



THE Hans India



We will move court again to resist voter deletions: Didi
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday hit out at the BJP and the Election Commission over voter deletions during the SIR exercise and said her party will move a court again to resist the removal of electors from the rolls. **P10**

Together, let us empower our Nari Shakti!
In the coming days, India will be immersed in a festive season, with celebrations taking place across the length and breadth of the nation. The people of Assam will mark Rangali Bihu while Odisha will celebrate Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti. **P6**

Centre lining up Rs 2.5-L-Cr guarantee scheme for MSMEs
The government is considering a Rs 2.5 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme to support businesses, particularly MSMEs, hit by the ongoing West Asia crisis, sources said. **P11**

Atlee unveils 'RAAKA', Allu Arjun roars
In a blockbuster announcement that has set the Indian film industry abuzz, Icon Star Allu Arjun, acclaimed director Atlee, and entertainment giant Sun Pictures, led by Kalanithi Maran, have unveiled the much-anticipated title of their mammoth project. **P12**

Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Vijayawada | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi
Follow @ thehansindia / thehansindiaweb / thehansindia / TheHansIndiaWeb / thehansindia

WINDOWS

Priyank Kharge backs AICC chief's 'snake' remark

BENGALURU: Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge on Wednesday defended his father and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's "poisonous snake" remark against the BJP and RSS. He also hit out at Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, calling him "frustrated" and accusing him of "caste privilege" over his remarks on Mallikarjun Kharge.

"What has he (Mallikarjun Kharge) said? He said one must act if one encounters a poisonous snake. If you find a poisonous snake, will you feed it milk and nurture it, or will you drive it away?" Kharge asked in response to a question. Speaking to reporters, he said, "Who is sowing the seeds of communal poison in our society? Why? Should we save and nurture such ideologies and principles? No. That is what he (Mallikarjun Kharge) has said. We have been saying this for a long time, not just now."

Termining the RSS ideology and principles detrimental to the country's and society's progress, the minister said their perspective does not accommodate the Constitution, minorities, backward classes, Adivasis, Dalits, or even women. "They believe in Manusmriti; we follow the Constitution," he said. Questioning what one would do upon encountering a poisonous snake, Kharge said, "Will you call a conservationist? They would take it and release it in the forest. If you don't find a conservationist, what will you do? What do people in villages do? If an ideology is not good for the progress of the country, it should not be adopted."

At an election rally in Assam's Sribhumi district on Monday, citing the Quran, Mallikarjun Kharge said that if a poisonous snake passes in front of someone offering namaz, the person should stop the prayer and kill the snake. "I would say that breaking the namaz does not matter. The RSS and the BJP are that poisonous snake. If you don't kill this snake, you will not survive," he said.

Calling Sarma "frustrated" over his remarks against the AICC chief, Priyank said Mallikarjun Kharge has been in politics for about 50 years, and that neither the BJP nor the Prime Minister has answers to the questions he raises in Parliament and outside.

Trust, Reliability & Service
Synonymous with Kapil Chits

KAPIL GROUP 46 Years

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com

KAPIL CHITS
SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH KAPIL

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Polls will be fear-free, violence-free, intimidation-free... shall I also add voter-free?

Ceasefire sealed, civilization 'saved'

DUBAI/TEHRAN

IRAN, the United States and Israel reached a tentative, two-week ceasefire Wednesday in the war that tore across the Middle East and disrupted the global energy market, with US President Donald Trump pulling back from his threats to destroy Iranian "civilization." But questions emerged over what appeared to be dueling proposals to halt the fighting, with Iran insisting it would control and charge ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz as well as enrich uranium. Trump initially said Iran proposed a "workable" 10-point plan that could help end the war he launched with Israel on Feb. 28. But he later called the plan fraudulent without elaborating. Trump has said ending Iran's nuclear program entirely was a key point of the war. Israel backed the US ceasefire with Iran but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday it doesn't cover fighting against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which continued through the morning. That

US, Israel and Iran agree to a 2-week ceasefire as Trump pulls back on his threats; Trump says moment could mark new 'Golden Age' for Mideast; Democrats call for removal of Trump; push back from some Republicans too; Trump warns of 50% tariffs on nation supplying arms to Iran; Iran confirms participation in Pak-hosted peace talks with US

contradicted comments from Pakistan, a key mediator that said talks over cementing a peace plan would begin as soon as Friday in Islamabad. Pakistan also said the ceasefire began immediately, while Iran launched attacks on Gulf Arab states and Israel soon after.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has confirmed Tehran's participation in Pakistan-facilitated peace talks with the US in Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday. The talks will



be held on Friday. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said passage through the strait would be allowed under Iranian military management. It wasn't clear whether that meant Iran would completely loosen its chokehold on the waterway

Trump in a social media post declared the ceasefire agreement a "big day for World Peace" and that the US "will be helping with the traffic buildup in the Strait of Hormuz." "There will be lots of positive action!" Trump predicted in his

post. "Big money will be made. Iran can start the reconstruction process. We'll be loading up with supplies of all kinds, and just hangin' around" in order to make sure that everything goes well. I feel confident that it will." Trump's message on his Truth Social website signals Washington's concern about Iran maintaining its chokehold over the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, through which 20% of all oil and natural gas passes in peacetime.

Trump's threats of wiping out the "whole civilisation" in Iran drew strong condemnation from Democrat leaders, who called for his "immediate removal" and a push back from some Republicans who hoped and prayed that the remarks were "bluster".

US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on Wednesday claimed that Tehran begged for a truce.

Trump warned that any nation providing military weapons to Iran will face an immediate 50 percent tariff on all goods exported to the United States.

Will 'dig up' uranium buried in Iran: Trump

DUBAI: President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the United States would cooperate with Iran to excavate and remove enriched uranium buried during joint US-Israeli strikes last summer.

In a social media post, he emphasized that there would be no further uranium enrichment and claimed the material has remained untouched since the June attacks.

Iran claimed a 'historic victory' after the US agreed to a two-week ceasefire.

Foreign Affairs Expert Robinder Sachdev said that Trump's warning on Iran that its entire civilisation "will die" if a deal was not made raised the stakes for



the US President to take severe steps against the Islamic Regime, which pressured him to take a step back and lead to the ceasefire deal.

Maria Zakharova, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, says the United States and Israel

launched 'a one-track aggressive unprovoked attack' on Iran on February 28, which led to a "crushing defeat".

"Our country, from the very beginning, in its first statements, said that it was necessary to immediately stop this aggression, that

Iran declared victory by waging asymmetric war; US-Israel suffered 'crushing defeat' in Iran, Russia's Foreign Ministry; 'Trump's statements on Iran pressured him to step back'

there was no military solution to this situation or any attempt to establish order in the region," she said on Sputnik radio.

'Caring for Indians my responsibility'

No gas, fuel paucity; saw 95% online LPG bookings: Govt

NEW DELHI

ABDUL Majid Hakeem Ilahi, Representative of Iran's Supreme Leader in India, on Wednesday said that when the conflict intensified, Iran also worked closely with the Indian embassy in Tehran to support students and visitors.

Ilahi, in a conversation with ANI, said that taking care of Indian brothers and sisters is his responsibility. "When this conflict intensified, I worked to ensure about 3,000 students from Tehran and other cities, mostly in medical sciences,



were moved to safe accommodations. We also worked closely with the Indian embassy in Tehran to support students and visitors. About 400 visitors were provided with accommodation and meals before I supported their travel to Armenia and then back to India. Taking care of our Indian brothers and sisters is my responsibility," he said.

The Indian Ministry of

Petroleum said that there is sufficient availability of liquefied petroleum gas and other fuels such as petrol and diesel despite tensions in West Asia

About 95 percent bookings of LPG cylinders are being made online and 91 percent of the refill deliveries are ensured through the delivery authentication code, which reflects that there was no diversion in deliveries.

LDF eyes hat-trick

Assam to vote in high-stakes polls on Thursday; BJP aims hat-trick, Congress eyes wrestling power; 9.50 lakh voters to decide fate of 294 candidates in Pandy; all arrangements in place

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala is all set for a crucial Assembly election on Thursday, with 2.71 crore voters poised to cast their franchise in a decisive contest that will test the ruling LDF's bid for a third consecutive term, the opposition UDF's comeback prospects, and the NDA's push to open its account in the state. After nearly a month of intense campaigning, the southern state will go to the polls in a single phase, with voting to be held from 7 am to 6 pm across all 140 constituencies where 883 candidates are in the fray. The electorate comprises 1.32 crore men, 1.39 crore women and 273 transgender persons, along with over 2.42 lakh overseas voters, underlining the scale of the electoral exercise, according to Election Commission figures. The contest, though triangular, is rooted in Kerala's traditionally bipolar political landscape, where power has largely alternated between the LDF and the UDF. The high-stakes elections to the 126-member Assam assembly will

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



be held on Thursday, with most seats slated to witness a direct contest between the BJP-led NDA and the opposition coalition helmed by the Congress. The BJP is eyeing a third straight term in power in these elections, while the Congress is looking to wrest the state, from

where it was ousted in 2016. Around 9.50 lakh voters will decide the electoral fate of 294 candidates in the Assembly elections in Puducherry on April 9 and all arrangements have been made for smooth conduct of polls, CEO P Jawahar said here on Wednesday.

Seven gang-rape schoolgirl in Bareilly

BAREILLY: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by seven people in a cafe here in the Bhojipura area, police said on Wednesday. On April 2, the girl was on her way to school when she was forced by one of the accused to ride on his bike to the cafe, where other people were already present. Deputy Superintendent of Police (North) Mukesh Chandra Mishra said the student was allegedly threatened with the circulation of a video of an earlier sexual assault. According to an FIR lodged at Bhojipura Police Station, the accused were identified as Asad Haider alias Karan, Chand, restaurant owner Saifi, Samir Ahmad, Banti, and two unnamed persons.

Mishra said that on March 19, Asad had taken the girl to a room above the 'Saifi Cafe' and sexually assaulted her, filming the act in the process. He allegedly threatened to circulate the clip on social media if she told anyone.

The DSP said that on April 2, the girl was on her way to school to collect her mark sheet when Chand stopped her and warned that if she did not meet Asad, he would post the video online.

He took the girl to the cafe where she was raped by the accused. The girl came home with the help of a passerby in a state of distress. Mishra said she hid the incident from her family for two days out of fear, and spoke up only after relatives noticed her deteriorating condition.

Court grants divorce to rape convict Narayan Sai's wife

INDORE: An Indore family court has granted a divorce decree to the wife of Narayan Sai, rape convict and jailed son of self-proclaimed godman Asaram, and ordered him to pay her a permanent maintenance of Rs 2 crore within three months, the woman's lawyer has said. Narayan Sai is lodged in a jail in Surat district of Gujarat after being sentenced to life imprisonment in a rape case.

The court's order of April 2 dissolves his 18-year-old marriage, Anuragchandra Goyal, the lawyer representing Narayan Sai's Indore-based wife, Janaki Harpalani, told reporters on Tuesday. Goyal said his client had filed a divorce petition in the local family court in 2018, alleging mental cruelty and other charges against her husband, and seeking a lump sum maintenance of Rs 5 crore.

State sees drop in groundwater use, surge in recharge capacity

2025 report

► According to the report, overall groundwater extraction has reduced from 68.44 per cent in 2024 to 66.49 per cent in 2025, indicating more responsible and sustainable usage patterns across the state

BENGALURU: Karnataka has recorded a significant decline in groundwater usage alongside a notable increase in annual recharge capacity, reflecting the impact of sustained water conservation efforts and good rainfall, Minister N S Boseraju said on Wednesday.

Releasing the 2025 Groundwater Assessment Report at Vikas Soudha, he said the gains are the result of good rainfall, focused policy interventions, and large-scale water conservation initiatives implemented over the past two

years under the leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

According to the report, overall groundwater extraction has reduced from 68.44 per cent in 2024 to 66.49 per cent in 2025, indicating more

responsible and sustainable usage patterns across the state. At the same time, annual groundwater recharge capacity has increased from 18.74 billion cubic metres (BCM) in 2024 to 19.28 BCM in 2025, while annual extractable groundwater resources

rose from 16.88 BCM to 17.41 BCM, the minister's office said in a statement.

"This simultaneous reduction in usage and increase in recharge reflects our government's commitment to long-term water sustainability," the Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology Minister said. The improvement has been driven largely by the expansion of water conservation structures (WCS) across the state. Recharge through such structures increased by 29.11 per cent, from 0.81 BCM to 1.04

BCM within a year, the report stated.

Notably, the number of water conservation works has risen sharply from 3.15 lakh in 2024 to 3.94 lakh in 2025, strengthening the state's groundwater recharge ecosystem. The report indicates improvement in groundwater status across 11 taluks, with several regions moving to safer categories.

Highlighting these changes, the minister pointed out that Chamarajanagar taluk has improved from "over-exploited"

to "critical". Similarly, taluks including Athani, Channappana, Molakalmuru, Ranabennur, Savanur, and Shiggaon have successfully transitioned from "semi-critical" to "safe" status.

Domestic groundwater extraction has also declined by 0.58 per cent, dropping from 1,21,731 hectare - metres (ham) in 2024 to 1,21,023 ham in 2025. Officials attribute this to increased reliance on surface water under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

Boseraju said that ini-

tiatives such as lake rejuvenation, year-round water supply through treated and surface water, sustained public awareness campaigns, and good rainfall have played a key role in reducing over-extraction and enhancing recharge.

"Instead of depending solely on the 120-day monsoon, we are ensuring water availability throughout all 365 days through scientific management. This has strengthened long-term water security for both farmers and urban residents," he said.



IN BRIEF

'Don't pay attention to auto gas shortage rumours'

BENGALURU: Karnataka government on Wednesday urged auto drivers, owners, and the public not to pay attention to any rumours regarding the shortage of auto gas. It stated that some private auto gas supply companies are experiencing a shortage; to remedy this, state-owned oil companies are supplying higher quantities of gas.

"It has been noticed that some media outlets have published false reports that auto owners and drivers are standing in queues in front of auto gas stations in the State, based on rumours that there is a shortage of auto gas," the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Disputes Department said in a release. It said there is a shortage in private auto gas supply companies.

To compensate, the public sector gas companies -- IOC, BPCL and HPCL -- have enhanced the supplies to retail outlets, the department said. Earlier, these three companies supplied 56.67 metric tonnes of auto gas per day, and currently, 83.58 metric tonnes/day are being supplied. "Therefore, it has been advised that auto owners and drivers in the State should not panic by listening to any rumours and cooperate with us," it added.

Karnataka Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs K H Muniyappa on Monday said he will call a meeting on April 10, aimed at resolving the Auto LPG supply issue in the state.

Arif murder case: Seven key accused arrested

MANGALURU: In a breakthrough in the Arif murder case, police have arrested seven key accused so far, with investigations revealing crucial details about the conspiracy and the support network behind the crime.

According to police, the murder was a premeditated act. On the day of the incident, the main accused -- Rifat, Juttu Ashfaq, Khaleel, Shakir, Irfan and Rizwan -- allegedly chased Arif's motorcycle and rammed it from behind using an Innova car. They then carried out a brutal assault before fleeing the scene. During interrogation, it has come to light that the crime involved coordinated efforts by multiple individuals. While six accused directly participated in the attack, another accused, Irshad, is said to have provided shelter and facilitated their movement to the crime spot. Investigators also revealed that Suhail had arranged the rented vehicle used in the crime and later fled abroad. Arshad is believed to have supplied weapons and kept the attackers informed about police movements.

In a development, a previous case accused, Ashwir, allegedly used digital methods to help the group evade surveillance. He is said to have enabled the use of WhatsApp accounts through Dubai-based OTPs to avoid detection.

Further, the probe has uncovered that Mustafa and Ashwir, currently abroad, extended financial assistance to the accused.

Police said that while seven persons, including the six main accused and Irshad, have been arrested, efforts are ongoing to trace and apprehend the remaining suspects. Certain sensitive details are being withheld at this stage in the interest of the investigation, officials added.

BEML-DMRC tie-up aims to boost metro rail projects in India, abroad

BENGALURU

BENGALURU-headquartered defence PSU BEML Ltd on Wednesday said it has signed a MoU with DMRC to collaborate on metro rail projects and expand its footprint in global markets, while also exploring domestic opportunities.

The Memorandum of Understanding aims to establish a framework for co-



operation between the two organisations, focusing on jointly identifying, pursuing and executing metro rail projects, BEML said in a statement.

Under the partnership, BEML and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd will work together in both domestic and international markets, leveraging their respective strengths.

Speaking on the occasion, BEML Chairman and

Managing Director Shantanu Roy said the association with DMRC would further strengthen the company's presence in the rail and metro sector.

He noted that BEML's capabilities in manufacturing rolling stock, combined with DMRC's expertise in executing and operating metro systems, would enable the two organisations to offer comprehensive, competitive and globally

benchmarked solutions. BEML recently secured its first overseas order for metro rolling stock, valued at around USD 60 million, for a project in Africa. DMRC Managing Director Vikas Kumar described the MoU as a "historic collaboration" between two Indian entities.

He said the partnership would significantly enhance urban mobility, particularly metro networks,

in India and abroad. Kumar also highlighted the need to develop indigenous propulsion systems for rolling stock through innovation and stressed the importance of designing and manufacturing Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) domestically for upcoming infrastructure projects such as high-speed rail, metro systems and Regional Rapid Transit Systems (RRTS).

BYPOLLS

Congress eyes retention, BJP seeks gains in two key seats

BENGALURU

VOTING for bypolls to two Assembly segments in Karnataka-Bagalkot and Davanagere South-will be held on Thursday, following a high-voltage campaign by both the ruling Congress and the opposition BJP. The polls were necessitated by the deaths of senior Congress MLAs H Y Meti and Shamanur Shivashankarappa. Counting of votes will take place on May 4.

Although the outcome of these by-elections is unlikely to have an immediate impact on state politics, the contest is seen as a matter of prestige for both the Congress and the BJP. While the Congress faces the challenge of retaining both seats, the BJP is aiming to wrest them and deliver a setback to the ruling party, which is currently witnessing an "internal power struggle" over leadership.

A total of over 2.59 lakh eligible voters are expected to cast their votes at around 319 polling stations in Bagalkot, where nine candidates are in



the fray. In Davanagere South, over 2.31 lakh eligible voters are expected to vote across 284 polling stations, with 25 candidates contesting.

The BJP has fielded former MLA and 2023 defeated candidate Veerabhadrayya Charantimath from Bagalkot, and a fresh face, Srinivas T Dasakariyappa, from Davanagere South. The Congress has given tickets to family members of the late legislators in both constituencies. Umesh Meti is the son of H Y Meti, while Samarth Mallikarjun is the grandson of Shamanur Shivashankarappa. Samarth's father, S S Mallikarjun, is a minister in the Siddaramaiah-led Cabinet and in charge of

Davanagere district, while his mother, Prabha Mallikarjun, is a Member of Parliament from the region.

The BJP is looking to make gains in the bypolls and energise its cadre ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections. For the Congress, retaining both seats is crucial, as a loss could be seen as a negative verdict on the performance of the Siddaramaiah-led government.

Muslim discontentment appears to be a concern for the Congress in Davanagere South. With 14 of the 25 candidates in the fray belonging to the community, there are apprehensions within the party about a split in votes,

which could benefit the BJP. The community had strongly demanded the Congress ticket for Davanagere South, given its significant presence in the constituency. Some factions within the party had opposed giving the ticket to the Shamanur family.

