



# THE Hans India



**Indian women top medal charts with 4 gold**  
The Indian women's team delivered a historic performance at the Asian Boxing Championships 2026, finishing on top of the medal charts with a total of 10 medals, including four gold, two silver, and four bronze, underlining their dominance. **P6**

**When global fragility becomes everyone's burden**  
When fuel prices surge on the streets of Colombo, fertilisers slip beyond the reach of African farmers, and Asian governments exhaust fiscal space to hold down subsidies, the reflex explanation is domestic mismanagement. That diagnosis is convenient—and often wrong. **P4**

**TCS Q4 net profit jumps to Rs13,718 cr**  
Country's largest IT services company TCS on Thursday reported a 12.22 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit at Rs 3,718 crore. The Tata Group company reported a net profit of Rs12,224 crore in the January-March period. **P7**

**Priyanka Mohan captivates with striking photoshoot**  
Actress Priyanka Mohan made a strong impression in Tamil cinema with her breakout performance in Doctor alongside Sivakarthikeyan. The film became a massive success, and Priyanka's charm, natural acting, and confident screen. **P8**

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**WINDOWS**

**Fire erupts at Terminal 1 of Mumbai airport**

MUMBAI: A fire broke out at Terminal 1 of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai on Thursday evening, a civic official said, adding that dousing operations were underway. No casualties have been reported, he said. The fire was reported at a three-storey structure near I-B Circle at 6.35 pm and vehicles of the Mumbai Fire Brigade were rushed to the spot, the official said. The flames were confined to the ground floor, he said.

**Har: 11 injured as gas leak triggers fire, blast**

YAMUNANAGAR: Eleven people, including seven children, suffered burn injuries on Thursday after a gas cylinder leak triggered a fire and an explosion at a residential quarter for migrant labourers in Haryana's Yamunanagar, police said. SHO Police Station Jagadhari (Sadar) Tarsem Kumar said over the phone that a family was preparing food in the morning using firewood when the incident took place in the Salempur Bangar area here, adjacent to a factory. "There was a gas leak from a cylinder kept nearby, and soon it caught fire and turned into a massive fireball, causing an explosion, and the walls of the quarter were severely damaged," he said. Among the injured were a two-month-old infant, two 43-year-old men, a 40-year-old woman, and an 18-year-old. Officials said the other injured children were between 5 and 10 years old.

**3 men from Pb held for stabbing bus passengers**

SHIMLA: Three men from Punjab have been arrested for allegedly stabbing the driver, conductor and two passengers of a Delhi-bound bus after an argument over a road rage incident in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, police said on Thursday. The accused have been identified as Nishan Pal (46), resident of Sagla village in the Hoshiarpur district, Balvinder Singh (45) and Alish (21), both residents of Pathankot, Punjab. According to police, the incident took place on Wednesday night near Thural village when a dispute ensued when the accused, who were travelling in a Thar, tried to overtake the bus but were unable to do so.

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## Delhi Assembly orders time-bound action on CAG Health Audit

PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Legislative Assembly Secretariat has directed all concerned departments to implement the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) stemming from the CAG audit on public health infrastructure and management of health services, setting July 31, 2026, as the deadline for compliance. Departments have been instructed to submit

**Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta emphasised that effective healthcare delivery is a cornerstone of good governance and a critical responsibility towards citizens**



a comprehensive Action Taken Report indicating the status of implementation as of June 30, 2026. The move follows the formal adoption of the PAC's first report by the Assembly, based on the CAG audit for the financial

year ending March 31, 2022. The directive underscores a shift from audit findings to enforceable administrative outcomes, with a focus on measurable progress and accountability. To ensure execution at the administrative level, formal communication has been sent to the Health Minister and the Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Department, seeking a detailed and time-bound response to the committee's findings. The Action

Taken Report must include the status of departmental assurances, progress on each recommendation and clearly defined timelines for their completion, so that it can be placed before the Assembly. The audit report provides a comprehensive review of public health infrastructure, service delivery mechanisms and overall healthcare management in Delhi. The Assembly Secretariat has also put in place a structured follow-up mechanism to ensure that PAC observa-

tions translate into concrete administrative action within a defined timeframe. Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta emphasised that effective healthcare delivery is a cornerstone of good governance and a critical responsibility towards citizens. He called for sustained efforts to strengthen public healthcare infrastructure, expand service reach and ensure equitable access to quality medical care for all sections of society.

