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## Gachibowli Police issue notice to IAS officer Smita Sabharwal in Kancha Gachibowli land dispute probe

Hyderabad: The Gachibowli police have issued a notice to Smita Sabharwal, urging the senior IAS officer to share any information regarding the Kancha Gachibowli disputed land case to the investigation officials on Wednesday. However, as there was no response from the officer, the police are planning to send her a notice for the second time.

In the notice, the police said 'as the case pertaining to spreading fake news by sharing morphed and edited clips, videos and images on social media platforms was already under investigation, it has been found that the officer had reposted certain content on her verified X account'.

## Drugs worth Rs 40 lakh, vehicle seized

Hyderabad, April 16 (NSS): The STFB team of Excise police seized Oji Kush, which is grown in Florida cornflower in the US, along with other drugs and foreign liquor bottles. Along with the drugs, the STFB seized a Skoda car containing ganja, hashish synthetic drugs and charas drugs, said Excise Enforcement Joint Commissioner Qureshi.

The seized drugs and the accused were presented before the media at a media conference organized at Excise Bhavan on Wednesday. The car and drugs are worth Rs 40 lakh, said Qureshi. The drugs were seized by B Team SI Sandhya team near Kacheguda Railway Station at around 2 pm on Wednesday. At Kacheguda Railway Station, STF excise personnel caught a person exchanging OG Kush on a bike and a Skoda car on suspicion. During the checks in the car, 500 gram of OG Kush, one kg of ganja, six gram of charas, 4.38 gram of hashish synthetic drugs and five bottles of foreign liquor were seized.

## Telangana police ranked best in the country, says India Justice Report 2025



GNS News Agency, April 16

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire police force of the state for securing the top rank in the country for policing performance. Telangana tourism Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire police force of the state for securing the top rank in the country for policing performance. According to the 'India Justice Report 2025', Telangana police has been ranked first among 18 Indian states with a population of over one crore. The report, prepared by respected organisations such as Tata Trusts, Centre for Social Justice, and Common Cause, highlighted Telangana's exceptional performance. The Chief Minister stated that this recognition is a testament to the tireless efforts of the state's police force and a matter of pride for every citizen of Telangana. Also Read - Singareni begins coal mining outside Telangana for the first time, CM Revanth Reddy hails milestone Telangana tourism Commending the police for their role in maintaining peace and order, controlling crime, taking strict action against offenders, and ensuring transparency in case registration, the Chief Minister said that Telangana police have successfully upheld peace and justice across the state. He also remarked that the unwavering dedication of the police has strengthened public trust and that this achievement reflects the collective efforts of the entire department.

## VHP delegation meets Telangana DGP

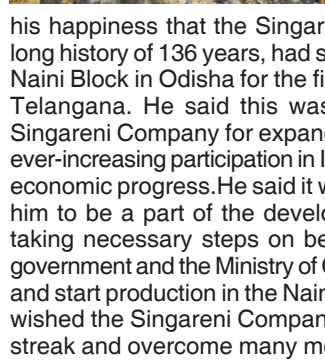
Hyderabad, April 16 A delegation of VHP leaders today met with State DGP and urged him to take steps to protect the State from the threat of Muslim extremist organizations that are conspiring to attack Hindus under the guise of opposing the Waqf Board (Amendment) Act.

In its representation, the leaders claimed that suspected individuals were staying in large numbers at madarasas and mosques across Telangana. "Do not allow Muslim extremist organizations to hold protest events. The Owaisi family, which has looted lakhs of crores of the waqf properties, is trying to create communal clashes in Hyderabad. MIM leaders are inciting communalism in Telangana. Take action against Bangladeshi and Rohingya Muslims across Telangana. Take action against those who hoisted ISIS flags in Hyderabad," the leaders demanded. A memorandum containing the above points was submitted to the DGP on the occasion. Among those who met the DGP are VHP National Spokesperson Dr Ravinutala Shashidhar, VHP State Vice President Dr Sunitha Reddy, VHP National Math Mandir Vibhag Sanyojak M. Ramaraju were present

## Kishan happy SCCL to mine coal in Odisha

Hyderabad, April 16 Reacting on the inauguration of the Naini coal block, which is going to be mined by State-owned SCCL in Odisha, Union Minister for Coal and Mines Kishan Reddy today said this was a historic moment in the history of the Singareni company and it was a pleasure for him to be a part of this development.

On Wednesday, Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka virtually inaugurated the Naini Coal Block in Odisha. Responding to this on Twitter, the Union Minister made several comments. He expressed his happiness to be a part of this initiative. Speaking on the occasion, he said starting coal production outside the State of Telangana for the first time was a historic moment in the history of the Singareni company. He expressed his happiness that the Singareni Company, which has a long history of 136 years, had started the coal production in Naini Block in Odisha for the first time outside the State of Telangana. He said this was a proud moment for the Singareni Company for expanding coal production and its ever-increasing participation in India's energy availability and economic progress. He said it was personally satisfying for him to be a part of the development of the company by taking necessary steps on behalf of the Narendra Modi government and the Ministry of Coal to remove the obstacles and start production in the Naini Coal Block. Kishan Reddy wished the Singareni Company to continue its successful streak and overcome many more milestones.



## Justice BR Gavai to succeed Sanjeev Khanna as the next CJ

GNS News Agency, April 16

Justice Gavai, the second senior-most Supreme Court judge after the incumbent CJI Khanna, is set to become the 52nd CJI on May 14 after the retirement of CJI Khanna on May 13. Justice Gavai, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019, would have a tenure of over six months as the CJI. He is due to retire on November 23, 2025. CJI Khanna, who was sworn in as the 51st CJI on November 11 last year, recommended to the Union Law Ministry to appoint Justice Gavai as the next CJI.

The retirement age of Supreme Court judges is 65 years. Born on November 24, 1960 at Amravati, Justice Gavai was elevated as an additional judge of the Bombay High Court on November 14, 2003. He became a permanent judge of the high court on November 12, 2005. Justice Gavai has been a part of several Constitution benches in the apex court which delivered path-breaking verdicts. He was



part of a five-judge Constitution bench which in December 2023 unanimously upheld the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 bestowing special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Another five-judge Constitution bench, of which Justice Gavai was a part, annulled the electoral bonds scheme for political funding. He was a part of a five-judge Constitution bench which, by a 4:1 majority verdict, gave its stamp of approval to the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise 1,000 and 500 denomination currency notes.

Justice Gavai was part of a seven-judge constitution bench, which by a 6:1 majority held that states are

the affected must be given 15 days to respond. He is also heading the Bench which is hearing matters related to forests, wildlife and protection of trees.

He had joined the bar on March 16, 1985 and was the standing counsel for the Municipal Corporation of Nagpur, Amravati Municipal Corporation and Amravati University. He was appointed as an assistant government pleader and additional public prosecutor in the Bombay High Court's Nagpur Bench from August 1992 to July 1993. He was appointed as a government pleader and public prosecutor for the Nagpur Bench on January 17, 2000. According to the memorandum of procedure — a set of documents guiding appointment, elevation and transfer of high court and Supreme Court judges — the Law Minister writes to the CJI to name his or her successor. The MoP says the senior-most judge of the apex court is considered fit to hold the office of the CJI and the views of the outgoing head of the judiciary have to be sought "at an appropriate time".

## Congress regime has brought only trouble for farmers, says Kavitha

GNS News Agency, April 16

Jagtial: BRS MLC K Kavitha said farmers were facing troubles due to indifferent decisions being taken by the State government. She called upon the BRS activists to educate people about the cheating being done to various sections by the Congress government by visiting each and every village.

Participating in a BRS silver jubilee preparatory meeting here on Wednesday, Kavitha said the Flood Flow Canal was used to its full capacity like a perennial river throughout the year during the BRS regime. There were no problems for both irrigation and drinking water. However, there was no water in the FFL after the Congress came to power. As a result, the farmers of upstream areas such as Mallial, Katkapur, Metpalli and others were facing troubles for irrigation water. Former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao used to allow farmers to draw water from the FFL by arranging motors. Besides passing orders for non-removal of motors, the BRS president had also instructed electricity department officials not to collect power charges from farmers who arranged mo-



tors on the canal. However, the situation has changed with the Congress regime and officials were now removing motors from the canal, she said, adding that the Congress had failed to fulfill the promises made to farmers before the elections. Though it claimed that Rythu Bharosa was paid to all farmers, not even 60 percent farmers got the benefit, she said, adding that same was the case of the crop loan waiver, which was provided only to 50 percent ryots.

## BRS, KCR have no plans to topple Congress Govt, says Kamalakar



Karimnagar: GNS News Agency, April 16, Karimnagar MLA Gangula Kamalakar made it clear that neither the BRS nor its president K Chandrashekar Rao had any plans to topple the State government.

People elected the Congress party to rule the State for a period of five years. The BRS would also wish the Congress to continue in the power for five years and provide better facilities to the public. There were no plans of toppling the government. It could be some Congress MLAs who might have such plans, Kamalakar said after inaugurating paddy purchasing centres in Karimnagar rural mandal on Wednesday.

Stating that real-estate business had flourished during the BRS regime, Kamalakar informed that realtors from Mumbai, Delhi as well as foreign countries had invested money in Hyderabad. However, the real-estate sector had slumped after the Congress party came to power. Realtors were not coming forward to invest as they did not believe in the Congress government and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Business persons would not dare to invest if the government went ahead with its demolitions and continued

abusing Chandrashekar Rao, he said. Chandrashekar Rao, who achieved a separate State, wanted the people to be happy always as they were during the BRS regime. People of the State would be happy if Revanth Reddy followed in the footsteps of the BRS president. However, that was not happening and the people had started revolting against the government.

## Actress Jayasudha chairs Gaddar Telangana Film Awards jury meeting

Hyderabad, April 16 The State government has initiated the process for the prestigious Gaddar Telangana Film Awards, aimed at honouring cinematic excellence within the state. On Wednesday, a meeting of the Gaddar Awards Jury took place at the TFDC conference hall, chaired by noted actress Jayasudha. Jayasudha expressed her intention to embrace the responsibility given by the government as a challenge, vowing to successfully carry out the selection process. Dil Raju, the Chairman of the Telangana Film Development Corporation (TFDC), called on the jury members to fairly assess the nominations submitted for the Gaddar Telangana Film Awards introduced by the state.

He encouraged them to work in a manner that would elevate the Telugu film industry's recognition on a national level. Dil Raju also mentioned that the state government has appointed industry experts to the jury and that this marks the return of film awards after a gap of 14 years.

## Singareni begins coal mining outside Telangana for the first time, CM Revanth Reddy hails milestone



GNS News Agency, April 16

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has praised Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) for launching coal mining operations beyond the state for the first time in its 130-year history. He described the move as a historic and commendable achievement that marks a new chapter for the organisation. SCCL has commenced mining activities in the Naini coal block located in Odisha's Angul district, after securing all the required permissions. The Chief Minister noted that the company, which has long illuminated Telangana through its mining efforts, is now setting a golden path for future generations by expanding its reach. Calling it a proud moment in Telangana's journey, Mr Reddy congratulated the Singareni organisation and highlighted the significance of this development as a lasting milestone in the state's industrial progress.

## IAS officer Smita Sabharwal gets notice from police



As there was no response from the IAS officer, the police are planning to send her a notice for the second time

Hyderabad, April 16 Principal Secretary of Youth Development, Tourism and Culture Department of the State Government Smita Sabharwal has received a notice from the State police. The reason for this is that Smita Sabharwal shared an AI-generated image on social media related to the destruction of 400 acres of forest in Kancha Gachibowli land. The image was shared on March 31 on the X social media handle 'Hi Hyderabad'. It was made in the style of Ghibli with bulldozers at Mushroom Rock and animals like peacocks and deer watching them. The image shows the Kancha Gachibowli area under the jurisdiction of the University of Hyderabad (UoH). Gachibowli Police Station Inspector Mohammad Habibullah Khan said in this regard that a notice had been issued to Smita Sabharwal under Section 179 of the BNSS. However, he clarified that the contents mentioned in the notice cannot be revealed now. According to Section 179 of the BNSS, the investigating police officer has the power to summon the relevant persons to the station to give a statement. It is understood that the notice was sent to Smita based on these provisions. There has been criticism of the Police department for sending a notice to an officer, who is in the field of creating public awareness regarding environmental protection. Questions have also been raised about whether sharing the AI image is a criminal act?

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# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Cornering Choksi

THE arrest of fugitive diamond tycoon Mehul Choksi in Belgium has made India hopeful that he will finally be brought back and put on trial in a case that had rocked the country's banking sector in 2018. He is accused of defrauding the Punjab National Bank of over Rs 13,000 crore, allegedly in connivance with bank officials and others. Both Choksi and his nephew, co-accused Nirav Modi, had managed to flee India before details of the colossal fraud became public. Nirav was arrested in Britain in 2019 and remains in custody there, but he has been able to stall his extradition so far on one pretext or the other. A similarly protracted legal battle awaits the Indian authorities in Choksi's case.

It's inevitable that he will leave no stone unturned on the legal front to secure his release and ensure that his extradition gets delayed or does not happen at all. The defence counsel's playbook is not going to hold any surprises, with the all-too-familiar grounds being ill health — Choksi is undergoing treatment for cancer — and the allegedly poor conditions in Indian prisons. Indian probe agencies must be well prepared to counter such arguments in a convincing manner. At stake is the investigation into one of India's biggest bank frauds, besides the efficacy of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, which was enacted by the Narendra Modi government in 2018 after Choksi and Nirav made their great escape. Unfortunately, the Enforcement Directorate's plea seeking to declare Choksi a fugitive economic offender and confiscate his assets under provisions of the Act has been pending before a Mumbai court for nearly seven years. The proceedings should be expedited to up the ante against Choksi. The Indian government has claimed that the amount involved in bank frauds has dropped appreciably in the past few years, thanks to steps such as the setting up of an online Central Fraud Registry.

Cattle management in cowsheds is proper: CPI National Secretary K. Narayana



“April 16, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator” CPI National Secretary K. Narayana has advised various political parties that people have a lot of trust in a world-famous charitable organization, and in the same way, it is not appropriate to play politics in a region where tourism is also developing. In view of the allegations coming in the past four days about the deaths of cows in the SV cowshed, which is being run under the auspices of TTD, he visited the SV cowshed on Wednesday. There, he inspected the management of the cowshed, the feed provided to the cows, the way of feeding and dairy management along with local CPI leaders. He inquired about the various types of cattle in the SV cowshed, their food and care. He inquired about the details from the staff working there. On this occasion, the workers working in the cowshed brought several issues to Narayana's attention. They explained that in the past there were errors in the management of the dairy, irregularities and corruption took place. They explained that there were many problems in the matter of cattle feed, and now each cow is given adequate food and fodder under the supervision of doctors. However, they brought several issues to Narayana's attention regarding the previous cowshed director, Harinath Reddy. The staff there said that there was systematic corruption in purchasing good cows from outside areas, and that cows worth Rs. 60 to Rs. 90 thousand were billed for a high amount of Rs. 2 lakh. They complained that during the previous director's tenure, even if worms were found in the expired feed, proper action was not taken. They said that the conditions have improved somewhat now. They brought to Narayana's attention that the cows that died recently were old and died of illness. Later, the cowshed workers there explained that there was no security for the time scale and contract employees working in the dairy, and that no help was provided to those who died due to various reasons while on duty. After inspecting the cowshed, CPI National Secretary K. Narayana held a media conference and mentioned the points he had examined. He said that tourists come from all corners of the world to visit the Tirumala temple and visit the places here, but in the context of people's faith in the religious institution, it is not appropriate for political parties to use such a place for politics.

Hyderabad Police raid spa, arrest nine women for cross massage

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Police raided Ruby Beauty Spa and Saloon at Ameerpet and caught nine women on charges of cross massage here on Wednesday. The arrested persons who worked as beauticians in the guise of spa, offered cross massage services illegally to the customers on the instructions of Venkat Kumar, the owner.

## HEATSTROKE COMPENSATION A RESULT OF WORKERS' STRUGGLE, SAYS AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' UNION



“P.S.ASHOKAN”INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI APRIL 17”“Manthani, April 16, 2025 — The Agricultural Workers' Union has credited its long-standing struggle for

the Telangana Government's recent decision to provide ₹4 lakh ex-gratia compensation to families of agricultural workers who died due to heatstroke. “Speaking at a gathering of MGNREGA workers in Kakalapalli village, Manthani Mandal, Union District Secretary Boodida Ganesh said, “This announcement is a direct outcome of years of relentless advocacy by the Agricultural Workers' Union. While the decision is welcome, the compensation should be increased to ₹10 lakhs in view of the devastating impact on affected families.” He also urged the Central Government to introduce a nationwide compensation policy for heatstroke victims, especially among vulnerable rural laborers. “Ganesh further raised concerns about unpaid wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). “Workers have not received their payments since the beginning of the current work cycle. The government must release the pending dues immediately and ensure essential facilities like drinking water, shade, and first aid at all worksites,” he said. “The event saw active participation from local laborers, who expressed support for the Union's demands and called for timely action from both state and central governments.

## MANTHANI SIDEGA RAMESH EMPHASIZES NEED FOR LAWFUL CONDUCT



“P.S.ASHOKAN”INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI APRIL 17”“Sub-Inspector Dega Ramesh of Manthani has

stressed the importance of maintaining public order in the constituency. Addressing recent demonstrations and gatherings, he stated that all activities must comply with legal procedures and official permissions. “He noted that no rallies or public events should be conducted without prior authorization. The use of DJs is not permitted, and operating drone cameras without clearance is strictly prohibited. Individuals involved in activities such as effigy burning or unauthorized protests will be subject to legal action. “The Sub-Inspector urged the public, elected representatives, and political parties to act responsibly and extend their cooperation to the police in preserving peace and harmony in the region.

## National Sanskrit University NSS extends warm welcome to Minister of State, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Union Government



“April 16, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator” National Sanskrit University Tirupati National Service Scheme welcomed Raksha Nikhil Kadse, Minister of State, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Union Government at the International Airport in Tirupati today by NSS Coordinator Dr. A. Chandulal and Unit 2 Program Officer, APRO Dr. Kanapala Kumar. On this occasion, Coordinator Dr. Chandulal explained the social service being

done by NSS at National Sanskrit University. He informed that in the future, following the instructions of Andhra Pradesh State NSS, more new programs will be organized for the National Service Committee and the country will be taken further forward in its service. “On behalf of the university, Vice Chancellor Prof. G.S.R. Krishnamurthy welcomed and congratulated the Union Ministers online. On this occasion, the Ministers expressed their joy and expressed their commitment to the development of NSS.

## University Grants Commission, Rajabhasha Samiti team visited National Sanskrit University



“National Sanskrit University, University Grants Commission, Rajabhasha Samiti members Dr. Kishore Kumar and V.K. Sudarshan Devi at the conference hall of NSH reviewed the extent to which Hindi, the official language, is being implemented in the university in the office orders. “In the meeting held later, Dr. Kishore Kumar said that the Na-

tional Sanskrit University, Tirupati is conducting good programs through the Rajabhasha Department and praised the good functioning of Rajabhasha Hindi in the office. Later, V. K. Sudarshan Devi made several suggestions to implement Hindi language more in the university and suggested that Hindi language should be promoted more. The University Rajabhasha Samiti described the receipt of the Rajabhasha Nayak Award by the University as a part of the implementation of Hindi language as a testament to the university's performance. “Vice-Chancellor Prof. GSR Krishnamurthy, who participated in this program, explained that all the activities in the university are being carried out in Rajabhasha Hindi in the office administration and various departments. He informed that efforts are being made to release some jobs soon for the development of this department. University Academic Dean Prof. Rajnikantha Shukla, Examination Controller Dr. K. Sambasivamurthy, Proctor Prof. C. Ranganathan, Head of the Rajabhasha Department Dr. T. Latha Mangesh, members Dr. A. Charukesh, Dr. Ved Prakash, Dr. P. Balaji and OSD Dr. Harinarayana, Deputy Librarian Dr. N. Vasanth and office officials participated in this program.

## Congress leaders stage protest against ED chargesheet on Sonia, Rahul Gandhi

Hyderabad, April 16 : In protest against the inclusion of names in the ED chargesheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in connection with the National Herald case, a huge rally was organized led by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee ( TPCC) led by President and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud here on Wednesday.

The rally was held from MLA Quarters to BSNL Bhavan in the city, alleging that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed a chargesheet against the Gandhis in the National Herald case only at the behest of the Union government, which wanted to suppress the voices of the Opposition in the country. TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud said the Narendra Modi-led government was trying to tarnish the image of Congress party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi as it was unable to digest the leaders' growing popu-

larity across the nati He expressed his disapproval of the Union government, noting that it has been a decade since the BJP took power at the Centre.

The TPCC chief pointed out that nearly 95 percent of the cases brought by the ED have been against opposition leaders. Since 2014, approximately 95 out of every 100 cases filed involve opposition parties. The ED is filing charge sheets that prominently feature the names of opposition members. The BJP is leveraging the CBI and the ED as instruments to unfairly target opposition leaders and senior figures,” Mahesh Kumar Goud claimed.

Congress party cadres participated in a large-scale rally with black flags, raising slogans against the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## SPMVV team meets Minister of State, Ministry of Sports.



“April 16, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator” Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadseni, who arrived for the darshan of Tirumala Srivari, was cordially received at the airport on Wednesday by Padmavati Mahila Vishwa Vidyalaya NSS Coordinator Acharya Lalitha Kumari, Program Officer Dr. Yuvasree, and student volunteers. In this context, the Minister spoke to the students and inquired about the NSS programs being conducted regularly.

## Resolve petitions promptly: Bojjala Sudheer Reddy



“April 16, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator” As per the orders of the state government, Kalahasti MLA Bojjala Sudheer Reddy received petitions from the public at the PR Guest House in Srikalahasti. Speaking on the occasion, he clarified that the petitions are being received with the intention of resolving the problems of the people from time to time. He issued instructions to the officials to resolve the problems of the people to their satisfaction.

## BJP to hold workshop on Waqf Act today

Hyderabad, April 16 (NSS): A Telangana State level workshop is being organized on Thursday by BJP to create awareness among people about the recently amended the Waqf Amendment Act. The workshop will be inaugurated by Union Minister and BJP Telangana State president Kishan Reddy. BJP State Vice President G. Manohar Reddy said the party's National Co-Organization Secretary Siva Prakash, Arvind Menon and State Organizational General Secretary Chandrashekhar Tiwari would participate in this workshop. He said for holding the workshop, committees with four members had been appointed from each district and added that the members of these committees would help in creating awareness among the people about the Waqf Amendment Act and provide necessary details. He said the Waqf Amendment Act was brought to provide important solutions to the encroachment of the Waqf lands that are currently in force. He claimed that this Act would organize the rights of Muslims in a way that will be useful for their progress. “I request the Muslims not to get caught up in the misconceptions being created by some politicians regarding the Waqf Amendment Act. We request people to be vigilant. In the case of alienated lands, the Waqf Amendment Act was brought mainly to resolve the problems. He said the welfare schemes like Ujjwala Yojana, Mudra Yojana, Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana offered by the Narendra Modi government were benefiting up to 40% of the poor Muslims. Taking this mantra, the Narendra Modi government is continuously working for the development of all sections of the people, he said

## Technician caught issuing heart scan posing as doctor in Suryapet

Hyderabad: A medical technician, who allegedly conducted a 2D Echo diagnostic test on a patient in the absence of clinical cardiologist by claiming that he was a doctor himself, was caught by the inspecting teams of Telangana State Medical Council (TSMC) at Sharat Cardiac Centre, Sri Sri Nagar, Suryapet, on Wednesday. Based on complaints related to Sharat Cardiac Centre, Suryapet, the members of Telangana State Medical Council (TSMC) including Dr. V. Naresh Kumar and Dr. M. Rajeev conducted surprise inspections of the facility on Wednesday. In a statement, TSMC said “During inspections, it was found that a 2D echo technician, Vanam Sarat Chandra provided a 2D echo report to a patient, claiming to be a doctor himself. The clinical cardiologist and Dr. Shireesha (MBBS) were not present in the facility. Moreover, it was also noted that the Cardiac Care Centre had received the permission to operate under the name of a heart specialist Dr Leela Krishna”.