Although the Congress persuaded rebel candidate Sadiq Pailwan to withdraw, he remains in the fray as the move came after the deadline for withdrawal of nominations. In Bagalkot too, the Congress faced some dissidence, with other members of Meti's family seeking the ticket. Siddaramaiah's intervention helped resolve differences to an extent, and they campaigned together.

The BJP, in contrast, saw little dissidence over candidate selection, with its leaders campaigning in unity. Top state leaders from both parties campaigned extensively in the two segments. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, and several ministers camped in and toured the constituencies for over a week.

COFFEE GROWER KILLED IN ELEPHANT ATTACK

Minister calls for debate on wildlife population control

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU



FOREST Minister Eshwar B. Khandre on Tuesday expressed concern over the rising incidents of human-wildlife conflict in the state, stating that there is a need to consider measures such as sterilisation or vaccination to control the population of select wild animals.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Khandre clarified that the idea is only at a discussion stage and not a final decision. He emphasized the need for a broader public debate on the issue, noting that while wildlife conservation is important, preventing loss of human life is equally critical. "Both life and livelihood must be protected," he said, adding that certain regions are witnessing a significant increase in wildlife populations, which requires careful regulation.

He further stated that the matter is also linked to a case currently before the Supreme Court, and any concrete proposal would require consultations with experts, legal advisors, and senior officials before being submitted for judicial con-

sideration.

The minister also highlighted the government's ongoing efforts to address the issue of forest dwellers voluntarily relocating from forest areas.

He said authorities have been instructed to prepare a list of those willing to move out, following which financial requirements and budget allocations will be assessed in consultation with the Chief Minister, who also holds the finance portfolio. According to him, such relocation would help expand wildlife habitats while also integrating forest-dwelling communities into the mainstream with better access to basic amenities.

Expressing grief over a recent incident in which a

coffee grower was killed in an elephant attack, Khandre termed it deeply tragic and assured that the government stands with the bereaved family. He said the state is making all possible efforts to mitigate human-elephant conflict but acknowledged that no compensation can truly make up for the loss of life.

The minister also noted that the state government had planned to establish dedicated elephant camps as part of a long-term solution. However, the proposal has faced delays due to pending approvals from the central government. He assured that efforts are being made to resolve these hurdles and move forward with the project.

Record coconut price brings cheer to farmers in Tumakuru

HANS NEWS SERVICE TUMAKURU

IN what comes as a major boost for coconut growers, the famed Kalpataru region has witnessed a record surge in copra prices. At the Tiptur APMC, a fresh benchmark was set on Monday as copra prices touched an all-time high of ₹32,218 per quintal during the auction.

Traders confirmed that several lots were sold above ₹30,000, with premium quality copra fetching up to ₹31,860 per quintal. Interestingly, only 1,621 quintals of copra arrived at the market, significantly lower than usual volumes. This sharp drop in arrivals has been identified as the primary reason behind the steep price rise. The previous record stood at ₹31,606 per quintal, recorded on June 30 last year. With the latest surge, all earlier benchmarks have been surpassed, marking a historic moment for the region's agricultural economy.

However, despite the encouraging price trend, farmers are facing a paradoxical situation. Many growers currently have little or no



stock left to take advantage of the high rates. "Prices are very good, but most farmers have already sold their produce earlier. There is hardly any stock now," said a local trader.

Typically, auctions at Tiptur APMC are held every Monday and Thursday, with arrivals often exceeding 3,000 quintals. But the latest auction saw barely half that quantity, reflecting a sharp supply crunch. Market experts attribute the reduced supply to multiple factors. Coconut production has declined this season, and a growing number of farmers are opting to sell tender coconuts instead of processing them into copra. The rising demand and better prices for tender coconut have made it a more attractive option for growers.

Inquiry ordered into misuse of Rajyotsava funds in Belagavi

HANS NEWS SERVICE BELAGAVI

THE government has ordered a comprehensive probe into allegations of large-scale irregularities in the utilisation of funds released for the Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations in Belagavi.

The Tourism Department had sanctioned Rs. 50 lakh for organising the event in a grand manner. However, several Kannada organisations in the district have strongly alleged that the district administration violated government norms and misused the funds.

The organisations claim that while planning the Rajyotsava programmes, the Deputy Commissioner completely ignored the suggestions and inputs from local Kannada groups.

They further allege that transparency was not maintained in the expenditure and that funds were spent in excess of government guidelines.

Following a series of complaints, senior officials of the Tourism Department have instructed the Belagavi Regional Commissioner to conduct a thorough inquiry as per rules and submit a detailed report at the earliest.

Hanumagiri temple gears up for grand Brahmakalashotsava

HANS NEWS SERVICE PUTTUR

NESTLED amidst serene surroundings, the Hanumagiri temple is all set to witness a surge of devotion and spiritual fervour as preparations intensify for its much-awaited Brahmakalashotsava.

The sacred hill shrine, known for its religious significance and tranquil ambience, is expected to draw thousands of devotees during the multi-day celebrations beginning April 13.

The temple, a prominent spiritual centre in the region, holds a special place among devotees who flock here seeking peace and blessings.

With its rich traditions and vibrant rituals, Hanumagiri has long been a hub of faith, particularly during annual festivities that bring together communities from across coastal Karnataka.

This year's Brahmakalashotsava is being organised on a grand scale, reflecting both the temple's growing prominence and the deep-rooted devotion of its followers.



Priests and volunteers have been working round the clock to ensure that all arrangements are in place, from ritual preparations to facilities for pilgrims.

Speaking to Hans India President of the Brahmakalashotsava committee Nalin Kumar Kateel (former MP of Dakshina Kannada) said the celebrations will feature a series of sacred rituals, including homas, special poojas, and ceremonial offerings, conducted as per Vedic tradi-

tions. The highlight will be the grand procession, where the deity will be taken through decorated streets, accompanied by devotional music and cultural displays, creating an atmosphere of festivity and reverence.

Beyond its religious importance, the event also serves as a cultural gathering, showcasing traditional performances and strengthening community bonds. For many devotees, attending the Brahmakalashotsava is not just a ritual but

a cherished spiritual experience that reinforces faith and unity.

With arrangements made for food distribution, drinking water, and crowd management, the temple authorities are ensuring that devotees can participate comfortably in the celebrations. As the auspicious days approach, Hanumagiri is poised to transform into a vibrant centre of devotion, echoing with chants, rituals, and the collective spirit of faith.

Class 10 girl from Kerala goes missing near Manikyadhara Falls

HANS NEWS SERVICE CHIKKAMAGALURU

A Class X student from Kerala has gone missing near the popular tourist spot Manikyadhara Falls, triggering an intensive search operation by police and forest officials.

The missing girl has been identified as Nandana, a native of Palakkad district, who had arrived in Chikkamagaluru along with a group of around 40 tourists, including her



Nandana

family members. According to officials, the girl mysteriously disappeared on Tuesday evening while returning from the hilltop after taking photographs with her group.

As soon as the incident came to light, personnel from the Chikkamagaluru Rural Police Station, along with forest department officials, launched a large-scale search operation. More than 30 staff members combed the hilly terrain late into the night, continuing

the search until around 1 am.

However, dense fog, darkness and challenging terrain hampered the efforts, forcing the teams to suspend operations temporarily. Search efforts resumed on Wednesday morning with greater intensity. This time, rescue teams deployed drones to scan deeper forest areas and inaccessible regions. The rugged terrain of the Western Ghats, combined with thick vegetation and steep slopes,

has made the operation particularly difficult.

Fire and emergency services personnel have also joined the operation, working alongside police and forest officials in a coordinated effort. Authorities are exploring all possible routes the girl might have taken from the point where she was last seen.

Police said the girl's parents have filed a missing complaint. "The girl was with the group and had

taken photos with everyone. She went missing while descending from the hill," an officer said. The family, which had travelled from Kerala for a holiday, is in deep distress. Local residents have also joined the search, assisting officials in combing the area. Authorities have assured that all necessary resources are being deployed to trace the missing student. The search operation is expected to continue until she is located.

IN BRIEF

2nd PUC results today: Madhu Bangarappa

BENGALURU: The much-awaited results of the Second PUC examinations, eagerly anticipated by lakhs of students across Karnataka, will now be announced on April 9, according to State Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa. The results were initially expected to be declared earlier, but were postponed due to pending final-stage evaluation work. Authorities have now rescheduled the announcement to Thursday, April 9.

The delay also coincides with polling for the by-elections in Davanagere South and Bagalkot on the same day. Officials indicated that the results will be declared later in the evening after voting concludes, with the minister addressing a press conference to formally announce them. In a significant move aimed at easing access, students will also be able to check their results through the DigiLocker platform, in addition to the official website. This is expected to help reduce server-related issues that typically arise during high-traffic result announcements.

The results will be made available on the official portal, where students can log in using their registration number and date of birth to access and download their scorecards. This year, a total of over 7.1 lakh students appeared for the Second PUC examinations, which were conducted between February 28 and March 17 across 1,217 centres statewide. Last year, the overall pass percentage stood at 73.45%.

State takes centre stage ahead of energy expo



BENGALURU: Karnataka has once again emerged as a key driver in India's clean energy journey as preparations intensify for RenewX 2026, South India's largest renewable energy sourcing expo. Ahead of the landmark 10th edition, Informa Markets India hosted a high-level industry roundtable in Bengaluru, bringing together leading experts and stakeholders from across the renewable energy ecosystem.

The roundtable witnessed participation from distinguished industry leaders including Bhpendra Singh Rawat, Group CEO, Dhash Green Energy Pvt Ltd.; Dr. Anand M Shivapuji, Senior Research Scientist, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, Indian Institute of Science (IISc); Raghavendra Asuti, Head of Solutions, Sigenery India; Saptak Ghosh, Sector Head - Renewables and Energy Conservation, CSTEP; Surendra Kumar K R, President, Karnataka Renewable Energy System Manufacturers Association (KRESMA); Venkata Krishnan, Co-Founder & CGO, SmartGrid Analytics and Rajneesh Khattar, Senior Group Director Energy and Construction Portfolio, Informa Markets India. The three-day expo is scheduled to be held from April 27 to 29 at the Chennai Trade Centre in Chennai.

IIM, Kozhikode opens admissions for MBA

BENGALURU: Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode has announced the opening of admissions for the 19th batch of its flagship Executive Post Graduate Programme (EPGP) in Management, a two-year executive MBA designed for working professionals aiming to take on higher leadership roles. IIM Kozhikode Director Debashis Chatterjee highlighted the programme's strong legacy and its role in shaping future-ready leaders. "The EPGP has consistently brought together professionals from diverse sectors and career stages into a cohort defined by intellectual depth and a shared commitment to growth," Chatterjee said.

HC quashes order shifting PSI scam accused to Mysuru jail

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

THE Karnataka High Court has set aside a trial court order that had directed the transfer of key PSI recruitment scam accused Rudragouda Patil from Kalaburagi Central Prison to Mysuru Central Prison, citing violation of principles of natural justice.

The order was passed by a bench led by Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty while hearing a petition filed by Patil's wife, Shobha. With

this ruling, authorities have now been directed to shift Patil back to Kalaburagi jail.

The High Court observed that before transferring an undertrial prisoner, authorities must provide an opportunity for the accused to present objections. "The failure to hear the accused before shifting him amounts to a violation of natural justice," the bench noted. The court further criticised the trial court for relying on vague "security reasons" without detailed justification.

It held that merely citing security concerns, without proper examination and reasoning, cannot be grounds for such a transfer. The bench also pointed out that the district court had not conducted a thorough inquiry before passing the order.

Earlier, the Kalaburagi District and Sessions Court had permitted the transfer of Patil to Mysuru prison on January 27, citing security concerns. Challenging this order, his wife approached the High Court. During the hearing, the

State argued that the transfer was necessary due to security threats. However, it admitted that the accused had not been heard prior to the decision. Taking note of this, the High Court ruled in favour of the petitioner.

Rudragouda Patil is a prime accused in the PSI recruitment scam, which involves alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations conducted by the Karnataka Examination Authority. He was arrested in November 2023 by a special team of the Criminal In-

vestigation Department led by SP Raghavendra K. Hegde.

According to the chargesheet, Patil, a Class-I civil contractor from Kalaburagi, allegedly facilitated cheating in recruitment exams by supplying electronic devices such as Bluetooth gadgets and walkie-talkies to candidates. He is currently booked under the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act (KCOCA). The High Court's order is expected to impact further proceedings in the case.



Rudragouda Patil

Kharge regrets remarks on Gujarat during Kerala poll speech

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

MALLIKARJUN Kharge, President of the Indian National Congress, has expressed regret over his controversial remarks referring to people of Gujarat as "illiterate" during a recent election campaign speech in Kerala.

Taking to the social media platform X, Kharge said his statements made during a public rally were being "deliberately misinterpreted." However, he added that he sincerely regretted the remarks. "I express my heartfelt regret if my words have hurt the sentiments of the people of Gujarat. It was never my intention to insult them," he stated.

Kharge clarified that he has always respected the people of Gujarat and would continue to do so. "I have great regard for the people of Gujarat and their contributions. Any suggestion otherwise is incorrect," he wrote.

The controversy stems from Kharge's speech delivered on April 5 in Idukki, where he compared the literacy levels of Kerala with other states. Praising Ker-



ala's high literacy rate, he reportedly said that while leaders might be able to mislead "illiterate people" in places like Gujarat, it would not be possible to do so in Kerala.

The statement quickly triggered a political storm, with the Bharatiya Janata Party strongly condemning his remarks. BJP leaders accused Kharge of insulting the entire population of Gujarat and demanded an apology. Political observers noted that while Kharge intended to highlight Kerala's educational achievements, the comparison led to widespread backlash. The BJP has used the remarks to tar-

get the Congress, alleging that such statements reflect the party's "elitist mindset."

Meanwhile, Congress leaders have defended Kharge, arguing that his comments were taken out of context and were meant to emphasize literacy differences, not demean any community.

The episode underscores the sensitivity of political rhetoric during election campaigns, especially when references to regions and communities are involved. With elections approaching, such controversies are likely to intensify political exchanges between major parties.

DAVANAGERE SOUTH, BAGALKOT BYPOLLS

Are BJP rebels rallying behind Kumaraswamy?

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

THE political heat around the by-elections in Davanagere South and Bagalkot has intensified, with both Congress and BJP leaders aggressively campaigning on the ground. However, what has caught political observers' attention is the visible shift of several BJP rebel leaders, who appear to be aligning more closely with HD Kumaraswamy rather than the party's state leadership.

Senior leaders considered part of the rebel camp, including Ramesh Jarkiholi, GM Siddeshwar, Kumar Bangarappa and B P Harish, have largely stayed away from campaigning alongside BJP state president BY Vijayendra. While some leaders have maintained distance altogether, others have been seen sharing the stage with Kumaraswamy during campaign events, sparking



speculation within political circles.

Notably, these rebel leaders have openly expressed reservations about accepting Vijayendra's leadership. Earlier, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal had been vocal in his criticism of the B.S. Yediyurappa family, which eventually led to his expulsion from the party on charges of anti-party activities. Despite his expulsion, Yatnal has continued to campaign in Bagalkot in support of BJP candidate Veeranna Charantimath, though he has also kept his distance from

the Vijayendra camp.

A similar pattern is visible with Ramesh Jarkiholi, who has participated in campaign activities but avoided sharing platforms with Vijayendra, instead appearing alongside Kumaraswamy. This trend has added fuel to ongoing discussions within the BJP about internal divisions and leadership acceptance.

Amid these developments, there is renewed speculation that in the event of the BJP returning to power in the state, Kumaraswamy could emerge as a Chief Ministerial

candidate under a potential alliance arrangement. While the Yediyurappa faction has not endorsed such a possibility, the rebel camp has remained non-committal, indirectly giving rise to interpretations that they may be more open to Kumaraswamy's leadership.

Political analysts view these developments as early prediction of shifting dynamics within the BJP-JD(S) alliance in Karnataka. Despite internal differences, rebel leaders have continued to campaign for BJP candidates, including in Davanagere, where they have supported Srinivas Das Kareyappa.

While their participation signals continued party loyalty, their growing proximity to Kumaraswamy is being interpreted as a sign of his increasing influence within the alliance. The evolving situation is likely to have significant implications for the future political equations between the BJP and JD(S) in the state.

Police recover 110 stolen mobiles worth Rs 22 lakh using CEIR portal

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

BENGALURU police have successfully recovered 110 stolen mobile phones valued at around Rs. 22 lakh through a special drive conducted by 13 police stations in the North Division. The operation made effective use of the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal and the 'e-Lost' app to track the devices.

Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh, while addressing a press conference on Tuesday, said that information about lost or stolen mobiles is uploaded on the CEIR portal and the e-Lost app. Based on technical clues and thorough investigation, the police were able to

Return phones to owners



locate and seize the devices.

The breakdown of recoveries includes, 12 from RT Nagar, 8 from Jalahalli, 9 from JC Nagar, 12 from Mahalakshmi Layout, 6 from Sanjaynagar, 10 from Rajajinagar, 11 from Subramanyanagar, 12 from Nandini Layout, 8 from Malleshwaram, 3 from Hebbal, 10 from Yeshwanthpur, 4 from RMC Yard, and 5 from Shrirampur police stations.

The Commissioner urged the public to immediately report lost or stolen mobiles either on the CEIR portal or at the nearest police station, as this greatly helps in quick recovery. DCP B S Nemagouda and his team led the successful operation.

CM accuses EC of 'bias', defends guarantee schemes ahead of bypolls

BENGALURU

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah has accused the EC of "double standards" and "bias" after it sought details on the state's guarantee schemes in Davanagere and Bagalkot districts, where bypolls are scheduled for Thursday. In a post on 'X' on Wednesday, Siddaramaiah said the Election Commission of India had asked the Karnataka government for information on fund releases under five ongoing guarantee schemes in the constituencies going to polls. "The polls were necessitated following the deaths of senior Congress MLAs Shamanur Shivashankarappa and H Y Meti, respectively. Siddaramaiah alleged that the ECI had remained silent when similar cash transfer schemes were announced in Maharashtra and Bihar ahead of elections, calling



the scrutiny of Karnataka's schemes a "clear case of bias".

"In states like Maharashtra and Bihar, cash transfer schemes were announced or fast-tracked just before elections, directly benefiting voters. Yet the ECI remained silent. This is not neutrality-it is complicity," he said. The CM accused the BJP and NDA governments of "a double standard", noting that when they act, the ECI "looks the other way", but when Karnataka fulfils its promises, it faces "intense scrutiny".

He added that targeting the state's guarantee schemes is "not just political but anti-poor, anti-women, and anti-Karnataka." Siddaramaiah

clarified that these schemes were not launched in connection with the bypolls but are ongoing programmes implemented as part of the Congress government's commitments from the 2023 Assembly elections. Funds are transferred regularly to beneficiaries in a transparent and structured manner, he added.

"The guarantees are part of governance-a direct investment in human dignity, household stability, and economic participation, not inducement," he said. He also accused the BJP of "hypocrisy", saying that while it criticises Karnataka's schemes as "freebies", it rolls out similar programmes in states it governs. "The Karnataka model has set a benchmark for the country. What is deeply concerning, however, is the ECI's selective approach," Siddaramaiah added.