## 254 killed in Lebanon

**China denies reports of support to Iran's military; Iran says no negotiations on nuclear enrichment programme; permission to pass Hormuz needed: Iran; Iran publishes chart showing likely sea mines in Hormuz; Israel kills Al Jazeera correspondent in Gaza drone strike**



BEIRUT

HOSPITALS in Beirut and across Lebanon are struggling to cope with hundreds of casualties after the Israeli military launched more than 100 air strikes within a 10-minute window. According to civil defence, at least 254 people have been killed and more than 1,100 injured, with the death count expected to rise as many remain in a critical condition. Rescuers are still working to reach those reported missing or trapped under the rubble of destroyed buildings. Iran issued a stern warning against any violation of the ongoing ceasefire arrangement between the

Islamic Republic and US-Israeli coalition forces aimed at halting the hostilities in West Asia for two weeks, stating that any breach would trigger a swift and strong response, as reported by Iranian state media ISNA. China's Defence Ministry on Thursday denied reports that Chinese firms provided satellite imagery and semiconductor chip manufacturing equipment to the Iranian military in the midst of the US-Israeli war against Iran. Iran firmly ruled out any negotiations over its nuclear enrichment programme, reiterating that its right to enrichment is non-negotiable, even as it links the issue to ongoing efforts to bring a

complete end to hostilities in West Asia with the US and Israel, as reported by Iran's state news agency ISNA. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has affirmed that Israel will persist in its military operations against Hezbollah. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister said "Anybody who communicates with the Iranian authority has got permission to pass Strait of Hormuz."

Iranian news agencies released a chart indicating that the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard may have deployed sea mines in the Strait of Hormuz during the war. The move appears intended to pressure the United States, as uncertainty continues around a fragile, days-old two-week ceasefire and further negotiations are anticipated in Pakistan. The charts, published by the ISNA news agency and Tasnim—widely seen as close to the Revolutionary Guard—depicted a large "danger zone" marked in Farsi over the Traffic Separation Scheme, the main shipping route through the strait. This narrow passage at the mouth of the Persian Gulf has historically carried about 20% of the world's traded oil and natural gas. Al Jazeera's Mubasher correspondent Mohammed Wishah was killed in a drone strike west of Gaza City on Wednesday.

## Kerala sees surge in voter turnout at 77%

Assam records 85.21 pc polling, CM says high voter turnout not ordinary but historic

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

VOTING concluded at 6 pm on Thursday in Kerala, with a strong turnout recorded in the elections to constitute the 16th Kerala Legislative Assembly after an intense month-long campaign by the ruling LDF, Congress-led UDF and BJP-led NDA.



The updated figures released at 7 pm by the Election Commission show a turnout of 77.45 per cent, higher than the 74.06 per cent polling seen in the 2021 Assembly elections. The polling process was largely peaceful, with only minor technical issues reported at a few locations. Polling was held across all 140 constituencies in the state, with over 2.71 crore voters eligible to exercise their franchise. Officials said the final turnout is expected to rise further as late voters in queues are counted. If the

trend continues, the overall turnout could cross 80.54 per cent registered in 1987. Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U Kelkar said the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll had an impact on turnout. He said the polling process was largely smooth and peaceful across the state. Polling for all 126 Assam assembly constituencies ended at 5 pm, with an estimated voter turnout of 85.21 per cent, surpassing the previous figure of 82.04 per cent in the 2021 elections, officials said. The polling percentage was

expected to rise further as people who had entered the booths before 5 pm would be allowed to vote, they said. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described the high voter turnout as "not ordinary but historic". According to initial estimates, the polling percentage has crossed 86 per cent in Puducherry. As the NDA is fighting to retain power, the opposition Congress-led bloc is pushing to wrest power from the AINRC-led front in the union territory, centering its campaign on local autonomy and administrative friction.