## Shabbir Ali attends Supreme Court hearing, vows to fight Waqf Act legally and democratically



cratic means. "This is not just a legal fight, it is a matter of safeguarding the constitutional rights of Muslims. Until this draconian law is repealed, we will not rest. We will continue our struggle in the courts, in Parliament, and among the people," he declared. The Supreme Court bench, led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and comprising Justices P.V. Sanjay Kumar and K.V. Viswanathan, heard over 100 petitions filed against the amended Waqf Act, which was passed by Parliament on April 4 and received Presidential assent on April 8. Mohammed Ali Shabbir is being represented in the case by senior counsels Kapil Sibal and Salman Khurshid. During the proceedings, the bench questioned the rationale behind allowing non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and asked the Centre whether similar inclusion would be allowed in Hindu religious boards. It also expressed concern over the delegation of quasi-judicial powers to District Magistrates to decide Waqf property disputes and the challenges faced in documenting centuries-old mosques and religious structures created by long-standing usage. Senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Rajeev Dhavan, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, and C.U. Singh represented the petitioners, contending that the amendments infringed upon Article 26 of the Constitution, which guarantees religious denominations the right to manage their own affairs. The Solicitor General, representing the Centre, defended the amendments, saying they aimed to improve transparency, but the court said it would consider issuing interim directions on two key issues - restricting Waqf Board membership to Muslims (except ex officio members) and protecting by-user Waqf properties from coercive action during the case.

New Delhi/Hyderabad, April 16: Advisor to Telangana Government Mohammed Ali Shabbir, one of the petitioners challenging the Waqf Amendment Act, personally attended the Supreme Court hearing in Delhi on Wednesday and welcomed the court's strong observations in favour of religious autonomy and minority rights. Speaking to reporters after the hearing on Wednesday, Shabbir Ali said he was encouraged by the constitutional questions raised by the bench, particularly around the inclusion of non-Muslims in Waqf institutions and the threat posed to centuries-old Waqf properties. "Today's hearing has vindicated our stand. The court has clearly indicated that this law raises serious constitutional concerns. We are hopeful that the Supreme Court will grant a stay on the implementation of the Waqf Amendment Act," he said. Shabbir Ali described the Act as a direct assault on Muslim religious institutions and reiterated his commitment to continue the battle through legal and demo-

## Telangana receiving huge investments with green energy policy: Bhatti

Hyderabad, April 16 Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka announced that both national and international firms are stepping up to invest in Telangana, attributing this interest to the new energy policy introduced by the Congress government. On Wednesday, representatives from Ecoren Energy India Private Limited and GPRS Arya Private Limited signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with TG REDCO at the Telangana Institute Rural Development in Rajender Nagar, Hyderabad, with Bhatti Vikramarka present. During the event, the Deputy Chief Minister highlighted that the two companies have committed to invest Rs.29,000 crore in the state through their agreement with TG REDCO. "With the launch of the New Energy Policy, Sun Petro Company has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to invest Rs 20,000 crore for the generation of 3,400 MW of pumped storage power in Telangana. Additionally, a major corporation is set to invest Rs 7,500 crore to produce 1,500 MW of pumped storage power. Both companies are currently in the process of developing Detailed Project Reports (DPR), and their new projects are expected to commence shortly in Telangana," Bhatti stated. Bhatti expressed his satisfaction regarding Ecoren Energy India Private Limited, which has also signed



an MoU with the state government today to produce 5,600 MW of green energy through an investment of Rs 27,000 crore, thanks to the implementation of the clean and green energy policy.

He noted that the influx of investments into Telangana for green energy generation presents a significant opportunity to swiftly address the electricity requirements of the state's residents.

## 100 Years of Caterpillar: Team India's Role in Building a Better, more Sustainable World



Hyderabad:As Caterpillar Inc., the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, off-highway diesel and natural gas engines, industrial gas turbines, and diesel-electric locomotives, celebrates its monumental 100th anniversary, Caterpillar team in India takes immense pride in its role in this legacy. With over 50 years of operations in India, Caterpillar has contributed significantly in building infrastructure and driving industrial progress in the country. For a century, Caterpillar's customer-centric innovation and industry-leading transformation have helped shape the modern world—including India. From the Bhakra Nangal Dam to the Atal Tunnel and the Purvanchal Expressway, Caterpillar's equipment has been instrumental in building the country's infrastructure since 1930s.

"At Caterpillar, innovation and customer-centricity have always been the cornerstones of our success. As we celebrate 100 years globally and over 50 years in India, we recognize that our people are the driving force behind our achievements," said Bhuvan Anandakrishnan, India Country Manager and Vice President, Integrated Component Solutions Engineering Division, Caterpillar. "Their dedication has not only met India's evolving needs but has also set new benchmarks on a global scale. We remain committed to building a more sustainable, efficient, and technologically advanced future—together, we are shaping the next century of progress."

As India strengthens its position as a key global manufacturer, Caterpillar remains deeply committed to supporting the nation's industrial and infrastructure ambitions. With cutting-edge technology and a highly skilled talent, Caterpillar continues to be an integral part of India's growth story. As part of the celebration, Caterpillar Inc. pledged \$100 million over the next five years globally to help equip the workforce of the future with the skills needed, leveraging technology to meet global market demands as the world undergoes a rapid digital transformation. To know more read Caterpillar | Caterpillar Celebrates First 100 years with a Commitment to the Future Workforce

## Rachakonda Police Cooperative Credit Society 2025 Calendar Unveiled by Commissioner



Hyderabad:At the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate office, the Rachakonda Police Cooperative Credit Society (RPCCS) 2025 calendar was unveiled by Rachakonda Police Commissioner and RPCCS President Sudheer Babu. Speaking on the occasion, he directed that the financial year 2024-25 audit for RPCCS be initiated

promptly and that interest on thrift and dividends on shares be distributed to members soon. The event was attended by Society Vice President Shiva Kumar (Additional DCP, Admin), Treasurer Balaraj, Directors Sangi Valaraju, Ravinder Reddy, Suvarna, and Lakshmi Prasanna, as well as Society Accounts Officer Pradeep Kumar.

## Office space absorption hits 18.9 mn sq. ft. in Q1 2025 – Strongest start since 2020: Savills



Source: Savills India Research

"With 18.9 million sq. ft. of office space absorbed in Q1 2025, India has recorded its strongest start to the year since 2020 – marking a 10% year-on-year growth. This robust demand reflects sustained occupier confidence, supported by a stable macroeconomic outlook. We expect this leasing momentum to persist, driven by the tech, BFSI, manufacturing, and flexible workspace sectors in the coming quarters. Both domestic companies and Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are set to play a key role in fueling demand," said Naveen Nandwani, MD, Commercial Advisory and Transactions, Savills India.

Key Highlights of Q1 2025 for the India office market

In Q1 2025, India witnessed the strongest leasing activity, reaching 18.9 mn sq. ft., a 10% YOY increase.

Bengaluru continued to lead the pack contributing 26% to the total leasing activity, followed by Delhi-NCR with a 19% share and Mumbai with an 18% share.

The tech sector dominated the leasing activity with 32% share, followed by BFSI at 21% and flexible workspaces at 13%. Large deals (100,000 sq. ft. or more) continued to dominate the gross leasing activity this quarter, contributing 47% to overall transactions.

Bengaluru and Delhi-NCR together witnessed 5.7 mn sq. ft. of new completions in Q1 2025, comprising nearly two-thirds of the total supply added across India.

Hyderabad: The office space absorption across six major Indian cities stood at 18.9 million sq. ft. in Q1 2025 reflecting a 10% year-on-year (YOY) growth, making it the strongest first-quarter performance since 2020 according to Savills India, a global real estate advisory firm. During the same period, new supply was recorded as 8.6 mn sq. ft., registering a rise of 28% YOY. The overall vacancy rate remained stable at 15% by the end of the quarter, supported by sustained leasing momentum and measured supply additions. In Q1 2025, Hyderabad's office space leasing activity was largely driven by large & mid-sized transactions, which accounted for approximately 2.0 mn sq. ft., representing over 80% of the total leasing volume. The tech sector remained the key demand driver, contributing 35% of the total leasing activity, followed by the healthcare and pharma sector at 17%.

## 3rd Graduation ceremony of KSPP of GITAM held

Hyderabad, April 16 (NSS): The Kautilya School of Public Policy (KSPP) of GITAM Deemed to be University, its 3rd Graduation ceremony at the Kinnera Seminar Hall on its Hyderabad campus on Wednesday. The event marked a significant milestone for the Class of 2025, commemorating the culmination of their rigorous academic journey and entry into the realm of public policy leadership.

Chief guest Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, spoke on the occasion. He paid tribute to the visionary founder of GITAM, Dr M.V.V.S. Murthi, for planting the seeds of the university and lauded GITAM President M. Sri Bharat for continuing to lead that vision forward. The event was formally inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Chief Guest, accompa-

nied by university dignitaries. M. Sri Bharat, President of GITAM and Member of Parliament from Visakhapatnam, delivered the presidential address and felicitated the chief guest for his contributions. Prateek Kanwal, Co-Founder of KSPP, also spoke. The degree conferment was conducted by Prof. Syed Akbaruddin, Dean of KSPP and former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. Degrees and certificates were awarded by the Chief Guest. Dr D. Gunasekaran, Registrar of GITAM, presented the degree records to Prof. Errol D'Souza, Vice-Chancellor. The Graduation Pledge was invoked by Prof. D.S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, and read aloud by graduating student Vaibhavi Awasthi. Dr Vasudha Katju, Assistant Professor at KSPP also spoke.

## Confusion reigns after Karnataka relaxes minimum age for Class 1 admission to 5 years and 5 months

GNS News Agency, April 16

In a move that has caused confusion and anger among different school boards, the Karnataka government on Wednesday announced a one-time relaxation in the minimum age requirement for Class 1 admissions for 2025-26. This comes after widespread parental requests and frustration as they had sought relaxation in the age restriction for their children who were admitted into preschool as per previous norms. School Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa stated that children who have completed pre-primary education and are at least five years and five months old by June 1, 2025, will be eligible to enrol in Class 1. The decision comes after extensive deliberation and follows the framework under the Right to Education Act 2009 and Compulsory Education Rules 2012, which mandate a minimum age of six years as of June 1 each academic year for Class 1 enrolment. The State Education Policy Commission, tasked with reviewing the proposal, reaffirmed the importance of the six-year age limit, citing its alignment with constitutional provisions, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and global educational practices that prioritise stress-free learning and mental development for young children. However, acknowledging the frustration of parents and their children who have completed pre-primary education this year, the commission recommended a temporary relaxation for the upcoming academic year. "This is a one-time measure to accommodate children who are slightly below the six-year threshold but have completed pre-primary schooling," the order stated. Additionally, the government reiterated that as per an order dated June 26, 2024, the minimum age for LKG and UKG admissions will remain four years and five years, respectively, effective from 2025-2026.

Addressing the media, Bangarappa said, "The SEP (State Education Policy) initially recommended five years and nine months and the department officials also insisted on the same. However, we thought of the need to accommodate all the children with a minimum age of five years and five months into Class 1, as we had previously done during Siddaramaiah's first term as chief minister. The relaxation applies to only state board-run schools. Starting from the 2026-2027 academic year, the six-year minimum age requirement will be strictly enforced." Appealing to the parents, Bangarappa said, "Other states in the country also strictly follow the six-year norm for Class 1. My request to parents henceforth is to follow the minimum age criteria of six years to enrol in Class 1 and ensure their children finish anganwadi, LKG and UKG at ages three, four and five, respectively."

However, CBSE- and ICSE-affiliated schools are not sure about whether to follow the state government's norms of age relaxation or NEP guidelines that mandate the six-year minimum age for Class 1 admission. Private school management associations have expressed their displeasure at the government rolling back on the six-year age criterion, dubbing it unscientific. D Shashikumar, president of the Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools of Karnataka (KAMS), said in a statement, "The 6+ years entry age for Class 1, mandated by the NEP 2020 and the RTE Act 2009, is grounded in developmental science, ensuring cognitive and emotional readiness. Research confirms better self-regulation and academic sustainability for children starting at 6, with early starters showing no long-term gains but higher stress. Karnataka's proactive compliance over three years, with most schools and parents adapting, reflects strong policy alignment. SATS and RTE systems enforce this age limit, making relaxations a legal and equitable violation." He added, "Unauthorised schools' non-compliance risks undermining law-abiding institutions, parental efforts, and the NEP's credibility. Any rollback, even by months, could spark inequity, legal challenges, and administrative chaos, eroding public trust. We urge the government to uphold the 6-year mandate, enforce it across all schools, and avoid retrospective changes. This ensures



Karnataka's State Education Policy Commission, which recommended the temporary relaxation, has reaffirmed the importance of the six-year age limit, citing constitutional provisions, the National Education Policy 2020 and global practices. child-centric, equitable education, respects mass compliance, and safeguards policy integrity. Clear communication is vital to maintain fairness and legal standing under RTE norms, ensuring a future-proof education system. "KAMS is also exploring legal options to challenge the government order relaxing the age norm. M Srinivasan, president of the Managements of Independent CBSE Schools Association (MICA), said, "CBSE schools are obligated to follow the board's regulations, which align with NEP 2020 and mandate a minimum age of six for Class 1 admissions. We will steadfastly adhere to this directive." Srinivasan called the government's decision to relax the age criterion a "grave disservice to the countless students and numerous schools that have complied over the past three years. It's unfair to penalise those who followed the rules for the sake of a few who willfully ignored them. How often will the government dilute these standards? The fault lies solely with schools that knowingly violated the regulations." He also pledged solidarity with KAMS in its legal fight against the relaxation.

Father Sunil Fernandes, principal of St Joseph's Boys High School, Bengaluru, said, "The one-time measure is definitely a welcome step and offers a big relief to preschool students of 2022 who were in a fix. The state government has proactively addressed the ambiguity. Meanwhile, I believe the CBSE might direct the schools to follow the age criteria norms of the state given the relaxation that the state government has given. While some schools might accommodate students under the revised age criteria if they have vacancies, other schools including St Joseph's are closed for Class 1 admissions." Dr Sagar Srinivas, a medical professional, whose son studies at National Public School, Jayanagar, heaved a sigh of relief. He told indianexpress.com, "We are grateful to the government for considering our request and delivering justice. We had asked the school to hold off the admission process for the affected parents until the state government gives its decision. Now that the relaxation is officially confirmed, the school management stated that they will get back to us after discussion." Hundreds of parents in Bengaluru were up in arms against the government's enforcement of the NEP 2020's age criterion—that children must be at least six years old by June 1 of the academic year they enter Class 1. Parents argued that this decision, announced in November 2022, unfairly affected children who had already begun their pre-primary education under the previous system in the academic year 2021-22. They were particularly concerned about the psychological effects on children, who will see their peers progress while they are held back. Earlier, the BJP government had relaxed the rules by allowing students under six years to proceed to Class 1, following protests from parents. The government had provided relaxation to students of the academic years 2023-24 and 2024-25. Later the government decided to postpone the implementation to the academic year 2025-26. However, parents who had enrolled their kids in preschool in 2022-23 are now crying foul, citing the introduction of the age criterion later in 2022.



## TGSRTC strongly condemns False allegations by unions

Hyderabad, April The TGSRTC management today strongly condemned the false allegations being made by some persons in the name of unions. It made it clear that the those persons had been creating confusion among the RTC employees by speaking at will and issuing statements for protecting their vested interests.

In a statement, the management that the unscrupulous elements were trying to provoke the employees by misleading them by saying that the company was cancelling SRBS. "The TGSRTC management strongly condemns this propaganda that is being deliberately spread to tarnish the reputation of the corporation. The management is appealing to the employees not to believe the false propaganda and rumors being spread by some people including the union leaders. The employees are the backbone of RTC. The organization is able to survive only because they all perform their duties effectively at the field level. Good results are also coming only when the staff works with commitment, dedication and discipline. The management does not compromise at all on the welfare of the employees, who are driving the RTC forward. The 2017 PRC, which has been pending for many years, was given in May 2024 with 21 percent fitment. The 11 pending DAs were released to the employees in phases from 2019. The corporation has deposited Rs. 280 crore in the accounts of the RTC employees related to RPS-2013 bonds. The corporation is providing accident insurance of Rs. 1.20 crore to employees, who die prematurely due to accidents and are permanently disabled," it said.

It also said that in the last three and a half years, the management had paid Rs. 2,348.35 crore towards PF and Rs. 1300.73 crore to CCS.

While the PF dues were 1,352.82 crore as of 2021-22, along with them, the recovery amounts have been reduced to Rs. 580.37 crore at present by paying them regularly every month. Similarly, while the CCS dues were Rs. 887.48

crore as of 2021-22, the corporation has reduced the recovery amounts to Rs. 451.09 crore by paying regularly every month. The corporation has had PF and CCS arrears since 2012. They are falsely spreading that the funds have been utilized now. This is completely untrue. For three and a half years, the corporation has been paying the employees' CCS and PF recovery amounts on time every month. It is gradually reducing them by making payments to other pending arrears. The management has brought the remaining pending issues to the attention of the state government. The government is also positive about resolving them," it said. The management made it clear that the financial condition of the corporation was miserable before 2021. After a leading credit rating agency gave the corporation a default rating and reminded that no bank came forward to provide loans to it. "With the help of the employees, the financial condition was improved and the corporation was brought from the default stage to BB Plus (BB+) rating. With this, the management contacted the chairmen and MDs of several banks and explained the performance and progress being made by the RTC through PowerPoint presentations. Satisfied with the corporation's progress and vision, the top officials of the banks came forward to provide loans. Due to these loans, the corporation has acquired more than 3,000 new buses in the last three years. Currently, more than 50 percent of the corporation's buses are new. The state government has recently approved 3,038 posts to fill the vacancies for the new buses. The recruitment process is ongoing," it said. In the case of environmentally friendly electric buses, some people were deliberately creating misconceptions among the employees that the depots would be privatized and made it clear that the management was making it clear that there would be no situation where a single employee would be laid off due to the electric buses while noting that there is no need for any misconceptions or concerns for the employees regarding electric buses.

## 4 held in Kanpur after protest against Waqf (Amendment) Act

GNS News Agency, April 16

In connection with Friday's protests against the Waqf Amendment Act, the police have lodged an FIR against six named and 15 unidentified persons at Naubasta police station. In connection with Friday's incident, the police have lodged an FIR against six named and 15 unidentified persons at Naubasta police station.

Four men were arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur on Saturday for allegedly staging a protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act as people were returning after Friday prayers at the Jama Masjid in the Naubasta area. The police said the protest took a dramatic turn when a youth attempted to immolate himself by pouring petrol on his body, but alert officers prevented the act. All those who were arrested are in their 20s and earn their livelihood through odd jobs, the police added. A heavy police force had already been deployed in the area as a precautionary measure.

In connection with Friday's incident, the police have lodged an FIR against six named and 15 unidentified persons at Naubasta police station. "Based on available evidence, we have arrested four people, and raids are underway to trace the remaining accused," Chitranshu Gautam, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Kanpur, said. On Friday, as a group began protesting near the mosque, the police apprehended several of the demonstrators. However, many managed to flee the spot. Senior officers rushed to the location after receiving information about the protest. A preliminary inquiry revealed that pamphlets opposing the Waqf (Amendment) Act had been circulated a day before the incident, urging people to gather in large numbers at the mosque during Friday prayers, the police said. Soon after



the prayers concluded, a group assembled outside the mosque carrying banners and began raising slogans, Santosh Kumar Singh, Station House Officer, Naubasta police station, said. The police have also found that one of the accused allegedly urged members of a WhatsApp group to gather at the mosque in large numbers on Friday. The person who allegedly circulated the message was identified and detained, the ACP said, adding that in addition, the owner of the printing press that published the pamphlets used during the protest was also booked.

The incident comes against the backdrop of protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act in Muzaffarnagar last week, following which over 300 people were served notices by the district administration. The protesters had worn black armbands while offering prayers at a local mosque last Friday and again on Eid three days later. The notices were issued by City Magistrate Vikas Kashyap, following reports submitted by the local police, officials said.

## Karnataka Bitcoin scam: SIT gets sanction to probe corruption charges against four cops

GNS News Agency, April 16

The Karnataka government has accorded sanction to the police to investigate corruption charges against four former Bengaluru Central Crime Branch (CCB) officers accused of tampering with evidence collected from an international hacker, Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, after his arrest in 2020, according to police sources. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Karnataka Police's Criminal Investigation Department is investigating a Bitcoin scam linked to Sriki. The SIT was accorded sanction under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the sources added.

The SIT arrested the four police officers – Sridhar Pujar, currently a deputy superintendent of police, and police inspectors Prashanth Babu, Chandradhar S R and Lakshmi Kanthaiah – in 2024. While the SIT has gathered evidence of alleged police tampering with devices seized from Sriki and his associate, Robin Khandelwal, by using the services of private cyber experts, it is also looking at the corruption involved in the case, police sources said. "There has been a transfer of Bitcoin from one of the accused to a technical expert. There is also the question of the claim of disappearance of cryptocurrency held by the hacker after he was arrested and taken to police custody (in 2020). These are being investigated as acts of corruption by the police officials," a police source said. The SIT will require additional sanctions under Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act to file a chargesheet against the officers as well as under the Karnataka Police Act and Section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code when investigations are completed, police sources said.

The SIT probe has found that a cyber expert roped into assist investigations by the Bengaluru Central Crime Branch (CCB) police into the illegal activities of Sriki in 2020 illegally accessed the crypto wallet of an accountant of the hacker and transferred Bitcoin valued at Rs 1.83 lakh to his own crypto wallet. The SIT named five people – cyber expert K S Santhosh Kumar who runs a private firm called Group Cyber ID Technology Pvt Ltd in Bengaluru and former CCB officers Poojar, Babu, Chandradhar and Lakshmi Kanthaiah – in the FIR alleging illegal confinement, breach of trust by a public servant and destruction of evidence filed in the Cyber Crime police station of the CID on January 24, 2024. The investigations in the case have revealed dozens of procedural lapses by the police, including illegal detention, lack of documentation of the logins, passwords and data for computer usage by the accused, and even the provision of a laptop worth Rs 60,000 by the police to Sriki to facilitate hacking. In statements to the police



that are documented in earlier chargesheets filed by the CCB, Sriki claimed to have had 400 to 500 Bitcoins in his possession when he was arrested in 2020. The CCB police never recovered any of the Bitcoin allegedly acquired through illegal hacking by the hacker. On January 5, 2021, on the instructions of Babu, cyber expert Kumar is alleged to have gained access to crypto wallets, email accounts, and bank accounts of Sriki and Khandelwal and changed the logins and passwords in the absence of witnesses or court orders, the SIT has alleged. The SIT has further stated in its FIR that Babu provided a laptop worth Rs 60,000 to Sriki, with which the hacker was allegedly allowed to access his Amazon Web Server account on the cloud, but no data accessed was collected for evidence by the officers. The police officers who were a part of the Central Crime Branch unit of the Bengaluru police in the 2020-21 period are also accused in a separate FIR from September 2023 of tampering with evidence in the form of two laptops that were seized from Sriki after his arrest in November 2020 by a CCB team led by Pujar. The SIT has yet to seek sanction under the Prevention of Corruption Act to probe the alleged corruption in the 2023 case. The SIT referred to voluntary statements of Sriki and two technical experts who were witnesses to suggest that CCB police officers facilitated the illegal accessing of crypto wallets containing crypto currency to the tune of Rs 850 crore belonging to the hacker. Citing a Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) forensic report for the laptops seized from the hacker and statements of witnesses, the SIT has alleged that as many as 4,000 Bitcoin valued at Rs 850 crore in 2020 was probably accessed illegally by police officers after Sriki's arrest. The CDAC report dated January 23, 2024, has stated that one of the laptops seized from Sriki on November 17, 2020, was used to access crypto wallets at cryptocurrency websites and for accessing online gaming platforms while it was in police custody.