Space manoeuvres



ISRO Chairman V Narayanan (third left) along with International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) Secretary General Jean-Michel Contant, (second right) former ISRO Chairman AS Kiran Kumar (centre), ISTRAC Director Dr AK Anil Kumar, (second left), ISTRAC Associate Director Raghavendra MR and UR Rao Satellite Centre Director M Sankaran, (right), during the inauguration of International Conference on Spacecraft Mission Operations in Bengaluru, on Wednesday

HUSBAND MURDERS WIFE OVER PROPERTY DISPUTE

According to police, Daniyappa had earned crores as a contractor but had his eyes on the Rs. 3-4 crore worth of property registered in the names of his wife and mother. He planned to sell it and move to Athani to build a political future. However, Kavya repeatedly refused to agree to the sale, leading to frequent fights

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

A domestic murder case in Peenya has taken a new turn with police uncovering a calculated motive behind the killing. Contractor Daniyappa-

Funding political ambitions root cause



pa from Athani in Belagavi district has been accused of murdering his wife Kavya so that he could sell family property and pursue his political ambitions. The couple, who got married 15 years ago, were living in Rukmini Nagar, Na-

gasandra, along with their two children. On April 2, an argument broke out between them. During the quarrel, Daniyappa allegedly stamped on his wife's neck with his foot, leading to her death. According to police, Daniyappa had earned crores as a

contractor but had his eyes on the Rs. 3-4 crore worth of property registered in the names of his wife and mother. He planned to sell it and move to Athani to build a political future.

However, Kavya repeatedly refused to agree to the sale, leading to frequent fights. Two days before the murder, he had organised a grand feast for villagers in his native place and decided to enter politics. When his wife continued to oppose the property sale, he allegedly planned her murder.

On April 2, he picked a fight at home and killed her by pressing his foot on her neck. A case has been registered at Peenya police station, and further investigation is underway.

Chip in as partners in devt with CSR funds: Revanth to corporates

Government appeals to business leaders to view social responsibility funds as long-term investments in education and healthcare rather than mere expenditure while appointing a Special Chief Secretary to coordinate heritage and forest conservation initiatives

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister Revanth Reddy emphasised that contributions made towards social development by corporate companies should be considered as a subscription of partners and not merely as expenditure in the development of the state or the wellbeing of the people. At a meeting regarding Corporate Social Responsibility funds with representatives of various companies on Wednesday, the Chief Minister stressed that spending under CSR initiatives must yield one hundred per cent positive results. He explained that the government has accorded top priority to education, healthcare, and water resource conservation. Revanth Reddy suggested that companies choose sectors on their own to utilise these funds. He not-

ed that students will possess the skills to grab global opportunities if the government and companies spend money combined. He further stated that the government considers expenditure on education as an investment in future generations.

He pointed out that 44 per cent of the state student population resides within Hyderabad city alone and asserted that the responsibility of providing them with quality education rests upon all stakeholders. Since companies utilise local infrastructure available in a region, the Chief Minister said management should allocate a significant portion of their CSR funds toward the development of that same region. In view of the lack of a proper mechanism for the utilisation of such funds, the Chief Minister said the government has already appointed a Special Chief



Secretary specifically for this purpose. Company representatives were requested to coordinate with the official to utilise their funds for any area of interest, such as education, healthcare, water resources, skill development, preservation of heritage structures, or forest conservation. The Chief Minister praised Raheja Group, Ramky Group, and Yashoda Foundation for already coming forward with contributions of Rs 50 crore, Rs 50 crore, and Rs 10 crore, respectively, toward the development of the education sector. Other representatives in the meeting told the Chief

Minister that no one had ever approached them regarding CSR funds before.

They appreciated Revanth Reddy for taking the initiative and expressed their readiness to provide funds for school education, healthcare, and the conservation of heritage structures. Shraavan Kumar from the Raheja Foundation, Dakshayani Alla from the Ramky Foundation, Gorukanti Surender Rao and Gorukanti Phalgun Rao from Yashoda Hospitals, Sudha Reddy from Megha, Aparna Reddy and Kamineni Bhaskar Reddy from Apollo Hospitals, Sekhar Reddy from the In-

dian Green Building Council, and Pagidipati Devayya and Rudramadevi from the NA-ADAM Foundation attended the meeting.

The government intends to provide all necessary support to ensure these corporate initiatives are executed effectively. This collaborative approach aims to bridge the gap between industrial growth and social equity by ensuring that the benefits of Hyderabad's economic success are shared with the most vulnerable sections of the community through improved public services and infrastructure.

KTR to meet sulking Congress veteran Jeevan Reddy

BRS EYES MAJOR INROADS INTO KARIMNAGAR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

UNDER the directions of BRS chief Chandrashekar Rao, the party working president KT Rama Rao is set to invite the sulking senior Congress leader T Jeevan Reddy to join the BRS. The working president is slated to hold a meeting with party leaders from Karimnagar district on Thursday. Having returned from a week-long trip to the United States on Wednesday, KT Rama Rao and BRSLP deputy leader Harish Rao were summoned by the party chief at his Eravelli farmhouse. Sources indicate that the BRS chief has entrusted KT Rama Rao with the responsibility of meeting Jeevan Reddy at 2 pm on Thursday to formalise the invitation. Previous discussions have already taken place, and this meeting is viewed as a strategic attempt to strengthen the party in Karimnagar. The veteran Congress leader is expected to meet Chandrashekar Rao



Working President entrusted by KCR to invite the senior leader into party fold during crucial meeting in Hyderabad while leadership finalises plans for grand plenary session on April 27 in Ranga Reddy district

soon and likely join the party in his presence in Hyderabad.

The meeting at the farmhouse also involved discussions regarding the upcoming TRS Formation Day. Sources suggest the party will hold a day-long plenary on 27 April in the Ranga Reddy district. This announcement is expected to be made

officially by KT Rama Rao following his meeting with the Karimnagar leaders. By bringing a seasoned politician like Jeevan Reddy into the fold, the BRS aims to reclaim its dominance in its former stronghold while preparing for the large-scale organisational celebrations later this month.



Tim Reifschneider, COO and Managing Director of Tata Lockheed Martin Aerostructures, paid a courtesy visit to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy at his residence in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad on Wednesday

NIA notice sparks political row in Khammam

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD/KHAMMAM

FORMER MLA Gummadi Narsaiah and Potu Rangarao, Telangana State Secretary of the CPI ML Praja Pantha, have strongly condemned the issuance of notices by the National Investigation Agency against Rangarao.

Speaking at a press conference at the party office in Khammam, Narsaiah asserted that their activities consist

solely of open public movements and that they have never engaged in anti-social acts. He questioned how a case of seditious conspiracy could be filed against Rangarao and criticised the authorities for allegedly suppressing voices working for public welfare. Narsaiah cited the labeling of Rahul Gandhi as an Urban Naxal and warned that democracy is under threat due to false cases filed against activists, journalists,

and intellectuals.

Highlighting previous legal victories, Narsaiah noted that all prior cases related to Podu lands and public movements had been quashed. He accused the government of using the UAPA and Sedition Act to stifle dissent and silences their party.

He affirmed that the CPI ML would confront the cases both legally and through public protests while continuing its work for people's

rights. Narsaiah stated they would cooperate fully with the NIA investigation while continuing their struggle. This notice is viewed by the leadership as an attack on constitutional freedoms and the right to protest.

The party remains committed to its ideology and intends to mobilise public support against what it describes as the misuse of central agencies for political ends across the state.

Temples act as pillars of spiritual growth and unity: MLA Naini

- Temples promote spiritual growth and social unity
- Community participation strengthens harmony and belonging
- Temple to become a key spiritual landmark for the area

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

TEMPLES constructed with active public participation serve as a guiding force for spiritual development and social unity, said Naini Rajender Reddy on Wednesday.

He made these remarks while attending the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Pochamma Thalli temple in Chaitanyapuri Colony under the 61st Division of Hanumakonda. The temple is being constructed with the collective efforts of local residents, and the ceremony was held in a grand



MLA Naini Rajender Reddy attending the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Pochamma Thalli on Wednesday

and devotional atmosphere.

The MLA, who was the chief guest at the event, formally inaugurated the construction works by breaking a coconut and offering special prayers in accordance with traditional customs. The area witnessed a vibrant spiritual ambience, with devotional chants and traditional musical instruments drawing large participation from devotees.

Speaking on the occasion,

he stated that the construction of the Pochamma Thalli temple symbolised faith, devotion, and unity among the people. He added that such initiatives would significantly contribute to the spiritual growth of the region.

He emphasised that temples are not merely places of worship but also serve as cultural and social centres that help preserve age-old traditions and values. Ac-

ording to him, community-driven efforts like these play a crucial role in strengthening social harmony and fostering a sense of belonging among residents.

The MLA appreciated the voluntary efforts of the colony residents in taking up the temple construction and noted that the structure, once completed, would emerge as a spiritual landmark for the area. He further assured his support for the timely completion of the temple, along with the overall development of the colony, including improvements in basic infrastructure and civic amenities.

A large number of local leaders, colony representatives, women, and youth participated in the programme and expressed happiness over the commencement of the temple construction. The event concluded on a devotional note, reflecting unity and collective spirit among the people.



Tech-driven policing takes off in Bhupalpally with new control hub

- Command Control Centre strengthens surveillance and public safety
- Facility enhances crime control traffic management and emergency response
- Modern technology improves efficiency of district police

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

A state-of-the-art Command Control Centre equipped with modern technology was inaugurated at the District Police Office in Jayashankar Bhupalpally

by District Superintendent of Police Sureshetti Sankirth, IPS, marking a significant step towards strengthening technology-driven policing in the district.

Addressing the gathering, the SP stated that the primary objective of establishing the Command Control Centre was to enhance policing efficiency through advanced technological integration and ensure better safety and security for the public. He emphasised that the facility would play a crucial role in monitoring CCTV cameras installed across various locations in the district, enabling a real-time surveillance and swift action.

He further noted that the centre would significantly aid in crime prevention and control, streamline traffic management, and facilitate prompt response during emergencies. The SP expressed confidence that the introduction of such modern systems would improve the overall performance and responsiveness of the police department.

The inauguration programme was attended by Additional SP Nareish Kumar, Welfare Reserve Inspector Santosh, and other police personnel, who lauded the initiative as a major step towards modern policing.

Hello SIR...! AIMIM gets cracking, sets up help desk to clear air among voters

- Help desks in seven constituencies
- Central Desk at Darussalam
- Focus on voter verification
- Trained staff to assist public
- Push to prevent name deletions
- Family mapping emphasised
- Outreach in religious places

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TO avoid misconceptions on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and to avoid panic among the citizens, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), the sole political party stepped up and has initiated an educational effort for voters by establishing a SIR help desk.

AIMIM leaders have appealed to citizens to take the SIR process seriously and complete their voter mapping without delay.

In view of the upcoming SIR of electoral rolls in Hyderabad and other districts of Telangana, AIMIM has advised voters to gear up for the exercise. The party has been assist-



ing the voters with voter list verification, registration and corrections. In the help desk established by the party, the party leaders, along with the officers, are explaining the process of the exercise, they are advising the citizens to search for their or their relatives' names in the 2002 SIR list.

A physical help desks have been set up in each area by the party under the guidance of area MLA. Moreover, to assist the voters with verification, registration, and corrections, the leaders are conducting door-to-door campaigns. These help desks were set up in all seven constituencies - Chandrayangutta, Charminar, Yakutpura, Bahadurpura, Malakpet, Karwan and Nampally. A central help desk was also launched at the party headquarters at Darussalam by Asaduddin Owaisi

to assist the public in verifying, correcting and updating voter details. In Charminar, the MLA Mir Zulfiqar Ali, who inspected the help desk in Shalibanda on Wednesday, said that the help desk is intended to help the public verify, correct and update their details in the voter list.

He urged the people to confirm their inclusion in the electoral rolls. "The help desk is providing guidance and support to ensure the accurate information about the voter or a family, allowing citizens to confirm their names or a family tree in the electoral rolls," said Zulfiqar Ali.

The MLA said that trained representatives are available to assist individuals during the process. Zulfiqar Ali said, "All voters are encouraged to make use of this facility and ensure that their details are correct in the rolls."

The party Corporators, MLAs and local leaders are creating awareness campaigns at the ground level to prevent any voter from missing the process.

Yakutpura MLA Jaffar Hussain Meraj said the campaign's primary goal is to ensure every eligible voter is mapped and prevent deletion of genuine names. The MLA urged the residents that when the party's volunteers visit a household, along with BLO, they should give priority to meet the senior-most head of the family. This will help in mapping the entire family tree."

Furthermore, SIR help desk was also set up at Masjid-e-Mohammedia, Red Hills, to assist the Bohra community also in Masjid Khair-ul-Anaam, Kamalapur Colony Phase 2, and various other religious places across the city.

Atchannaidu for demand-based, sustainable farming

- Agriculture minister urges farmers to adopt demand-driven crops and organic farming for better incomes and soil health
- Warns against excessive chemical use; govt offering training, subsidies, and dedicated markets for organic produce
- Highlights success of Maruteru paddy varieties; calls for village-level awareness and alignment with changing food habits



Agriculture minister K Atchannaidu inaugurated Kisan Mela at the Maruteru Agricultural Research Station in West Godavari district on Wednesday.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

AGRICULTURE minister K Atchannaidu called upon farmers to shift towards demand-based crop cultivation and adopt sustainable farming practices to improve incomes and protect soil health.

Speaking at a Kisan Mela at the agricultural research station in Maruteru of Penumantra mandal in Achanta constituency of

West Godavari district on Wednesday, the minister said organic farming offers higher returns with lower input costs while ensuring healthier food for consumers. The event focused on the theme 'Changing Climate Conditions-Sustainable Paddy Cultivation.'

The minister inspected laboratories at the research station and interacted with scientists to understand

the latest developments in paddy varieties.

He also visited stalls set up by Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University and private companies, showcasing modern farm machinery and technologies.

Addressing the gathering, he expressed concern over the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which he said is

degrading soil quality and increasing cultivation costs.

He stated that the government is providing training, subsidies and marketing support to encourage farmers to shift towards organic farming. Steps are also being taken to establish dedicated markets to ensure better prices for organic produce.

He noted that paddy varieties developed at the

Maruteru research centre are achieving high yields in several states across the country and appreciated the efforts of agricultural scientists. With changing food habits among people, he advised farmers to align crop choices with market demand.

He directed officials and scientists to create awareness at the village level about suitable crops for different regions. Raja Sabha MP Paka Venkata Satyanarayana stressed the importance of soil testing awareness among farmers and said interlinking of rivers in the state would help address irrigation challenges.

District collector Chadalavada Nagarani said a target of 7.25 lakh metric tonnes has been set for rabi procurement in the district.

Achanta MLA Pitani Satyanarayana, Tanuku MLA Arimilli Radhakrishna, Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University vice-chancellor Dr R Sharada Jayalakshmi Devi, Horticulture University vice-chancellor Dhanujaya Rao were among those present.

Botcha flags Rs 20,500 cr debt gap, seeks Gov's intervention

- Opposition leader in Council in a letter to the Governor alleges that finance dept understated borrowings for 2024-25 and 2025-26 by omitting key components
- Claims actual liabilities are Rs 81,082 cr versus the reported Rs 60,485 cr, citing CAG-audited accounts
- Accuses govt of hiding off-budget loans and inconsistent reporting, urging transparency to restore public trust



YSRCP MLC Botcha Satyanarayana

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

EXPRESSING concern over debts mobilised by the NDA government, particularly in the past two years, YSRCP MLC Botcha Satyanarayana dashed off a letter to Governor S Abdul Nazeer alleging that the state finance department presented inaccurate details regarding government borrowings for 2024-25 and 2025-26 in the Legislative Council.

Satyanarayana said the response given by the principal finance secretary to a 'starred' question in the February 2026 session understated the actual borrowings, omitting 'key' components.

The leader of Opposition in Legislative Council requested the Governor's intervention in

convincing the state government to provide the real picture of the data to the legislature. "The finance department stated that total borrowings for 2024-25 were Rs 60,485 crore. However, the CAG-audited finance accounts clearly indicate that the actual net liabilities are about Rs. 81,082 crore. This leaves a gap of more than Rs. 20,500 crore which needs attention," he demanded.

Pointing out that three major components would have possibly been omitted, the MLC said, "Borrowings under Ways and Means Advances from RBI were not included, even though they have been classified as internal debt in official records. Net liabilities under public account such as deposits and reserve funds were excluded. Also, adjustments related to GST compensation loans were reduced without valid justification."

He underlined that when the fiscal deficit itself is over Rs 81,000 crore, presenting a much lower borrowing fig-

ure paints a 'different' picture of the state's finances. "Such omissions create a false impression that the government's debt burden is lower than it actually is," he criticised.

Raising another issue, Satyanarayana said the government's claim that there were no off-budget borrowings in 2025-26 is incorrect. "Government backed corporations like MARKFED and Civil Supplies Corporation have been allowed to raise loans with state guarantees. These entities depend on government support and such borrowings clearly fall under off budget liabilities as per Government of India guidelines," he said.

Pointing to alleged inconsistency in the finance department's approach, Satyanarayana said that when details were sought for borrowings from 2014-2024, both public debt and public account were included. However, public account was excluded in the past two years. He expressed that this raises serious concerns.

Stating that officials are expected to present facts in a transparent manner, he stressed that any deviation from this principle affects the credibility of the finance department and weakens public trust. The MLC requested the Governor to intervene and ensure corrective action is taken with immediate effect.

ELEPHANT RAIDS

Solar fencing brings hope to farmers in Chittoor region

- Tirupati East forest division installed a hanging solar-powered fence covering about five kilometres in Pulicherla mandal

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI



FARMERS across several mandals of the erstwhile Chittoor district are beginning to see hope after years of crop destruction caused by recurring elephant incursions, with forest authorities rolling out a solar-powered fencing system aimed at keeping herds away from agricultural lands.

For nearly a decade, villages located along forest fringes in Pulicherla, Somala, Sadum, Palamaner, Punganur and Kallur mandals have witnessed frequent elephant movement. The animals often strayed into cultivated fields, damaging crops across vast stretches and destroying farm equipment, leaving cultivators struggling with mounting losses. The persistent threat forced many farmers to either reduce cultivation or shift to less vulnerable farming practices.

In an effort to address the issue, officials of the Tirupati East forest division have installed a hanging solar-powered fence covering nearly five kilometres, stretching from

Gantavaripalle village in Pulicherla mandal up to the Kallurghat road. The project, implemented at a cost of Rs 49 lakh, has been completed and is set to undergo trial operations shortly. Forest authorities noted that a similar fencing system introduced earlier in the Palamaner range had yielded positive outcomes.

Elephant activity has been particularly intense in villages such as Pathapeta, Palem, Devalampeta, Kammappalle, Rayavaripalle, Challavaripalle and Ellankivariipalle. Farmers in these regions reported heavy losses to crops including paddy, tomato, brinjal and banana. Mango orchards and fodder crops were also affected, prompting several cultivators to cut down on agricultural operations due to uncertainty and financial strain.

Forest department officials said the solar fence installed earlier along the forest boundary at Palyam in Pulicherla mandal has begun yielding

favourable outcomes. In the month following its installation, elephant herds attempting to enter nearby farmlands have reportedly turned back upon reaching the barrier, providing relief to local farming communities.

Officials explained that the fencing system operates using solar-powered batteries to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply. During summer months, when elephants frequently venture out searching for food and water, power is maintained round the clock. The fence delivers a mild, non-lethal electric shock that deters the animals without causing harm. In the monsoon season, however, the power supply will function between 6 pm and 6 am, aligning with peak elephant movement hours.

Forest authorities expressed optimism that the new measure would significantly reduce human-elephant conflict in the region and help farmers regain confidence in cultivation.