## Biometric attendance must for Delhi govt staff

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government has made biometric attendance compulsory for all employees across its departments, including the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), as part of efforts to improve discipline and efficiency in public offices. The decision follows the withdrawal of GRAP measures, after which offices have reverted to their regular working hours. Under the new order, MCD offices will function from 9:00 a.m. to

5:30 p.m., while GNCTD offices will operate from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The government has clarified that the earlier adjusted timings introduced during GRAP are no longer in effect and all departments must follow standard schedules. All departments have been directed to install biometric attendance systems, and offices where machines are already installed must ensure they are fully operational. The system will be used to record attendance for all employees without exception, from entry-level staff to the highest-ranking officials, including Additional Chief Secretaries, Secretaries and heads of departments.

## Live fish gets lodged in toddler's throat; removed after surgery

INDORE: A routine task of cleaning a home aquarium turned into a medical emergency for an Indore family after a fish jumped into their toddler's throat. Doctors surgically removed the fish from the one-year-old boy, officials said on Thursday. The freak incident occurred on April 3, when the child's elder siblings were cleaning their aquarium and playing with ornamental fish kept in a net. A fish suddenly jumped out of the net and fell into the toddler's mouth while he was laughing loudly, officials said. Panicked family members rushed the boy to the Government Maharaja Yashwantrao Hospital (MYH), Dr Yamini Gupta, told PTI. "The nearly three-inch fish was alive and flapping vigorously as it was stuck in his throat. It caused injuries, and blood mixed with saliva was coming out.

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
SURI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday went all guns blazing against the ruling TMC, accusing it of lawlessness and unleashing 'maha jungle raj' by referring to the Bagtui carnage of 2022, in which around 10 women and children were burnt alive in Birbhum district. Modi intensified the BJP's infiltration plank, citing last week's gherao of judicial officers in Malda to slam the Mamata Banerjee administration and reiterate his conviction of getting the country rid of "illegal entrants". "I stand before you today to make this promise: Once there is a



change of guard in state power following these elections, I will initiate a special inquiry against the facilitators of infiltration in this state and put them behind bars," Modi declared. "The Trinamool Congress' slogan of 'Maa-Mati-Manush' (mother, land, people) has become nothing more than empty rhetoric. While 'Ma' is crying and 'Manush' is reeling under the fear of the goons of the TMC regime, land encroachment by infiltrators un-

der the current dispensation has reached dangerous proportions," he added. Referring to the Bagtui killings in Ram-purhat, not far from where the PM spoke, Modi said the incident stood testimony to "TMC's maha jungle raj" which thrived on the unholy nexus of syndicate, mafia and corrupt politicians. "Cottage industry has been rapidly declining in West Bengal, but the TMC has turned crude bombs into a household affair in the state," the PM said. Resuming his discourse on infiltration, Modi said infiltrators were usurping the jobs of locals by accepting work contracts for less money and forcing the indigenous people to migrate.

## Kejriwal can't seek judge's recusal for attending 'legal seminar' by ABAP

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

FORMER chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and other discharged accused in the liquor policy case cannot seek the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma merely because she attended a "legal seminar" by the Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad (ABAP) as it does not demonstrate any ideological association, the CBI has told the

**CBI highlighted that several sitting Supreme Court judges, including Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, and high court judges, have attended functions by the RSS-affiliated confederation of lawyers, and if their plea is accepted, all of them would have to recuse from hearing any case involving politically exposed persons as accused**



Delhi High Court. In a reply filed to applications by the AAP leader and others seeking the judge's recusal from hearing the Central Bureau of investigation's (CBI) challenge to the trial court's discharge order, the agency highlighted that

several sitting Supreme Court judges, including Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, and high court judges, have attended functions by the RSS-affiliated confederation of lawyers, and if their plea is accepted, all of them would have to recuse from hearing any case involving politically exposed persons as accused. The CBI asserted that making "unscrupulous" and "sweeping" allegations of bias over attending legal

seminars, which had no political topic, was an attempt to scandalise and lower the court's authority and interfere with the administration of justice, which amounted to contempt of court. Kejriwal has filed the application for recusal of Justice Sharma, claiming there was a grave, bona fide, and reasonable apprehension that the hearing in the matter before her would not be impartial and neutral. His plea stated that

Justice Sharma has decided multiple cases arising from the CBI FIR, including Kejriwal's petition against his arrest, and never given relief to any of the accused. Besides Kejriwal, the applications for recusal of the judge have also been filed by AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Durgesh Pathak. Other respondents, including Vijay Nair and Arun Ramchandra Pillai, have also filed similar applications seeking recusal.