## Former Punjab MLA Dalvir Goldy rejoins Congress after short stint with AAP



GNS News Agency, April 16

The re-induction occurred at the Congress Bhawan in Chandigarh in the presence of Bhupesh Baghel, AICC general secretary in Punjab Congress. This move is seen as a strategic realignment for both Goldy and the Congress, especially in the context of Punjab's dynamic political landscape as future elections approach. Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, and former minister Balbir Singh Sidhu were among those present on the occasion. "Wholeheartedly welcome younger brother @GoldyDS\_Dhuri ji to the party fold. He has today formally joined @INCPunjab in the presence of @INCIndia General secretary & state incharge @bhupeshbaghel ji & CLP @Partap\_Sbajwa ji," said Warring in a post on X.

Dalvir Goldy, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly from Dhuri in the Sangrur district left Congress in a huff before the 2024 Lok Sabha poll when he was denied a ticket from Sangrur. Goldy began his political career as a student leader, rising to prominence as the president of the Panjab University Campus Students' Council in 2006-07. He joined the Congress in 2007, steadily building his reputation within the party. In 2017, he won the Dhuri Assembly seat, defeating the AAP candidate by a narrow margin of 2,838 votes, establishing himself as a promising young leader. In the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, Goldy lost the Dhuri seat to the AAP's Bhagwant Mann, who later became the chief minister, by a significant margin of 58,206 votes. Despite this setback, the Congress fielded him in the 2022 Sangrur Lok Sabha bypoll, necessitated after Mann vacated the seat. Goldy finished third with 11.21 per cent of the votes, behind candidates from Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) and the AAP. He was subsequently appointed

president of the Congress's Sangrur district unit.

Goldy's relationship with the Congress soured in 2024 when he was denied the party's ticket for the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat for the general elections. The Congress, instead, chose Sukhpal Singh Khaira, a three-time MLA from Bholath, which led to significant disappointment for Goldy. On April 16, 2024, he publicly expressed his frustration, alleging that the party had reneged on a commitment made during the 2022 bypoll to field him in 2024. Feeling ignored by the state leadership, Goldy resigned from the Congress on April 30, 2024, and joined the AAP the next day, May 1, 2024, in the presence of Chief Minister Mann. Mann welcomed Goldy as a "younger brother" and a "hardworking youth," emphasising the AAP's intent to promote young leaders. Goldy's induction was seen as a boost for the AAP's campaign in Sangrur, particularly for their candidate Gurmeet Singh Meht Hayer. However, speculation arose that Goldy's move might have been influenced by pressure from the Punjab Vigilance Bureau, which had summoned him in 2023 over a disproportionate assets case—an allegation both Goldy and Mann denied. Despite initial expectations that Goldy might contest from Barnala if Hayer won Sangrur, he clarified that he had no interest in that seat and focused on supporting the AAP's campaign. Goldy's tenure with the AAP was, however, short-lived. On October 22, 2024, he announced his dissociation from the party, stating that he was not aligned with any political outfit at the time. The decision to bring Goldy back was not without internal debate. Some senior Congress leaders initially opposed his re-induction, citing his brief defection to the AAP as a betrayal. However, Goldy's persistence and his public acknowledgement of his "misjudgment" in leaving Congress appear to have softened the leadership's stance. Goldy described his departure from Congress as his "first and last mistake," expressing regret and reaffirming his commitment to the Congress's values. Goldy's return strengthens the Congress's position in Sangrur, a key Lok Sabha constituency, and Dhuri, where he retains a local support base. His re-induction is viewed as a reconciliation effort by the Congress to consolidate its ranks in Punjab, especially after facing defections and internal rifts in recent years. For Goldy, rejoining the Congress offers a chance to rebuild his political career within a familiar framework. By returning to the Congress, Goldy positions himself for potential roles in the 2027 Assembly elections, where he has already declared his intent to contest from Dhuri.

## Chandigarh cyber police crack Rs 3.66-crore online share market fraud, arrest accused from Tihar Jail

GNS News Agency, April 16

The investigation is ongoing, and Chandigarh police are working to trace his accomplices and recover the defrauded amount. The investigation is ongoing, and the police are working to trace the accomplices of the accused and recover the defrauded amount. The cybercrime cell of the Chandigarh Police has arrested an accused in a share market fraud case for allegedly duping a retired professional of Rs 3.66 crore through a fake online trading platform. The accused has been identified as Chander Mohan Singh, 32, who was arrested while in judicial custody at Tihar Jail No. 3, New Delhi. He was brought on a production warrant with the court's permission. The case registered on May 23, 2024, at the cybercrime police station in Chandigarh pertains to a complaint by Surinder Kumar Thakur, a resident of Sector 49, Chandigarh. Thakur reported that he was misled into investing in a fraudulent stock market app that claimed to be operating under professionals from the reputed SMC Global Securities Limited.

Thakur told the police that he joined a WhatsApp group titled 'P15 Stock Market Exchange Club' in December 2023, where members posing as employees and market analysts provided enticing stock tips. They gradually built trust by predicting accurate stock movements before convincing him to open a so-called "institutional account" through a fake app named SMCLE, as per the complaint. Over a period from February 16 to March 25, 2024, Thakur allegedly transferred Rs 3.66 crore to multiple bank accounts under instructions, believing he was investing in high-return "upper circuit" stocks. However, he alleged he could not access or withdraw funds from the institutional account managed entirely by the accused. Following the complaint, Chandigarh Police initially arrested five people from Jodhpur in Rajasthan. The police said that during interrogation, it was revealed that Chander Mohan Singh was also involved in two other fraud cases registered in Delhi and Faridabad. The investigation is ongoing, and the police are working to trace his accomplices and recover the defrauded amount.

## Haryana gov't shuts 300 abortion centres, another 23 issued show-cause notices

GNS News Agency, April 16

The Haryana government Thursday announced that the registrations of 300 medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) centres in the state have been cancelled. The closed centres had allegedly failed to share and update information concerning its gynaecologists and abortion data, among others. In a move ordered by a special task force formed to curb female foeticide, out of 1,500 such centres operating in Haryana, 23 were also issued show-cause notices this week after raids. The notices issued of impending closures if violations were not addressed. Dr Virendra Yadav, convener of the task force, stated that over the past two months, the body has ensured the filing of First Information Reports (FIRs) against 17 online sellers of MTP kits, which are often misused for illegal abortions. Yadav explained that the crackdown has led to significant measures on the administrative side as well. The nodal officer for enforcing the anti-sex determination law in Hisar district has been suspended, and show-cause notices have been issued to senior medical officers (SMOs) overseeing 12 community health centres (CHCs) in Nahar (Rewari), Tosham (Bhiwani), Danoda (Jind), Kunjpara (Karnal), Tauru (Nuh), Tigaon (Faridabad), Bhattu Kalan (Fatehabad), Ateli (Mahendragarh), Uklana (Hisar), Baropal (Fatehabad), Nissing (Karnal), and Ladwa (Kurukshetra).

These notices flagged low sex ratios in these areas, with the warning that unsatisfactory responses would lead to charge sheets. The SMOs of three CHCs with the lowest sex ratios face imminent chargesheets, while nodal officers in five districts – Charkhi Dadri, Rewari, Rohtak, Gurgaon, and Faridabad – have been replaced due to persistently poor sex ratio figures. Further, the civil surgeon of Hisar is preparing to file a criminal case and FIR against one Usha, identified as a middle person facilitating illegal abortions. In another case, the civil surgeons of Rohtak and Sonapat have registered FIRs regarding a case wherein a mother of two girls was coerced into an abortion. Investigation in the case is going on, with authorities questioning both the family and the doctor to ascertain the circumstances.

Yadav emphasised that the Health Department has issued clear directives to intensify the vigil over MTP centres, particularly those performing abortions on women with two daughters. Such centres will face regular inspections, and any centre found complicit in female foeticide will be shut down immediately. Show cause notices issued to MTP centres must be resolved promptly, and gynaecologists involved in illegal practices risk losing their licenses, he added. The State Drugs Controller has been tasked with compiling a list of wholesalers and stockists of MTP kits,



restricting their sale exclusively to registered MTP centres. Unregistered In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) centres are also under scrutiny, with orders to close those found violating regulations or showing skewed sex ratios indicative of malpractice. To strengthen grassroots monitoring, the Health Department has assigned Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) to urban wards under Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHCs) and Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (UAAMs) to collect data on births. This initiative aims to track the sex ratio by recording the birth of boys and girls accurately. The department has identified 62,000 pregnant women with one or more daughters, reaching out to them via the Health Department's helpline (104) to raise awareness against female foeticide. A proposed incentive scheme will offer ASHAs Rs 1,000 for each successful delivery of a girl child to mothers with more than two daughters. Collaboration across departments, including Women and Child Development and Panchayati Raj, is amplifying efforts to promote the message of saving and educating daughters, the health department said.

**We collected record-breaking property tax: GHMC Commissioner**

Hyderabad, GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi today said the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) had created history by achieving record-breaking property tax collections. He said the field officers had done a great job in collecting property tax of over Rs 2,000 crore. In the wake of GHMC collecting record-breaking property tax for the financial year 2024-25, a felicitation program was organized at Banjara Bhavan in Banjara Hills on Friday for the revenue officers, bill collectors, tax inspectors, AMCs and deputy commissioners, who worked har



## Finance Minister Sitharaman to visit UK and Austria to boost financial collaborations, bilateral ties

GNS News Agency, April 16

New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will embark on an official visit to the United Kingdom and Austria from April 8-13, where she is scheduled to attend ministerial-level bilateral meetings, an official statement said on Monday. The Finance Minister would participate in the 13th Ministerial round of India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue and engage with think tanks, investors, and business leaders in the UK and Austria, according to a Ministry of Finance statement. The 13th round of the India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue (13th EFD) is scheduled to be held in London on April 9. It would be co-chaired by the Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister and the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer. "The 13th EFD is a significant bilateral platform between the two countries that offers opportunities for candid engagement at Minister level, officer-level, working groups and between the respective regulatory bodies in various aspects of financial collaboration, including investment matters, financial services, financial regulations, UPI interlinkages, taxation matters and illicit financial flows," said the ministry. The key priorities include cooperation in the IFSC GIFT City, investment, insurance, and pension sectors, FinTech and Digital economy, and mobilising affordable and sustainable climate finance. On the

sidelines of the 13th EFD, FM Sitharaman will engage in bilateral meetings with key dignitaries, participate in investor roundtables and other meetings with heads of key financial institutions and companies. The Minister will deliver the keynote address at the India-UK Investor Roundtable in the presence of chief executive officers (CEOs) of international organisations, including key management personnel from across the UK financial ecosystem covering pension funds, insurance companies, banks, and financial services institutions, among others. Sitharaman, along with UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds, will co-host the roundtable in partnership with the City of London, with top CEOs and senior management of prominent pension funds and asset managers in the UK as participants. During the Austrian leg of the official visit, the Finance Minister will hold bilateral meetings with senior Austrian government leaders, including Finance Minister Markus Marterbauer and Chancellor Christian Stocker. According to the ministry, Sitharaman and the Austrian Minister for Economy, Energy and Tourism, Wolfgang Hattmannsdorfer, will co-chair a session with key Austrian CEOs to apprise them of existing and upcoming opportunities in India for deeper investment collaboration between the two countries.

## Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority divided over Covid-19 period relief to Faridabad flat owners

GNS News Agency, April 16

Differing with the Chairman of the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (HRERA, Panchkula) over a nine-month long period of Covid lockdown in 2020-21, as many as three members of the Authority have given a recent judgment with majority to extend relief to two flat owners in lieu of the delay caused in giving possession for this period. The interest amount ordered to be paid for delayed possession by nearly 10 years would be more than the total payment made by two allottees in this case. The issue belongs to a residential project, Park Elite Floors, developed by Delhi-NCR-based real estate developer BPTP in Faridabad. Faridabad couple Santosh Kumar and her husband Vijay Sharma, and Ghaziabad resident Arun Kumar had approached HRERA separately in this matter.



months—March 25, 2020 to September 24, 2020 and April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021." He also reminded the Authority, too, had earlier decided to consider this period as force majeure, being a natural calamity and affecting the whole world. He also pointed out that Covid-19 was declared a pandemic by the Centre. However, three other members of the Authority — Chander Shekhar (a former IAS officer), Geeta Rathee Singh (a law graduate), and Nadim Akhtar (a former officer of the town and country planning department) — differed with the chairman. They said any event that subsequently occurred could not have hampered the deemed date/construction work that was to be completed till the year 2013. They also referred to an order of the Delhi High Court in a case, "M/s Halliburton Offshore Services Inc. vs Vedanta Ltd and Anr" passed in May 2020 in support of their plea. In this case, the Delhi High Court had stated "the past non-performance of the contractor cannot be condoned due to Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 in India, adding "the outbreak of pandemic cannot be used as an excuse for non-performance of a contract for which the deadline was much before the outbreak itself".

The members ordered that the allottees (Sharma couple) are entitled to an interest of Rs 23.22 lakh from the deemed date of possession (June 24, 2013) to the date of valid offer of possession (December 4, 2023) instead of Rs 21.53 lakh as decided by the Chairman in his order. In the case of Arun Kumar, too, the three members authored a different judgment and ordered a delay interest of Rs 28.11 lakh for delaying possession of the flat instead of Rs 26.28 lakh as ordered by the Chairman. In both orders, the members insisted they were in complete agreement with the findings of the orders authored by the Chairman except exemption on account of "force majeure (unforeseeable circumstances that prevent someone from fulfilling a contract) and delay interest".

## WBBSE appeals to SC for permission for 'non-tainted' teachers to continue jobs — 'until end of academic year, or when fresh appointments are made'



GNS News Agency, April 16

The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) Monday appealed to the Supreme Court to allow teachers "not found to be tainted" to continue services until the end of the academic year "or until the process of fresh appointments is concluded, whichever is earlier". On April 3, the SC nullified over 25,000 school jobs in West Bengal, while upholding a Calcutta High Court Order on an alleged school jobs scam case which is being probed by the CBI. The apex court termed the 2016 School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment process as "vitiated and tainted by fraud". The WBBSE stated in the appeal, "The applicant has under its supervision 9,487 high schools, of which 6,952 have higher secondary sections (Class XI and XII), catering to over 78.6 lakh students. The Applicant Board also oversees 6,350 upper primary schools (Class VI-VIII). Perennially, in the State, about 88% enrolments are in government/government-aided schools."

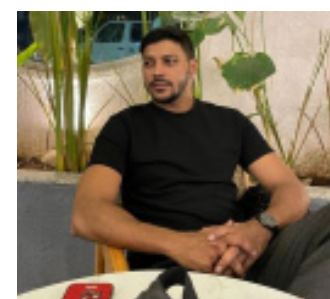
"The teacher strength of 1,51,568 (excluding headmasters) in the State is already strained, with most schools relying on a single teacher per subject for Classes V to X. Services of 17,206 out of the 1,51,568 teachers, i.e. 11.35% of the existing teachers are to be terminated pursuant to the judgment, which would have a devastating impact across the schools in the State," the appeal read. Incidentally, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a meeting at Netaji Indoor Stadium on Monday with teachers who are expected to lose

their jobs, assuring them of her support, and that her administration would submit a review petition to the Supreme Court.

## 37-year-old Pune gym trainer drowns while swimming in Panshet dam

GNS News Agency, April 16

37-year-old Pune gym trainer drowns while swimming in Panshet dam According to the FIR lodged by the deceased's brother the incident took place when Mohanish Bolate and six of their friends went to the Panshet area. A gym trainer drowned while swimming at the Panshet dam in the Velhe Taluka of the Pune district on Sunday afternoon. The deceased has been identified as Mohanish



Vijay Bolate, 37, a resident of Yerawada. According to the FIR lodged by the deceased's brother, Shubham Vijay Bolate, the incident took place when he, Mohanish Bolate and six of their friends went to the Panshet area. In his statement, the deceased's brother said that they had sat down on the banks of the Panshet dam, while Mohanish Bolate and one of their friends went into the water for a swim.

A while later, their friend alerted the others that Mohanish Bolate could not be seen anywhere. They tried to contact the local authorities but were not able to do so due to the unavailability of a mobile network. After they got a signal, the group informed the local residents, along with the Velhe police station and the disaster management team. They were able to trace Mohanish Bolate shortly after.

## 'Where is the state govt's list of genuine teachers?': West Bengal BJP leadership targets Mamata as party workers protest



GNS News Agency, April 16

Minutes after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a meeting on Monday with teachers who lost their jobs after a Supreme Court ruling, the Opposition BJP sharply criticised her, saying that she is "misleading" the candidates. State BJP leadership questioned the Chief Minister on why her government could not provide the Supreme Court with a list of teachers who were "genuine" and those who were "tainted". On April 3, the SC nullified over 25,000 school jobs in West Bengal, while upholding a Calcutta High Court Order on an alleged school jobs scam case which is being probed by the CBI. The apex court termed the 2016 School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment process as "vitiated and tainted by fraud".

While BJP MLAs protested near the state Assembly, the BJP Yuva Morcha Thursday carried out a Kalighat Abhiyan on the issue from the Exide crossing to the Hazra crossing, near the Chief Minister's residence in Kalighat. Police said that some leaders and workers were arrested. "The Chief Minister is misleading the teachers and

non-teaching staff who have lost their jobs. Why isn't Banerjee giving the list of genuine candidates to the Supreme Court? Everyone knows how Trinamool Congress leaders are involved in the school jobs scam. It is the Trinamool Congress and the CM who are responsible for the job loss of thousands of teachers," said Suwendu Adhikari, BJP MLA and Leader of the Opposition, speaking to mediapersons near the state Assembly. "She is asking all the teachers to continue to work 'voluntarily'. Is this not a violation of the SC order? The SC should take cognizance of this. The Chief Minister said that she is holding a meeting with genuine teachers. Then, she knows who they are. Now, why is the list not given to SC?" said Sukanta Majumder, BJP state president, speaking at a press conference. "The School Service Commission and Mamata Banerjee are responsible for all this. The SCC was not allowed to work independently," Majumder said. Meanwhile, Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato, BJP MP from Purulia, wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, against Banerjee's statements after the SC order. "The reaction of... Banerjee, under whose regime this scam was orchestrated, has been nothing short of alarming. Instead of upholding the verdict of the apex court, the Chief Minister chose to criticise the judiciary in a press conference held at the state secretariat, flanked by senior IAS officers. The visuals of this address, where the judiciary and even the Supreme Court's intent were questioned, have shaken public confidence in constitutional governance," the letter read. "The situation worsened on April 7, when Mamata Banerjee, along with Chief Secretary Manoj Pant and Education Minister Bratya Basu, presided over a government-organised meeting at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Kolkata. The event, under the guise of expressing solidarity with the impacted candidates, turned into a platform to openly denounce the Supreme Court and attack Your Lordship personally," it read.

## Justice Navin Chawla recuses from hearing Wikipedia's appeal challenging order in ANI case

GNS News Agency, April 16

Justice Navin Chawla, heading a two-judge division bench of the Delhi High Court, recused himself from hearing an appeal by Wikipedia which challenges an order directing the platform to take down defamatory posts against news agency Wikimedia Foundation has moved an appeal against the single-judge's order on April 2, which directed Wikipedia, the free open-source online encyclopedia run by the foundation, to remove false and defamatory content on its page for ANI. The court had held that the contents of the Wikipedia page of ANI "are ex-facie defamatory" and tarnishes its "professional reputation". The court had opined that Wikipedia "has some fiduciary responsibilities and obligations to prevent acts of defamation."

While the matter was listed for hearing before a division bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Renu Bhatnagar, Justice Chawla recused himself. He directed that subject to the orders of the Chief Justice, the appeal be listed before another bench. The court directed that the appeal be listed tomorrow. Justice Chawla, while sitting in a single-judge bench earlier, had dealt with ANI's defamation suit against Wikipedia, issuing summons and directing the platform to disclose the subscriber details of individuals who made edits to the Wikipedia page of ANI. Subsequently, another Wikipedia page was made, wherein the court proceedings of ANI versus Wikipedia were detailed. This page, titled 'Asian News International vs Wikimedia Foundation', was later ordered to be taken down by a division bench of the Delhi



High Court, headed by then Chief Justice Manmohan. The court-ordered takedown of a Wikipedia page in India was a first, and the division bench had held that the page was "contemptuous" and "amounts to interference in the court proceedings". This order is now under challenge before the Supreme Court. Last month, the apex court had expressed concern on the "validity and legality" of the high court's takedown directions, and a Justice Abhay Oka-headed two-judge division bench had orally remarked, "To bring the best out of the lawyers, sometimes we say so many things in open court. Now, if the court says something orally and, on social media, somewhere there is a comment offered, why should the court be touchy about such comments... Somebody discusses something which happens in the court, will that amount to interference?"

## Mumbai set to experience water crisis as tankers will suspend business indefinitely starting April 10

GNS News Agency, April 16

The Mumbai Water Tankers Association (MWTA) has warned of suspending its services starting April 10 in protest against the civic body's notices to private ring well and borewell owners, asking them to stop supplying water to tankers and obtain a fresh licence from the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA). In their notices, the civic authorities also maintained that underground wells were becoming hotspots for mosquito breeding. The suspension of services may lead to a water crisis in Mumbai as 1,800-2,000 water-tanker owners in the Maharashtra capital are affiliated with MWTA. "We are not calling for any strike, but we are forced to stop our trade. The BMC has said that if the well owners don't take an NOC (No-Objection Certificate) from CGWA, then legislative action will be taken against us. Now FIRs are being registered against our men for not having a new NOC," Ankur Sharma, Spokesperson, MWTA, told The Indian Express. "The CGWA has no office in Mumbai. They are based in Delhi, and they don't return our telephone calls. There's no scope of dialogue for us," Sharma added.

According to CGWA guidelines, a licence would be issued to a well owner only if the well is situated on a land parcel having a minimum size of 200 square metres. The new guidelines also make it mandatory for every well operator to set up a flow meter for recording the flow of water,



among others. In Mumbai, water from tankers is used in residential societies as well as in ongoing infrastructure works like the coastal road, metro, and bullet train projects. The water is also used for other important purposes like cleaning railway coaches and maintenance of public roads, lawns, and gardens, among others. In 2023, the city reeled under a water crisis after MWTA went on a strike for five days. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) supplies 3,850 million litre per day (MLD) of water against a demand of 4,200 MLD. As a result, the tankers continue to be an important source of water in Mumbai, especially in informal settlements.

## 'Not valour; it is state-sanctioned violence against our own': Mother of IAF pilot killed in 2001 MiG-21 crash on recent Jaguar tragedy

"I want you to remember. To rage. To demand better. Do not wait for the next crash to care," wrote Kavita Gadgil, mother of the late Flight Lieutenant Abhijit Gadgil who died in a MiG-21 crash in 2001. Her unflinching, yet emotional note to fellow Indians comes in the wake of last week's crash of an Indian Air Force (IAF) Jaguar fighter jet near Jamnagar in Gujarat. "Do not reduce these boys to photo ops and patriotic hashtags," she added.

Gadgil, 75, wrote the post on Facebook after the April 2 crash in which Flight Lieutenant Siddharth Yadav, 28, died and another pilot of Group Captain rank was critically injured. "Dear Citizens of India, Another young man is gone. Flight Lieutenant Siddharth Yadav. Not martyred in war. Not killed in combat. But lost in a 46-year-old Jaguar jet that

should have been grounded long before he was born," she posted on Sunday. "He died flying an aircraft that the rest of the world retired decades ago. An aircraft that, like the MiG-21, continues to haunt our skies, claiming the lives of our brightest and bravest, not because of enemy action, but because of our own apathy," Gadgil underlined. Flt Lt Gadgil had died on September 17, 2001, in an air crash involving a MiG-21 at Suratgarh in Rajasthan. "My son, Flight Lieutenant Abhijit Gadgil, died the same way. In 2001. Since then, over 340 Indian Air Force aircraft have crashed. Over 150 pilots have died. The numbers are horrific. The silence around them, even worse. And still, we carry on. No accountability. No reform. No outrage," wrote Gadgil who lives in Pune. "What we get instead is advice.