Focus on uninterrupted power supply, farmer welfare: Energy minister

Inaugurates APCPDCL corporate office in Vijayawada

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

ENERGY minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar said the government's primary goal is to provide quality and uninterrupted power supply while enhancing services to the public.

The minister inaugurated the new corporate office of Andhra Pradesh Central Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APCPDCL) at Gunadala, Vijayawada, in the presence of MP Kesineni Sivanath, MLA Gadde Ramamohan Rao, energy special chief secretary K Vijayanand and CMD P Pulla Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister expressed happiness over the inauguration of the modern office, built at an estimated cost of Rs 35-40 crore with a total area of 65,000 square feet. He credited the collective efforts of the department staff for earning a good reputation for the power sector.

He said that construction of new substations is progressing rapidly across the state. Following the directions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the government is focused on providing uninterrupted quality power supply without increasing electricity tariffs. He emphasised that there should be no power disruptions or low-voltage issues, and officials are working dili-



Energy minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar inaugurates the new corporate office of APCPDCL at Gunadala in Vijayawada on Wednesday

gently to achieve this.

The minister further stated that the department aims to improve public perception from the current 80 per cent to over 95 per cent. Under the PM Kusum scheme, tenders have been completed to provide free daytime electricity to farmers, and works will commence soon.

Highlighting achievements, he noted that the state has recorded unprecedented levels of power generation using modern techniques. By purchasing power during low-demand daytime and generating electricity during peak evening hours, the state is ensuring no shortages.

Renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and pumped storage projects (PSPs) are being expanded, and tenders have already been invited at 10 locations for battery storage systems.

He also praised electricity staff for their tireless service during disasters. Recalling past floods and cyclones, es-

pecially in Visakhapatnam, he said around 1,500-2,000 personnel restored nearly 20,000 electric poles within 24 hours, ensuring quick restoration of power supply.

Vijayanand said that advanced, human-independent software is being used to ensure transparency in power purchase and sales. He added that the state successfully managed a record peak load of 14,009 mw this year and supplied 275 million units of power without interruption during the summer. The efficiency of APGenco plants has been increased to 85-90 per cent.

He further noted that the APCPDCL building has been developed with a 'Net Zero' concept, incorporating solar energy and green technologies to reduce power consumption and achieve carbon neutrality.

CMD Pulla Reddy urged discom officials to continue delivering better services to consumers.

Endowments woman official sent to custody

- Assistant commissioner Kalingiri Shanti remanded till April 21 after ACB arrest over alleged disproportionate assets



Kalingiri Shanti (file picture)

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

A city court on Wednesday sent an endowments department official to judicial custody in a disproportionate assets case. Kalingiri Shanti, assistant commissioner in the endowments department, was produced before the ACB court, which sent her to judicial custody till April 21. She was subsequently shifted to the Vijayawada district jail.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested Shanti after simultaneous raids at premises linked to her on Tuesday. The anti-graft agency took the action following information that she allegedly amassed wealth beyond her known sources of income.

ACB officials conduct searches for 10 hours in different locations, including Tadepalli, Undavalli, and Visakhapatnam. The searches were conducted at four places in Tadepalli, including her residence, a garment shop belonging to her mother, and her sister's residence.

They seized incriminating documents and unearthened assets, including a residential flat in Visakhapatnam, a G+2 building at Kunchanapalli,

776 grams of gold ornaments, nearly 3 kg of silver articles, cash worth Rs 1.15 lakh, bank balances of about Rs 3 lakh, a Volkswagen Polo car, a motorcycle, and electronic gadgets. Following the searches, the ACB registered a Disproportionate Assets (DA) case against the Assistant Commissioner under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The official was also found to have a locker in a bank in Vijayawada. Further searches and valuation of assets were in progress. Shanti was appointed as Assistant Commissioner in the Endowments Department through the Andhra Pradesh State Public Service Commission (APPSC) in 2020, and worked in Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada. After the TDP-led coalition government came to power in 2024, Shanti was suspended for over an allegation of irregularities. She was under suspension from July 2024 to March 2026. The Endowments Department had initiated a departmental inquiry into the allegations against Shanti. The government had seriously taken the allegations against Shanti, including her recruitment procedure itself.

The suspension was lifted in March, and she was waiting for a posting.

Lokesh cracks whip on inactive TDP MLAs

- Pulls up several legislators for failing to hold cadre meetings and grievance programmes for four weeks; directs staff to seek explanations
- Warns against negligence, stresses performance-based recognition; honours top 'My TDP' app performers
- Conducts 87th 'Prajadarbar', receives public petitions on railway depot relocation, bus operators' losses, and land dispute issues

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA



Education minister Nara Lokesh honours top 10 performers on My TDP app, at the party state office in Mangalagiri on Wednesday

lack of organisational activity in recent weeks by some legislators.

During a review meeting with party leaders at the party office, Lokesh pulled up several leaders for failing to conduct cadre meetings and grievance redressal pro-

grammes for four consecutive weeks. He expressed concern over the inaction of Mydukur MLA Putta Sudhakar Yadav, Kadapa MLA R Madhavi Reddy and Prodatur MLA Varadarajulu Reddy, and directed party office staff to seek explana-

tions from them. He also voiced anger at Pulivendula in-charge B Tech Ravi, Kamalapuram MLA Chaitanya Reddy and Dharmavaram in-charge Paritala Sriram for not holding the mandated programmes. Lokesh warned that negligence would not be tolerated and instructed leaders to strictly implement party directives.

Reiterating that the TDP recognises and rewards hard work, Lokesh said the party's growth was driven by the performance of its leaders. He emphasised that consistent execution of party programmes would ensure its long-term strength. He also interacted with the top 10 performers of the 'My TDP' app and honoured them for effectively promoting party ideology.

Later, Lokesh conducted

the 'Prajadarbar' public grievance programme at the TDP central office in Mangalagiri, marking its 87th day. He received petitions from people across the state, including party workers and leaders, and assured them of action after carefully hearing their concerns.

Among the issues raised were requests from loco pilots to prevent the relocation of the gala depot in Vijayawada during the proposed South Coast Railway formation, appeals from private bus owners for replacement support after Covid-related losses, and a land dispute complaint from a Kurnool district resident seeking justice over alleged encroachment of ancestral property. Lokesh assured all petitioners that their grievances would be examined and addressed.

World Bank sees strong investment potential in Amaravati

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from the World Bank met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the State Secretariat on Wednesday and expressed optimism about the vast investment opportunities in Amaravati.

The World Bank representatives appreciated the progress of Amaravati's construction and highlighted that the city's rapidly developing infrastructure, along with reforms in the IT and power sectors, is expected to attract significant international investments. They opined that Amaravati has the potential to emerge as the growth engine of Andhra Pradesh. The delegation further noted that with the ongoing development of

CM outlines comprehensive development plans



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with World Bank delegation at the Secretariat on Wednesday

world-class infrastructure, Amaravati is likely to become a major hub for commercial and economic activities in the state.

During the meeting, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu briefed the delegation on the government's vision of building a world-class capital while ensuring balanced and inclusive development across

the state. He explained that the government is working on comprehensive plans to promote growth in all regions. The Chief Minister also informed the delegation that strategies are being formulated to develop Andhra Pradesh across three regions, aiming for equitable progress and sustainable economic expansion.

Despite Tehran's claims, it is 'goals accomplished' for the US and Israel

AN interesting aspect of the war in West Asia is that now both sides can declare victory—with some justification. From the perspective of the United States and Israel, the primary objectives were met in the first few days—many of them within hours, when the belligerent allies eliminated Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a section of the political and military top brass. While the Iranian armed forces are resisting the US-Israel attacks, their capabilities have been seriously degraded. The Iranians may have shot down US aircraft but that is an exception rather than the rule; they have control over their airspace. US President Donald Trump has already claimed victory.

He wrote in a social media post, "The reason for doing so [accepting Pakistan-brokered ceasefire] is that we have already met and exceeded all Military objectives, and are very far along with a definitive Agreement concerning Longterm PEACE with Iran, and PEACE in the Middle East. We received a 10-point proposal from Iran, and believe it is a workable basis on which to negotiate (sic)"

Iran's 10-point conditions that the US finds "workable" include: non-aggression; continuation of Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz; acceptance of enrichment; lifting all primary sanctions; lifting all secondary sanctions; termination of all Security Council resolutions; ter-

mination of all International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors resolutions; payment of compensation to Iran; withdrawal of US combat forces from the region; and cessation of war on all fronts, including against the heroic Islamic Resistance of Lebanon. This gives Iran reason to claim that it has been able to withstand the sustained assault by the world's mightiest military, in alliance with the regional power, Israel, for more than a month. Trump's vow to bomb Iran's power plants and send the country "back to the stone ages" notwithstanding, Tehran's enemies have not been able to force open the Strait of Hormuz. Trump's warnings became chillier; just before 12 hours of his

ultimatum expired, he posted a warning on social media: "A whole civilization will die tonight." The clerical regime, however, refused to blink, leading to a two-week ceasefire. If the war ends after the culmination of the ceasefire on as-is-where-is basis, it will be a victory of the US-Israel alliance, for they will have militarily truncated a powerful regime in the Middle East which has been spreading jihad all over the world. Regime change would have been the icing on the cake, but Trump would still be happy because he achieved the goals with negligible American casualties. Ditto with Israel. Iran, on the other hand, has lost the deadly nuclear and other capabilities, which it had till a few

months ago. Rebuilding degraded military capabilities, restoring deterrence, and reviving its nuclear programme—if it chooses to do so—will require time, resources, and a degree of strategic patience that may test the regime internally. The economic toll, compounded by sanctions and wartime destruction, will further constrain its options. In this sense, even as Tehran claims moral and political victory, it does so from a position of significantly diminished capacity. What remains uncertain is whether this uneasy equilibrium marks the beginning of a more stable regional order—or merely an interlude before the next, perhaps more dangerous, confrontation.

MEDLEY



LETTERS

Custodial deaths: Punish the Doc and judicial officer

THE verdict of the trial court in the case of custodial deaths in Sathankulam is widely welcomed. Police taking the right to brutally and beating the accused to death is sending the wrong message. Meanwhile, the doctor who had issued a false 'fit for remand' certificate and the judicial officer who had, in a mechanical manner, permitted remanding the two persons should also be treated on par with those who beat the innocents to death.

A G Rajmohan, Anantapur-515004

Traditional alternatives more healthier

A PROPOS "Be warned: Soft drinks are silent killers" (April 8, 2026). The lure of fizzy drinks in summer is undeniable, yet their hidden cost to health is sobering. Clever advertising sells them as instant refreshment, but what they truly deliver is a cocktail of sugar, acids, and chemicals that quietly erode wellbeing. Obesity, diabetes, and dental decay are not distant risks, but everyday realities fuelled by these so-called coolers. The irony is that traditional alternatives like buttermilk, lemon water, and tender coconut are not only healthier but far more suited to our climate. If everyone treats soft drinks as indulgences rather than staples, we may reclaim both health and common sense before the silent killers claim more ground.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

Fruit juices are a better option

A PROPOS "Soft drinks and the illusion of cooling relief" (THI, April 8), the concern about rising consumption of such drinks, especially during summer, is well founded. Many continue to see these beverages as harmless, overlooking their long-term health impact. Awareness alone is not enough. Schools and public institutions should actively promote healthier alternatives like water and fresh juices. Local campaigns, especially in smaller towns, can help change habits gradually. At the same time, ensuring easy access to safe drinking water is essential. A combined effort by authorities, industry, and consumers can lead to more responsible choices and better public health outcomes.

Abbharna Barathi, Chennai-600023

Better late than never

WITH reference to the article "Polavaram: Decades of delay, emerging progress and the road ahead" (THI, April 8), the renewed momentum is encouraging, but persistent gaps in planning and execution remain a concern. Large projects cannot afford repeated disruptions caused by weak coordination and irregular contracting. Clear timelines, stable funding, and strict oversight are essential. Land acquisition and rehabilitation must be handled with greater sensitivity and speed. Regular public updates can improve accountability and confidence. Technical monitoring should be strengthened to avoid costly damage to structures. If managed well, Polavaram can still deliver its intended benefits without further slippage or escalation.

M Barathi, Bengaluru-560076

thehansreader@gmail.com

BENGALURU ONLINE

Are rebels rallying behind HD Kumaraswamy?

BENGALURU: The political heat around the by-elections in Davanagere South and Bagalkot has intensified, with both Congress and BJP leaders aggressively campaigning on the ground. However, what has caught political observers' attention is the visible shift of several BJP rebel leaders, who appear to be aligning more closely with HD Kumaraswamy rather than the party's state leadership.

Senior leaders considered part of the rebel camp, including Ramesh Jarkiholi, GM Siddeshwar, Kumar Bangarappa and B P Harish, have largely stayed away from campaigning alongside BJP state president BY Vijayendra. While some leaders have maintained distance altogether, others have been seen sharing the stage with Kumaraswamy during campaign events, sparking speculation within political circles. Notably, these rebel leaders have openly expressed reservations about accepting Vijayendra's leadership. Earlier, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal had been vocal in his criticism of the B.S. Yediyurappa family, which eventually led to his expulsion from the party on charges of anti-party activities. Despite his expulsion, Yatnal has continued to campaign in Bagalkot in support of BJP candidate Veeranna Charantimath, though he has also kept his distance from the Vijayendra camp. A similar pattern is visible with Ramesh Jarkiholi, who has participated in campaign activities but avoided sharing platforms with Vijayendra, instead appearing alongside Kumaraswamy. This trend has added fuel to ongoing discussions within the BJP about internal divisions and leadership acceptance.

Amid these developments, there is renewed speculation that in the event of the BJP returning to power in the state, Kumaraswamy could emerge as a Chief Ministerial candidate under a potential alliance arrangement. While the Yediyurappa faction has not endorsed such a possibility, the rebel camp has remained non-committal, indirectly giving rise to interpretations that they may be openly to Kumaraswamy's leadership.

Read more at <https://epaper.thehansindia.com>

Together, let us empower our Nari Shakti!



NARENDRA MODI

IN the coming days, India will be immersed in a festive season, with celebrations taking place across the length and breadth of the nation.

The people of Assam will mark Rongali Bihu while Odisha will celebrate Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti. In West Bengal, Poila Boishakh will usher in the Bengali New Year and in Kerala, Vishu will be observed with immense enthusiasm. Tamil Nadu will celebrate Puthandu, while in Punjab and other parts of Northern India will rejoice Baisakhi, which will usher in a spirit of hope and positivity. I convey my best wishes to all those across India and the world on this festive occasion. May these auspicious occasions bring happiness and prosperity to everyone.

Furthermore, on April 11, we will commence the 200th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Phule and on the 14th, India will pay homage to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar on his Jayanti. In addition to these spe-

cial occasions, when the spirit of renewal fills our hearts and minds, our nation stands at the threshold of another historic occasion. It is an opportunity to deepen the foundations of our democracy and to reaffirm our collective commitment to equality and inclusion.

On the 16th of April, Parliament will be convened to discuss and pass an important bill that advances women's reservation. To describe this merely as a legislative exercise would be an understatement. It is a reflection of the aspirations of crores of women across India. It is an affirmation of a principle that has long guided our civilisational ethos, that society progresses when women progress.

Women constitute nearly half of India's population. Their contributions to our nation are vast and invaluable. Today, India is witnessing remarkable achievements by women across every field. From science and technology to entrepreneurship, from sports to the armed forces and from music to arts, women are at the forefront of India's progress.

Over the years, sustained efforts have been made to create an enabling environment for their empowerment. Greater access to education, improved healthcare, enhanced financial inclusion and better access to basic amenities have strengthened the foundations of women's participa-



On the 16th of April, Parliament will be convened to discuss and pass an important bill that advances women's reservation. To describe this merely as a legislative exercise would be an understatement. It is a reflection of the aspirations of crores of women across India. It is an affirmation of a principle that has long guided our civilisational ethos, that society progresses when women progress.

tion in economic and social life. Yet, their representation in the world of politics and legislative bodies has not always been commensurate with their role in society. This is particularly unfortunate because when they participate in administration and decision-making, they bring along experiences and insights that enrich public discourse and improve the quality of governance.

It is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and Assembly elections to various states in the coming times are conducted with women's reservation in place.

Over the decades, there have been repeated efforts to provide women with their rightful place in democratic institutions by the previous governments. Commitments were made; bill drafts were introduced but they never saw the light of day. But the broad consensus

has remained that women's representation in legislative bodies must increase. In September 2023, Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam with the same spirit of consensus. I consider it to be among the most special occasions of my life.

This opportunity to ensure women's reservation also resonates deeply with the spirit of our Constitution. The makers of our Constitution, notably the distinguished women members of the Constituent Assembly, envisioned a society where equality is both enshrined and realised in practice. Strengthening women's participation in legislative institutions is an important step towards fulfilling that vision. It reflects our commitment to building a society where every citizen has an equal stake in shaping the nation's destiny.

This is a moment that

cannot be deferred any longer. Every delay in advancing women's representation is, in effect, a delay in strengthening the quality and inclusiveness of our democracy.

For decades, the need for greater participation of women in legislative institutions has been acknowledged, discussed and reaffirmed. To postpone action now would mean extending an imbalance that we already recognise and have the capacity to correct. At a time when India is moving forward with confidence and purpose, it is essential that our institutions reflect the aspirations of all citizens, especially those who form half our population.

Timely action will not only honour long-standing commitments but also ensure that the momentum of progress is sustained. This is truly a historic opportunity to make our democracy

more representative, responsive and future-ready.

This moment calls for collective action. It is not about any one government, party or individual. It is about the nation recognising the importance of this step and coming together to realise it. It is what we owe to our Nari Shakti.

That is why the passage of a bill for women's reservation should reflect the broadest possible consensus and be guided by the larger national interest. Such opportunities call upon us to act not for ourselves, but for future generations. They remind us that the true strength of a democracy lies in its ability to evolve and to become more inclusive over time.

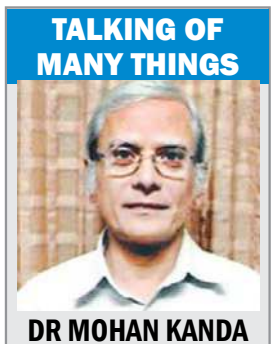
As we approach this historic Parliament sitting, I appeal to all Members of Parliament, across party lines, to come together in support of this important step for the women of India. Let us seize this opportunity with a sense of responsibility and purpose. Let us act in a manner that reflects the highest traditions of our democracy.

India has always shown that when it comes to matters of national importance, it can rise above differences and act with unity. This is one such moment.

Let us move forward together and strengthen Constitutional values and empower our Nari Shakti for national progress.

(The writer is the Prime Minister of India)

Indian marriages undergoing major transitions from the ritualistic 'arranged' concepts



DR MOHAN KANDA

THE Karnataka Legislative Assembly recently passed the 'Karnataka Freedom of Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition (Eva Nammava Eva Nammava) Bill, which pointedly states that "the consent of parents, family, caste, or clan is not necessary once two adult individuals agree to go into wedlock. The phrase 'Eva Nammava Eva Nammava' dates to the philosophy of the 12th century social reformer Basavanna. It is a part of one of his 'vachanas', that translates to ".....do not ask who he is, who he is, who he is....."

"Say he is our own, he is our own, he is our own. Lord Koodalasangama, say he is a son of your house,"

That message of inclusivity highlighted the need for inclusivity, in the context of Basavanna having facilitated a Dalit man's marriage to a Brahmin woman that led to an intense social turmoil and violence.