# Triple talaq case triggers row over non-use of UCC provisions

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HARIDWAR

POLICE in Uttarakhand's Haridwar district have registered a case against a man for allegedly giving triple talaq to his wife over dowry in the Bugawala area, but the case has sparked a controversy as it was not filed under the state's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) law.

According to police sources, the Uttarakhand police currently appear unable to enforce the UCC law in some cases due

**Uttarakhand police currently appear unable to enforce the UCC law in some cases due to delays in software updates to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems; legal experts say the case falls under the category of a cognisable offence and should be registered under Section 32 of the UCC**

to delays in software updates to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS). Legal experts say the

case falls under the category of a cognisable offence and should be registered under Section 32 of the UCC.

Shaheen, a resident of Bandarjud village in the Bugawala area, filed a police complaint against her husband and his family, accusing them of harassing her for dowry, pronouncing triple talaq and pressuring her to undergo 'halala' for remarriage. In her complaint, Shaheen said she was married to Danish two and a half years ago and that within a few days of the marriage she began facing physical and mental harassment for dowry.

According to the complain-



ant, when the alleged atrocities by her husband and in-laws

crossed all limits, she informed her parents. When her parents

approached her husband to resolve the matter, he allegedly pronounced triple talaq and threw her out of the house. The complainant alleged that when a settlement was later discussed, a condition of halala was placed before her for remarriage, after which she approached the police.

Haridwar Rural Superintendent of Police Shekhar Chand Suiyal said that after receiving Shaheen's complaint on April 4, the police registered a case under Sections 3 and 4 of the

Dowry Prohibition Act, Sections 115(2) and 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and Sections 3 and 4 of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, and began an investigation.

Asked why the case was not registered under the UCC, Suiyal said that sometimes cases cannot be registered under the law due to issues with the CCTNS portal. He added that the investigating officer is probing the matter and UCC provisions will be added if applicable.

## Har govt suspends 2 IAS officers

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH

THE Haryana government has suspended two officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) with immediate effect. In two separate orders issued on Wednesday, the government placed Ram Kumar Singh and Pardeep Kumar under suspension with immediate effect.

While no reason was given for their suspension, sources said the action was linked to the ongoing probe into the Rs 590-crore IDFC First Bank fraud case. During



the suspension period, both officers -- promoted from the state civil service and belonging to the 2012 and 2011 batches respectively --

will have their headquarters at the office of the chief secretary to the Government of Haryana (Services-I Branch) in Chandigarh.

They will be entitled to subsistence allowance in accordance with Rule 4 of the All India Service (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969. Singh had served as commissioner of the Panchkula Municipal Corporation between July 2025 and January 2026, while Kumar was member secretary of the Haryana State Pollution Control Board from August 31, 2022, to December 10, 2025.

Before the suspension, Singh was posted as special secretary of the Revenue and Disaster Management

Department and additional CEO of Panchkula Metropolitan Development Authority, while Kumar was posted as the director of the State Transport and special secretary of the Transport Department before his suspension. Haryana's State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (SV&ACB) has been conducting investigations into the IDFC First Bank fraud case. It has so far arrested several people, including bank employees, private individuals, and government officials.



## 3 MORE CHILDREN DIE IN RAJ'S SALUMBER

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
JAIPUR

THREE more children have died in Rajasthan's Salumber, with authorities saying their deaths are not connected with the "mysterious" deaths of five children earlier this month. The fresh deaths took place in the last two days in the Jhallara and Lasadiya areas in the district and have been attributed to vomiting and diarrhoea.