## Residential property registrations in Hyderabad dropped by 8%: KFI



Hyderabad, April 16 According to Knight Frank India's latest assessment, residential property registrations in Hyderabad dropped by 8% year-on-year (YoY) in March 2025. However, month-on-month (MoM) registrations rose by 6%. Despite the decline in overall volume, the total value of registered homes rose by 5% YoY and 14% MoM, signaling a market shift towards higher-value

transactions. Properties priced below Rs 50 lakh -- which continue to make up more than half of total transactions—declined by 14% YoY. In contrast, registrations for homes priced above Rs 1 cr grew 17% YoY, accounting for 19% of total deals in March 2025, up from 15% last year. This signals a growing preference for premium homes across the Hyderabad region, which includes Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy, and Sangareddy districts.

While the sub-Rs 50 lakh segment still dominates in volume, the appetite for high-value properties has accelerated. The Rs 1 crore-plus category contributed significantly to the total registration value with a 33% YoY increase. Larger homes are also gaining traction, with properties exceeding 2,000 sq ft comprising 16% of all registrations—up from 13% last year. Majority of the registered properties in Hyderabad were concentrated in the range of 1,000 to 2,000 square feet (sq ft), accounting for 68% of all registrations. Units sized >2000 sq ft accounted for 16% of the total registrations as compared with the 13% registered during March 2024

## SC reprimands Telangana Govt over illegal deforestation at Kancha Gachibowli

Hyderabad, April 16 : The Supreme Court on Wednesday reprimanded the Telangana government regarding extensive tree cutting in the Kancha Gachibowli area of Hyderabad, cautioning that strict actions could be taken against officials involved in illegal deforestation. The court mandated that officials prepare a detailed restoration plan and outline measures to safeguard wildlife in the affected forest region. A Bench consisting of Justices B.R. Gavai and A.G. Masih reviewed the suo motu case concerning the reported environmental violations. The court has scheduled the next hearing for May 15, allowing Telangana four weeks to address the report from the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) and requiring the state's wildlife warden to clarify the actions being taken to protect any displaced animals.

Senior Advocate Abishek Manu Singhvi, representing Telangana, informed the Court that all development activities in the region had been suspended. However, Justice Gavai raised a question about whether the necessary permissions from the forest authorities had been secured. Singhvi responded that most of the tree felling had received approvals, apart from a few trees. In contrast, Senior Advocate Parmeswar argued that the government had implemented a self-certification process and had unilaterally ex-

empted certain tree species. Justice Gavai expressed concern over videos depicting wildlife fleeing for safety from strays. He emphasized that the Court was primarily focused on the presence of numerous bulldozers and the clearing of 100 acres of forest. He inquired about the urgent need to clear the forest during a three-day holiday period while utilising bulldozers.

The Supreme Court indicated that it would not accept interpretations of environmental law from bureaucrats or Ministers, referencing its 1996 ruling that prohibits tree felling, even on private property. Justice Gavai warned that the Chief Secretary could face serious consequences if a viable restoration plan is not provided. "Otherwise, we cannot predict how many of your officials might end up in temporary custody. Our priority is to safeguard the environment. Under Article 142, we are prepared to take extraordinary measures," he cautioned. The Court also acknowledged the Central Empowered Committee's (CEC) report claiming that land had been mortgaged to private entities without proper disclosure in affidavits. Ultimately, the Supreme Court mandated the submission of an affidavit outlining the steps to be taken for environmental and wildlife protection. In the meantime, the current situation must remain unchanged. The next hearing has been postponed to May 15.

## Krupakar Madiga hails Chandrababu to issue ordinance on SC reservations

Hyderabad, April 16 MRPS Founder General Secretary Krupakar Madiga today expressed his happiness over the Andhra Pradesh Council of Ministers' decision to issue an ordinance for the classification of SC reservations on Wednesday. On this occasion, Krupakar thanked Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

Saying that this is the day that has been awaited for many years, Krupakar Madiga called on the students and unemployed people of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to avail the education and job opportunities provided by this classification ordinance. "We appeal to the Rajiv Ranjan Mishra Commission and the State Government to immediately amend the Roster Points System recommended by the Rajiv Ranjan Mishra Commission on the Classification, which is against the spirit of the Supreme Court judgment on preferential treatment of the most backward SC castes and to immediately amend it so that the first group, the Relli affiliated castes, gets one percent, the second group, the Madiga affiliated castes, gets seven percent, and the third group, the Mala affiliated castes, gets seven percent. Krupakar expressed his concern on the occasion that if this was not amended, the Madigas would have to climb the steps of the High Court to seek justice for

the injustice being done. He said behind the implementation of this ordinance, there are the sacrifices of many of the MRPS activists. "There are the efforts and sacrifices made by thousands of the activists and leaders for decades, who have lost their careers, jobs and employment opportunities. We declare that this victory belongs to all of them. More importantly, it belongs to the Madiga people, all those belonging to the nomadic and semi-nomadic castes among the SCs.

In 1997, the then Chandrababu Naidu government filed a special leave petition in the Supreme Court to protect the classification. If Mandakrishna, who was in the name of Eka Wahidar, had not pressured the then government to withdraw this petition, justice would have been done to the Madigas. The Madigas and their affiliated castes would not have had to make so many decades of time and sacrifices. The Madigas, instead of being beneficiaries, are constantly kept in the opposition, turning the classification issue into an endless story and making a living in a single place," he said. He alleged that Activists, leaders, and lakhs of Madigas have fallen victim to the conspiracies of Mandakrishna, who has turned the issue of classification into an endless story, and had been deprived of their rights for decades," he alleged.

## Bhatti inaugurates Naini coal block in Odisha



Hyderabad, April 16 Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka virtually inaugurated the Naini Coal Block in Odisha from here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Bhatti Vikramarka expressed that the growth of Singareni Collieries in Odisha is a significant achievement for Telangana, marking a joyful moment not just for Singareni, but for the whole state of Telangana. He noted that the opening of the Naini block represents an initial step towards the global expansion of Singareni Collieries, emphasising that a special initiative regarding the Naini coal block was undertaken during the Congress administration. Bhatti Vikramarka also extended his gratitude to Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mandi and Union Ministers Kishan Reddy and Dharmendra Pradhan for their assistance in establishing the coal mine. The Deputy Chief Minister announced plans to generate employment opportunities for the residents of Angul district, who played a role in the establishment of the mine. He mentioned that extensive social responsibility initiatives will be launched, and efforts are underway to set up a 16,000 MW thermal power plant. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed via X that the inauguration of the Naini mine in Angul district marks a significant milestone for Singareni. "It is truly noteworthy that the Singareni Company has initiated coal mining outside its home state for the first time. I would

like to congratulate Singareni Company on the commencement of coal mining in the Naini block," said Revanth Reddy. For nearly 136 years, Singareni has been a guiding force in the state through its mining activities, and now, by beginning operations in the Naini coal block in Odisha, it has opened new avenues for future generations, he added. The Chief Minister mentioned that the special efforts made by the Congress government for Singareni were the reason it was able to initiate a coal mine in another state for the first time, highlighting the government's dedication. Revanth Reddy expressed that the momentous achievement of securing all the necessary approvals for the Naini coal mines and beginning operations there is a source of pride for everyone in Telangana. He reaffirmed that the State government will provide full support for the growth and development of the Singareni Company, which is a valuable asset for Telangana and essential for the livelihoods of many working families.

## Fancy number plate craze in Hyderabad: Manikonda RTA raises Rs. 52.6 lakh in auction

GNS News Agency, April 16

Hyderabad: A killer VIP number plate appears to be the much sought-after status symbol for companies and individual vehicle owners in Hyderabad. Cashing-in on this craze for personalized number plates, the Telangana Regional Transport Authority (RTA) at its Manikonda office raised an impressive Rs 52.6 lakh through a recent auction, on Tuesday.

Several high-value numbers fetched substantial amounts during the registration number auctions, RTA officials reported. Among the top bids, the highest was for the number plate "TG 07 R 9999," which was lapped-up for a staggering Rs 12,49,999 by Congruent Developers

## Congress govt in State deceiving people again: Kavitha

Jagityal, April 16 Stating that deception is not new to the ruling Congress party, which deceived people in 2004 by saying that it would give Telangana, BRS party MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha alleged that the ruling party was now deceiving the people again. Speaking at the BRS Silver Jubilee Celebrations preparatory meeting here, she said the Congress party was damaging the self-respect of the women by saying that it had implemented the free buses scheme.

She said by not increasing the number of the buses after providing the free buses, a situation had arisen where the seats are not available. She alleged that the ruling party leaders deceived people by saying that they would give a tola of gold under the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme. She said schemes like crop Loan waiver and farmer's insurance had not yet reached 50 percent of the people. She said the Congress's deception should be exposed at the village level and added that the BJP's deceptive policies should also be taken to the people. She claimed that the Turmeric Board

was set up as a slogan but it was not given legality. "As a result, not a single rupee was allocated in the budget for the Turmeric Board. Union Minister Bandi Sanjay said if turmeric prices fall, money will be given from the board. And if turmeric prices fall, did the board give money to the farmers?" Kavitha questioned. Targeting Nizamabad MP D. Aravind, she mocked that when asked what happened to two crore jobs, legality of the board, and 15 lakh per person, MP Arvind talks nonsense and added that there was no record of him speaking anything useful to the people beyond that.

Stating that there are eight Congress and eight BJP MPs from the State, she alleged that the Centre did not give even Rs 8 to Telangana in the budget. She claimed that the only thing that saves Telangana was the BRS party. She said the silver jubilee was not just a party's festival, but it was a Telangana festival. "KCR is a great leader, who brought special recognition to the people of Telangana," Kavitha added.

## GOC TASA meets CM of Andhra Pradesh



Hyderabad.: Major General Ajay Misra, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Telangana & Andhra Sub Area (TASA), held a crucial protocol meeting with Nara Chandra Babu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

During the meeting, various key aspects were discussed, to include the importance of the Army's involvement in Nation and State building initiatives as per the initiatives of Headquarters Southern Command, need to build a War Memorial in the new State capital (Amravati) for

honouring sacrifice of our soldiers, key issues affecting the welfare of ex-servicemen and potential solutions to address their needs, opportunities to the large body of disciplined ESM to partner in State building activities, coordination between the Army and State authorities to enhance disaster response and management, matters related to protocol and cooperation between the Army and State government, discussion on land-related issues and requirements of land for Army & ESM at Amravati. Exploring opportunities for collaboration in development of niche defence technology, need for establishing a Army technology cell at Amravati for facilitating Army - Industry interactions, request by the State government for establishing defence industry clusters to promote growth of local industry, need for formulating a SOP and Protocol for ensuring appropriate interaction and response to requests by Armed Forces personnel were also discussed. The Chief Minister acknowledged the disciplined lifestyle of forces and emphasized the need for a suitable presence of Army at the new capital for regular interaction. He also promised to facilitate darshan for Armed Forces personnel at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTDs) and Srisailem. The protocol meeting highlighted the importance of continuous engagement & cooperation between the Army and State government in promoting development, security, and welfare initiatives.

## Policy makers must stay connected to grassroots level: Rammohan Naidu



GNS News Agency, April 16

Sangareddy: Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Kinjarampu Rammohan Naidu said the policy making was not just a paper work it was a people's work. The union Minister said that the policy makers would not get desired results unless they stay connected to the gross root level of people's life. Addressing the students of Kautilya School of Public Policy (KSPPP) graduation ceremony at Gitam University, Hyderabad, at Rudraram in Sangareddy district on Wednesday, Naidu said that he has followed a the path of staying connected with the people during his more than a decade political career as an MP. He opined that the policy makers must keep in mind that every work they were doing would impact the people at grassroots level. Saying that he found it difficult in discharging duties when was elected

for the first time due to lack of presence of efficient policy makers in his office, Naidu felt that there was a serious need for efficient policy makers in the country in different sectors.

He said that policy making was gaining prominence in governments administration, NGOs, industries and in the offices of elected representatives. The Aviation Minister hoped that most of these graduating budding policy makers will pursue careers in the aviation industry since there was dire need for such professionals in the sector. Naidu called upon the students to understand the country as whole to come up with ideas that touch the entire nation. He asked them to come up with inclusive ideas to cover all those who need to be reached. Vishakapantam MP and GITAM President M Sriharath, and others were present.

## Protest by Warangal east journalists for double bedroom houses enters into third day

GNS News Agency, April 16

Warangal: A protest by journalists in Warangal east Assembly constituency for double bedroom houses has entered into the third day on Wednesday. The journalists cutting across unions have started the indefinite deeksha on April 14 coinciding with Dr. BR Ambedkar jayanti by submitting a memorandum to the statue of Ambedkar. The deeksha was being staged at the double bedroom houses complex at Deshaipet.

Several political parties, people's organisations and student organisations have extended their solidarity to the protesting journalists. CPI (ML) district leaders, BJP state executive member Dr. Vannala Venkataramana, BC JAC, BRS leader Hari Ramadevi and PDSU leader R Ranjith Kumar extended their support to the journalists.

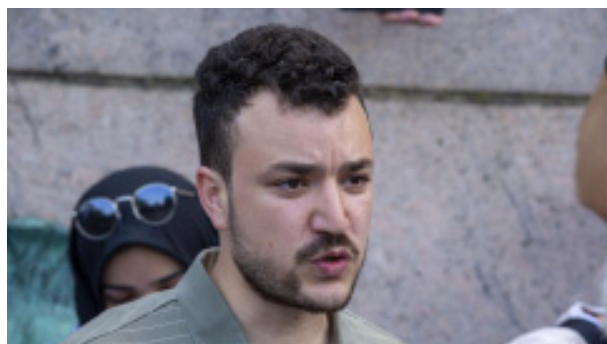
Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation Deputy Mayor Rizwana Shamim Masood, corporators Marupalla Ravi and Siddham Raju addressing the protesting journalists on Wednesday demanded the Congress government to immediately allot the double bedroom houses to all the eligible journalists.



Senior Congress leader Rajanala Srihari also took part in the deeksha extending his support to the journalists. He wanted the local ministers and the government to look into the just demand of the journalists and allot the houses at the earliest. As part of the third day's protest, the journalists submitted a petition to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on the premises of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation and later to the statue of Rajiv Gandhi at MGM Junction.



# U.S. judge rules Columbia University activist Mahmoud Khalil can be deported for pro-Palestinian views



GNS News Agency, April 16

Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil can be kicked out of the U.S. as a national security risk, an immigration judge in Louisiana has found during a hearing over the legality of deporting the activist who participated in pro-Palestinian demonstrations. The government's contention that Mr. Khalil's presence in the United States posed "potentially serious foreign policy consequences" was enough to satisfy requirements for his deportation, Immigration Judge Jamee E. Comans said at the conclusion of a hearing in Jena on Friday (April 11, 2025).

Judge Comans said the government had "established by clear and convincing evidence that he is removable". Lawyers for Mr. Khalil said they plan to keep fighting and will seek a waiver. And a federal judge in New Jersey has temporarily barred Mr. Khalil's deportation. Mr. Khalil, a legal U.S. resident, was detained by federal immigration agents on March 8 in the lobby of his university-owned apartment, the first arrest under President Donald Trump's promised crackdown on students who joined campus protests against the war in Gaza.

Within a day, he was flown across the country and taken to an immigration detention centre in Jena, thousands of miles from his attorneys and wife, a U.S. citizen who is due to give birth soon. Mr. Khalil's lawyers have challenged the legality of his detention, saying the Trump administration is trying to crack down on free speech protected by the U.S. Constitution. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has cited a rarely used statute to justify Mr. Khalil's deportation, which gives him power to deport those who pose "potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States". A person holds a sign with an image of Palestinian activist and Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil as they take part in a pro-Palestinian rally.

A person holds a sign with an image of Palestinian activist and Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil as they take part in a pro-Palestinian rally. File | Photo Credit: ReutersAt Friday's hearing, Mr. Khalil

attorney Marc Van Der Hout told the judge that the government's submissions to the court prove the attempt to deport his client "has nothing to do with foreign policy". Earlier this week, Judge Comans challenged the government to share proof that Mr. Khalil should be expelled from the country for his role in campus protests against Israel and the war in Gaza. She said if evidence did not support his removal, she would "terminate the case on Friday". On Friday, Justice Department attorneys said in papers filed in federal court in Newark, New Jersey, that Judge Comans would not have the authority to immediately free Mr. Khalil. They said an immigration judge could determine if Khalil is subject to deportation and then conduct a bail hearing afterward if it is found that he is not. Mr. Khalil isn't accused of breaking any laws during the protests at Columbia. The government, however, has said that non-citizens who participate in such demonstrations should be expelled from the country for expressing views that the administration considers to be antisemitic and "pro-Hamas," referring to the Palestinian militant group that attacked Israel on Oct 7, 2023. Mr. Khalil, a 30-year-old international affairs graduate student, had served as a negotiator and spokesperson for student activists at Columbia University who took over a campus lawn last spring to protest Israel's military campaign in Gaza. The university brought police in to dismantle the encampment after a small group of protesters seized an administration building. Khalil is not accused of participating in the building occupation and wasn't among the people arrested in connection with the demonstrations.

But images of his maskless face at protests, along with his willingness to share his name with reporters, have made him an object of scorn among those who saw the protesters and their demands as antisemitic. The White House accused Mr. Khalil of "siding with terrorists," but has yet to cite any support for the claim. Federal judges in New York and New Jersey have ordered the government not to deport Mr. Khalil while his case plays out in court. The Trump administration has said it is taking at least \$400 million in federal funding away from research programmes at Columbia and its medical centre to punish it for not doing enough to fight what it considers to be antisemitism on campus. Some Jewish students and faculty complained about being harassed during the demonstrations or ostracised because of their faith or their support of Israel. Immigration authorities have cracked down on other critics of Israel on college campuses, arresting a Georgetown University scholar who had spoken out on social media about the Israel-Gaza war, cancelling the student visas of some protesters and deporting a Brown University professor who they said had attended the Lebanon funeral of a leader of Hezbollah, another militant group that has fought with Israel.

# Trump says tariff policy 'really doing well' after China hits U.S. with 125% tariffs



GNS News Agency, April 16

U.S. President Donald Trump insisted Friday (April 11, 2025) that his tariff policy was "doing really well" despite China hiking levies on U.S. goods to 125% in the spiraling trade war between the world's two biggest economies. Investors dumped U.S. government bonds, the dollar tumbled and stocks seesawed after Beijing's retaliation against Mr. Trump deepened concerns on already traumatized global markets. Mr. Trump sent financial markets into a tailspin by announcing sweeping import taxes on dozens of trade partners last week, only to abruptly roll them back to 10% on Wednesday for 90 days — while raising levies on goods from China.

"We are doing really well on our tariff policy," Mr. Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network after China announced its latest hike. "Very exciting for America, and the World!!! It is moving along quickly," he wrote. Optimistic about deal with China The White House said later that Mr. Trump remained "optimistic" about a deal with China, and added that 15 other countries have offers "on the table" during his 90-day pause in their tariffs. But Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt added that "the president made it very clear, when the United States is punched he will punch back harder." The U.S. and Beijing have been trading salvos of increasingly harsh tariffs since last week. Chinese President Xi Jinping gave his first major comments on the tensions on Friday, with state media quoting him as saying his country was "not afraid." Mr. Xi also said the European Union and China should "jointly resist unilateral bullying practices" during talks with Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. Numbers game/Beijing announced after Xi's comments that new tariffs of 125% on U.S. goods would take effect Saturday — almost matching the staggering 145% level imposed on Chinese goods coming into America. A

Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson said the United States bore full responsibility, deriding Mr. Trump's tariffs as a "numbers game" that "will become a joke." But China's finance ministry said tariffs would not go any higher in an acknowledgement that almost no imports are possible at the new level. Mr. Trump had reiterated on Thursday that he was looking to do a deal with Xi despite the mounting tensions. "He's been a friend of mine for a long period of time. I think that we'll end up working out something that's very good for both countries," he told reporters. But American officials have made it clear they expect Mr. Xi to reach out first. Markets troubled Pressure was growing on Mr. Trump, however, as markets continued to fret. As investors fled the dollar, which is typically considered a key haven currency, Mr. Trump attempted to squelch fears on Friday.

"We're the currency of choice. We're always going to be... I think the dollar is tremendous," Mr. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One, after the dollar plunged to its lowest level against the euro in more than three years. Meanwhile yields on crucial US government bonds, which are normally seen as a financial refuge, were up again Friday, indicating weaker demand as investors take fright. The White House said however that it had no evidence to support speculation by traders that China was offloading some of its vast holdings — which would increase the cost of borrowing for the US government — in retaliation. Wall Street stocks finished higher Friday, concluding a rollercoaster week on a positive note amid hopes that the market has absorbed the worst headlines about trade conflicts. Policymakers at the US Federal Reserve meanwhile warned of higher inflation and slower growth ahead due to Mr. Trump's tariff policy. Countermeasures Economists warn that the disruption in trade between the tightly integrated U.S. and Chinese economies will increase prices for consumers and could spark a global recession. Ipek Ozkardeskaya, an analyst at Swissquote bank, told AFP the tariff figures were "so high that they don't make sense anymore," but said China was "now ready to go as far as needed." The rest of the world is still calibrating its response. Mr. Trump on Thursday described the European Union — which was originally hit with 20% tariffs by Mr. Trump — as "very smart" for refraining from retaliatory levies. EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic will hold talks in Washington on Monday. But the 27-nation bloc's chief Ursula von der Leyen told the Financial Times it remained armed with a "wide range of countermeasures" including a possible hit on digital services that would strike U.S. tech firms.

# U.S. tariffs could shrink global trade by 3%, says U.N. economist

GNS News Agency, April 16

Global trade could shrink by three per cent and exports could see a shift from markets such as the U.S. and China to India, Canada and Brazil due to tariffs imposed by the U.S., a top United Nations (UN) economist has said. U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled a massive tariff plan last week. The White House later announced a 90-day pause on "reciprocal tariffs" for most countries except China, which in turn decided to impose 125% tariffs on U.S. imports. Global trade could shrink by 3%, with significant long-term shifts in trade patterns and economic integration, International Trade Centre Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton said in Geneva on Friday (April 11, 2025). "For example, exports from Mexico—which have been highly impacted—are shifting from markets such as the U.S., China, Europe and even other Latin American countries, with modest gains instead in Canada and Brazil, and to a lesser extent, India," she said.



Institute (ASPI) Vice President and Managing Director, Washington, D.C. Wendy Cutler said that with China's announcement of further tariff hikes against U.S. imports, it's clear that hopes that China would blink first in this trade war are misplaced. "China is in for the long haul. Beijing has also admitted that it has reached the endpoint in retaliating with tariffs, perhaps signalling that it has lots of other tools in its arsenal that could be activated further should the U.S. respond today with additional measures," she said. She added that the steep tariffs now in place—145 per cent for Chinese imports to the U.S. and 125% for U.S. imports to China—virtually halt all goods trade between the two largest economies in the world.

"How long these tariffs remain in place is an open question, but at some point, both Washington and Beijing will recognise the need to re-engage and manage this deteriorating situation," she said. ASPI's Vice President of International Security and Diplomacy Daniel Russel said that Chinese President Xi Jinping isn't backing down, but he's not blowing things up either. He's "betting that Trump's tariff tantrum will collapse under the weight of the U.S. market response," Mr. Russel said. He added that Beijing is shifting away from symmetrical retaliatory tariffs, signalling that it's done playing Trump's escalation game and instead is playing for the long-term strategic advantage. "By declaring it will 'ignore' future U.S. tariff hikes, Beijing is not trying to win the trade war—it's trying to outlast it and to outmanoeuvre Trump. Beijing's goals are to buffer its economy, expand diplomatic clout, and keep pressure on U.S. allies to hedge. Mr. Xi's Southeast Asia tour is part of a strategy to shore up China's economic ties in the region while Washington lashes out and alienates its partners," Mr. Russel said.

Similarly, Vietnamese exports are redirecting away from the U.S., Mexico and China, while increasing substantially towards Middle East and North Africa (MENA) markets, the EU, Korea and others, she said. Citing the example of apparel, Coke-Hamilton said that textiles is a top industry in terms of economic activity and employment for developing countries. In this context, she said that Bangladesh, the world's second-largest apparel exporter, would face a reciprocal tariff of 37%, should it come into effect, which could lead to a loss of \$3.3 billion in annual exports to the U.S. by 2029. She added that a key part of the solution for developing countries to navigate any global shocks—be it a pandemic, climate disaster or sudden changes in policies—lies in prioritising three areas—diversification, value addition and regional integration. "So there are opportunities for developing countries not just to navigate times of uncertainty, but to proactively prepare for the long haul," she said.