The aim of the legislation is to provide legal protection to couples who are facing threats of violence or coercion in inter-caste relationships, recognising the need to curb the alarming

increase in violence, harassment, threats, and ostracism, perpetrated in the name of caste, hierarchy, honour and custom. It also notes that such crimes disproportionately affect women. The step was necessitated by the fact that the state had witnessed several hate crimes against such couples in the recent past. In a particularly heinous instance of honour related violence, a 20-year-old woman was killed in a gruesome manner by her father for marrying a Dalit man.

Many countries have also put in place legislation banning forced marriages and facilitating inter - faith or inter-caste unions.

Interestingly, the legislation is in sharp contrast to a recent proposal of the government of Gujarat, which requires couples wanting to register their marriages to submit identity documents of their parents, accompanied by a declaration that the parents have been kept informed.

What happened in Karnataka is only one manifestation of the ongoing worldwide transformation in the concept of marriage. From having, earlier, been a social or family obligation based on traditional grounds, such as caste, religion, or family status, the institution of marriage is increasingly being viewed as a matter of personal choice, emotional compatibility, and individual autonomy. There is, in evidence, a global decline in traditional matchmaking, even in traditional conservative societies.

Another emerging feature of marriages is that couples are prioritising education and ca-



Provisions that envisage providing protection to couples engaged in inter-caste relationships, and facing ostracisation or violence, are undoubtedly welcome. What is of essence, however, is how effectively such noble intentions are translated into concrete actions, especially against the background of crimes against such couples having continued in the past, existing laws notwithstanding.

reers over early marriages and marrying later in life, allowing more time for personal choice. Marriages are increasingly being seen as a partnership or companionship rather than merely instruments of procreation of financial stability, like love marriages and self-choice weddings. Consequently, there is a welcome and rapidly decreasing value being attached to factors like caste, religion, and, most importantly, the practice of demanding and accepting dowry. The classical and age-old belief was that marriages are made in heaven or that they are divine, predestined and ordained by fate rather than mere coincidences.

Even in traditionally conservative cultures, including in the Middle Eastern countries and parts of Asia, a growing number of women are seen fighting for the right choice in marriages and opposing forced

unions. This is evident in India too. While the practice of arranged marriages has not disappeared altogether, a hybrid variety of what are called - 'arranged with choice' are becoming increasingly common.

Interestingly, a novel concept of a 'trial' for a marriage is also gaining popularity in certain urban settings, a sort of live - in relationship as a prelude to a permanent relationship by way of marriage. In the changing ambience of marriages, one also sees a reduction in the stigma attached to divorce and remarriages. In a manner of speaking, it is almost as though lifelong love and heterosexual marriages are about as obsolete as a horse and carriage.

One way of looking at the emerging scenario is that the world community is amid a transition to a brave new world of intimacy. It is against such a background that one must view

the significance of the events in Gujarat and Karnataka.

Provisions that envisage providing protection to couples engaged in inter-caste relationships, and facing ostracisation or violence, are undoubtedly welcome. What is of essence, however, is how effectively such noble intentions are translated into concrete actions, especially against the background of crimes against such couples having continued in the past, existing laws notwithstanding. An even more pertinent issue arises in the present context, as caste consolidation rather than annihilation is very much in evidence, not merely in the way partners are chosen in marriages, but also the way candidates are picked by political parties and voted to positions of authority by the electorate.

The situation gets curiouse and curiouse when one notes the fact that Karnataka is yet to roll back the controversial law of 2022, dealing with freedom of religion and ushered in by the then BJP government. Some way forward suggestions establishment of specialised fast-track courts to deal exclusively with honour killings to ensure swift justice and prevent delays, by bringing in an amendment to the Special Marriage Act, 1954 to shorten the registration period in order to protect couples from potential threat surveillance and introduction of a provision in the 'Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita' law clearly defining what honour killing is and specifying punishments.

Matrimonial advertisements in newspapers are a popular, traditional way to find partners, widely used for their broad

reach and credibility. Leading newspapers offer dedicated weekly supplements for matrimonial classifieds. A very sensible suggestion by an elderly friend (who, incidentally, is happily married) is that it might be worthwhile putting in place a mechanism which will function as an advisory arrangement, to couples intending to get married. An agency or a set of experts, in other words, to counsel them about the pros and cons of the proposed union, before it is formalized by a ceremony or a registration. That way, it is felt, they will make an informed entry into the era of married life, with their eyes wide open. Even the central and state governments will do well to think in terms of creating an environment which enables such arrangements to be formed and to function, together with creating a regulatory mechanism to ensure that they are not misused.

Some examples from my personal experience reinforce the validity of the issue under discussion. My marriage and those of some of my friends and relatives have also been a sort of mixed bag in this context. Usha and I got married through an 'arranged-but-confirmed-by-choice' mode. One of my nephews married his paternal uncle's daughter, which, in fact, is frowned upon in the Hindu religion. Another friend is the happy result of a Christian-Muslim marriage. And by God's grace, all the unions have resulted in pleasant and well-adjusted relationships.

(The writer was formerly Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

Keshav decodes budget plan in Uravakonda outreach

- Says the primary objective of the outreach was to create awareness about key features of the state budget, development priorities, and welfare initiatives
- Directs officials to adopt a clear and structured approach in utilising budget allocations, stressing that every rupee must be spent fruitfully

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

STATE Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav participated in a constituency-level outreach programme on the Budget 2026-27 held at the Mandal Parishad office in Uravakonda.

Addressing officials and the public, the Minister said the primary objective of the outreach was to create awareness about key features of the state budget, development priorities, and welfare

initiatives.

He emphasised the need to ensure that information reaches both district and mandal-level officials as well as citizens, enabling effective implementation of government policies.

Keshav directed officials to adopt a clear and structured approach in utilising budget allocations, stressing that every rupee must be spent efficiently and transparently.

He noted that nearly 85 previously stalled central schemes had been revived



Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav addressing the officials during the Budget 2026-27 outreach programme at the Mandal Parishad office in Uravakonda constituency on Wednesday

and urged departments to make optimal use of the available funds.

Highlighting the government's commitment to transparency, the Minister said efforts are being made to ensure that the benefits of the budget reach the com-

mon people more effectively.

He called on officials to focus on accountability and timely execution of programmes to achieve development goals.

Officials from various government departments participated in the programme.

Officials urged to drive Viksit Bharat, Swarna Andhra goals by 2047

- Lanka Dinakar reviews the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes and projects
- States that transforming India into a developed nation by 2047 is a key objective of the Prime Minister
- Emphasizes that Andhra Pradesh should play a crucial role in this national mission

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURNOOL

CHAIRMAN of the 20-Point Programme, Lanka Dinakar, on Wednesday called upon officials to work with commitment towards achieving the goals of "Viksit Bharat" and "Swarna Andhra" by 2047.



Chairman of the 20-Point Programme, Lanka Dinakar addressing a meeting on Viksit Bharat on Wednesday

He made these remarks during a review meeting held at the Collectorate Conference Hall to review the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes and projects in Kurnool district.

Addressing the officials, Dinakar stated that transforming India into a developed nation by 2047 is a key objective of the Prime Minister, while the State aims to emerge as a leading region under the "Swarna Andhra" vision.

He emphasized that Andhra Pradesh should play a crucial role in this national mission

and directed all departments to align their efforts accordingly.

Referring to administrative reforms, he noted that a key issue raised in a previous review led to a decision allowing municipal corporations to directly utilize their funds without diversion through CFMS, easing operational challenges across urban local bodies.

The Chairman also highlighted welfare and sector-specific concerns, particularly in handloom clusters like Kodumur, where steps have been initiated to secure GI tag recognition.

He suggested forming self-help group-based clusters for master weavers to improve access to credit and financial assistance. Stressing the need for preventive healthcare, he recommended periodic health screenings for weavers due to occupational hazards.

District Collector Dr A Siri, in her address, outlined the district's development priorities post reorganization, noting that nearly 75 percent of the region remains rain-fed with limited irrigation coverage. She detailed plans to promote water conservation, expand drip irrigation, and encourage crop diversification towards horticulture.

Measures such as farm mechanization, compensation support to farmers, and efforts to boost dairy, fisheries, and industrial investments through the Orvakal node were also highlighted.

Free eye medical camp held

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

COLLEGE Principal Dr Kutala Srinivasulu announced that, on the occasion of World Health Day, Ananthalakshmi College organized a free eye medical camp and an awareness programme regarding eye health issues.

This initiative was conducted under the aegis of the National Service Scheme (NSS), courtesy of Smart Vision Eye Hospital.

During the event, experts from Smart Vision Eye Hospital educated students on various eye-related problems, explaining their causes, the precautions necessary for prevention,



and providing medical advice.

Furthermore, their medical team conducted free eye examinations for 500 individuals, including students, college staff, and residents of Itikalapalli.

Students and staff members identified with vision impairments underwent comprehensive eye examinations using a computer

slit lamp and received free medical treatment. The event was attended by College Chairman M Anantha Ramudu, Vice Chairman Ramesh Naidu, Principal Dr Kutala Srinivasulu, Director of Skill Development Dr M Surendra Naidu, NSS Officer T Manohar, Program Coordinator Himabindu, as well as faculty members and students.

KIMS Saveera organises road safety awareness rally

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

TRAFFIC CI Venkatesh Naik stated that everyone must strictly adhere to traffic regulations in order to reduce road accidents.

Under the aegis of KIMS Saveera Hospitals, and in observance of International Neurosurgeons Day, a road safety awareness programme was organized at the Tower Clock Circle in Anantapur.

Speaking on the occasion, he emphasized that given the daily increase in the number of vehicles, the public needs to exercise greater caution.

He highlighted that factors



such as controlling speed, refraining from driving under the influence of alcohol, and obeying traffic signals are absolutely critical.

During the event, an individual dressed as 'Yama' (the God of Death) handed out flowers to those not wearing helmets and urged them to make wearing a

helmet mandatory. He warned them that, otherwise, they would end up coming to him.

Subsequently, Neurosurgeons Dr Mohana Murali Krishna and Dr Anil spoke, noting that the majority of patients requiring neurosurgical interventions are, in fact, victims of road accidents.



Home Guards Commandant M Mahesh Kumar inspecting a parade and briefing personnel on election duty at the police parade ground in Anantapur on Wednesday

Home guards urged to uphold khaki image during polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

RAYALASEEMA Region In-charge Home Guards Commandant M Mahesh Kumar called upon personnel to discharge their duties responsibly and enhance the reputation of the police department while ensuring effective public service.

A parade of Home Guards was conducted at the local police parade ground under the directions of District Superintendent of Police S Satish Kumar.

The Commandant attended as the chief guest, inspected the parade, and later addressed the personnel.

He provided detailed guidance to Home Guards assigned for upcoming election duty in Tamil Nadu, explaining their roles and appropriate conduct while interacting with voters. Emphasising discipline and professionalism, he urged them to perform their responsibilities with dedication.

Mahesh Kumar stressed the importance of maintaining good health, stating that physical fitness is essential for efficient duty performance.

He advised personnel to recall their training, enhance their skills, and remain prepared for challenges in daily duties.

He also highlighted safety during travel, instructing personnel to carry valid driving licences, ensure timely renewal of insurance, and follow proper protocols. Home Guards were advised to report any issues through sub-division in-charges or higher authorities for resolution.

A grievance session was held later to address concerns, which will be forwarded to the District SP for necessary action. AR DSP Srinivasulu, RI Vali, RSI Pradeep Singh, and other staff attended the programme.



Grand celebrations mark DS Nakara's birth anniversary

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURNOOL

THE State Government Pensioners Association, located at the local 'C' Camp, organized the birth anniversary celebrations of DS Nakara.

Following this event, the association held its regular monthly meeting, which is customarily conducted on the second Wednesday of every month.

Speaking on the occasion, A Maddileti Reddy (Secretary, State Government Pensioners Association) and Kotla Linganna (President, Kurnool District State Government Pensioners Association) highlighted the legacy of DS Nakara (1914-2009).

They noted that Nakara had

served as the former Financial Advisor to the Ministry of Defence, Government of India. They hailed him as a champion who fought for the rights of millions of pensioners across the country, citing a historic case he filed against the Central Government in 1983.

In that landmark case, the Supreme Court delivered a pivotal verdict declaring that "pension is not a bounty [gift] given, but a right of the employee."

The Court further ruled that there should be no discrimination in pensions based on the date of retirement and affirmed that all pensioners possess equal rights. This judgment brought about revolutionary changes in the pension system.

Narayana Health crosses 10k spine surgeries milestone

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

NARAYANA Health has surpassed 10,000 successful orthopaedic and spine surgeries, including over 1,000 robotic joint replacements, reinforcing its position in advanced, technology-driven healthcare.

The milestone highlights the hospital's focus on clinical excellence, innovation, and improved patient outcomes.

Marking the achievement, the hospital reported successful management of two complex cases advanced knee arthritis and a rare multi-level spinal tumour. Dr Abhinandan S Punit, Senior Consultant and Clinical Lead-Arthroplasty, stated that the institution remains committed to expanding access to



Doctors of Narayana Health addressing the media at the Press Club in Anantapur on Tuesday

high-quality care through advanced technologies and multidisciplinary expertise, enabling precision in surgery and faster patient recovery.

In one case, a 69-year-old patient suffering from severe knee pain due to advanced osteoarthritis underwent a total knee replacement and was mobilised within a day, later

discharged with improved mobility.

In another case, a 53-year-old patient diagnosed with a rare spinal tumour involving multiple levels underwent a complex surgery led by Dr Shashidhar BK and a team of specialists.

The procedure involved tumour excision and multi-level spinal stabilisation

using advanced navigation and neuromonitoring technologies.

Doctors reported that the patient regained full strength in the lower limbs post-surgery. The hospital stated that continued emphasis on early diagnosis and integrated care will further strengthen its role in delivering advanced orthopaedic and spine treatment.

COLLECTOR HITS THE GROUND TO INSPECT MGNREGA WORKS

- The inspection was carried out at Kuvvakonda area under Bukkapatnam Gram Panchayat, where ongoing trench works were reviewed
- Examines attendance records of workers and assesses the quality of work at the site
- Directs to accelerate the pace of works and ensure timely completion of targets set under the scheme

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

DISTRICT Collector A Shyam Prasad conducted a surprise inspection of employment guarantee works under the MGNREGS scheme in Bukkapatnam mandal on Wednesday.

The inspection was carried out at Kuvvakonda area under Bukkapatnam Gram Panchayat, where

ongoing trench works were reviewed.

During the visit, the Collector examined attendance records of workers and assessed the quality of work at the site.

He also interacted directly with labourers to understand their concerns and working conditions.

Officials were directed to accelerate the pace of works and ensure timely comple-



Collector A Shyam Prasad interacting with labourers during a surprise inspection of MGNREGS works at Kuvvakonda area in Bukkapatnam mandal of Anantapur district on Wednesday

tion of targets set under the scheme.

Emphasising worker welfare amid rising tem-

peratures, the Collector instructed authorities to provide adequate shade, drinking water, and medical

kits at all work sites.

He further directed that all eligible beneficiaries must be provided employ-

ment opportunities and that works must be executed strictly as per guidelines.

The government has set clear targets for the current month, aiming to maximise employment opportunities in rural areas.

Officials have been instructed to ensure daily attendance of 77,000 workers across sites and complete 1.9 million person-days of work by the end of the month.

District Water Management Agency Project Director Vijayendra Prasad, Puttapparthi Cluster APD V Ramesh Babu, APO Srinivas Reddy, EC Manjunath, and other field staff participated in the inspection.

SC Commission chairman orders speedy resolution of pending cases in Chittoor

HANS NEWS SERVICE CHITTOOR

SC Commission Chairman KS Jawahar directed revenue and police officials to work in coordination and resolve pending cases immediately, stating that land disputes and caste discrimination issues remain high in the Chittoor district.

He conducted a review meeting on Wednesday in Chittoor with senior officials on cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and the implementation of welfare schemes. District Collector Sumit Kumar, district SP Tushar Dudi and other officials participated.

Jawahar said he expected the district to develop as a model, but observed that discrimination still continues in new forms at grass-roots level. Caste discrimination has not been completely eliminated and is still visible in some areas. Officials have a responsibility to address public grievances without delay. He noted that atrocity cases are higher in Kuppam, Palamaner

and Nagari areas. District Collector Sumit Kumar explained the steps being taken to resolve issues related to SC communities. Major concerns include land disputes, DKT land matters, encroachments and issuance of caste certificates.

A special drive is being conducted by the revenue department with village-level inspections to speed up solutions.

He added that special attention is being given to problems in SC colonies, including population pressure, lack of basic amenities and food-related issues, with co-ordinated action taken through concerned departments.

SP Tushar said special investigations into atrocity cases are being carried out under the supervision of DSP-level officers. Committee members Sriprati Babu, M Biksham, NT Ramanjaneyamma, Secretary Chinnna Rayudu, Joint Collector A Rajendran, District Social Welfare Officer Rabbani Basha and others attended the meeting



Why sewing is not a hobby, but a career path for today's youth

Sewing is no longer confined to tradition or hobby—it is emerging as a modern, skill-driven career shaped by creativity and technology. For today's youth, it offers a powerful blend of independence, adaptability, and opportunity in an evolving job landscape



SEEMA MAHAJAN

In a world where careers are no longer shaped by linear degrees or predictable corporate ladders, sewing is undergoing a quiet but significant redefinition. Once viewed primarily as a domestic skill or a leisurely pastime, it is now emerging as a credible, future-ready profession—one rooted in creativity, technical expertise, and economic independence. For India's youth navigating an increasingly uncertain job market shaped by automation, platform economies, and shifting consumer values, sewing offers something rare and valuable: a tangible, adaptable skill with real-world application.

The renewed relevance of sewing lies in its ability to seamlessly blend craftsmanship with modern capability. Contemporary sewing is far

removed from the narrow perception of basic stitch work. The tools, techniques, and outcomes have evolved dramatically, expanding what young professionals can create, customise, and scale. Entry-level mechanical machines help learners build a strong foundation in garment construction and fabric handling, while advanced mechanical and electronic machines introduce greater speed control, stitch variation, and material versatility. Computerised sewing machines, with intuitive digital interfaces and pre-programmed designs, enable precision and consistency, allowing creative ideas to translate into professional outputs. Embroidery-enabled machines further widen the creative canvas, making detailed personalisation accessible without extensive manual effort. Together, these ad-



vancements position sewing as a discipline that combines artisanal skill with technological fluency.

Sewing as Creative Entrepreneurship

This evolution has been amplified by the rise of the creator economy, which has transformed sewing into a viable pathway for creative entrepreneurship. Digital

platforms and direct-to-consumer models have lowered traditional barriers to entry, enabling skilled individuals to build brands, offer bespoke services, and reach niche audiences with minimal infrastructure. Today, a young sewist can launch small collections, offer made-to-measure solutions, create customised products, or monetise ex-



pertise through workshops and digital content. In this ecosystem, sewing extends beyond production—it becomes a tool for storytelling, differentiation, and sustained value creation.

Cultural Continuity in a Contemporary Context

Beyond its economic potential, sewing holds deep cultural significance in the

Indian context. Our textiles, silhouettes, and construction techniques carry centuries of heritage and regional identity. When young people engage with sewing as a profession, they do more than preserve these traditions—they reinterpret them for contemporary markets. This dynamic fusion of heritage and modern design ensures cultural

narratives remain relevant, adaptable, and commercially viable, positioning sewing as both a creative and cultural profession.