Chief Medical Officer Mahendra Kumar Parmar said, Raunak -- aged four-and-a-half years -- a resident of Amloda village in Jhallara, was brought dead to the hospital on Tuesday. A two-month-old infant, Banshi, from Kalibheet village and Divyansh Patel, aged two years from Mandli village, died on Wednesday after suffering from fever, vomiting and

diarrhoea, the officer said.

"Five deaths reported earlier are mysterious. We are yet to receive sample reports. The three deaths reported have other causes," Parmar said. Medical teams from Jaipur and Udaipur have been deployed in the affected villages and have so far surveyed over 500 families. Around 20 children with mild fever symptoms have been identified and provided medication, the officer said.

The district administration and health department are on alert, and samples are being examined to ascertain the cause of the illness. Earlier, five children, including two siblings, had died between April 1 and 6 in Lalpura and Ghata villages of the Lasadiya area. Further investigation is underway to determine the exact cause, officials added.

## Cong orchestrating hijack of local body polls in HP

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA

HIMACHAL Pradesh BJP president Rajeev Bindal on Thursday accused Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led Congress government of systematically undermining democracy and orchestrating an attempt to hijack panchayati raj and urban local body elections in the state. In a statement, he said that for two years, the Congress government made relentless efforts to delay the elections, even taking the matter to the Supreme Court.

After the apex court clearly directed that the elections should be conducted before May 31, 2026, the state government has now resorted to "a new phase of manipulation and malpractice" by arbitrarily altering the reservation status of local bodies, he said.

The BJP has been alleging that the chief minister is changing the reservation status of local bodies to accommodate people of his choice. Bindal said that it is for the



first time in the state's history that the reservation roster is being altered arbitrarily and repeatedly: one day, a panchayat is reserved for scheduled castes, the next day, it is declared unreserved and then reserved for women.

"This is not an electoral process, this is Congress's 'suitability' model, where rules are not followed but tailored to suit political convenience," he alleged. The state BJP chief said that such actions are in direct violation of the spirit of the Panchayati Raj Act and Article 243D of the Constitution, which mandates a transparent and structured process for reservation and roster determination, instead of arbitrary alterations to manipulate electoral outcomes.

## Cong councillor refuses to sing Vande Mataram, triggers row

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
INDORE

A controversy has erupted after a woman councillor of Congress refused to sing Vande Mataram, citing Islamic beliefs, during a discussion on the Indore Municipal Corporation's budget. The refusal by Fauzia Sheikh Alim to sing the national song on Wednesday prompted councillors from the ruling BJP to rush to the chairman's podium and raise slogans. Amid the uproar, Chairman Munnalal Yadav directed Alim to leave the House.

The Congress councillor later told reporters that her religion does not allow her to sing 'Vande Mataram' - a Sanskrit phrase meaning "I bow to thee, Mother". Alim said she enjoys religious freedom under the Constitution, and no one can force her to sing Vande Mataram.

As the controversy escalated, Alim said she respects the national song and will continue to do so. She said that she had stood up to speak at the municipal corporation meeting to raise the issue of contaminated drinking water, but in an attempt to distract the House from the more fundamental issues, BJP councillors asked her to sing Vande Mataram first. Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava described the Congress councillor's refusal to sing Vande Mataram as unfortunate and alleged that she deliberately arrives late to the municipal corporation meeting so as not to participate in the mass singing of the national song. Mu-



nicipal Corporation Leader of the Opposition and Congress councillor Chintu Chouksey distanced himself from the controversy, stating that the party has no concern with Alim's "personal opinion" on Vande Mataram.

"Vande Mataram is ingrained in every citizen of India. Singing the national song should be mandatory for every citizen," he added. Written in 1875 and later included in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel "Anandamath" (1882), 'Vande Mataram' became a rallying cry during the freedom movement. Vande Mataram was first published in the literary magazine "Bangadarshan" as part of Chatterjee's Anandamath.