Coke-Hamilton said that initial estimates, developed with the French economics research institute CEPPII, calculated before the announcement of the 90-day pause and the additional tariff hikes on China, indicate that by 2040, the effect of the so-called "reciprocal" tariffs and initial countermeasures could reduce global GDP by 0.7 per cent. Countries like Mexico, China and Thailand—but also countries in Southern Africa—are among the most affected, alongside the United States itself. On China's decision to impose 125% tariffs on U.S. imports, Asia Society Policy

# Trump says he feels 'in very good shape' after annual checkup

GNS News Agency, April 16

Donald Trump said he felt "in very good shape" Friday (April 11, 2024) after his first annual medical checkup since returning to the U.S. presidency, an exam that puts the focus on the fitness of the oldest man ever elected to the White House. Republican Trump, 78, has repeatedly boasted about his own vigor since starting a second term, while mocking his 82-year-old Democratic predecessor Joe Biden as decrepit and mentally unfit for office. But now it is Mr. Trump, who will also be 82 at the end of his presidency, under the stethoscope. "I felt I was in very good shape. Good heart," Mr. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One, adding that "I took a cognitive test. I don't know what to tell you other than I got every answer right." The billionaire arrived at the Walter Reed military hospital in the Washington suburbs earlier in the day -- after a delay due to talks on tariffs. "I have never felt better, but nevertheless, these things must be done!" Trump said on Truth Social earlier this week.

Mr. Trump has repeatedly been accused of a lack of openness about his health despite huge interest in the wellbeing of America's commander-in-chief. Stating that he underwent both cardio and cognitive tests, Mr. Trump said a report would be released by his doctor on Sunday (April 13, 2025). The White House said previously that presidential

physician Sean Barbabella would give a readout of the physical and that "of course" it would provide the full report. "I can confirm the president is in very good shape, as you see on a near daily basis," Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters earlier. She said Mr. Trump would not be having a general anesthetic -- which is normally used for procedures such as colonoscopies -- but added there is "a lot that goes into it to make sure the president is accomplishing all of his goals." Trump is a prolific golfer who abstains from alcohol and cigarettes. But he is also known to indulge in fast food and famously enjoys well-done steaks, although he appears noticeably thinner than during his first term. "Healthiest individual" Mr. Trump's personal and White House doctors have at times made outlandish claims about his health. In 2015, during Mr. Trump's first presidential run, his doctor Harold Bornstein released a letter saying the tycoon "unambiguously, will be the healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency." Dr. Bornstein later told CNN that Trump himself "dictated that whole letter. I didn't write that letter." The White House doctor in his first term, Ronny Jackson, said in 2018 that with a healthier diet Trump could "live to be 200 years old." Mr. Jackson's report then suggested Mr. Trump should aim to lose 10 to 15 pounds but said he was generally in "excellent health."



The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said in an assessment late on Thursday. Washington remains committed to securing a peace deal, even though four weeks have passed since it made its ceasefire proposals, State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said. "It is a dynamic that will not be solved militarily. It is a meat grinder," Bruce said Thursday about the war, adding that "nothing else can be discussed... until the shooting and the killing stops." Observers expect a new Russian offensive Ukrainian officials and military analysts believe Russia is preparing to launch a fresh military offensive in coming weeks to ramp up pressure and strengthen the Kremlin's hand in the negotiations. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said his country would provide Ukraine with four IRIS-T short- to medium-range systems with missiles, as well as 30 missiles for use on Patriot batteries. The Netherlands plans to supply a Hawkeye air defence system, an airborne early warning aircraft. Estonian Defence Minister Hanno Pevkur said his country is monitoring the world armaments market and sees opportunities for Ukraine's backers to buy more weapons and ammunition. Pevkur said he believes Putin might try to reach some kind of settlement with Ukraine by May 9 — the day that Russia marks victory during World War II — making it even more vital to strengthen Kyiv's position now. "This is why we need to speed up the deliveries as quickly as we can," he said. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth was absent from the forum that the United States created and led for several years, although he spoke via video. At the last contact group meeting in February, Hegseth warned Ukraine's European backers that the US now has priorities elsewhere — in Asia and on America's own borders — and that they would have to take care of their own security, and that of Ukraine, in future.

# Israel's military strikes threaten Syria's fragile political transition: UN official

United Nations: Israel's continued military strikes are threatening Syria's fragile political transition and undermining its efforts toward peace and stability, a senior UN official warned. Briefing a Security Council meeting on Thursday, Khaled Khiri, assistant secretary-general for political and peacebuilding affairs, said that hundreds of reported Israeli airstrikes have taken place across Syria since the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, namely in the southwest, the coast, the northeast, Damascus, Hama, and Homs, Xinhua news agency reported.

# European countries vow billions in military support for Ukraine as U.S. envoy meets Putin

GNS News Agency, April 16

European countries have vowed to send billions of dollars in further funding to help Ukraine keep fighting Russia's invasion, as a U.S. envoy pursued peace efforts in a trip to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin amid growing questions about the Kremlin's willingness to stop the more than three-year war. Russian forces hold the advantage in Ukraine, with the war now in its fourth year. Ukraine has endorsed a U.S. ceasefire proposal, but Russia has effectively blocked it by imposing far-reaching conditions. European governments have accused Putin of dragging his feet.

"Russia has to get moving" on the road to ending the war, U.S. President Donald Trump posted on social media. He said the war is "terrible and senseless". In Russia, the Kremlin on Friday (April 11, 2025) said Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff met with Putin in St Petersburg. Witkoff, who has been pressing the Kremlin to accept a truce, initially met with Putin envoy Kirill Dmitriev, footage released by Russian media showed. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Witkoff during his visit to Russia was discussing efforts to end the war with Putin and other officials. "This is another step in the negotiating process towards a ceasefire and an ultimate peace deal," she said. Witkoff's meeting with Putin lasted four and half hours

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said Witkoff's meeting with Putin lasted 4 1/2 hours, and cited the Kremlin as saying that the two discussed "aspects" of ending the war, without providing any details. After chairing a meeting of Ukraine's Western backers in Brussels on Friday, British Defence Secretary John Healey said that new pledges of military aid totalled over 21 billion euros (\$24 billion), "a record boost in military funding for Ukraine, and we are also surging that support to the frontline fight". Healey gave no breakdown of that figure, and Ukraine has in the past complained that some countries repeat old offers at such pledging conferences or fail to deliver real arms and ammunition worth the money they promise. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said last week that Ukraine's backers have provided around \$21 billion so far in the first three months of this year. European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Friday that more than \$26 billion have been committed. Ahead of the "contact group" meeting at NATO headquarters, Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov said a key issue was strengthening his country's air defences. Standing alongside Healey at the end of it, Umerov described the meeting as "productive, effective and efficient," and said that it produced "one of the largest" packages of assistance Ukraine has received. "We're thankful to each nation that has provided this support," he said. Britain said that in a joint effort with Norway just over \$580 million would be spent to provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar systems and anti-tank mines, as well as repair and maintenance contracts to keep Ukrainian armoured vehicles on the battlefield. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his appeals for more Patriot systems since 20 people were killed a week ago, including nine children, when a Russian missile tore through apartment buildings and blasted a playground in his home town. The Russian delay in accepting Washington's proposal has frustrated Trump and fuelled doubts about whether Putin really wants to stop the fighting while his bigger army has momentum on the battlefield. "Russia continues to use bilateral talks with the United States to delay negotiations about the war in Ukraine, suggesting that the Kremlin remains uninterested in serious peace negotiations to end the war,"



## 'Land-holding farmers doing non-farming activities improve labour efficiency'



Land-holding farmers who engage in non-farming activities tend to improve labour efficiency on their farms, a recent study has found. The study aimed to understand the impact of multiple job holding on farm labour use efficiency. The researchers used data from the International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) of farmers from States such as Odisha, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh for the period between 2010 and 2014. "This is important as participation in non-farm activities alters farmers' labour allocation decisions between farm and non-farm activities," the researchers said in their paper.

The data came from the Village Dynamics in South Asia Project. The researchers adopted data envelopment analysis to estimate labour use efficiency. This is a mathematical technique that compares the efficiency of multiple workers doing the same kind of task without having to get into exactly how they do it. Anvika Drall, assistant professor of economics at the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru and Sabuj Kumar Mandal, associate professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT-Madras, conducted the study. Their article 'Does

multiple job holding raise labour use efficiency of the farm operators? Evidence from rural India?', was published in the peer-reviewed journal Applied Economics. The researchers found that when farmers migrated, either within their State or outside, they gained new knowledge about farm practices that they applied to their farms when they returned. Often, farmers had time on their hands after sowing seeds. In the intervening months, their family carried on the agricultural work. Large farmers with financial wherewithal hired labour to work in their absence, Mr. Mandal said.

Ms. Drall said, "The study recommends promoting structured non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas to maximise positive spillover effects on farming." Mr. Mandal added: "Farming is becoming riskier because of climatic shock and price fluctuation. Farmers are diversifying into non-farm activities, either by starting a family occupation such as carpentry; craftsmanship or a saloon, or they migrate. When they migrate, they learn how farmers in other states are doing their farming activities and use of technology." The migration and multiple job holding help in two ways: to invest in new farming practices and improve labour efficiency. "We argue that instead of concentrating only on farming you can diversify into non-farming activities," Mr. Mandal explained.

"But to start a business you need money. Farmers face credit constraints. Therefore, we suggest that governments should come in and help farmers to diversify in non-farming activity," he added. The researchers said they deliberately selected data from villages from semi-arid and humid tropics in the country. Households were chosen randomly based on village listing in each selected village. The States encompassed semi-arid tropics and eastern regions vulnerable to drastic agro-climatic fluctuations, prompting them to undertake multiple jobs for income smoothing. A total of 1,415 households were considered in the study.

## Day temperatures in Telangana likely to rise and reach a peak in May

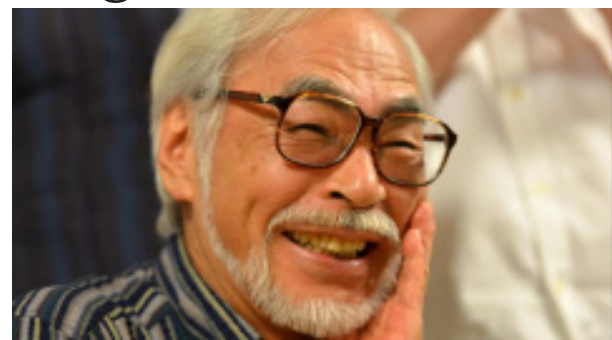
If you are already sweating due to the summer heat now-a-days just wait, it is going to get hotter by next week with the weather forecasters expecting a two-three degrees rise in temperatures in the capital region and across Telangana. The maximum or the day temperatures, which are now hovering around 38-39 degree C in the twin cities and up to 42 degree C in the North Telangana region of Adilabad, Kumaram Bheem Asifabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Kamareddy, and others, could soon see a rise of up to three degrees above normal. "From about April 15-18, we can expect the day temperatures to rise and this will reach the peak in May. This is also the period when the hot Northerly winds will pick up momentum over the prevailing Easterlies," explained Telangana Development Planning Society (TGPS) senior weather consultant Y. V. Rama Rao.

The hot climate could also lead to 'heat waves' and citizens have been cautioned not to venture out between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. plus also protect themselves from the searing heat during the day. Mr. Rama Rao said that, so far, the region has been experiencing 'normal' summer with the day temperatures hovering between 37-39 degrees C in most places with spikes here and there in the capital region. In the districts, it has been in the range of 39-42 degree C, with a some places in North Telangana recording above normal temperatures on a slightly higher side. "We have also been experiencing the Easterlies from the Bay of Bengal bringing in a lot of moisture and dominating the Northerlies. This climatic phenomenon coupled with the local heating of the atmosphere has been resulting in light rain and thunderstorms towards the evening, of late," explained the senior weather forecaster. Soon, these climatic conditions will change and the maximum temperatures are likely



to reach up to 41 degree C or more in the twin cities. Whereas in the districts it will be a couple of notches more and hover around 42-43 degree C. In the North Telangana region, the maximum temperatures are likely to reach up to 44 degree C or even go further up to 46 degree C later in some places. And, this is going to have an effect on the minimum temperatures or the night time temperatures as well. The minimum temperatures currently moving between 18-21 degree C in the capital region could rise up to 22-23 degree C. In the districts, the minimum temperatures are likely to rise up to 24-25 degree C. "Since we are still in the beginning of the summer season, we cannot yet say how this is going to pan out this year. Yet, till date it has been a normal summer season with a few places especially in North Telangana recording above normal temperatures," Mr. Rama Rao said. Overall, 14 districts reported 'excess' rainfall during this period and rest 'normal' rainfall. This year, total rainfall has been 107.1 cm (2024-2025, from June 2024) against the normal of about 88 cm or 22% in excess. Last year total rainfall has been 92.1 cm, as per TGDPs data.

## Is OpenAI's Studio Ghibli-style AI image generator undermining copyright law?



Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki's anime fantasy films have enthralled generations of children both within Japan and internationally. These movies instilled in countless viewers a lifelong opposition to war, militarisation, and all forms of violence, regardless of their political affiliation. Across Studio Ghibli films like Princess Mononoke, Howl's Moving Castle, and Castle in the Sky, soldiers are portrayed as misled fighters at best and sexual predators at worst. This is why there was widespread shock when the official Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) account on X shared images reminiscent of Studio Ghibli's style. The IDF's collage was prompted by OpenAI's late March update to the GPT-4o model. This update enabled users to simply type text prompts into ChatGPT to generate images imitating Studio Ghibli's iconic animation style. While most people initially used ChatGPT's new image update to transform themselves or their family portraits into adorable, Studio Ghibli-inspired images, others ventured further. They created anime stills from photos of the 9/11 terror attacks and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Users shared Studio Ghibli-style pornography, "Ghibli-fied" stills from Bollywood films, and even a short video clip reimagining Christopher Nolan's Interstellar as a Studio Ghibli film. What's more, the irony of Nolan's Oppenheimer being turned into a Studio Ghibli-style image was lost on far too many. One AI anime image that gained widespread attention in India depicted the destruction of the historic Babri Masjid in 1992 by Hindutva rioters. This image, rendered in a distorted Studio Ghibli style, featured anime figures waving flags atop the mosque's dome, cheering in celebration. Another viral image was shared by the US White House. This picture, in a childish anime style, mocked a foreign citizen accused of drug trafficking who was visibly distraught as she was taken into custody. Screenshot of the US White House using the Studio Ghibli anime trend to make fun of an arrested person. Screenshot of the US White House using the Studio Ghibli anime trend to make fun of an arrested person | Photo Credit: The US White House on X The IDF account on X

also joined the trend, sharing anime images of soldiers using communication devices and flying planes. Professor David Leslie, Director of Ethics and Responsible Innovation Research at The Alan Turing Institute, highlighted the ethical concerns surrounding the misappropriation of a man's life work in "troubling ways." "Miyazaki has always been a person who takes a lot of care to present the ideas that are passionate to him in his works, and here you've got just an operationalisation of the patterns or the styles of those work[s], now being easily re-appropriated in any context, right? So you've got the IDF of Israel producing Miyazaki-style images," said Leslie.

He described the Japanese artist as "one of the great pacifists of his generation." Leslie acknowledged that Studio Ghibli's media would likely be part of the OpenAI model's training data set. However, he stressed the need for a more evidence-based approach to explore the extent of its presence. He also highlighted OpenAI's lack of transparency as a potential complication in this process. Screenshot of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman reacting to the Indian government's use of the Studio Ghibli trend. Screenshot of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman reacting to the Indian government's use of the Studio Ghibli trend | Photo Credit: MyGovIndia on XMiyazaki's ardent fans have resurfaced an old video where the Japanese director expressed disgust when introduced to AI-generated motion animation. In the video, Miyazaki referred to AI art as an "insult to life itself." Last year, OpenAI championed the fair use defence, which allows copyrighted works to be used in specific circumstances. The company claimed this usage was "fair to creators, necessary for innovators, and crucial for US competitiveness." However, Leslie urged the public to consider a broader perspective beyond fair use regulations. He questioned whether OpenAI's actions were advancing the shareholder value of itself and Microsoft, or if they were aligned with the public interest. Diving into the legal intricacies, Geoffrey McGovern, Director of Intellectual Property and Senior Political Scientist at the RAND non-profit organisation, clarified that while specific creative products or works enjoy copyright protection, this is not the case for concepts and ideas. McGovern explained, "For instance, if Georges Braque, the French painter, sought to copyright Still Life with Metronome and the style that became known as Cubism, the painting's image would theoretically be copyrightable. It's an image that can be reproduced, and the rights to that reproduction would vest in Braque. However, the 'Cubist style' is an idea. US law does not permit the ownership of ideas. It becomes IP-protected only once those ideas are manifested in some form, such as a photograph, poem, recipe, film, composition, and so on." McGovern elaborated,

## Are existing mechanisms effective in combating judicial corruption?



Last month, unaccounted cash was reportedly recovered from the official residence of former Delhi High Court judge, Justice Yashwant Varma. In response, Chief Justice of India Sanjay Khanna initiated an in-house inquiry into the matter. Justice Varma has since been repatriated to his parent High Court in Allahabad and will not be assigned any judicial work until the Supreme Court-mandated inquiry is completed. Are existing mechanisms effective in combating judicial corruption? Sanjay Hegde and Alok Prasanna Kumar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik. Edited excerpts:

Is impeachment an effective mechanism for judicial accountability, given its reliance on political consensus?

Sanjay Hegde: Far from being a mechanism for accountability, the process of impeachment is designed to shield judges. Unless a motion garners the support of two-thirds of the members present and voting, as well as an absolute majority in each House of Parliament, the judges cannot be removed. To assume that the threat of impeachment acts as a deterrent is misguided, given how rarely such proceedings succeed. What is needed instead is an internal mechanism within the judiciary to transparently address serious misconduct. Such a system would go a long way in reinforcing public confidence in the institution. Alok Prasanna Kumar: Impeachment upholds judicial independence by insulating judges from political retaliation. To this end, the process is intentionally rigorous, requiring both a detailed parliamentary procedure and proof of 'misbehaviour or incapacity.' These high thresholds are meant to deter the executive from using impeachment to remove judges who are seen as inconvenient. We also tend to assume that judicial independence has always existed, but it is a relatively modern concept. Historically, judges served to deliver the monarch's justice, not to check state power or protect individual rights. This began to change with the rise of constitutional democracies.

Are legislative reforms required in the Supreme Court's in-house procedure for addressing judicial misconduct?

Sanjay Hegde: The in-house procedure was established to prevent the misuse of legal processes against the judiciary, especially when judicial decisions displease the executive. A key precedent is Delhi Judicial Service Association v. State of Gujarat (1991), where the Supreme Court intervened after the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Nadiad was mistreated by Gujarat police officials, and issued guidelines for arresting judicial officers. To guard against misuse, the judiciary introduced an internal inquiry mechanism before allowing prosecution. Nonetheless, this framework could benefit from legislative intervention.

Alok Prasanna Kumar: Corruption cases are particularly difficult to prosecute in a country like ours, where enforcement institutions are weak, the capacity to secure convictions is limited, and judges enjoy a degree of institutional protection. A striking example is the recent acquittal of former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Nirmal Yadav, nearly 15 years after a Supreme Court-mandated inquiry committee found sufficient evidence to prosecute her. That said, I agree with Sanjay that there is certainly scope for strengthening the in-house procedure.

Should inquiry reports under this mechanism be made public?

Alok Prasanna Kumar: Yes. We have seen a welcome shift towards transparency in the Supreme Court's handling of the Justice Yashwant Varma case. In an age where judicial conduct is closely scrutinised through social and mass media, opacity in cases of alleged judicial corruption is no longer viable. However, such transparency cannot remain an ad hoc response to crises; it must be institutionalised. At the same time, it is essential that the inquiry process

upholds the principles of natural justice and safeguards the rights of the accused. While rigid procedural rules may not be feasible, a balanced framework is necessary — one that commands the confidence of all stakeholders and prevents the inquiry process from becoming the subject of further litigation.

Sanjay Hegde: I agree that increased transparency in the functioning of inquiry committees is welcome. However, in this particular case, the Court's decision appears to have been shaped by the extraordinary level of public speculation. By proactively releasing the video purportedly showing the recovery of unaccounted cash, the Court pre-empted any perception that it was shielding a member of the higher judiciary. Had the footage surfaced through other unofficial channels, it could have severely undermined institutional credibility. That said, such decisions must be made with caution and evaluated on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that the accused's right to a fair trial remains fully protected. The Court could also benefit from appointing dedicated communications personnel to prevent misinformation and bolster public confidence.

The Justice Varma case has renewed calls to revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission. Should the government have a say in judicial appointments? Sanjay Hegde: The government already holds a seat at the table. The real question is whether it should hold a blank cheque. Even before the collegium finalises its recommendations, informal consultations with the executive are often undertaken. After the names are forwarded, the government retains the power to flag Intelligence Bureau inputs for the collegium's reconsideration. There have also been several instances where the government has stalled appointments by simply sitting on the recommendations. This de facto executive veto has prevented many deserving judges from reaching the Supreme Court.

Alok Prasanna Kumar: We should no longer call it the collegium system; it now resembles a search-and-selection committee. While the High Court and Supreme Court collegium recommend names, the Union government follows a pick-and-choose approach. This has dissuaded many deserving candidates from subjecting themselves to an opaque and often humiliating process. Ultimately, it does not matter whether judges are appointed by the government, the judiciary, or a combination of the two. What matters is transparency. The D.Y. Chandrachud-led collegium made progress on this front by publishing resolutions that detailed the rationale behind each recommendation. Regrettably, the practice has been discontinued.

Should the Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010, be reconsidered?

Alok Prasanna Kumar: I don't think so. It fails to address several critical gaps. What we need is a more calibrated and institutional response. The first step should be to define clear, enforceable judicial standards. Consider the issue of familial ties in the judiciary — every judge should be mandated to disclose relatives practising in the same court. Once disclosed, either the judge must be transferred or the relative barred from appearing before that court. Merely setting up more oversight bodies is not the solution. These institutions would inevitably be staffed by retired judges, thereby perpetuating the same structural flaws we seek to remedy. Sanjay Hegde: More than legislative reform, we need to focus on the fact that the legal profession already operates through an informal system of peer review. Long before a judge becomes entangled in a corruption scandal, there are usually murmurs within the corridors of the court. A meaningful step forward would be to institutionalise this peer review process by systematically incorporating inputs from bar associations and fellow judges. This would strengthen internal accountability.

Should contempt of court laws be liberalised to permit greater public scrutiny of judicial conduct?

Alok Prasanna Kumar: We can liberalise contempt of court laws, but unless there are consequences for judges who invoke them arbitrarily, such reforms will have little impact. It is also important to assess the context in which contempt is initiated — does it stem from a judge's anger or fear, or is it a measured institutional response to someone deliberately spreading falsehoods to undermine public trust in the judiciary? That said, there must be space for good-faith discourse on judicial corruption without the spectre of criminal contempt looming over those who voice legitimate concerns.

## BJP Vs Congress | How do they fuel their election campaigns?

Story so far: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has been re-elected to power for the third time in June 2024, albeit with the support of other parties, was armed with 88% of the donations received by political parties in 2023-24. Analysis of the income and expenditure reports, including donations above ₹20,000 declared by the major national parties show that BJP had an income of ₹4340 crore, including ₹2243 crore in individual donations. Of these BJP only spent ₹2211 crore (50.96%) of its income, noted Association for Democratic Reform (ADR). The latest set of income and expenditure declarations are the first since the Supreme Court scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme which had collected ₹16,518 crore in 30 tranches since 2018. Here's a look at the political contributions and expenditures of India's top two national parties.