Yet, despite these shifts, outdated perceptions persist. Sewing is still often framed as a secondary option rather than a legitimate career choice. These notions are increasingly being challenged as more young pro-

professionals build sustainable livelihoods, integrate technology into their practice, and engage confidently with national and global markets.

Looking ahead, the role of the sewist is set to become even more relevant. While automation will continue to shape large-scale manufacturing, craftsmanship, personalisation, and design sensitivity remain irreplaceable. Sewing offers resilience against market volatility, adaptability across industries, and the freedom to evolve with changing consumer demands. What was once dismissed as a hobby has emerged as a profession with depth, dignity, and purpose - offering today's youth a forward-looking career grounded in skill, creativity, and opportunity.

(The writer is President of Studio of Fashion & Craft, Usha International)

From the heart of Hyderabad to the runways of Mumbai: Vaishali Agarwal debuts 'Baakul'

Hyderabad-based designer Vaishali Agarwal marks a milestone moment as she debuts on the national fashion stage with her collection 'Baakul'. Showcased in Mumbai, the line brings the city's rich craftsmanship to a wider audience, blending heritage with modern elegance



Designer Vaishali Agarwal has taken a significant step in her two-decade journey by debuting on the pan-India fashion stage with her latest collection, 'Baakul'. Known for her strong presence in Hyderabad's couture landscape, Vaishali has now expanded her vision to a national audience, unveiling her collection at a recently concluded fashion week in Mumbai, where actor Alaya F walked as the showstopper. This showcase represents more than just a runway debut; it marks Vaishali's first presentation beyond Hyderabad, bringing her deeply rooted design philosophy to a wider luxury audience. Despite the geographic expansion, her work remains firmly anchored in the cultural richness and artisanal traditions of her home city.

Vaishali's journey began with designing outfits for her young daughter, gradually evolving into a celebrated couture label recognized for intricate embroidery, handcrafted textiles, and meaningful storytelling. Over the years, she has consistently bridged traditional craftsmanship with contemporary aes-

thetics, creating designs that resonate with modern brides and occasion wear enthusiasts.

Her latest collection, 'Baakul', reflects this philosophy. Named after the sacred flower offered to Lord Shiva and inspired by the cosmic rhythm of Nataraja, the collection translates spirituality into wearable art. Each piece embodies symbolism, fluidity, and grace, brought to life through detailed craftsmanship and modern silhouettes.

The collection highlights Hyderabad's signature design elements, including rich textiles and intricate surface ornamentation. Motifs such as Nandi and the fish from Ganga are reinterpreted through dhabka embroidery, gota appliqué, handmade floral detailing, and statement dori jackets. These traditional elements are paired with fluid silhouettes, metallic accents, and layered textures, giving the collection a contemporary

edge suitable for today's fashion-forward audience.

Speaking about the milestone, Vaishali Agarwal shared that presenting 'Baakul' in Mumbai marks a defining moment for her brand. She emphasized her intention to carry Hyderabad's craftsmanship into a broader narrative that connects with the aspirations of the modern Indian bride.

Complementing the collection is Shivasa Fine Jewellery, founded by Sandhya Agarwal. The brand blends traditional polkis, vibrant gemstones, and diamonds to create timeless pieces designed for modern women. Together, the collaboration presents a cohesive vision of bridal and occasion wear that celebrates heritage while embracing contemporary elegance.

With 'Baakul', Vaishali Agarwal successfully bridges regional craftsmanship and national appeal, signaling a promising new chapter in her design journey.

Ananya Panday on tackling exam pressure: 'They are a small part of a much bigger journey'

Actress Ananya Panday's So Positive, a children and family-first initiative designed to acknowledge exam stress, has joined forces with Nick India to come up with new and exciting ways to tackle exam pressure.

Rooted in Nick India's ongoing Pressure Ko Bolo Bye campaign, the initiative encourages parents to actively ease exam pressure by recognizing each child's unique strengths and learning style, while building confidence over comparison.

The collaboration came to life with a special on-ground activity led by Ananya Panday, along with Nick's beloved characters Chikoo and Bunty.

They selected everyday exam worries written on balloons and popped them to reveal easy stress-busting actions.

Shedding further light on the initiative, Ananya revealed that as a kid, she learned that the best way to overcome exam pressure is to take a step back and

remember that exams are merely a small part of a much bigger journey.

The 'CTRL' actress said, "Exam pressure is something almost every student experiences, but it's important to remember that it doesn't have to define you. Growing up, I realised that the best way to deal with it is to take a step back, breathe and remind yourself that exams are just one small part of a much bigger journey."

"What I love about the Nick's Pressure Ko Bolo Bye initiative is that it encourages kids and parents to talk openly about stress and handle it in a healthier, more positive way. Sometimes even small actions,

like pausing, sharing how you feel or just letting go of expectations, can make a big difference," she added. Sharing a glimpse of the initiative, Ananya wrote on her official Instagram handle, "It's that time of the year again - books, exams and all the pressure that comes with it. But this year, with Nick India

and So Positive, we're saying #Pressure-KoBoloBye and will show you exactly how to do this - one pop at a time!"



CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Brawl (6)
 - A solemn pledge (3)
 - Romulus kin (4)
 - Freudian terms (4)
 - Restaurant, diner (6)
 - Wept with loud sobs; had a running nose? (9)
 - Metallic element (4)
 - Supplement (3)
 - Farm bird (5)
 - ___ as a hatter? (2,3)
 - In what way (3)
 - ___ Aviv: capital of Israel? (3)
 - Garden flower (5)
 - Capital of China's Hubei province (5)
 - "It is" a verbal contraction (3)
 - Low voice (4)
 - Romantic illumination? (9)
 - Halogen element (6)
 - Red vegetable (4)
 - Asian language (4)
 - Drain of strength (3)
 - Source (6)

DOWN

- Madness or very frantic (6)
- ___ his advice: doing as he counselled? (6,2)
- Light melodies (4)
- Cunning (7)
- Flow controlling device (5)
- In good health (4)
- Northernmost Irish county (7)
- President Eisenhower's nickname? (3)
- Milk-giving animals (4)
- Use a dagger (4)
- Minatory (8)
- Capital of Lower Saxony (7)
- Samurai code (7)
- Toupee (3)
- Behind at sea? (6)
- Bind (3,2)
- Eggs of insects (4)
- Long trip (4)

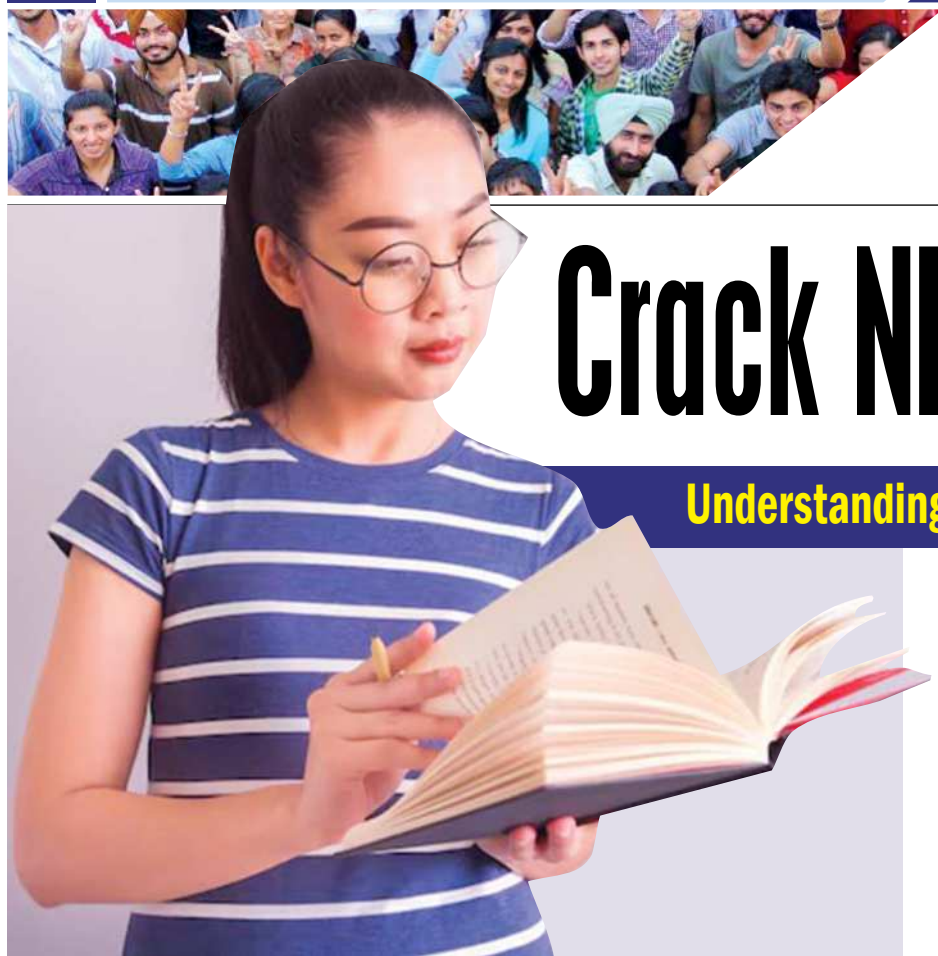


Solution to April 8

SUDOKU



Solution to April 8



Crack NEET Chemistry with the right plan

Understanding trends, focusing on key chapters, and regular revision are key to better performance

Understanding Class 11 Chemistry Trends

The Class 11 portion forms the foundation of Chemistry preparation. Many of these topics are concept-heavy and require a clear understanding before moving on to advanced chapters.

High-weightage chapters in Class 11 include Chemical Bonding and Molecular Structure, Equilibrium, Hydrocarbons, and Organic Chemistry basics. These topics are crucial not only because of their weightage but also because they form the base for several Class 12 chapters.

Medium-weightage chapters such as Structure of Atom, Thermodynamics, and Some Basic Concepts of Chemistry also play an important role. These chapters introduce key principles that are frequently applied in problem-solving.

On the other hand, topics like Classification of Elements and Periodicity in Properties are relatively lower in weightage but still require revision, as they can contribute to easy scoring opportunities.

Class 12 Chemistry: Higher weightage, higher impact

The Class 12 syllabus generally carries slightly higher

overall weightage in NEET. Many chapters in this section are scoring if prepared well.

Among the high-weightage topics are Electrochemistry, Coordination Compounds, and the d- and f-block elements. These chapters are known for repeated questions and relatively predictable patterns.

Medium-weightage chapters include Chemical Kinetics and Alcohols, Phenols, and Ethers. These require a mix of conceptual understanding and memorisation.

Lower-weightage topics such as Amines and Biomolecules are often more theory-based and can be covered through regular revision. While they may contribute fewer questions, they are important for securing complete marks.

Building a step-by-step preparation plan

An effective Chemistry preparation strategy begins with strengthening the basics. Students should start with chapters like Structure of Atom and Basic Concepts to build clarity. Once the fundamentals are clear, they can move on to more complex topics such as Thermodynamics, Equilibrium, and Chemical Bonding.

Organic Chemistry should be approached in a logical



sequence—beginning with general principles and reaction mechanisms, followed by specific chapters like Hydrocarbons and functional groups. Understanding reaction patterns is more important than rote memorisation.

Inorganic Chemistry, on the other hand, requires consistent revision.

Short notes, flashcards, and regular recall practice can help retain important facts and reactions.

Solving previous years' question papers is a crucial part of preparation. It helps students understand the exam pattern, identify im-

portant topics, and improve time management. Chapter-wise practice is particularly useful for strengthening weaker areas.

Balancing chemistry with other subjects

NEET preparation requires a balance between all three subjects. Biology often carries the highest weightage, while Physics demands strong analytical skills. Chemistry acts as a bridge between the two, offering scoring opportunities if prepared strategically. Students should aim to maintain a balance between Physi-

cal, Organic, and Inorganic Chemistry, ensuring that no section is neglected. A well-rounded approach can significantly improve overall performance.

Chemistry can play a decisive role in determining your NEET rank. With a clear understanding of chapter-wise weightage, a structured study plan, and consistent practice, aspirants can turn it into a high-scoring subject. Rather than studying everything with equal intensity, focusing on the right topics at the right time can make preparation more efficient and result-oriented.

- 1. Focus on high-weightage chapters:** Prioritise topics like Chemical Bonding, Equilibrium, and Coordination Compounds.
- 2. Strengthen fundamentals first:** Build a strong base before moving to advanced topics.
- 3. Practice consistently:** Solve previous years' papers and take regular tests.
- 4. Revise regularly:** Especially for Inorganic and memory-based chapters.
- 5. Maintain subject balance:** Allocate time wisely across all sections of Chemistry.

DILIP GANGARAMANI

For students preparing for the NEET UG 2026, Chemistry often feels like a subject that sits between extremes. It is generally more manageable than Physics but not as straightforward as Biology. For some aspirants, it becomes a reliable scoring area, while for others, it presents a mix of challenges—numerical problem-solving in Physical Chemistry, conceptual understanding in Organic Chemistry, and memory-based learning in Inorganic Chemistry.

This makes it essential for

students to adopt a clear and structured strategy. One of the most effective ways to do this is by understanding the chapter-wise weightage of Chemistry based on previous years' papers.

This approach does not mean ignoring any topic but helps aspirants prioritise their time and effort more effectively.

Why chapter-wise weightage matters

A close analysis of past NEET papers reveals that certain chapters consistently carry higher weightage. Topics such as Chemical Bonding, Equilibrium, Hy-

drocarbons, Coordination Compounds, and Aldehydes and Ketones are frequently asked and often contribute significantly to the total marks.

Focusing on these high-weightage chapters offers several advantages.

It allows students to allocate more time to topics that are more likely to appear in the exam. It also builds familiarity and confidence, as repeated practice increases accuracy and speed. At the same time, revising low-weightage chapters ensures that students do not lose out on easy marks from straightforward questions.

VIT Chennai Celebrates University Day



The Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Chennai, celebrated its University Day recently with great enthusiasm. Binod Kumar, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Indian Bank, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Vaibhav Chaurasia attended as the Guest of Honour. The event was presided over by G. Viswanathan, Founder and Chancellor of VIT, in the presence of G. V. Selvam, Vice-President of VIT.

In his address, Binod Kumar encouraged students to prepare for a rapidly evolving world, emphasizing the importance of continuous effort and adaptability. He highlighted the need for innovation with

a focus on enhancing end-user experience. Stressing a customer-centric approach, he remarked that simplifying people's lives should be a guiding principle, as it helps individuals strive for excellence.

He further underlined the significance of both knowledge and character, stating that while knowledge shapes one's path, it is personal character that ultimately defines success.

Major Vaibhav Chaurasia inspiring students to draw inspiration from their surroundings and focus on positive influences. He urged them to remain resilient and maintain self-belief, reminding them to persevere through challenges and continue work-

ing hard with integrity.

In his presidential address, G. Viswanathan highlighted the transformative power of education, noting that it uplifts individuals, families, and society at large. He stressed that the vision of a developed nation can be achieved through universal access to quality education and knowledge-driven economic growth.

This concluded with the distribution of medals and certificates to meritorious students in recognition of their academic and overall excellence. Senior officials, including Prof. T. Thyagarajan, Prof. K. Sathiyarayanan, and Prof. P. K. Manoharan, were also present at the event.

Industry-integrated undergraduate programmes designed to combine academic learning with practical training. The B.Tech in Applied Life Sciences includes initial classroom study followed by hands-on experience. The B.Sc in Cardiovascular Sciences, both courses focus on skill development, industry exposure, and employability, with structured internships forming a key component of the learning process

HYDERABAD

Young India Skills University (YISU) has launched a set of industry-integrated undergraduate programmes along with a digital learning platform, marking a shift towards skill-based and experiential education.

The launch event was held on Wednesday at the International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad campus in Gachibowli, in the presence of academic and

Young India Skills University launches industry-linked courses, digital learning platform



industry representatives. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between classroom education and industry requirements by embedding practical training within degree programmes.

According to university officials, the newly introduced B.Tech programme in Applied Life Sciences has been developed in collaboration with companies such as Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Het-

ero, and Bharat Biotech. The structure of the programme includes classroom learning in the initial phase, followed by extended hands-on training within partner organisations and internships in the final year.

The university has also introduced a B.Sc programme in Cardiovascular Sciences in collaboration with AIG Hospitals. The course is designed to provide students

with practical exposure in a clinical environment under the guidance of medical professionals.

Vice Chancellor V.L.V.S.S. Subba Rao stated that the programmes have been designed with a strong focus on employability and real-world application. He noted that industry collaboration has been a key factor in shaping the curriculum, ensuring students gain relevant skills

alongside academic knowledge.

Alongside the academic programmes, the university launched a Digital Learning Universe in partnership with Tutorials Point. The platform is designed to offer flexible, self-paced learning through AI-supported content across multiple domains, including technology, artificial intelligence, and professional skills.

The digital platform is expected to initially offer around 75 courses, catering to learners seeking to upgrade skills or explore new areas of study outside traditional degree structures.

University officials said the move reflects a broader shift away from conventional textbook-based education towards practical, skill-driven learning models.

The programmes are also expected to create new opportunities for students, particularly those seeking industry exposure during their academic journey. Admissions for the newly launched courses are currently open, with selection based on an entrance test and interview process.

Survey finds Gen Z aspirants shifting focus to global, skill-based careers

A majority of Gen Z students in India aspiring for careers in finance are moving away from traditional degree-focused pathways and increasingly prioritising global opportunities and skill-based learning, according to a recent survey by Zell Education.

The report reveals that over 70% of students are actively targeting international career prospects, including roles with global firms, remote work opportunities, and career pathways enabled through internationally recognised certifications. This trend reflects a significant

shift in student mindset, with greater focus on global exposure, higher earning potential, and faster career growth.

One of the key findings of the survey is the growing preference for practical, application-oriented learning. Students are placing more importance on acquiring job-ready skills and real-world experience rather than relying solely on academic degrees. The emphasis is increasingly on employability and industry relevance.

Pratham Barot, CEO and Co-founder of Zell Education, noted that students today are more informed

and outcome-driven in their decisions. He highlighted that career choices are now guided by long-term prospects and skill development rather than just formal qualifications.

The survey also points to a rising demand for globally recognised certifications such as ACCA, CFA, and CPA. These qualifications are increasingly seen as essential for building international careers and aligning with global industry standards.

In terms of career preferences, students continue to show strong interest in fields such as investment banking,

private equity, consulting, and financial analytics—areas known for high growth and dynamic work environments.

However, the report also highlights challenges faced by aspirants, including limited awareness about career pathways, access to industry-relevant training, and the need to balance academic commitments with skill development.

1. Global outlook: Over 70% of students aim for international or globally connected careers.
2. Skill-first approach: Practical learning and employ-

ability skills are gaining priority over degrees.

3. Rising certifications: ACCA, CFA, and CPA are becoming central to career planning.

4. Awareness gaps: Students still face challenges in accessing the right guidance and training.

The findings underline a broader transformation in how Gen Z approaches education and careers, with a clear shift towards global mobility, skill-driven learning, and outcome-focused decision-making in an increasingly competitive job market.