## 315 lakes vanished, 203 shrunk in Jammu

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU

THE Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has flagged alarming degradation of lakes in Jammu and Kashmir, revealing that 518 out of 697 natural lakes -- over 74 per cent -- in the Union territory have either disappeared or decreased in size since 1967, leading to significant ecological imbalance and loss of biodiversity.

As per the CAG report on the conservation of lakes in Union territory for the year ended March 31, 2024, out of



the total 697 lakes with a total area of 28,990 hectares, as many as 315 lakes covering

1,537.07 hectares have disappeared, while the area of 203 lakes shrank by 1,314.19

hectares.

"There was a total decrease and disappearance of an area of 2,851.26 hectares in 518 lakes," the report stated. The CAG strongly recommended a series of measures for effective conservation and management of lakes in Jammu and Kashmir, stressing the need for a structured and time-bound approach.

It said this large-scale shrinkage has resulted in loss of flora and fauna, disruption of ecological services, and adverse impacts on water, food and biodiversity. It also said the reduction in lake

area has contributed to climate insecurity and was one of the factors behind the devastating Jammu and Kashmir floods in September 2014, highlighting that lakes act as natural flood buffers.

Jammu and Kashmir, endowed with 697 natural lakes spread across 20 districts in two divisions, holds immense ecological and socio-economic significance, it said. These include 185 major lakes larger than five hectares, such as the Wular Lake, the largest freshwater lake in India, along with several other prominent water bodies.



## Registration for Amarnath Yatra to begin from April 15

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU

THE advance registration for the annual Amarnath Yatra will commence from April 15 across 554 designated bank branches in the country, with the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) issuing a detailed step-by-step procedure for pilgrims. Officials said that the registration and issuance of yatra permits will be conducted on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to a fixed daily quota for each route at every designated branch.

As per the guidelines, only pilgrims aged between 13 and 70 years will be eligible for registration, while women with more than six weeks of pregnancy will not be permitted to undertake the pilgrimage, even if they possess the mandatory health certificate. For the 2026 yatra, registration will be carried out in real time through Aadhaar-based biometric eKYC authentication, and permits will be generated online through the official portal of the Shrine Board, guidelines said.

"In case of technical issues in biometric authentication, a provision for manual data entry with webcam-based photo capture has been kept as a fallback option," the guidelines read. Pilgrims will be required to submit a valid Compulsory Health Certificate (CHC), issued on or after April 8, 2026, by an authorised doctor or medical institution, along with the prescribed fee of Rs 150 per permit. For this process, the board has issued the list of doctors and institutions authorised to issue compulsory health certificates in 37 states and union territories, it said.

## 'Nasha Mukh Abhiyaan': J&K LG reviews readiness

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU

JAMMU and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for the upcoming 100-day intensive campaign under the Nasha Mukh Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan, a Raj Bhawan spokesperson said. The campaign, aimed at eradicating drug abuse from the Union Territory, will be marked by a series of awareness programmes, he said.

The LG will flag off a mega "padyatra" from M A Stadium in Jammu, on April 11, followed by a similar large-scale launch in Srinagar during the first week of May.

Also, the LG will participate in padyatras in Kathua and Rajouri. "The influx of drugs to the UT is part of a larger international conspiracy to jeopardise the future of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Every section of society must join this fight against the drug menace," the LG said. He directed continuous and intensive drives to dismantle drug trafficking networks.

## Pb parents to get SMS alerts on their children's school attendance, absence

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH

PARENTS will now receive daily SMS alerts regarding their children's school attendance as the Punjab government on Thursday rolled out a state-wide attendance-tracking system under its Mission Samrath 4.0, a flagship foundational learning programme. Declaring it as the next big leap in Punjab's 'Sikhya Kranti', Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said the state, already ranked number one in the PARAKH (Performance Assess-

ment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) survey, is now moving from recognition to results by tightening classroom accountability and scaling proven teaching practices.

He underscored that the state government raised the education budget to Rs 19,279 crore in 2026-27 from Rs 12,657 crore in 2021-22, ensuring funds reach classrooms rather than remain stuck in files, driving visible transformation from basic infrastructure to measurable learning outcomes across

government schools. Bains noted that the state government has introduced the attendance-tracking system as part of Mission Samrath 2026-27.