Contributions to the BJP stand at ₹3967 crore for 2023-24. Of these 'voluntary contributions', ₹2243 crore come from 8358 donations over ₹20,000, including ₹856 crore via six electoral trusts. Apart from contributions, BJP's income also includes ₹369 crore in interest and ₹2.7 crore in fees and subscription. BJP has received ₹2064 crore from corporate houses in donations while individual donors contributed ₹169 crore. The party also received donations from unions/party units worth ₹1.09 crore, while ₹9.147 crore were from undeclared donors. Also, BJP received ₹1685 crore from electoral bonds — which constitute 38.84% of the party's total income. A month-wise analysis of the contributions by ADR found that September 2023 and March 2024 were when BJP received its maximum contributions. However, BJP's declared dates of donations barely amount to ₹85 crore, while dates of 7996 donations worth ₹2158 crore are unknown. The above-mentioned donations are payments made via cheque/DD or bank transfers. The top donations to BJP were ₹723 crore from Prudent Electoral Trust and ₹127 crore from Triumph Electoral Trust. While which company donated to the BJP via electoral trusts is not known, the top donors to electoral trusts are ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd (₹100 crore), DLF (100 crore), Maatha Projects (75 crore), CESC Ltd (60 crore) and Maruti Suzuki India (60 crore). BJP also saw a leap in electoral trust contributions from 265 crore in 2022-23 to ₹723.785 in 2023-24, coinciding with the Lok Sabha election year.



Expenses and unspent funds The BJP's income increased by 83.85% from ₹2360.844 crore during 2022-23 to ₹4340.473 crore in 2023-24. Similarly, its expenses also increased from ₹1361 crore in 2022-23 to ₹2211.7 crore in 2023-24. In both years, 80% of its expenses went to election and general propaganda. In 2022-23, BJP spent ₹1092 crore on its election campaign, while in 2023-24 it spent ₹1754 crore — a 64% increase in expenses. BJP's poll campaign expenditure in the previous Lok Sabha poll cycle too shows that the party spent ₹792 crores in 2018-19 — a 40% increase from 2017-18 when they spent ₹567 crore. Currently, BJP has an unspent ₹2128 crore in its kitty — amounting to 49% of its total income. In the previous year too, BJP had not spent around ₹1000 crore — 42% of its income of ₹2360 crore. BJP's unspent funds have steadily increased over the past two Lok Sabha cycles. In 2012-2013 — a year prior to the Lok Sabha polls — BJP had unspent funds of ₹101 crore — 31% of its total income of ₹324 crore. This was the last year when BJP's coffers were lower than the Congress, which had 111 crore's worth of unspent funds. However, the following year (2013-14), BJP's income bloomed to ₹673 crore, surpassing Congress, which declared ₹598 crore as its income. Incidentally, electoral trusts had been instituted in January 2013, paving the way for corporate funding of political campaigns. By the end of the Lok Sabha elections, BJP had spent 328 crore, leaving 345 crore left in its kitty. Similarly, in 2017-18, BJP had an excess of ₹268.87 crore — 26% of total income of 1027 crore. A year later, in 2018-19, the Modi government instituted the electoral bonds scheme.



## New fitness metric may predict heart disease risk better than steps or heart rate, finds study



GNS News Agency, April 16

In a stride towards integrating wearable technology with clinical health monitoring, researchers have identified a new fitness metric, Daily Heart Rate Per Step (DHRPS) that shows stronger associations with identifying cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk than traditional indicators such as step counts or average heart rate. The study, published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, analysed data from nearly 7,000 participants who volunteered their Fitbit data as part of the National Institutes of Health's All of Us Research Program. The research team, led by scientists from Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, developed DHRPS as a simple ratio: an individual's average daily heart rate divided by the number of steps taken per day. The higher the DHRPS, the more heartbeats per step, is an indication of lower cardiovascular efficiency and potentially poorer heart health. Using 5.8 million person-days of Fitbit data and over 50 billion recorded steps, the study included 6,947 adults who shared at least 10 days of data along with linked electronic health records (EHRs). Researchers tested whether DHRPS correlated with six key cardiovascular conditions, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart failure, stroke, coronary atherosclerosis, and myocardial infarction.

They found that individuals in the highest DHRPS quartile (indicating higher heart rates and fewer steps) had significantly higher odds of having all six conditions, even after adjusting for age, sex, BMI, race, step count, and heart rate alone. For instance, high DHRPS was associated with 2.03 times higher odds of type 2 diabetes, 1.63 times higher odds of hypertension, and 1.77 times higher odds of heart failure. The study underscored that DHRPS could be easily calculated, low-cost biomarkers using data already collected by widely available devices. "The study clearly shows that those with a higher DHRPS value are more likely to develop chronic conditions, the top three being diabetes, brain stroke, and heart failure. When there's pressure on the heart, these individuals are more prone to cardiac failure. It also correlates with hypertension and the risk of heart attacks. So, this index isn't just theoretical, it has practical relevance for predicting metabolic and cardiovascular health risks," said Kiran Madala, Professor and HOD of Anaesthesia at Gandhi Medical College, Hyderabad, commenting on the research. The researchers didn't stop at these six conditions. They ran a phenome-wide association study

(PheWAS), examining DHRPS across 1,789 disease codes in 17 categories. The result revealed that 518 conditions were significantly associated with DHRPS, especially those already known to be cardiovascular risk factors, such as obesity, sleep apnoea, and type 2 diabetes. Compared to using step count or heart rate alone, DHRPS consistently showed higher statistical significance and stronger regression scores, suggesting it provides a more nuanced reflection of heart health and physical fitness. Sudhir Kumar, consultant neurologist at Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, said the value of the DHRPS index lay not in introducing a new concept, but in repackaging familiar data into an easily understandable metric. "There's nothing fundamentally new here. But what they've done is, they have created a new ratio, the DHRPS, and used it to build public awareness. The core idea is quite simple, the lower your heart rate in relation to your step count, the better your cardiovascular fitness. If your heart rate is high and your step count is low, that ratio increases, and that's not a good thing. So, to reduce this ratio, you either bring your heart rate down or increase your step count or ideally both," he said. In a small subgroup of participants who also underwent treadmill-based cardiovascular stress tests, DHRPS showed stronger correlations with maximum metabolic equivalents (METs), a measure of cardiorespiratory fitness, than either heart rate or steps. It also correlated better with how participants rated their own physical health in surveys. In other words, people who felt healthier typically had a lower DHRPS, reinforcing its potential as a reflection of overall fitness.

Dr Madala noted, "Standard medical literature says even professional athletes can have resting heart rates as low as 40. For the general population, a resting heart rate between 60 and 72 is ideal. Many people think 72 is normal, but it's actually on the higher end of the spectrum. The ideal is to stay closer to 60."

What makes DHRPS unique?

Heart rate and step count have long been used separately to estimate cardiovascular health. But DHRPS bridges both of these, in a reflection of how the body's cardiovascular system responds to physical activity. A lower DHRPS implies a more efficient heart, lower beats per higher number of steps while a higher DHRPS suggests increased heart strain even for lesser activity. According to the study, this integration captures deeper physiological responses, such as autonomic nervous system function and coronary flow reserve, which are often missed by simple metrics like total steps or average heart rate. The study suggests that DHRPS could complement existing CVD risk scores, offering an accessible tool for early risk detection. Given the increasing adoption of fitness trackers, DHRPS could potentially allow millions of users to better understand their heart health without visiting a clinic. "What this index does is link resting heart rate, walking or running heart rate, and step count into one meaningful number. It gives a clearer picture of fitness — and more importantly, of risk. Whether we're talking about diabetes, obesity, hypertension, stroke, or even lifespan, all these outcomes correlated with cardiovascular efficiency. A lower DHRPS reflects better health and longevity," said Dr Kumar.

## When Parkinson's strikes early



Parkinson's disease, often viewed as an ailment of the elderly, is manifesting with alarming frequency among younger individuals in India. This shift not only challenges existing clinical perceptions of the disease but also poses significant socio-economic and public healthcare implications for the nation. The tremors, stiffness, and slow movement commonly associated with the disease in old age are increasingly observed even in adults in their twenties, thirties and forties — at the prime of their lives. This unsettling trend demands more than just clinical attention; it calls for a systemic recalibration of how we understand, detect, and treat the second-most recurring neurodegenerative disorder in the world. The question is how can India redefine its healthcare strategies to include proper palliative care for Parkinson's without compromising on its younger demographic, which is leading the country's charge?

India is facing what can only be described as a dual burden — the expected increase of Parkinson's disease in older adults and a growing tide of early-onset Parkinson's disease. Compared with the global average age of diagnosis at around 60, India's average is 51 — nearly a decade earlier. What is even more startling is that recent cohort studies in the Parkinsonism & Related Disorder Journal show that nearly 45% of patients develop symptoms between the ages of 22 and 49, a statistic that should trigger national concern. It means that India will have the highest absolute number of people with early-onset Parkinson's disease, given its status as the most populous country. The younger patients experience the disease differently. They are more likely to suffer from dystonia (abnormal muscle contractions), early onset of levodopa-induced dyskinesias (involuntary movements), and psychiatric complications such as depression and anxiety. Because they are younger, they face longer disease durations, years of medication adjustments, employment disruptions, and emotional strain. In short, they are neurologically compromised while still economically and socially active, making the ripple effect of the early onset far wider than it appears.

Despite these shifts, community-level data in India remain sparse, particularly from rural areas where access to care is limited. A 2021 Lancet Global Health review noted the need for comprehensive neuroepidemiology surveys in India, particularly those that factor in region-specific exposures and lifestyles.

Patients often go through years of misdiagnosis or dismissal, partly because physicians themselves are conditioned to rule out Parkinson's in younger individuals. In women, symptoms are even more likely to be misattributed to stress or hormonal changes. This results in delayed intervention, missed therapeutic windows, and irreversible neurological damage. To address this, India needs structured rehabilitation models and public health messaging around Parkinson's, especially for young patients.

Strengthening early detection India's expanding network of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (erstwhile HWCs aka

SHC) under the Ayushman Bharat programme offers an important opportunity to bring neurological screening closer to communities. Training primary care providers to recognise early signs of Parkinson's, especially in younger individuals, can help improve early diagnosis and referral. Simple clinical checklists, community health worker sensitisation, and public awareness drives can reduce the delay in care-seeking and improve outcomes.

From a clinical standpoint, India presents a different biological profile. A recent paper on npj Parkinson's Disease observed that genetic mutations common in Western patients (such as LRRK2 and SNCA) are rare among Indians, which suggests that environmental triggers such as pesticide exposure (notably paraquat), industrial pollutants, and air pollution could play a more significant role in this context. Yet these hypotheses remain underexplored due to the lack of large-scale, India-specific studies.

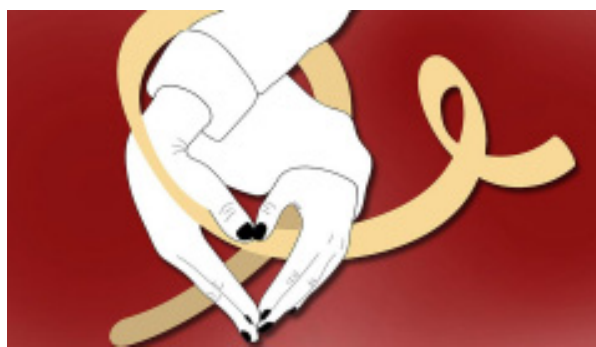
It is equally important to recognise that early-onset Parkinson's often remains undiagnosed in rural and underserved populations, where access to specialised neurological care is limited. Women, in particular, face a higher risk of misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis. Addressing these inequities requires focused public health messaging, telemedicine outreach, and mobile diagnostic camps in remote areas. Ensuring that Parkinson's care reaches every corner of the country must be considered a public health priority. Shifting the paradigm

India is driving a mixed approach towards tackling Parkinson's disease, which relies on broad-based government health schemes and healthcare efforts made by private hospitals. However, the growing challenges, especially those related to young-onset and early-onset Parkinson's disease, require a targeted response. The National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly is strengthening geriatric care. Yet, these schemes must be broadened to address the growing complexity of the disease arising from inconsistent implementation and a lack of disease-specific strategies. Promising models, such as Himachal Pradesh's telestroke programme, demonstrate how telemedicine can bridge access gaps and could be adapted to enable remote Parkinson's disease care and follow-ups.

India can explore integrating patient-specific registries into the National Health Mission, expanding centres of excellence, and forging public-private partnerships to scale comprehensive, multidisciplinary care. The country should include Parkinson's under Ayushman Bharat for insurance coverage, neurological diagnostics, and medications. Subsidising advanced therapies, such as deep brain stimulation, and supporting gene therapy trials can help India leverage its biotech capabilities while furthering advancements. Comprehensive strategy

India has already recognised brain health as part of the expanded National Mental Health Programme, a welcome step. However, there is a strong need to operationalise and strengthen services for neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease within this framework. Tackling the dual burden of Parkinson's calls for better integration under existing non-communicable disease initiatives, expansion of insurance coverage under PM-JAY to include neurological care, and building stronger referral systems from primary to tertiary care. Public-private partnerships, multidisciplinary care models, and investments in research and national registries will help India move from reactive care to proactive, equitable management of Parkinson's and related conditions. With a focused approach to genomics, gene therapy, early detection, de-stigmatisation, and research-led policy, India has a real opportunity to shift from reactive care to proactive preparedness.

## Spinal muscular atrophy patients welcome development of generic drug; call for government intervention to ensure access



A generic version of Risdiplam, a medicine used to treat spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), could soon be available in India at \$183.47 dollars per bottle, a sharp 97% drop from the current rate of \$7,150. The news has been welcomed by healthcare activists and patients as a significant development. Government intervention at this juncture is critical, says K.M. Gopakumar, a legal researcher who works in the area of access to medicines. "Even with this possible cost cut, the drug will remain expensive and out of reach for a large proportion of patients. The Central government can intervene, procure these medicines and reduce the price in a manner that is more affordable. They can also invoke Section 100 of the Patents Act, 1970 that would allow the manufacture of the generic version of the drug and ensure procurement of medicine for all SMA patients," he said.

Indian generic manufacturer Natco Pharma announced that it could commercialise a generic version of Risdiplam at 15,900, equivalent to \$183.47. Natco released this information within the context of its legal battle with Roche Pharma, the current patent holder for the drug. The Delhi High Court has rejected Roche's plea for an interim injunction against Natco for alleged infringement of its patent. Patients and their families are all waiting for an af-

fordable treatment option, says Saifullah Khalidi, an SMA patient representative and disability rights advocate. "SMA is a lifelong condition and Roche's drug improves quality of life. Currently, the drug costs upwards of ₹70 lakh annually for an adult patient. This makes sustained access to the drug an impossible task. As of now, we don't have any idea about when production would start or when the generic medicines would be available for patients. However, we welcome the possibility of having multiple companies making the generic version of the medicines and bringing down the cost to a point that it becomes affordable for all SMA patients," he said.

Mr. Khalidi added that, without treatment, SMA patients struggle with reduced mobility, encounter respiratory challenges, and typically have a shortened lifespan. "This medicine is critical for ensuring quality of life for SMA patients," he emphasised. SMA is a genetic disorder that causes weakness and wasting, or atrophy, of the muscles used for movement. It is caused by a loss of motor neurons, the specialised nerve cells in the spinal cord that control muscle movement. Symptoms vary depending on the type of SMA, but can include muscle weakness, difficulty with movement, breathing problems, swallowing difficulties, and scoliosis. There is currently no cure for SMA, but treatments can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life, with some therapies. Evrysdi (Risdiplam), a small molecule oral medication, is the first and only approved treatment for SMA in India, manufactured by Roche. Additionally, Nusinersen (Spinraza), another disease-modifying therapy, is available in India through a special program for select children. "Access to medicines means improved quality of life. I was able to raise ₹61 lakh through crowd-funding in 2022 which gave me access to Roche's medicine for close to a year. However, I have been without this medicine due to the high cost ever since. An easily accessible generic medicine would ensure a better life for people living with SMA," said writer and SMA patient Sarmista, who hails from Assam.

## Telemedicine guidance on WhatsApp helps govt. doctors bridge cardiac care gaps in Tamil Nadu



Can telemedicine guidance on a messaging platform like WhatsApp help doctors improve treatment outcomes in patients presenting with major heart attacks? The Tamil Nadu Government Heart Attack Management Programme - operationalised in a hub-and-spoke model networking 18 government medical college hospitals and 188 district/taluk government hospitals - has the answer. A study analysing the five-year experience (2019-2023) of the programme has found that it has demonstrated that WhatsApp groups are a cost-effective way of networking larger and smaller hospitals in a hub-and-spoke model to provide telemedicine guidance for early diagnosis and treatment of major heart attacks (STEMI-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction). Through this, cardiologists in larger hub hospitals offered telemedicine guidance to smaller spoke units. Additionally, these groups were used to coordinate patient transfers between hospitals and to monitor the entire process.

Putting out the key findings in an article published recently in the Indian Journal of Medical Research - 'Impact of telemedicine in STEMI care system: A five-year experience from Tamil Nadu, India' - government cardiologists and health officials reported that that the government-sponsored STEMI care system in a hub-and-spoke model, guided by telemedicine via WhatsApp groups, significantly improved guideline-directed treatment for STEMI care in a resource-limited setting. Talking about the implementation of the initiative, G. Justin Paul, professor of cardiology, Madras Medical College, and the programme's nodal officer, explained that the 18 government medical college hospitals in T.N. were equipped with cardiac catheterisation laboratories to offer Percutaneous Coronary Interventions (PCI), thereby serving as hub hospitals. Additionally, 188 district and taluk-level government hospitals lacking PCI capacity were enabled to administer clot busting medicines and were linked to these 18 hubs as spoke hospitals. Eighteen STEMI clusters were established by networking 10-15 spoke hospitals with each hub based on geographical proximity and transport logistics.

The networking was done in two phases - 12 hubs linked to 154 spokes to form 12 clusters in phase I (2017-2018) and six hubs linked to 34 spokes to create six more clusters in phase II (2019-2020). The authors noted that 18 WhatsApp groups - one for each cluster - were created to

facilitate case-specific management of persons with suspected heart attacks. These groups enabled seamless communication between cardiologists at hub hospitals and teams at spoke hospitals. In total, 71,907 individuals with STEMI were treated over the five years. There was a 67% annual increase in the total number of individuals treated for STEMI. The proportion of individuals receiving pharmacoinvasive therapy increased from 7.9 to 31.7%. There was a 68% increase in the number of individuals receiving primary PCI. The number of individuals who did not receive guideline-directed treatment decreased by 20%.

The analysis found that there was a 6.7-fold rise in the individuals referred from spoke to hub hospitals for catheter-based revascularisation. The overall mortality showed a marginal decrease from 8.7 to 8.3%; phase-II hubs achieved a 68% reduction from 8.5% to 5.8% aligning with a rise in guideline-directed treatment. Dr. Paul said that in developed nations, STEMI care was centred on timely primary PCI, which must be done within 90-120 minutes by a specialist team in a cath lab. But this set up requiring 24x7 infrastructure and trained interventional cardiologists was not feasible in many developing nations including India. "The current study highlights that any timely treatment to restore blood flow is lifesaving, even if limited to fibrinolysis. Any form of revascularisation is definitely better than no revascularisation at all. Healthcare systems in developing nations must focus on early heart attack and at least start with fibrinolysis. This forms the foundation in which a pharmacoinvasive system can be built, as healthcare capabilities expand," he added.

## All you need to know about: Eating disorders

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), eating disorders can lead to severe health complications and even death if untreated. The most common types include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder.

What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders are mental and behavioral conditions involving persistent disturbances in eating behavior, often stemming from an obsession with food, body weight, or shape. The six main types of eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder (BED), pica, rumination disorder, and avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID). These are complex mental health conditions that can have severe physical and emotional consequences. Anorexia nervosa, for instance, involves restrictive eating, an intense fear of gaining weight, and a distorted body image. This condition has two subtypes: the restrictive type and the binge eating/purging type. Bulimia nervosa is characterised by recurring episodes of binge eating followed by purging behaviors, such as vomiting, laxative use, or excessive exercise. These behaviors can lead to side effects like an inflamed throat, swollen salivary glands, and tooth decay. Binge eating disorder (BED) involves consuming large amounts of food rapidly and secretly, often accompanied by feelings of distress and guilt. In contrast, pica involves eating non-food substances, which can result in poisoning, infections, and nutritional deficiencies. Rumination disorder is marked by regurgitating food, re-chewing, and re-swallowing or spitting it out, potentially leading to weight loss and severe malnutrition. Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) is characterised by a lack of interest in eating or a distaste for certain foods, resulting in restrictive eating habits and potential nutritional deficiencies.

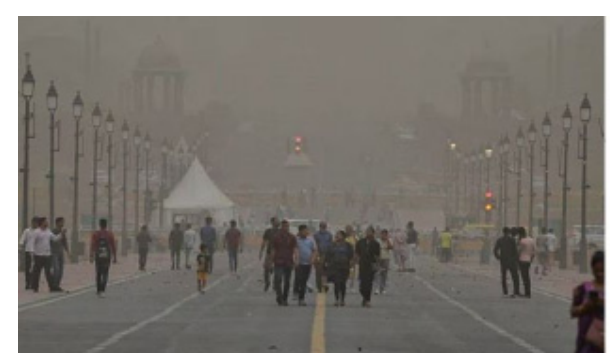
Other eating disorders include purging disorder, night eating syndrome, and other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED), an umbrella term for conditions that exhibit

symptoms similar to those of eating disorders but don't fit into the above categories. An example is orthorexia, which involves an obsessive focus on healthy eating that disrupts daily life. These conditions can have serious physical and emotional consequences, including malnutrition, weight loss, digestive problems, and an increased risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. According to WHO, eating disorders have long been associated with sociocultural factors. The drive for thinness is not a universal ideal, and in many non-Western cultures, plumpness is considered attractive and linked to fertility and caring. In contrast, Western societies often equate thinness with beauty and attractiveness, perpetuated by media and peer pressure.

WHO highlights the need for monitoring these causes and occurrences of eating disorders to track their signs, prevalence and impact. For instance, anorexia nervosa is typically characterised by a body weight that is at least 15% below the expected level, self-induced weight loss, a distorted perception of body image, and associated endocrine disorders. On the other hand, bulimia nervosa involves a persistent preoccupation with food, behaviors aimed at counteracting the perceived fattening effects of food (such as vomiting or excessive exercise), and an intense, morbid fear of gaining weight. In some cases, individuals may experience atypical forms of these eating disorders, where one or more of the typical features are absent. Despite the absence of some criteria, these atypical forms still reflect significant disturbances in eating behaviors and body image, and can be diagnosed accordingly. Less specific eating disorders include overeating associated with psychological distress and vomiting linked to other psychological disturbances, such as hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe form of nausea and vomiting during pregnancy, more intense than typical "morning sickness," potentially leading to dehydration, weight loss, and requiring hospitalisation and medical treatment.



## Delhi dust storm spillover: Scores of flights delayed, some cancelled on Saturday due to heavy congestion at IGI Airport



The severe dust storm that hit Delhi and neighbouring areas had a spillover impact on flight operations at the country's largest airport—Indira Gandhi International airport (IGIA)—on Saturday with scores of flights delayed with a few even getting cancelled due to heavy air traffic congestion. The situation led to crowded terminal buildings with a large number of irate stranded passengers. A number of passengers took to social media platforms to express their frustration, hitting out at airlines and the airport.

As per flight tracking data from Flightradar24, around 400 departing flights from Delhi on Saturday had been delayed as of 4:30 PM, while 18 stood cancelled. As for arrivals, around 220 flights were delayed, while 20 were cancelled. On Friday, over 500 departing flights were delayed and 24 cancelled, mostly due to the adverse weather event that brought the Delhi airport to a standstill in the evening. As for incoming flights on Friday, nearly 440 were delayed with a number of flights being diverted to other airports, and seven were cancelled, per flight tracking data. As IGIA is the country's largest airport and a major hub for India's main airline groups, any significant disruption in flight operations usually leads to a network-wide cascading impact on flight operations. Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), the op-

erator of IGIA, said on Saturday afternoon that while the situation at the airport was improving, some flights were still impacted due to Friday's dust storm.