It felt like the Mumbai Indians lacked a bit of purpose and intent with the ball, and that certainly spilled over into the batting. It was always going to be a big task to score 151 in 11 overs. Young swashbuckler Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was "brilliant" against pace ace Jasprit Bumrah
- Anil Kumble

Vaibhav taking down Bumrah eased pressure, says Jaiswal

GUWAHATI

AMAZED by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's seemingly effortless takedown of Jasprit Bumrah, Rajasthan Royals batter Yashasvi Jaiswal said his 15-year-old opening partner eased the pressure on him in the 27-run IPL win over Mumbai Indians on a rain-soaked evening here. The talking point before the match was the first face-off between the redoubtable pacer and the teen sensation, and Sooryavanshi lived up to the hype, smashing

an incoming Bumrah 131kph delivery on middle and leg for a first-ball six over mid-on. "First ball, he hit him for a six, and I told him to just keep playing his shots," said Jaiswal, who scored a 32-ball 77 not out to lift RR to 150/3 in the 11-overs a side match that was truncated because of inclement weather. Mumbai Indians, in reply, managed 123/9 to slump to a second loss on the trot, while Rajasthan Royals climbed to the top of the table with three wins from three matches.

Mahela concedes MI blown away by Sooryavanshi and Jaiswal magic; It felt like Mumbai Indians lacked purpose and intent with the ball: Kumble

The Bihar left-hander, who was signed by Rajasthan Royals for Rs 1.1 crore during the 2025 IPL mega auction. He had shown glimpses of his prodigious talent by becoming the youngest centurion in T20 cricket and the second-fastest in IPL history with a record-breaking

35-ball hundred against Gujarat Titans last season. On Tuesday too, he was in beast mode from the outset, even though Bumrah operating with the new ball. Sooryavanshi, who turned 15 a day before IPL 2026 began, went on to hit two of

his four sixes off the pacer in his opening over, setting the tempo early with a 14-ball 39. It made life easier for Jaiswal at the other end as their confidence soared, allowing them to target other MI bowlers like Deepak Chahar and Trent Boult who both leaked 22 runs in their respective overs. "Of course, Bumrah bhai is one of the legends, so if he's scoring against him, it's amazing. It made us feel that other bowlers we can also take down," said Jaiswal, who hit 10 fours and four sixes and anchored the

innings," Jaiswal said, are quite an opposition." Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene admitted his side was blown off course by a blistering onslaught from Rajasthan Royals openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. It felt like the Mumbai Indians lacked a bit of purpose and intent with the ball, and that certainly spilled over into the batting. It was always going to be a big task to score 151 in 11 overs," said former India captain Anil Kumble.



Divya Deshmukh storms into joint lead

R Praggnanandhaa saw his title hopes take a major hit after a loss against Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri in the eighth round
PAPHOS

INDIAN chess sensation Divya Deshmukh pulled off a superb turnaround converting what looked like a certain draw into victory to climb into joint lead, while compatriot R Praggnanandhaa saw his title hopes take a major hit after a loss against Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri in the eighth round, leaving him almost out of contention for a top finish in the Candidates tournament here. In the women's section, World Cup winner Deshmukh turned the tables on overnight leader Anna Muzychuk to jump into joint lead with four others including the Ukrainian on 4.5 points from what had seemed a difficult position to defend. Deshmukh did well to fight on and equalise and then capitalised on an unforced error by her opponent in the queen-and-pawns endgame to score a vital victory. The other Indian, R.



Vaishali drew with Bibisara Assaubayeva of Kazakhstan to join Deshmukh, Kateryna Lagno of Ukraine, China's Zhu Jiner and Muzychuk in the lead on 4.5 points after eight games. The event is wide open now with Jiner giving a knockout blow to the hopes of her Chinese compatriot Tan Zhongyi to move to 4.5 points while Kateryna defeated fellow Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina. On a day when Uzbek Javokhir Sindarov just decided to consolidate his lead and drew with tail-ender Andrey Esipenko of Russia in the 'Open' section, Praggnana-

ndhaa, who had scored his sole victory over Giri in the first round, fell prey to some simple tactics from a seemingly equal position and lost his second game in the tournament. Sindarov took his tally to 6.5 out of a possible eight and looks headed for victory as his lead now stands at a massive two points with six rounds remaining in the USD 700,000 prize money tournament that will also select the next challenger for reigning world champion D. Gukesh in the world championship match slated later this year.

KKR brace for Shami challenge in LSG clash

TAPAN MOHANTA KOLKATA

OUT of tune and bereft of ideas, Kolkata Knight Riders may ring in sweeping changes in search of their first win of the season when they face a Mohammed Shami-inspired Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL, here on Thursday. Shami is fresh from his outstanding 2/9 against Sunrisers Hyderabad, where he dismissed Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head in successive overs -- the same duo who had battered KKR the other day. The 'local' man Shami, a fine exponent of straight seam bowling and movement, will relish the conditions at Eden Gardens and could emerge as a key threat for a KKR who are yet to win after three matches. A glimpse of what to expect was seen on Monday when PBKS' Australian speedster Xavier Bartlett showed how effective straight seam bowling can be on a grassy Eden pitch, blowing away KKR's top order by dismissing overseas duo Finn Allen and Cameron Green in the space of three balls. From 16/2 in two overs, KKR were fortunate to escape with a point after their match against Punjab Kings was washed out. Because of a trough stretching from Gangetic West Bengal to the Gulf of Mannar, rain has been a constant over the past three days and is forecast around late Wednesday and early Thursday. However, being a late 7.30pm start the match is unlikely to be affected much, which should lift the mood. Coming back to the contest, while Shami will be a major threat in the power play, tackling the rest of LSG's attack including Prince Yadav and mystery spinner Digvesh Rathi could also be decisive. LSG's strength lies in their power play bowling, something evident when they reduced both Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad to identical scores of 26/4 early on.



MATCH STARTS AT 7:30PM

Ayush stuns world No. 7 Feng in Asia Championships

NINGBO: India's Ayush Shetty stunned world No. 7 Lin Shi Feng of China in straight games to enter the second round of the men's singles competition at the Badminton Asia Championships here on Wednesday. World No 25 Ayush, who had won the US Open Super 300 title last year, registered a 21-13 21-16 victory in 51 minutes. Lin raced to a 4-1 lead early on, but Ayush clawed back to level at 7-7 before gradually taking control to pocket the opening game. After the change of sides, the Chinese again moved ahead 4-1 and extended it to 12-9, but Ayush turned the tide with a six-point burst to surge to 18-13. Lin closed the gap to 16-18, but the Indian held his nerve to shut the door on his fancied opponent. Top stars such as PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen, Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy will begin their campaigns later in the day.

India go down 1-2 to Thailand

NEW DELHI: Rituja Bhosale and Ankita Raina salvaged some pride with a consolation win in the doubles after Sahaja Yamalappalli's narrow defeat in the second singles as India went down against Thailand 1-2 in the rain-hit opening Asia/Oceania Group I tie of the Billie Jean King Cup here on Wednesday. A lot was riding on world No. 384 Sahaja as she resumed the match after it was halted due to rain on Tuesday evening. However, the 25-year-old could not keep India in the hunt, losing 4-6, 6-1, 4-6 to Patcharin, ranked 449, in a match that lasted two hours and 25 minutes. Doubles pair of Bhosale and Raina then beat Thasaporn Naklo and Peangtarn Plipuech 6-3 6-4 in one hour and 11 minutes. "We knew going into the match, Thailand is a very good team. We really have to play some good tennis. Unfortunately, we didn't do what we needed to do and lost 2-0. But nevertheless, it's a good thing that we won the doubles because it's still a long tournament ahead. And



every win matters," captain Vishal Uppal told reporters. Earlier, resuming at 3-4 in the decider, Sahaja sent a forehand wide as Patcharin held serve to move 5-3 ahead. The Indian then held her serve after a Patcharin backhand slice found the net, narrowing the gap to 4-5. With the match on knife's edge, Sahaja produced some exceptional groundstrokes, dominating baseline exchanges. She even earned a break point when the Thai hit long. However, she faltered at the crucial juncture, sending a forehand and a backhand long to hand the advantage back. A miscued return on the next point ended her resistance.

We will move court again to resist voter deletions: Didi

Everything in my life began from here: Mamata after filing nomination for Bhabanipur seat;

KOLKATA

WEST Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit out at the BJP and the Election Commission over voter deletions during the SIR exercise and said her party will move a court again to resist the removal of electors from the rolls. Her comments came after nearly 91 lakh voters' names were deleted from the electoral rolls following the completion of the Special Intensive Revision in the state. "You will not be able to defeat the TMC by deleting names. We will move a court again to resist the exclusion of names," Banerjee said while attacking her principal challenger BJP over the roll revision exercise. Banerjee had in February argued in



the Supreme Court as she sought an intervention in the SIR process. The EC figures showed the total deletion of over 90.83 lakh names from the original voter base of 7.66 crore in October 2025. Criticising the poll panel over the SIR process, the TMC supreme said, "We will fight legally to get the names included on

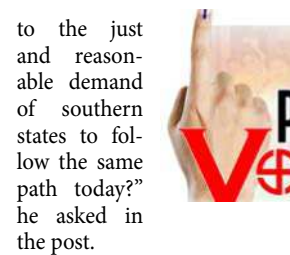
the list as per the Constitution. If people cannot cast their votes, what is the need to frame the tribunal? And then you are saying that the list has been frozen. What is this? We will challenge it and try to understand it." Turning her nomination filing for the Bhabanipur seat into a political counteroffen-

sive to the BJP's call for "paribartan", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee marched from her Kalighat residence to submit her papers, projecting the constituency as a "mini India" under siege of polarisation. "I was born and brought up here in Bhabanipur only. I stay here 365 days a year. My life, my work, my movements -- everything revolves around Bhabanipur. Everything in my life began from here. I thank and salute the people of Bhabanipur," Banerjee said. "People are allowed to eat eggs, fish, or meat in the BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. The same will happen here if the BJP comes to power," Banerjee claimed. PTI

CM Stalin on delimitation

'TN will not accept any decision taken without state's consent'

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday said the South demanded a fair delimitation and that the state will not accept any decision taken by the Centre on the subject without its consent. Prime Minister Narendra Modi should not turn a "calm south into a storm", he cautioned, and posed a set of questions to the PM. "The Prime Minister must answer these fair and pressing questions raised by the people of the South," Stalin said in a post on 'X' with a headline "Delimitation Danger: Is India sliding into dictatorship?" The DMK chief sought to know why the Union BJP government was "shrouding the entire delimitation process in secrecy instead of coming clean on how it intends to carry it out." "In 2001, former Prime Minister Vajpayee deferred delimitation for 25 years in the national interest. What is Prime Minister Modi's answer



to the just and reasonable demand of southern states to follow the same path today?" he asked in the post. He questioned the timing of convening a special session of Parliament in the midst of five state elections and why the Union government brushed aside the fair and reasoned demand of Opposition leaders to hold the special session only after April 29. "What is it that you are trying to hide? Forcing through far reaching constitutional amendments without even convening an all party consultation is nothing short of dictatorship," Stalin claimed.

RSS files police complaints against Cong President

GUWAHATI: The RSS on Wednesday said it has filed complaints at two police stations in Assam against Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for allegedly comparing the ideology of the organisation and the BJP with a 'poisonous snake' at an election rally. The complaints were filed to seek legal action over alleged "derogatory, provocative, and communally sensitive statements made during a recent election rally in south Assam, a RSS spokesman said. In the complaints, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh alleged that the Congress chief had made controversial remarks during an election rally in Nilambazar under the Karimganj South assembly constituency in Sribhumi district. "If a poisonous snake is moving in front of you while you are offering namaz, you



must stop the prayer and rush to kill the poisonous snake first - that is what the Quran prescribes you to do. I tell you that the RSS and BJP are like that same poisonous snake," Kharge was quoted as saying in the complaints. The RSS expressed serious concern, claiming that such remarks were "inflammatory in nature and capable of inciting hostility, intimidation, and violence against workers and supporters of the RSS and the BJP". The complaints pointed out that the statement constitutes a "corrupt electoral practice under Section 83 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and the remarks criminally intimidated the public and promoted enmity between supporters of different political and social groups".

Cong levels vote-for-cash allegations against BJP

PALAKKAD

CONGRESS alleged that Sobha Surendran, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate of the Palakkad constituency in Kerala, was "caught red-handed distributing" cash to voters ahead of April 9 elections to the state assembly. Surendran denied the allegations, calling them "fabricated" to defeat her. She alleged that a local Congress leader and a journalist of a TV channel were behind the allegations, and she would be filing a police



case against them. The BJP leader claimed that a video aired on TV channels, showing some women "offering something" to an elderly woman in her constituency, was wrongly projected by the Congress and the journalist to allege that she offered

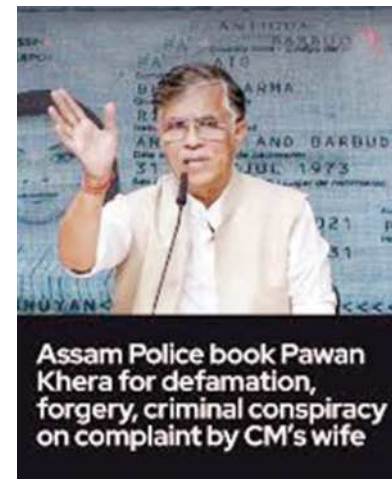
money for votes. Visuals aired on TV channels show a woman offering something to the elderly woman, and thereafter, another group goes to her and opens her hand to reveal a small roll of Rs 500 currency notes. Based on the video, it was alleged that the elderly woman was given money by someone in the BJP candidate's campaign team. However, the elderly woman denied having received any money, but admitted to having asked for Rs 5,000 for buying medicines.

Kerala LoP urges EC to ensure smooth postal voting for govt staff

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly, V D Satheesan, on Wednesday sought the EC's intervention to ensure that government employees can exercise their franchise without any hindrance through the postal voting process. In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner, CEC, Gyanesh Kumar, Satheesan said the issue has already been brought to the attention of the Kerala Chief Electoral Officer by postal voters from all 14 districts, but "no effective remedial measures have been implemented". Assembly polls for 140 constituencies in Kerala will be held on April 9. He said many such employees have also approached him, seeking assistance in resolving these difficulties.

Himanta using police to intimidate me: Khera

GUWAHATI: Congress leader Pawan Khera on Wednesday accused Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of "unleashing" the state police on him instead of addressing the opposition party's questions on multiple passports and foreign investments linked to the CM's wife. In a recorded video addressed to the CM from an undisclosed location, Khera said, "Our party had only asked you some questions. Why do you want to silence us? We have asked questions; give us the replies." He added, "Instead of replying, you are hurling abuses at everyone, you have put police behind me. I am not afraid of them. But I am avoiding them as I have more questions to ask." Khera reiterated questions regarding a purported company registered in the US state of Wyoming in the name of Sarma's wife, Riniki



Assam Police book Pawan Khera for defamation, forgery, criminal conspiracy on complaint by CM's wife

Dubai and Dhaka. He said the London address is also linked with 'Bhuyan Properties Ltd', according to UK government records. Referring to his previous charge of Bhuyan Sarma possessing passports of Egypt and Antigua and Barbuda, and the golden visa of the UAE, Khera asked, "Did you or your agent or one of your family members use fake KYC documents to open these shell companies, buy properties?" "It can be known only through investigation. You are in government, and you should probe these rather than trying to intimidate us," Khera added. Khera had brought the accusations against Bhuyan Sarma of possessing multiple passports and properties in foreign countries on April 5, which have been dismissed by the CM and his wife as false.

Rupee is stabilising around 92-93 against the US dollar. Because of global war-related headwinds and FI withdrawals, there was pressure, but despite these odds, the rupee will stabilise at these levels. One should not worry." -S Mahendra Dev, Chairman, EAC-PM

BIZ BRIEFS

ITC Hotels' milestone

ITC Hotels Limited (ITCHL) announced the Milestone 50th Hotel signing for the Welcomhotel brand in India with addition of new hotels in Shirdi and Bhubaneswar to the growing brand portfolio. The soon to open destinations for Welcomhotel brand include Gangtok in Sikkim and Bhopal & Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh. ITC recently entered into definitive agreements with Sandy Resort Private Limited to operate their upcoming 73-room hotel in Shirdi.

New collection from Tanishq

Tanishq, a jewelry brand from the House of Tata, unveiled its latest launch, Hues, in the natural gemstone category. Hues collection reimagines the way gold is experienced this Akshaya Tritiya, moving beyond traditional, investment-led purchases to jewellery that is expressive and meant to be worn, the company said. The campaign for the new collection features Rukmini Vasanth, Tanishq's new face for South India. The new collection takes centre stage with a focused design language that celebrates contemporary colour stories in gold.

CAIA in pact with UniCAM

Chennai Amrita International Aviation College (CAIA), an aviation training institution, has established a strategic international collaboration with University College of Aviation Malaysia (UniCAM) to bring global aviation expertise directly to its campus. This initiative is designed to strengthen students' practical exposure, build confidence, and equip them with industry-relevant skills for global aviation careers. As part of this collaboration, the college hosted a four-day international training programme from April 6 to 9, 2026.

NDC celebrates diamond day

Natural Diamond Council (NDC) celebrated first World Diamond Day on April 8. The day was introduced by NDC as a global movement to recognise and celebrate the joy, passion, and community that natural diamonds inspire. Beyond their brilliance, diamonds represent memories, legacy, and the craftsmanship of a passionate industry that brings these stories to life, it said.

Quest Global's acquisition

Quest Global, a pure-play engineering services company, announced the acquisition of BITSILICA, an India-based semiconductor design services company. The acquisition will strengthen Quest Global's semiconductor offerings and expand its footprint in supporting global semiconductor customers. It will also accelerate the company's strategy to build full-stack capabilities from concept-to-silicon-to-software. With this acquisition, BITSILICA will also gain access to Quest Global's 25 years of deep domain expertise.

RBI hits pause amid oil surge, global uncertainty

RATE STEADY AT 5.25% | IRAN CEASEFIRE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR POLICY DECISION

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank on Wednesday expectedly kept interest rates unchanged amid hopes of a global recovery on the back of ceasefire in the six-week-long US/Israel-Iran conflict. The policy decision comes as a month and a-half-long West Asia conflict has disrupted energy supplies, shot up crude oil prices and created fiscal and inflationary pressures for import-dependent nations like India.

This is the first monetary policy review after the government announced a fresh inflation target for the RBI last month. The government has asked the RBI to maintain retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side for another five years ending March 2031. Announcing the first bi-monthly monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unanimously decided to retain short-term lending rate or repo rate at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance.

The rate cut pause comes on the back of the consum-

er price index (CPI) based headline retail inflation that moved closer to the RBI's medium-term target of 4 per cent at 3.21 per cent in February.

Additionally, the rupee has depreciated by over 4 per cent since the war, which has consequences for pushing up import inflation. However, the rupee has appreciated by 50 paise to 92.56 against US dollar following announcement of the ceasefire by the US and Iran. Based on the recommendation of the MPC, the RBI reduced the repo rate by 25 bps each in February, April, and December 2025 and 50 basis points in June amidst easing retail inflation. India's retail inflation dropped to a historic low of 0.25 per cent in October 2025, marking the lowest level since the Consumer Price Index (CPI) series was introduced.

However, the rupee declined to historic low and crossed 95 against a dollar last month making imports costlier, raising fears of rise in inflation. Rupee touched a record low of 95.21 on March 30, 2026.

Both growth and inflation risks flagged

Trims growth view to 6.9% | Inflation at 4.6%, but risks ticking up

MUMBAI

THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday projected India's GDP growth at 6.9 per cent for FY27, lower than the estimated 7.6 per cent for FY26, citing elevated commodity prices and supply chain disruptions stemming from the West Asia crisis.

Unveiling the first bi-monthly monetary policy, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said merchandise exports could be hit by disruptions in key shipping routes and rising freight and insurance costs. However, domestic demand is expected to remain supported by strong services sector momentum, GST rationalisation, rising manufacturing capacity utilisation,



and healthy corporate and banking sector balance sheets.