"Flight operations at Delhi Airport are improving; however, a few flights are still impacted due to last night's weather conditions. Our on-ground teams and all stakeholders are working together to minimize any inconvenience to passengers. Please check the flight status on our website and the respective airline websites for the latest updates," DIAL said in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter). Airlines also issued advisories to flyers, cautioning them of heavy congestion at the Delhi airport and the consequent disruption in flight operations. "Ongoing air traffic congestion in Delhi is causing flights to be held for takeoff and landing clearance. Due to the consequential impact, a few flights across the network are impacted too. We understand that extended wait times can be bothersome, and we truly appreciate your patience. We recommend checking the flight status on our website or app for the latest information," the country's largest airline IndiGo said in an advisory to passengers. Tata group airline Air India even cautioned passengers about the possibility of a dust storm on Saturday as well. "Air India advises passengers flying today to/from Delhi to expect potential disruptions due to heavy dusty winds forecast today between 17:30 and 21:00 hrs IST. Similar weather conditions yesterday caused flight diversions and delays, with air traffic congestion continuing to affect operations into today. As such disruptions have a cascading impact on flight schedules, we are making every effort to manage them effectively and minimise inconvenience, but some delays or changes may still occur," Air India said in its advisory. "Allow extra time for airport travel, as ground operations may also be impacted. We appreciate your patience and understanding as our teams work to ensure your safety under these challenging conditions," the Tata group carrier added.

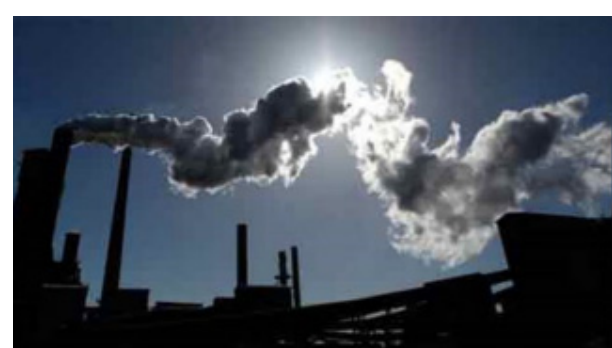
## Factory output growth slows to a six-month low of 2.9% in Feb with deceleration across sectors

Factory output, Factory output growth, Factory output growth slows, Index of Industrial Production, Indian express news, current affairs Growth in output of capital goods — an indicator of investment — was a positive sign, despite moderating to 8.2 per cent from 10.3 per cent in January. Factory output growth slowed to a six-month low of 2.9 per cent in February mainly due to a high base effect and deceleration across sectors including manufacturing, mining and consumer goods, data released by National Statistics Office (NSO) on Friday showed. Factory output, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), had grown 5.2 per cent in January this year and 5.6 per cent in February 2024.

Manufacturing output, which accounts for 77.6 per cent of the weight of the IIP, also slumped to a six-month low of 2.9 per cent in February from 5.8 per cent in January and 4.9 per cent in the year-ago period. Mining output grew by 1.6 per cent against 4.4 per cent in January and 8.1 per cent in February 2024, it showed. Electricity was the only sector to register a pickup, with its output growing by 3.6 per cent in February, higher from 2.4 per cent in the preceding month. It was, however, lower than 7.6 per cent in the year-ago period. "The moderation in mining and manufacturing output more than offset the improvement in electricity output, weighing on the overall growth number," Rajani Sinha, chief economist, CareEdge Ratings said.

Growth in output of capital goods — an indicator of investment — was a positive sign, despite moderating to 8.2 per cent from 10.3 per cent in January. The growth was, however, higher than 1.7 per cent growth in February 2024. Infrastructure or construction goods output also grew firmly at 6.6 per cent in February even as it was slightly lower than 7.4 per cent in the previous month and 8.3 per cent in the year-ago period. "Worryingly, the output growth of all the sub-sectors at the use-based level declined in February 2025 compared to the previous month, after a gap of five months. This indicates the muted and volatile nature of industrial output growth... the silver lining was the decent growth in capital and infrastructure goods at 8.2 per cent YoY and 6.6 per cent YoY, respectively, in February. This suggests sustained-but-moderated growth in investment demand and construction sector output," Paras Jasrai, senior economic analyst at India Ratings, said.

Consumption trend faltered, with both consumer durables and non-durables registering a sequential deceleration. Consumer durables output — an indicator of consumption demand — slowed to 3.8 per cent in February as against 7.2 per cent growth in the previous month and 12.6 per cent in the year-ago period. Consumer non-durable goods output, which reflects fast-moving consumer goods, continued to be in the negative territory for the third consecutive month at (-)2.1 per cent in February compared with (-)0.3 per cent growth in the previous month and (-)3.2



per cent in the year-ago period. Experts said this reflects demand-side fragility and hence, requires close monitoring. "Monitoring consumption trends remains crucial due to the ongoing unevenness in the domestic demand landscape. While rural demand has been improving, the lagging urban demand continues to be a cause of concern," Sinha said.

Though consumption demand seems to have weakened, economists said the recent rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India and the easing food prices will help in a pickup going ahead. "There is light at the tunnel with the substantial easing of food inflation in the recent time period and monetary easing in February and April 2025, the effect of which would be felt with a lag in FY26... with the onset of the summer, the power demand has seen a pickup as it was up 6.6 per cent YoY in March 2025, at a nine-month high. In addition, there has been an indication of pickup in government spending in March 2025 with the usual rush to meet capex targets both by state and union governments," Jasrai said. India Ratings expects industrial output growth to be around 4 per cent in March. Sectorally, as per the IIP data, 14 out of the 23 sectors in manufacturing registered growth in February, with computer, electronic and optical products (10.6 per cent), electrical equipment (9.3 per cent), and motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers among the higher growing sectors. Manufacturing of leather and related products (-)9.4 per cent, paper and paper products (-)9.1 per cent, and printing and reproduction of recorded media (-)8.6 per cent were among the significant non-performers. On a cumulative basis, industrial output growth was at 4.1 per cent during April-February as against 6 per cent in the year-ago period. "The electricity sector remains a consistent outlier with 5 per cent growth, and we will continue to see it growing for the next few months as the demand for electricity increases due to the onset of summer. While we are seeing the industrial sector post uneven numbers, this volatility flags the risk of plateauing momentum. The divergence between investment and consumption needs close monitoring in the run-up to FY26," Sankar Chakraborti, MD & CEO, Acuité Ratings & Research Ltd said.

## TCS delays salary hikes amid global uncertainty

Mumbai: IT services major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has delayed salary hikes, as the management remained unclear on the increment cycle amid global uncertainty arising due to US tariffs. TCS typically revises the wages of its staff in April every year. The employee count at the end of fiscal 2025 stood at 6,07,979, as the company added 625 employees in the fourth quarter. In the entire financial year, the company hired 42,000 freshers. The IT major now plans to make the salary revision decision based on the evolving business environment as uncertainty looms the sector.

The attrition rate in the fourth quarter for TCS increased to 13.3 per cent from 13 per cent in the last quarter. According to Milind Lakkad, chief human resources officer at TCS, "We have onboarded 42,000 trainees in FY25 and the FY26 number will be similar or a little higher. Regarding the wage hikes, we will decide during the year, considering the uncertain business environment." Lakkad further stated that while hiring from the campus remains strategic for the company, the new net additions will depend on the overall business environment and the skill requirements.

TCS is also looking to hire talent for niche and newer technology skills and plans to scout talent from across geographies, even international. Lakkad also said that the



company doesn't see AI impacting hiring, as more people would be required with AI for business programmes bringing in new opportunities. In the December quarter (Q3 FY25), TCS reported a reduction of 5,370 employees in its workforce. The company's overall headcount had declined in FY24 — the first such drop since it was listed in 2004. In contrast, TCS had added 22,600 employees in FY23 and over 1.03 lakh in FY22. The IT major's consolidated net profit for Q4 fell nearly 2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 12,293 crore. In the same quarter last year.

## How US, EU FTAs can help integrate auto component sector into global value chains: Niti Aayog report explains



Free trade agreements (FTAs) with the US and the EU, along with the creation of a conducive environment for foreign joint ventures (JVs), will help integrate India's burgeoning auto component industry into global value chains, a new NITI Aayog report said on Friday. It also recommended a fresh Production Support Scheme to partly cover operational and capital expenditure for auto components left out of the ongoing Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme — primarily engines, its components, transmission gears and axles, as well as equipment such as tools and dyes. By pursuing a combination of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives outlined in the report, NITI Aayog expects India's auto component exports to triple to \$60 billion by 2030, with the country's share in global value chains rising from 3 to 8 per cent.

Stressing the importance of FTAs in boosting export competitiveness, NITI Aayog Member Arvind Virmani said such agreements could also increase investment flows into India and facilitate the creation of foreign JVs. "Most of the M&As (mergers and acquisitions), whether it's automobiles or other things, are located in the US, EU and a few other countries. That is why FTAs are so important with the US and EU. This is particularly true of network or complex products, for which things move back and forth all over the place," Virmani said. India is currently negotiating a bilateral trade deal with Washington and an FTA with Brussels. The report noted that "strategically negotiated" FTAs can encourage foreign investment, technology transfer, and

innovation. To help foreign JVs thrive in India, it called for a business-friendly environment supported by tax breaks, subsidies, and investment promotion schemes. "By partnering with foreign companies from countries like Germany, Japan, and the United States, Indian manufacturers can gain access to cutting-edge technology, expertise, and resources, bridging the gap in specialized manufacturing capabilities," it said. Highlighting India's potential to attract foreign JVs, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said, "Everybody outside of China is looking at India right now. If you see the way the tariff policies have been evolving in the largest country in the world, we would be a preferred destination. There are small winners, lighthouse countries like Poland, Mexico, and Indonesia. They have captured on that. We are actually missing out on that," Subrahmanyam said.

"We need to get the large countries, like the Germans and others, who are getting outcompeted to come and do JVs here. The report identifies clusters located within India. There's no point spreading it thin. Go where you are already strong and expand it further. Two, go to the countries which have the technologies and get it," he added. The report proposed a new scheme to develop brownfield auto clusters into global manufacturing hubs. "There is also a need to undertake a thorough audit of existing auto clusters to evaluate utilization, implementation problems, and the state of facilities provided," it said. The eight auto clusters identified in the report are: Delhi-NCR, Pune, Sri City, Chennai, Ludhiana, Pithampur, Rajkot, and Sambhaji Nagar. The report found that India's auto component sector faces a 10 per cent cost disadvantage over China, plus an additional 20 per cent differential on manufacturing equipment. "China benefits from a well-integrated supply chain, spanning from raw minerals to high-value-added products, whereas India lacks such depth in its supply ecosystem," it said. As a solution, it proposes apex incentives for producing engine cylinders and cylinder heads, pistons and engine valves, crankshafts and camshafts, and transmission gears and axles, along with capex incentives for tools and dyes. Despite being the world's fourth-largest automobile producer after China, US, and Japan, India accounts for just 3 per cent (around \$20 billion) of global auto component trade.

## Dollar slumps 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 greenback 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.

Impact on the Indian Rupee 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" 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. Bond Market Shock

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.

## Govt delays security testing requirements for broadband gears amid US pressure

Department of Telecommunications, broadband, US pressure, United States Trade Representative, USTR, Indian express news, current affairs OLTs are installed at the broadband service providers' side for transmission of signals using optical fibres, while ONTs are installed at the user end for accessing the services. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has deferred mandatory security testing requirements for two specific broadband gears until August 31. The norms, which were supposed to kick in on April 1, have been postponed as the United States criticised the domestic requirements set by India over compliance costs, and not recognising internationally accepted certifications. While there was a previous extension in the testing requirements for Optical Network Terminal (ONT) and Optical Line Terminal (OLT) — products relating to broadband gears — in December, sources said that the fresh deferral comes as a report by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) specifically flagged its concerns around India's security testing framework. These security certifications are needed before selling products in India. With this concession, India moves to remove certain non-tariff trade barriers as it discusses a bilateral trade agreement with the US, which has criticised New Delhi over its business environment for American companies. Earlier, the government had also proposed to abolish proposed to abolish the equalisation levy on online advertisements — colloquially called the Google Tax — in a move largely understood to placate the US administration. The National Centre

for Communication Security (NCCS) under the DoT notified that the broadband gear products will be under the "voluntary security certification" regime till August 31, during which administrative fees and security test evaluation fees shall not be levied. OLTs are installed at the broadband service providers' side for transmission of signals using optical fibres, while ONTs are installed at the user end for accessing the services. In September 2017, through amendments made to the then Indian Telegraph Rules, the government said that all telegraph equipment will have to undergo mandatory testing and certification. In 2019, the Centre implemented the Mandatory Testing and Certification for Telecom Equipment (MTCTE) procedures, which require local security testing for telecommunication products. A year later, the DoT issued the 'Communication Security Certification Scheme' (ComSec), which was applicable to the security certification of all telecommunication equipment that is required to go through mandatory testing and certification processes. Products that are covered under the testing norms were expanded to 175 items in 2021, including routers, core equipment, 5G base stations, and servers, among others. In a report on April 1, the USTR said that the US industry was "concerned with the in-country testing and certification requirements," and that the country had urged India to "reconsider its domestic testing and certification requirements, to accept test results from International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation accredited labs, and to adopt the use of the Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement".



## IPL 2025 six hitters chart: Nicholas Pooran, Mitchell Marsh and Shreyas Iyer on top



GNS News Agency, April 16

The 18th edition of the Indian Premier League has seen an explosive display of batting with the bat dominating the ball once again. The tournament kicked off with a high-octane clash between KKR and RCB. So far, in just 25 matches, the campaign has already witnessed 450 sixes. Nicholas Pooran has confirmed his status as one of the most exciting batting talents in the modern game. He has been the key player with the bat for LSG, smashing 288 runs in just five innings with a strike rate of 225 (before the clash against Gujarat Titans). The current Orange Cap holder Pooran also has the record for most maximums in IPL 2025 with 24 sixes against his name. LSG's Rs 21 crore retention is proving to be worth every penny, as the 29-year-old batsman with an average of 72 is the most reliable asset in middle order.

The Australian veteran's expertise in hitting the ball over the boundary ropes with ease makes him a vital element of LSG's campaign. In terms of runs and striking power, Marsh is not far behind Pooran. With his aggressive strokeplay, the opener has scored 265 runs in 5 innings, including 15 big hits. He had helped LSG register a win over KKR by scoring 81 runs off 48 balls. Iyer began his journey in the Punjab Kings jersey with an unbeaten 97 off 42 deliveries, including nine gigantic sixes. With 14 sixes in four innings, he has displayed his ability to accelerate the innings and provide impetus at crucial junctures. The skipper's stats validated his approach to play aggressive and lead from front as the former KKR captain scored 168 runs in four innings with an impressive average of 84, thus giving PBKS renewed hope of finally breaking their trophy drought. While the reigning IPL champions have had a rough start to the campaign, Rahane has displayed his explosive batting by smashing 13 tremendous hits in just five innings showcasing his potential in this format. His highest score of 61 runs against LSG and his recent unbeaten 20-run knock against CSK made sure that their rivals tasted their biggest defeat in IPL history in terms of balls remaining. The 23-year-old from Uttar Pradesh is a hard-hitting batter and has emerged as a rising star for SRH. The young player has made his intentions clear to play dominating cricket. His highest score this season came against Delhi Capitals: a thrilling 74-run knock off of 41 balls. The youngster hit six sixes, albeit in a losing cause in Visakhapatnam.

## After Rabada, Gujarat Titans dealt with another blow as Glenn Phillips ruled out of IPL 2025

GNS News Agency, April 16

Days Kagiso Rabada left for personal reasons, Gujarat Titans were dealt another blow in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) season after Glenn Phillips was ruled out of the tournament. Phillips picked up a groin injury while fielding against Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 6 and the franchise said that the all-rounder has 'returned to New Zealand'. The table-toppers, with four wins in five matches, are yet to name a replacement.



members. Gujarat, who haven't named a replacement for Rabada as well, are now down to five foreign players — Sherfane Rutherford, Rashid Khan, Jos Buttler, Gerald Coetzee and Afghan all-rounder Karim Janat. Of the five, Coetzee is also returning from an injury that ruled him out of the SA20 and Champions Trophy.

Incidentally, Phillips did not get a place in Titans' starting line-up even once during his stint with the team. Against Sunrisers, he came on as a substitute after the fifth over. On the fourth ball of that over, Ishan Kishan played the ball towards point. Phillips chased it down and threw the ball towards the wicketkeeper's end as Kishan and Nitish Reddy ran a single. However, he immediately went down holding his groin and limped back to the dug-out with the help of the Titans' team

## 'CSK must risk it all to win again': Michael Clarke urges bold reset



GNS News Agency, April 16

That was Michael Clarke's frank assessment of Chennai Super Kings' current form, as the five-time champions continue to struggle with back-to-back defeats in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Speaking as an expert on JioHotstar, Clarke didn't hold back. "The pitch was tough, sure. A bit of seam, some turn. But the way Chennai approached the game, there was no intent. It's clear they're low on confidence and just trying to survive, not win," he said. "Right now, they're playing conservative cricket, just

hoping to stay close instead of pushing for victory. But sometimes, you've got to throw the kitchen sink at it. Take the risk. That's how you spark a turnaround." The former Australian captain said confidence can be contagious.

"Confidence, good or bad, is contagious. When you're winning, it lifts everyone. But when that losing feeling creeps in, it's tough to shift." Clarke's thoughts were echoed by fellow expert Piyush Chawla, who suggested it might be time to trust youth. "Maybe it's time to inject some fresh blood. Someone like Andre Siddarth, a promising middle-order bat, deserves a chance. We've seen plenty of Tripathi and Hooda, maybe it's time for new faces to bring in that spark. Even one or two changes can shift the mood in a dressing room." As the tournament heads into a crucial stretch, all eyes also turn to Sunrisers Hyderabad, currently at the bottom of the table. But Michael Clarke believes they're about to flip the script. "It's honestly shocking to see SRH at the bottom," he said. "That 300-run game? Leave it in the past. This team is too talented. They've got a strong core, and I believe Pat Cummins will rally the group. They just need someone to stand up and anchor an innings when required. If they get that, they'll start climbing the table fast."

## What makes Gujarat Titans click? Coach Ashish Nehra's unbreakable spirit

GNS News Agency, April 16

Ashish Nehra's injury-prone legs would often get pulled when he was part of the Indian dressing room. That banter didn't escape the attention of the then coach John Wright. In his book Indian Summers, Wright wrote: "Nehra and the team physiotherapist Andrew Leipus spent so much time in each other's company that players would ask them, 'So, when are you two tying the knot?' Leipus has a hearty laugh when reminded of the inside joke from Indian cricket's heady days of change when the template of a new fitness regime was getting shaped. "He is partly the reason my thumbs are worn out," he says, jokingly. "Even when I left the Indian team, he followed me to Adelaide when he got injured". The tone of his voice exudes the warmth he shares with the former pace bowler. Among other things, the IPL lends itself to the many reunions on the sidelines of games. Leipus, these days, is with the Punjab Kings. That's how he ended up bumping into his pet patient from years back—the much-visible and highly-successful Gujarat Titans head coach Nehra. Leipus says he consciously greeted Nehra with a measured "It's good to see you," and not with the usual "How are you doing?" Why he does so is a story for the concluding paragraph of this piece but first Leipus's insight into the much-misinterpreted man.

The picture of Nehra that Leipus paints is different from the popular 'Nehrajii' caricature circulated lovingly by his peers on TV shows or, rather cynically, by stand-ups searching for IPL characters to ride the cricket wave. This comes with the collateral damage of Nehra getting lumped with the image of a motormouth, hyperactive, argumentative coach. Also, the portrayal of him as a comical figure bouncing along the boundary rope, animatedly whispering instructions into the ears of his players. Having been with him during serious injuries, Leipus got a glimpse of the real Nehra. (File) Having been with him during serious injuries, Leipus got a glimpse of the real

Nehra. The world, by habit, reveres the stereotypical strong, silent coaches. A thinking coach always has an edge over a talking coach. GT's record under Nehra — one title, one runner-up finish — hasn't been able to change that. Leipus says his sessions with Nehra have never been the 'walk-in, walk-out' kind; they would always go on for hours. Fate had put two men from diverse backgrounds in a room for hours and they would talk about anything under the sun, not just cricket. "He is a pacer, it's only the batsmen who mostly talk cricket," the physio, chuckling. Having been with him during serious injuries — the toughest time for a professional athlete — the physio got a glimpse of the real Nehra. There are a few surprises. "He brings a lot to the table—calmness, friendliness, mental toughness, perspective and the ability to go out and perform without any sort of reservation or fear." Contrary to what most of the cricketing world thinks, Leipus says that Nehra wasn't a pacer with a fragile frame but it was his bowling action — "one foot pointing at 12 o'clock, the other at 6 o'clock" — that impacted his back, pelvis, hips, big toe and ankle. He was walking wounded on most days of his playing career but never gave up. It's a trait that would help him spread positivity around him — be it as a player or coach. "He is always positive. If he got injured, he would be thinking on the lines: 'I'll get injured. I'll get over it. I'll come back'. So as a coach, if a team isn't doing well, he is expected to say 'Guys, maybe we failed today, but 'listen, that's just cricket', says the Australian, constantly reminding during the conversation that since he hasn't worked with Nehra as a coach, his views are based on his long experience of working with him when he was a player. Nehra's in-born 'jack-in-the-box' persona too can come handy. "There can't be a price for the energy that he brings with him. You don't want somebody to sit back as a wallflower. He is also not bouncing off the walls. He isn't the kind who would suck energy from you. He actually gives, it's a positive energy," says Leipus. A thinking coach always has an edge over a talking coach. GT's record under Nehra — one title,

## China's Fan Siqi among lead stars for Ultimate Table Tennis auction



Hyderabad: Chinese paddler Fan Siqi, World No. 13 Bernadette Szocs, Olympians Aruna Quadri and Alvaro Robles, and several rising Indian paddlers led by Junior World No. 6 Ankur Bhattacharjee, will headline the Ultimate Table Tennis Season 6 player auction, set to take place in Mumbai on Tuesday.

For the first time in UTT history, team rosters will be shaped through a unique player auction, giving franchises greater control over their recruitment and strategies. Among the 56 players in the auction pool, youngsters Diya Chitale and Yashaswini Ghorpade — India's top-ranked women's singles players — teenage sensation Syndrelia Das, and former Under-17 World No. 1 Payas Jain lead a group of 25 rising Indian stars under 25, who have earned their spot alongside seasoned pros like two-time champion Harmeet Desai, former winners Sathiyam Gnanasekaran, Manika Batra, Sutirtha Mukherjee, and WTT Contender Lagos 2024 winner Sreeja Akula. All eight teams have been allotted 50 lakh virtual tokens to bid on the players, along with a one-time Right to Match (RTM) card to retain a player from the

previous season by matching the final bid price.

The franchise-based league, promoted by Niraj Bajaj and Vita Dani under the aegis of the Table Tennis Federation of India, will take place from May 29 to June 15 at the EKA Arena in Ahmedabad. "UTT Season 6's auction pool reflects just how far table tennis in India has come in the last five years. With 25 players under the age of 25 earning a spot in the pool alongside seasoned Indian and international stars, it's clear the next generation is already stepping up to the table," they said in a statement. "Hosting the league in Ahmedabad, a city at the heart of India's Olympic 2036 dream, feels fitting, as UTT continues to be the binding force bringing top-tier table tennis to every corner of the country."

Twelve of the 16 foreign paddlers to feature in UTT Season 6 auction are Olympians. Among those returning from previous seasons are UTT Season 2 champion Adriana Diaz and Spaniard Maria Xiao. Making their debuts are Britt Eerland, Dina Meshref, Zeng Jian, and Giorgia Piccolin. France's Lilian Bardet, who impressed in his debut last season, returns, while former UTT champion Tiago Apolonia and Kirill Gerassimenko add experience. Kanak Jha, Ricardo Walther, and Isaac Quek are entering the player pool for the first time. Meanwhile, the Indian contingent is packed with emerging stars, including World Youth Championship medalists Taneesha Kotecha, Suhana Saini, and Sayali Wani, Asian Championships medalist Sarth Mishra, and rising talents like Jennifer Varghese, Abhinandh PB, and Deepit Patil, who are looking to go shoulder-to-shoulder with senior stalwarts. Players will be divided into four base price categories—Pool A (11 lakh tokens), Pool B (7 lakh), Pool C (4 lakh), and Pool D (2 lakh). Bidding will follow a structured format with increments of 10,000 tokens, ensuring a competitive and strategic selection process as teams build their squads for UTT Season 6.

## Transfer window shopping: why Alexander Isak is the dream — and will likely remain just that

GNS News Agency, April 16

In the summer of 2022, Newcastle forward Callum Wilson injured his hamstring, setting in motion a sequence of events that has culminated in Alexander Isak transforming into one of the most sought-after players in world football. Newcastle's controversial Saudi Arabia-led takeover in 2021, with the Public Investment Fund buying the club in a deal worth just over £300 million, meant it could target players it hadn't previously. When a football team is bankrolled by the world's richest ownership, there is — as then Newcastle sporting director Dan Ashworth said — "no ceiling" on its potential. But the club was reportedly unsure about recruiting Isak. Although the Swedish striker looked to have all the physical attributes elite centre-forwards typically possess — speed, power, ball-striking — his numbers in the Spanish top flight weren't off the charts. Given his return of just six goals in 32 games for Real Sociedad in 2021-22, there was a feeling that he was not ready for a top-level move, especially at the £60 million price-tag the LaLiga club was quoting.

Trajectory-altering move But Wilson's injury changed Newcastle's thinking and seemingly forced its hand — the club shattered its transfer record in August 2022. The rest is history. Isak has developed over the last three years into Tyneside's crown jewel: a stunningly complete No. 9 with a love for big games, capable of terrorising defences and deciding matches with moments of individual brilliance.

The 6'3" sharpshooter recently helped Newcastle win its first major domestic trophy in 70 years, scoring what turned out to be the match-winner in the 2-1 victory over Liverpool in the League Cup final at Wembley. His superb drilled first-time finish ensured that a club that had endured five relegations to the second tier since its last trophy finally had a moment to celebrate. Indeed, Isak's exploits have even led to suggestions that Newcastle is a one-man team. When this view was put to Magpies manager Eddie Howe, he didn't agree. But he did talk up his star attacker's value to the side. "We recognise Alex's strengths and his abilities," said Howe. "I don't think we are a one-man team, I will never classify us in that bracket, but Alex brings unique qualities in that centre-forward role, in that pivotal middle role that we need." The numbers certainly highlight Isak's importance to Newcastle. Of the top 10 goal scorers in Europe's top five leagues this season, no player has a higher share of his team's goals. Both Mohamed Salah and Isak account for 38% of their side's goals. Both their contributions have been influential. Salah is having a historic season, powering Liverpool's title charge, while Isak has Newcastle in the reckoning for a spot in next season's Champions League. Level raiser: The 6'3" sharpshooter helped Newcastle win its first major domestic trophy in 70 years, scoring what turned out to be the match-winner in the 2-1 victory over Liverpool in the League Cup final at Wembley Stadium. | Photo credit: Getty Images Isak's brace against Nottingham Forest in February saw him reach 50 Premier League goals in 76 games. Only six players, headed by Haaland, have joined the 50-goal club in fewer games. Earlier this month, a typically predatory strike in a 2-1 win over Brentford helped Isak bring up his 20th league goal of the season, the second season in a row he has reached this milestone. Isak's acceleration, dribbling and finishing are elite, he has sharpened his movement in the six-yard box and, as per FBref.com, he is in Europe's top 4% over the last year for goal-creating actions. And yet for all his success in England, especially over the last two seasons, it still doesn't feel like he has unlocked his full potential.

So it's no surprise that Europe's heavyweights are monitoring the 25-year-old's situation at Newcastle, aware that if they can secure his peak years, they will be well positioned to win the biggest trophies. He is, in many ways, the dream signing: the one that makes a team inevitable. Liverpool and Arsenal are the clubs with the strongest reported links, while Chelsea and Barcelona have not hidden their admiration for the silken-skilled marksman. Liverpool and Arsenal, who boast two of the best centre-back pairings in club football, have experienced first-hand the threat Isak carries and the chaos he creates. When defenders of the quality of Virgil van Dijk, Ibrahim Konate, William Saliba and Gabriel Magalhaes suffer moments of uncertainty, you know this is a No. 9 worth breaking the bank for. Isak has always attracted the top clubs. Born in a Stockholm suburb to Eritrean parents, he became Sweden's youngest international goal-scorer at 17 years and 113 days. During a sparkling debut season at Swedish side AIK in 2016, representatives from 90 European clubs turned up at the ground to watch him play. But while he was certainly available — not to mention affordable — back then, the situ-



ation is significantly different now. Newcastle, understandably, does not want to lose Isak — he is both cult hero and talisman, a point of difference and a profile extremely difficult to replace. When the Tyneside club had to sell last season to ensure it complied with the Premier League's Profit and Sustainability Rules (PSR), winger Anthony Gordon and central midfielder Bruno Guimaraes were players it reluctantly considered cashing in on. Isak was deemed untouchable.

Significantly, Newcastle also has an extremely strong hand. Isak's six-year contract runs until June 30, 2028. While the club wants to tie him down with an extension this summer, there is no cause for panic even if an agreement isn't reached. It's also unlikely that the Swede will agitate for a move if the club secures Champions League football with a top-five finish. Newcastle is currently fifth and, with a game in hand and Isak firing, will back itself to make the cut. Back up that money truck: Given the threat he carries and the chaos he creates even against elite defences, Isak is a centre-forward worth breaking the bank for. But will even a fee in the £120-130 million range tempt Newcastle? | Photo credit: Getty Images Back up that money truck: Given the threat he carries and the chaos he creates even against elite defences, Isak is a centre-forward worth breaking the bank for. But will even a fee in the £120-130 million range tempt Newcastle?

Isak said last month that he is not in negotiations with Newcastle over a new contract, sparking speculation that he was waiting to see whether the club got into Europe's top competition before committing his future. But even if Newcastle doesn't finish in the top five, the price point at which it will even begin to consider answering an interested club's call is likely to be prohibitive. There were reports that a fee of £150 million was the minimum, but even a price of £120-130 million can torpedo the transfer budgets of most clubs in a PSR world. The transfer window is known as the silly season, with unreasonable sums having been spent on jaw-dropping moves in the past. But the likelihood of Newcastle not finishing in the top five, Isak pushing to leave and a buying club reaching an agreement with the Magpies appears remote at the moment.

## No concern with Maxwell's form, says Punjab Kings batter Nehal Wadhera

GNS News Agency, April 16 Hyderabad: Punjab Kings key batter Nehal Wadhera said there were no concerns about the indifferent form of the star all-rounder Glen Maxwell. In the pre-match briefing on the eve of the IPL league match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Friday, Wadhera said the way he batted he was looking very good and hopefully would see some good innings come from him soon.

On the team's mood, Wadhera said that the camaraderie between the boys and the coaches was very, very good. "I think it's a very healthy relationship which is being built in this team. So I think everyone is supporting each other which is very much necessary in a tournament like IPL," he said.

"And, even if someone has a bad day still there is everyone backing him on that day. I think these are the basic things which actually help a team build stronger and help you win more games in tournaments like IPL," Wadhera said.

Reflecting on the poor run of SRH, Wadhera said their job was to do well with bat and ball. "We just want to bat and bowl the best way we can. SRH, as we all know, is a very dangerous side and we are not taking the game lightly," he said. "Yes, we are really looking forward to beating them here at home ground. I don't think toss matters much on this pitch," Wadhera signed off.



## G20 movie review: Viola Davis is wasted in Hollywood's version of a Sunny Deol potboiler; laughably loud, chaotically clumsy



disciplining her teenage daughter for giving the secret service the slip, and partying with her friends at a local bar.

As punishment, she decrees that both her children will accompany her and their father, played by Anthony Anderson, to the G20 summit in South Africa. Danielle is determined to get world leaders to support her radical plans to tackle world hunger. She already knows that the British Prime Minister might be a tough nut to crack, but little does she know that they'll be forced to cooperate — is this movie a political allegory? — in the aftermath of what happens next. Moments into the summit, a group of masked men barges in and takes everyone hostage. The world's most powerful individuals are left cowering for their lives. The leader of the mercenary squad, a man named Rutledge, says that he has had it with politicians stealing the public's money, and announces a plan to get people to abandon traditional currency and buy crypto instead.

Played by Anthony Starr off The Boys, Rutledge isn't as noble as his masterplan might make him seem. It's ultimate riches that he's after, not social equality. After a brief shootout, Danielle slips away to safety with her personal bodyguard, and together, they decide to find their way towards the basement. This is where her car is parked; it's their only ticket out of this mess. As Danielle and her little troupe rushes towards the basement, Rutledge releases doctored videos of the world leaders urging their people to put all their stock in crypto-currency. He also manages to get his hands on her husband and kids, and shoves them into the room with all the other hostages. Danielle has no choice but to retrace her steps and rescue her family. G20 tries to be topical, weaving elements like artificial intelligence and the economic crisis into its harebrained plot. But in its

heart of hearts, it's a Sunny Deol movie. Let's not kid ourselves. A few years ago — actually, it's been over a decade — the box office saw a clash between Olympus Has Fallen and White House Down, two movies with near-identical set-ups. One starred Jamie Foxx as the president, while the other featured Aaron Eckhart. Both films seem extremely dated now; one of them had North Koreans as the villains. But G20 seems to have gone to the Top Gun: Maverick school for political commentary, in that it doesn't stick its neck out and give its villains an overt identity. Rutledge is Australian, but his nationality has nothing to do with his ideology. His henchmen sound like they're South African, but this could simply mean that he's a cheapskate. Why fly folks in when local talent is available? The one thing that the villains have in common, however, is that they're all white. The heroes, on the other hand, are all persons of colour. Because G20 is so forgettable, you might find your mind drifting during its many dingly shot action sequences. It's one thing to laugh at such movies, but they make you wonder if something this harmless would even be allowed in India. Would the PMO object to the sight of our elected leader brandishing an assault rifle and getting into scuffles with random villains? On that note, the Indian PM is featured in G20, but he's restricted to a background presence. It's difficult to recall if he escapes without harm, to be honest. So much for announcing to the world that we're a force to be reckoned with. We couldn't secure representation in a disposable Prime Video movie. Perhaps they should've set it inside the Bharat Mandapam? But then they'd take offence at the suggestion that such a security breach could happen here. Ah, well.

G20

Director — Patricia RiggenCast — Viola Davis, Anthony Starr, Anthony Anderson, Ramón Rodríguez, Douglas Hodge

## Mandira Bedi felt 'dismissed, disrespected' as a cricket presenter, recalls feeling 'powerless, belittled': 'I told myself it must be me'

Mandira Bedi, who had already established herself as an actor, debuted as a television presenter during the 2003 Cricket World Cup. She had appeared in popular films like Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, but cricket was uncharted territory for her. In those days, there weren't many female cricket presenters in India, and Mandira had to face a lot of sexism from her male colleagues. In a recent interview, she said that she felt "dismissed" and "disrespected." She shared that while things have changed a bit now, the world of cricket presenters is still largely a boys' club.

In a chat with Yuva, Mandira shared, "I felt dismissed and I felt disrespected. I felt powerless and I felt like I don't know what am I doing here. I questioned myself and belittled myself saying, 'It must be me'." Mandira said that after a while, when she realised that her questions for the panel of experts were being ignored, she decided to stand her ground and make herself known. Earlier, when veterans on the panel ignored her questions, she felt disrespected but later, she decided that she will keep asking the question until she gets her answer. "Somewhere along the way, when I realised that there's no pressure on me and nothing is off the table and I need to ask what I want to ask, whatever question is in my head could be a question in somebody else's head, nothing is off the table and if someone disrespects me, I will repeat that question till they give me an answer, and everything changed. The dynamic changed. And liter-



ally, after one week of being in absolute hell, when I realised that, 'You know what, it's life and I am sitting in the presenter's chair and I am the one who is supposed to ask the questions, I am going to ask them,'" she said. Mandira said that unfortunately, not much has changed more than two decades later. "When you say it was a boys' club, it still is a boys' club," she said, and added, "I did a tournament recently. Things have changed but not completely. Anyone who is on the outside, whether she has any knowledge of the game or not, they will be given a certain treatment.

## Hrithik heaps praise on Nick Jonas' performance



Mumbai: Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan went for Nick Jonas's play 'The Last Five Years' and said that he went in thinking it'll be a fun night out with friends and came out mind-blown. Hrithik attended Nick's play along with his girlfriend, Saba Azaad, and actress Priyanka. He even shared a picture on Instagram posing with Saba, Priyanka, Nick, actress Adrienne Warren, and director Whitney White.

"We went in thinking it'll be a fun night out with friends and came out mind blown and inspired like never before. The @thelastfiveyears is an unmissable experience! @nickjonas you are simply incredible. What a performance. @adriennelwarren you are fabulous. Such an amazing show. Thank you @priyankachopra for an amazing night of theatre, music, fun and food! My Congratulations to the director @yesimwhitneywhite," he wrote as the caption.

The 'War' actor also shared a few pictures of Nick and Adrienne from the play. In other news, Priyanka is all set to star alongside Hrithik in 'Krrish 4'. The two have previously worked together in movies such as 'Krrish', 'Krrish 3', and 'Agnepath'. "The excitement for Krrish 4 is building with each passing day, and the project is not even on the floors yet! This is one juggernaut of a project, and Hrithik seems to have grand plans to make it one of the biggest films ever made in Indian cinema," said a source.

calling it a huge development, the source added, "There is a huge development that Hrithik Roshan has roped in Priyanka Chopra in the film! Hrithik and Priyanka are one of the most loved on-screen pairs in the history of Indian cinema, and they are back to entertain audiences again in Krrish 4! It is massive news!" Filmmaker Rakesh

Roshan announced Hrithik Roshan's directorial debut with 'Krrish 4' as he passed the baton of a franchise that he shaped and nurtured in the past 22 years. The film is being produced by Yash Raj Films in association with Rakesh Roshan. The Indian superstar Hrithik Roshan will be swinging between the two departments of direction and acting for the film as he essays the titular superhero in the franchise. The shooting for the film is set to begin early next year.

## After Manoj Kumar's death, Dharmendra said, 'Tu chala gaya mujhe chhod ke?': Brother reveals they shared clothes, struggled together

Actor Manoj Kumar's passing was a huge blow to Bollywood, and left the industry a state of mourning. Kumar's brother, Manish Goswami, recently reflected on his legacy, and recalled anecdotes about his life and career. He said that his brother and Dharmendra rose up the ranks together, and were so close that they would share each other's clothes. At one point, when they felt like they weren't going to make it, they even contemplated returning to their villages. Talking to Vicky Lalwani, Goswami said, "He was very close to Dharmendra ji; they used to struggle together at Ranjit Studios. One day, both of them even decided to leave Bollywood and go back to their respective villages due to lack of work." The two actors worked together in films such as Shaadi (1962) and Mera Naam Joker (1970), and the latter is considered a classic of Indian cinema. Directed by Raj Kapoor, the cast of the film included Raj Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor, Simi Garewal, Manoj Kumar and Dharmendra. Elaborating on their relationship, Goswami said, "They used to share clothes, and he only addressed Manoj as Hari; he never used his stage name. So, when he came for the prayer meet, he said, 'Hari, tu chala gaya mujhe chhod ke (Hari, you have left me behind)'.

## Rasha Thadani channels inner princess in icy blue gown

GNS News Agency, April 16

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Rasha Thadani looked every inch Elsa from 'Frozen' as she channeled her inner princess dressed in an icy blue gown. Rasha took to Instagram, where she dropped a gamut of images of herself, where she channeled a dreamy yet vintage look.

In the pictures, the actress, who is the daughter of Bollywood star Raveena Tandon, is seen in a stunning icy blue off-shoulder gown. The ensemble features delicate ruffles and a corset-style lace-up back. Looking every inch gorgeous, Rasha's dress flows into many layers, giving it a princess aesthetic. To complete the look, the actress chose to style it in soft curls pinned up nicely, allowing a few tendrils to frame her face. She added a jeweled choker neck piece that gives a touch of sparkle to the enchanting look. With a soft and joyful smile, the actress added the caption 'fairytale whispers'.

Rasha's best friend Tamannaah Bhatia dropped three queen emojis in the comment section on Instagram. Rasha made her Bollywood debut in 2025 with the period drama 'Azaad', directed by Abhishek Kapoor. The film also stars Ajay Devgn, Diana Penty, and Aaman Devgn. The film, which is set in 1920s India, follows a young stable boy who bonds with a spirited horse. Amid rebellion and tyranny, his quest to ride the majestic animal becomes a journey of courage, awakening him to the country's fight for freedom.

On April 1, Rasha was seen attending Tamannaah's Mata Ki Chowki during Navratri. At the celebration, Tamannaah was fully immersed in the spirit of bhakti and showcased her devotion through graceful moves. In the clip, the 'Sikandar Ka Muqaddar' actress was seen fully immersed in the celebration, dancing joyfully to bhajans. She looked elegant in a beautiful pink silk suit, embracing a simple yet graceful style.

She shared a video from the celebration on her Instagram handle and captioned it, 'Jai Mata Di.'

## Mukesh Khanna pretends to beat anyone who accuses him of mimicking Amitabh Bachchan: 'If I came before him, people would say Amitabh mimics me'

Apart from his iconic roles on Indian television, actor Mukesh Khanna is known for outspoken nature, which often rubs people the wrong way. The Mahabharata actor has spoken about his contemporaries, and has often addressed the accusations that were hurled his way for seemingly aping Amitabh Bachchan's acting style. Recently, on a podcast, he talked about his image as an actor, and addressed the accusations once again.

In an episode of the Uncensored with Shardul podcast, Khanna pretended to punch an invisible person, and said that he doesn't appreciate these comparisons. "When god creates the mould for a person, I think mine and Amitabh Bachchan's moulds got mixed. That is why people say, 'Look, he is copying Amit Ji'. If I would have come before him, people would say that Amitabh copies Mukesh Khanna. There are people who copy others on purpose, but in this case, Amit ji has the same height, body, way of speaking. So, all I'll say is that this is the way I act, and you cannot copy and mimic someone for two and a half hours," he said.

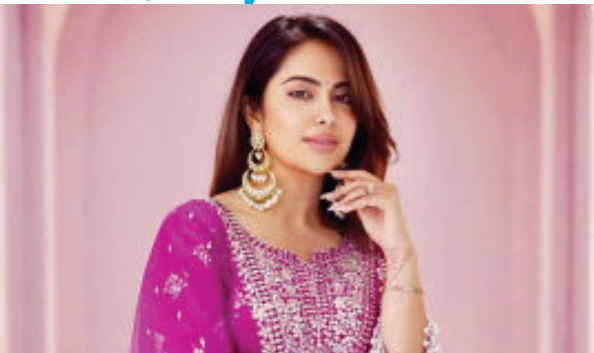
This isn't the first time that he has addressed this subject. In an appearance on the YouTube channel Hindi Rush, he said that after shooting an ad, a man came up to him and shared what Amitabh thought of his performance. "He told me that Amit ji saw the ad and said, 'Saala copy karta hai (He's copying me)'. You can call me self-respecting or stubborn, but I told that man, 'Pagal hai tu, woh aisa bolege? (Are you mad? Do you think he'd say this?)' But that sentence stayed in my mind."

He mentioned that people call him self-centered and say that he reminisces in the past too much. "People keep telling me that I don't move on from Shaktimaan and Bhisma, but why should I? I am the one who created these characters, I have given those characters my face and my image. I have done two such iconic roles and I have no ambition of doing another one like them, I used to have that, but not anymore," said the actor. After becoming a household name thanks to the Mahabharata television series, Mukesh Khanna created and produced the Shaktimaan show, which began airing on DD in 1997 and ran till 2005, with over 500 episodes.

## Farah Khan's cook Dilip gives a tour of his newly-constructed six-bedroom bungalow in Bihar, introduces his family.

Farah Khan's cook, Dilip, is a celebrity in his own right, with many viewers of her vlogs wanting to know about his personal life. In these vlogs, the choreographer-director shot with Bollywood celebs such as Aditi Rao Hydari, Sunny Singh, Anu Malik, Karan Johar and Archana Puran Singh. She also shot with television stars Karan Patel, Karishma Tanna, Divyanka Tripathi and Vivek Dahiya. The common factor in all these videos, which have garnered millions of views, is Dilip. The two share playful banter with each other, with Farah often poking fun at Dilip, and Dilip giving it back. Farah often alludes to Dilip's newfound celebrity status, because of which he has been able to build a big bungalow in Bihar. A couple of months ago, she gave a tour of Dilip's village, when the bungalow was still under construction. The video has since garnered over 6.2 million views. Dilip flew from Mumbai to his village in Bihar for 15 days, where he introduced audiences to his family, including wife Savita and three sons. Dilip also showed the cattle that his family owns, and also introduced audiences to his old parents. In the vlog, Dilip gave a tour of his farm, which had mango and bamboo trees, as well as a lake, where they go fishing and grow water chestnuts. In a vlog with Karan Patel, Dilip demanded a BMW car from Farah ahead of his shoot with Shah Rukh Khan. Farah asked him, "Parso kiske sath shoot hai (Who do we have to shoot with day after tomorrow)?"

## Traditional Indian outfits are underrated, says Avika Gor



Mumbai: Actress Avika Gor feels that wearing Indian ensembles such as sarees or salwar kameez is hugely underrated, especially among the younger generation.

Talking about one underrated habit or mindset she believes more people should adopt, Avika said, "I think wearing traditional Indian outfits like sarees or salwar kameez is hugely underrated, especially among the younger generation. In cities like Mumbai or Hyderabad, I hardly see youngsters embracing this part of our culture." "Sarees are so graceful, and it would be lovely to see more people wearing them casually—even at airports. Add a little kahal and a bindi, and you've got a stunning look. I hope more young people start seeing the beauty in that."

The actress, who is famously known for playing the role of Anandi in Balika Vadhu, for which she won the Rajiv Gandhi Award in 2009, prefers timeless classics when it comes to fashion. Revealing the reason, Avika said it is "because the fact that they are 'timeless' means they've been loved by generations. There's a sense of certainty and ease in choosing them." She added, "Trends often require a lot of effort and come with the risk of going wrong. But with classics, there's no hesitation or doubt—they just work. That's what I believe in."

It was in 2007 when Avika made her Hindi television debut with Ssshhhh...Koi Hai in 2007. She made her film debut in Tollywood with Uyyala Jampala in 2013. After she rose to fame with her work in Balika Vadhu, the actress was seen in shows such as Sasural Simar Ka and films including "1920: Horrors Of The Heart" and "Bloody Ishq." "How has her style evolved over the years?" Avika said, "Honestly, on screen, I don't think I have much of a say. My look is shaped by the designers, stylists, and directors who envision the character I'm playing. So, the style you see there belongs to the character, not me." "But off-screen, I've definitely evolved. I've learned that comfort should be a priority. I've also started embracing my own preferences—like knowing a red dress might suit me better than a black one. Saying 'no' to an outfit that doesn't feel right to me is something I never used to do, and that's the kind of personal evolution I really admire in myself."

## Sudesh Lehri, who once sold vegetables for a living, shows off 'ameeri' in tour of Mumbai apartment with home theatre, modular kitchen, spectacular views

Sudesh Lehri's rags-to-riches story is the stuff of legend. The actor-comedian, who once used to work at tea stalls, factories, and made footwear for a living, now owns a luxury apartment in Mumbai. His property includes three bedrooms, one huge dining room, a modular kitchen, a private studio, home theatre, as well as a huge living room. Sudesh Lehri recently gave a tour of his house to Pinkvilla, where he said that he and his family designed the home themselves. "We didn't hire an interior designer, because they are expensive," joked the actor. With a laugh, he said that he'd like to show off his 'ameeri' by giving fans a glimpse of the spectacular views of the Mumbai skyline that he can enjoy from his house. The next stop of his house tour was his nicely done modular kitchen and dining area, where Sudesh