"India's macroeconomic fundamentals exuded confidence with buoyant growth and low inflation, though conditions turned adverse in March due to intensifying geopolitical tensions," he said. The RBI

"The ceasefire, to some extent, has been taken into account. The whole implications (will come later), but the ceasefire has been taken into account in the monetary policy decision



-Sanjay Malhotra, RBI Governor

HDFC Bank sound, no issues found

MUMBAI: THE Reserve Bank of India found no governance or conduct-related issues at HDFC Bank during its supervisory inspection, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said Wednesday. On resignation of HDFC Bank Chairman Atanu Chakraborty, Malhotra said "HDFC Bank is a Domestic Systemically Important Bank (D-SIB) with sound financials, a professional board, and competent management. Periodic assessments show no material concerns."

amid uncertainty over the intensity and duration of the West Asia conflict. For FY27, quarterly GDP growth is projected at 6.8 per cent (Q1), 6.7 per cent (Q2), 7 per cent (Q3), and 7.2 per cent (Q4).

On inflation, the RBI projected retail inflation at 4.6 per cent for FY27, within the target band of 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent). Quar-

terly projections stand at 4 per cent (Q1), 4.4 per cent (Q2), 5.2 per cent (Q3), and 4.7 per cent (Q4). The MPC observed that inflation remains below target but warned of upside risks from rising energy prices and potential weather-related food price shocks. Core inflation remains muted, though supply disruptions could create uncertainty.

Central bank plans to revise norms to free up board time

MUMBAI

IN a bid to promote ease of doing business, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday proposed to revise and rationalise guidelines to facilitate better utilisation of bank board's time and draft directions in this regard would be released shortly. The matters to be placed before the Boards of banks, along with their periodicity, are determined by the Boards themselves, guided by the seven broad themes prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank has also mandated certain policies and matters to be placed before the Board for approval, review, or information. "In an endeavor to enable Boards to utilize its time effectively, and to facilitate a more focused and qualitative engagement on strategy and risk governance, the Reserve Bank has undertaken comprehensive review and rationalisation of all such instructions. Draft directions in this regard will be issued shortly for public consultation," RBI said in its



The Reserve Bank has constantly endeavored to refine and strengthen its regulatory and supervisory framework while minimising compliance costs, through periodic evaluation of instructions for their continued relevance.

statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies.

The announcement comes weeks after HDFC Bank Chairman Atanu Chakraborty's abrupt resignation, citing ethical concerns. "Certain happenings and practices within the bank, that I have observed over the last two years, are not in congruence with my personal values and ethics. This is the basis of my aforementioned decision," Chakraborty had said in his resignation letter dated March 17. This is the first time that the part-time

chairman of HDFC Bank left mid-way raising concerns over its functioning.

Announcing the Monetary Policy Committee meeting outcome, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said, "We had recently undertaken a detailed exercise, to consolidate over 9,000 regulatory instructions into 238 Master Directions. A similar consolidation exercise has now been completed for all our supervisory instructions."

The Reserve Bank has constantly endeavored to refine and strengthen its regulatory

and supervisory framework while minimising compliance costs, through periodic evaluation of instructions for their continued relevance. In furtherance of this objective, the Reserve Bank had undertaken a comprehensive consolidation exercise of the regulatory instructions, on an 'as is' basis, in 2025.

The exercise involved consolidation of more than 9,000 existing regulatory circular/guidelines into 238 function-wise Master Directions (MDs), specific to each category of regulated entity, the Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies said.

A similar exercise has now been carried out for the supervisory instructions, it said. Accordingly, the drafts of 64 Master Directions consolidating extant supervisory instructions on up to nine functional areas are being published today on RBI website for public comments, it added. To facilitate ease of doing business by MSMEs, Malhotra said, RBI proposed to dispense with the requirement of due diligence while onboarding them on TReDS platforms.

Adani's request for hearing in US SEC case allowed

NEW DELHI: A US court has granted billionaire Gautam Adani's request to schedule a hearing on his plea to dismiss a fraud case filed by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The Eastern District Court of New York approved a pre-motion conference, allowing Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani to argue for early dismissal of the complaint, potentially avoiding a prolonged trial.

The SEC's case, filed in November 2024 alongside a criminal complaint by the US Department of Justice, alleges the Adanis were involved in a \$250 million bribery scheme linked to solar energy contracts in India and



misled US investors during fundraising.

Adani's legal team has strongly denied the allegations, arguing there is no credible evidence of bribery and that US regulators lack jurisdiction. They contend the case represents an "impermissible extraterritorial application" of US securities laws.

Adani Green jumps over 11%

NEW DELHI: Adani Group stocks were in high demand on Wednesday, with Adani Green surging over 11 per cent, in tandem with a sharp rally in the broader equity market. A US judge granted a request from billionaire Gautam Adani to schedule a hearing in efforts to dismiss a US Securities and Exchange Commission fraud case, which he says lacks necessary jurisdiction as well as fails on multiple reasons.

HYUNDAI PRICE HIKE FROM MAY RUPEE JUMPS 47 PAISE

NEW DELHI: HYUNDAI Motor India Ltd on Wednesday said it will hike prices of its vehicles by up to 1 per cent across its portfolio from next month citing various cost escalations. The company has planned to increase the prices of its cars up to 1 per cent across the portfolio, effective May 2026, Hyundai Motor India Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

The price revision is attributed to a combination of various cost escalations, it added. The quantum of increase will vary based on the variants and models, HMIL said. "The company's endeavor is always to absorb rising costs to safeguard our customer from price fluctuations.

MUMBAI: The rupee appreciated 47 paise to close at 92.59 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday after US President Donald Trump announced the suspension of military strikes against Iran for two weeks, and the Reserve Bank kept the key benchmark rate unchanged with a neutral stance. Forex traders said investor sentiment got a boost after Governor Sanjay Malhotra assured that the steps taken on forex do not constitute a structural change.

Women borrowers drive ₹76-L-cr credit surge

Digital push fuels women's financial inclusion | Women now hold 26% of India's total credit

NEW DELHI

WOMEN in India are no longer confined to small-ticket loans but are increasingly driving the country's credit growth by moving into retail and business lending, NITI Aayog CEO Nidhi Chhibber said.

A new report titled "From Borrowers to Builders: Women and India's Evolving Credit Market" highlights a major shift in women's participation in the formal credit system, backed by digital public infrastructure and expanding financial access.

Speaking at the launch, Chhibber said economic growth strengthens when participation becomes broader, deeper and more efficient. She noted that women are increasingly shaping and benefiting from these changes.

"Women borrowers are moving beyond entry-level credit towards retail and business-purpose lending, indicating stronger financial capability and deeper economic integration," she said.

The report reveals that women borrowers now hold a credit portfolio of Rs 76 lakh



crore, accounting for 26 per cent of total system credit. This marks a sharp rise from Rs 16 lakh crore in 2017, reflecting a 4.8-fold increase in credit exposure.

The number of women actively using credit has also grown steadily, recording a compound annual growth rate of 9 per cent between 2017 and 2025.

Prepared under the Women Entrepreneurship Platform of NITI Aayog in collaboration with TransUnion CIBIL and MicroSave Consulting, the report combines large-scale credit data with insights from rural women entrepreneurs.

Aviation stocks fly high: IndiGo ends over 8% higher

NEW DELHI: Aviation stocks ended sharply higher on Wednesday following a steep decline in crude oil prices after the US and Iran announced a two-week ceasefire. Easing of geopolitical stress led to a sharp fall in Brent crude oil prices, which tumbled 14.12 per cent to USD 93.95 per barrel. InterGlobe Aviation, the parent firm of IndiGo, jumped 8.16 per cent to settle at Rs 4,616.60 on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 10.98 per cent to Rs 4,737.40.

The stock of SpiceJet climbed 5 per cent to reach its upper circuit limit of Rs 11.14. "The rally was primarily driven by a sharp improvement in global sentiment following the announcement of a temporary ceasefire between the US and Iran, which led to a significant cooling in crude oil prices and eased concerns around inflation and global growth," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Mudra democratises credit, drives inclusive growth: FM

NEW DELHI

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) will continue to empower entrepreneurs, making them active participants in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Marking the scheme's 11th anniversary, Sitharaman said PMMY has driven a "silent transformation", enabling crores of citizens to enter entrepreneurship with confidence. Launched on April 8, 2015, the scheme focuses on "funding the unfunded" by extending credit to those outside the formal banking system.

"Eleven years later, the scheme has been instrumental in reshaping the credit landscape for MSMEs and individual entrepreneurs,"



she said, adding that it has democratised access to finance by removing entry barriers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the scheme has redefined access to credit, empowering millions "with the confidence to dream and the means to fulfil it".

According to Sitharaman, over 57.79 crore loans amounting to Rs40.07 lakh crore have been sanctioned under PMMY so far. Nearly

two-thirds of the loans have gone to women entrepreneurs, while around one-fifth were extended to first-time borrowers, translating into 12.15 crore loans worth Rs12 lakh crore. Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said PMMY has strengthened financial inclusion, especially among marginalised sections. Around 51 per cent of beneficiaries belong to SC, ST and OBC categories, while women account for 67 per cent. The scheme offers collateral-free loans of up to Rs20 lakh for non-corporate, non-farm income-generating activities through banks, NBFCs and MFIs. The finance ministry said MSMEs remain the backbone of the economy, driving balanced growth, while digital innovations are making credit access easier for small businesses.



Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas & Kavya Reddy's engagement was a grand affair

Young hero Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas and Kavya Reddy got engaged in a grand ceremony on Sunday at a spacious farmhouse in Shankarpally, Hyderabad. Friends from the film industry, well-wishers, family members, and many celebrities participated in the ceremony. At the engagement, the Sai-Kavya couple

wore customized jewelry reflecting their special bond. Enhancing their appearance, their engagement outfits were designed by Delhi-based renowned costume designer Abhishek Sharma. These looks, blending tradition with modernity, impressed everyone. Photos from the engagement ceremony went viral on social media, with

fans and netizens congratulating the Sai-Kavya couple. Sai Srinivas and Kavya Reddy's wedding ceremony has been named 'Srinivasakavyanam'. The wedding ceremony will take place on April 29 in the divine Tirumala, one of the most sacred spiritual destinations, making it a truly memorable venue for their union.



'Sampradayini Suppini Suddapoosani' blends family crime comedy

The entertaining film 'Sampradayini Suppini Suddapoosani' is currently making waves on Netflix, trending among the Top 5 titles and gaining massive appreciation from audiences. With its unique mix of humor, emotions, and a touch of crime comedy, the film is emerging as a refreshing watch in the OTT space.

Positioned as a light-hearted crime comedy thriller, the film smartly blends suspense with fun-filled moments, making it engaging for viewers of all age groups. While the narrative carries elements of intrigue and unexpected twists, it never loses its core essence of family entertainment. This rare balance is what makes 'Sampradayini Suppini Suddapoosani' stand out. Audiences are particularly enjoying how the film keeps them hooked with its playful storytelling, witty dialogues, and entertaining performances, while also delivering subtle thrills. The crime angle is presented in a clean and humorous way, ensuring it remains suitable for family viewing without compromising on excitement. Social media is buzzing with positive responses, with many viewers calling it a "must-watch family entertainer with a twist." The film is being widely recommended for weekend viewing, especially for those looking for something different yet wholesome.



The success of 'Sampradayini Suppini Suddapoosani' on Netflix once again proves that audiences are embracing content that combines laughter, suspense, and family values in a meaningful way. If you're in the mood for a light crime comedy thriller that you can enjoy with your entire family, 'Sampradayini Suppini Suddapoosani' is definitely the perfect pick right now.

Atlee unveils 'RAAKA', Allu Arjun roars

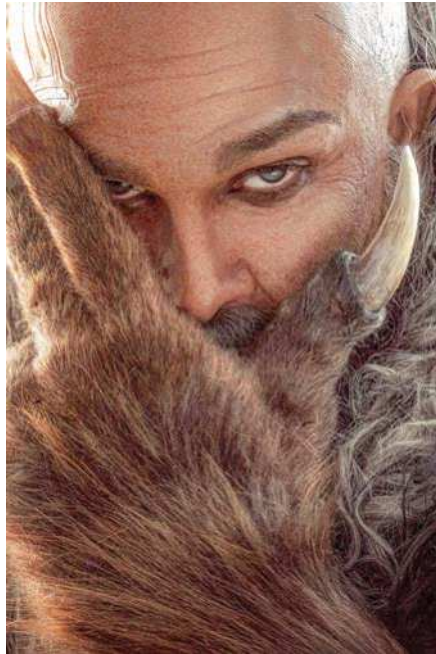
In a blockbuster announcement that has set the Indian film industry abuzz, Icon Star Allu Arjun, acclaimed director Atlee, and entertainment giant Sun Pictures, led by Kalanithi Maran, have unveiled the much-anticipated title of their mammoth project. AA22XA6 is now titled 'RAAKA'. The uniquely titled film is already generating massive excitement for the epic vision Atlee is set to bring to life.

In the first-look poster, Allu Arjun appears in a striking and unique avatar. He is seen bald, kohl-eyed, staring intensely into the camera, while sporting animal-like claws teased earlier. His forehead features markings reminiscent of Viking tattoos, adding to the intrigue.

Beyond this look, little is known about the film, including its cast and genre. Fans have reacted enthusiastically to the stunning transformation, with many calling it "jaw-dropping." Known for constantly reinventing himself, Allu Arjun once again proves his commitment to aligning with the grand vision of his director. This bold transformation has truly surprised everyone.

The first look sent shockwaves across the country, with fans celebrating the Icon Star's birthday with full energy and excitement. After keeping audiences waiting for nearly a year, Atlee and Allu Arjun have delivered a reveal that has heightened anticipation for what's to come.

Following the global success of 'Pushpa: The Rule', National Award-winning actor Allu Arjun is expected to bring his signature style to 'RAAKA'. Reports suggest that the film will be a major technical venture, with Atlee aim-



ing to create visual effects and world-building that rival Hollywood spectacles.

Director Atlee, known for massive blockbusters like 'Jawan', 'Theri', 'Bigil', and 'Mersal', joins forces with Sun Pictures, one of India's most influential media powerhouses.

Deepika Padukone stars as the female lead opposite Allu Arjun, marking their first collaboration. 'RAAKA' is poised to be a cinematic milestone, blending intense emotion, adrenaline-pumping action, grand visuals, and storytelling deeply rooted in Indian culture, with a global appeal.

Chai Shots brings back 'Rituraagalu' and new serials

At the 'Chai Shots Kitty Party' press meet, Chai Biscuit, a trendsetter in digital entertainment, shared exciting updates about its short-series OTT platform 'Chai Shots', which has already achieved significant success. Designed especially for smartphone audiences, 'Chai Shots' content has received an excellent response. Taking things a step further, the platform is now bringing both new serials and iconic Telugu shows to viewers.

Speaking at the event, Chai Shots co-founder Sharat Chandra said, "Hello everyone. We launched 'Chai Shots' in December, and at that time, we were still figuring out how to design the app and what kind of content to provide. Now, three months later, we've realized that nearly 70% of our audience is above 35 years of age. At Chai Biscuit, we are used to creating content for younger audiences. However, when we introduced TV serial-like content on 'Chai Shots', the response was amazing.

That's when we approached Ramani garu to scale this further. We have created around a dozen short serials with actors and directors currently working in television. Each episode is just two minutes long, with about 30 episodes per season. So far, we have released more than 15 short serials, and many more are on the way.

We have also started devotional shows. Along with cult serials like 'Rituraagalu', we are bringing more legendary Telugu shows to 'Chai Shots'. Our aim is to create a platform that blends the essence of TV and OTT. We have even recreated shows



like 'Pattakhima Pattu Saree', which many of us watched in our childhood. Produced with Hariteja garu, it will be aired daily at 1 PM. While people often ask, "Who watches TV anymore?", the emotions and drama in television remain timeless—and we want to bring that experience to our app." Anurag Reddy added, "During the pandemic, when no one was coming to the office, we started making one-minute videos, which evolved into micro-dramas. While Chinese and Korean content is being dubbed for Indian audiences, we already have incredible native content. We are bringing back cult Telugu serials like 'Rituraagalu'. Our goal is to promote stories rooted in our culture. 'Old is gold'—these timeless stories will entertain audiences again in a new format. Emotions never change; only their presentation does."

Writer Balabhadrapatruni Ramani said, "Sharath has already achieved great success with Chai Biscuit, and I believe he will achieve even more with

'Chai Shots'. Our team has been extremely supportive, and everyone—from actors and directors to technicians—is doing a fantastic job. We are committed to delivering quality serials in a short format, along with devotional programs that cater to senior citizens as well."

Actress Suhasini shared, "I was truly excited when Ramani told me about 'Chai Shots'. It was a unique experience to complete a series—something that usually takes two to three years—in just about an hour. I'm also involved as a producer. The acting process felt fresh, and the stories are very engaging. It's content that appeals to everyone, from children to adults."

Producer Nagababu said, "I thank Ramani garu for this opportunity. It was a wonderful experience to be part of this project. As a devotee of

Baba, working on devotional content brought me immense joy."

Producer Bharathi Krishna added, "Initially, we were a bit skeptical when Ramani garu approached us for short serials. But once we started working, it became an exciting journey. Hats off to Sharath and Anurag garu for their vision. It's encouraging to see devotional content gaining popularity again—even among the youth. This trend is only going to grow in the future."

'Thimmarajupalli TV' trailer releasing on April 9

'Thimmarajupalli TV', produced by actor Kiran Abbavaram under KA Productions in association with Sumaira Studios, will have its trailer released on April 9.

Encouraging new talent, Kiran Abbavaram is backing "Thimmarajupalli TV" under his banner KA Productions along with Sumaira Studios, with Teja Velpucharla serving as co-producer. The film introduces Sai Tej and Veda Jaladharr as lead actors, while V. Muniraju makes his directorial debut with this project.

Set against a village backdrop, 'Thimmarajupalli TV' is a period drama gearing up for a grand theatrical release on the 17th of this month. The makers recently shared an update confirming that the trailer will be released on April 9. The film has already begun generating positive buzz among movie lovers.



'Lenin' poster to be out on Akhil Akkineni's birthday

Manam Enterprises LLP and Sithara Entertainments' 'Lenin' is set to release on June 26: Akhil Akkineni's birthday special poster unveiled.

Young and dynamic actor Akhil Akkineni's upcoming film 'Lenin' has already created a strong buzz with its first single. The film stars Bhagyashri Borse as the female lead. Directed by Murali Kishor Abburu, 'Lenin' is shaping up to be a complete cinematic package filled with powerful emotions and engaging storytelling.

On the occasion of Akhil Akkineni's birthday, the makers unveiled a special poster wishing the actor a very happy birthday. In the poster, Akhil appears in a refreshing new look, with his charming smile adding warmth. The

much-anticipated film is scheduled for a theatrical release on June 26, 2026, with the date reaffirmed on the poster.

Directed by Murali Kishor Abburu, 'Lenin' is being crafted as a wholesome cinematic experience, promising a blend of strong emotions and compelling storytelling. The team assures audiences that the film will be presented in its finest form, delivering a memorable big-screen experience.

The film also features music by Thaman S, further enhancing its scale and appeal. Produced by Akkineni Nagarjuna and Suryadevara Naga Vamsi under Manam Enterprises LLP and Sithara Entertainments, and presented by Annapurna Studios, 'Lenin' promises to be a memorable big-screen spectacle.