"Parents will receive daily SMS alerts on their child's attendance, with notifications for every absence, aiming to boost regular attendance, learning continuity and classroom engagement. Any child absent for seven days will trigger a district-level parent contact, while absence beyond 15 days will be flagged to state headquarters. This will ensure both

learning continuity and child safety," he informed.

Emphasising the impact of the programme, the minister stated, "Mission Samrath has transformed classroom dynamics. This phase focuses on enhancing teaching quality and accountability through attendance tracking, improved monitoring and sharing the best practices. Our goal is to ensure that every child achieves strong foundational learning." He further underlined improvements in school infrastructure under the Bhagwat Mann government, stating

**Any child absent for seven days will trigger a district-level parent contact, while absence beyond 15 days will be flagged to state headquarters. This will ensure both learning continuity and child safety: Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains**

that every senior secondary school with more than 500 students now has a



dedicated campus manager, while schools with over 100

students have been provided security guards and sanita-

tion staff, once unavailable facilities

# Double-decker bus cruise along Lutyens' roads draws 800 passengers

SHRUTI BHARDWAJ  
NEW DELHI

AROUND 800 people have witnessed Delhi from the upper deck of the city's new electric double-decker bus following its launch around a month ago, viewing some of the capital's most recognisable locations. The service, which began on February 28, has seen higher footfall on weekends, reflecting its appeal among leisure travel-

**The Delhi government had launched the service on February 27 to boost tourism in the capital, with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta flagging off the electric double-decker buses**

lers and tourists looking to explore central Delhi in a curated manner, officials said. The bus service operates every day of the week except Monday. "Between February



28 and April 5, nearly 800 passengers travelled on the double-decker bus. The response has been particularly encouraging over weekends," an official told PTI, adding

that the initiative is gradually gaining traction among both residents and visitors.

The Delhi government had launched the service on February 27 to boost tourism in the capital, with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta flagging off the electric double-decker buses. She, along with Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra and other officials, took a ride from Rafi Marg to the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya during the inaugural run.

The tourism department is operating the bus on a fixed circuit connecting prominent sites in central Delhi, including Bharat Mandapam, National War Memorial, new Parliament complex and Dilli Haat, among others, a senior official said. Evening tours are also in the pipeline, with the route largely finalised. Since the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya closes at 6 pm, the tour is expected to begin from the museum before

moving to other destinations, the official added.

The bus can accommodate over 63 passengers and has been designed to run smoothly in Lutyens' Delhi, avoiding challenges such as low-hanging wires and tree cover. The service aims to cater to both domestic and international tourists. Fares have been fixed at Rs 500 for adults and Rs 300 for children aged between six and twelve years. A trained

guide accompanies each trip to provide insights into the historical and cultural significance of the sites covered, officials said. Two such buses are planned to be deployed under the initiative. The service also marks a return of double-decker buses on Delhi roads, which were earlier operated by the Delhi Transport Corporation as 'Suvidha' services before being phased out in 1989 due to an ageing fleet.

# Bomb threat to Assembly triggers security drill

- The emails claimed that the Secretariat complex would be blown up, causing panic in administrative circles and prompting an immediate response from security agencies
- Teams from the Delhi Police, along with bomb disposal units and dog squads, were deployed to the Secretariat, and a comprehensive search operation was carried out

PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

A bomb threat targeting the Delhi Secretariat triggered a major security alert in the national capital after multiple official email accounts received threatening messages on Thursday. The emails claimed that the Secretariat complex would be blown up, causing panic in administrative circles and prompting an immediate response from security agencies.

Following confirmation of the threat, emergency protocols were swiftly put in place.

Teams from the Delhi Police, along with bomb disposal units and dog squads, were deployed to the Secretariat, and a comprehensive search operation was carried out across the entire premises. Officials said every section of the building was thoroughly checked to rule out any danger.

Despite the extensive search, no suspicious object has been found so far. However, authorities are continuing to maintain a high level of alert and are not ruling out any possibility. The Delhi Police cyber cell has begun a de-



tailed investigation into the source of the emails. Efforts are underway to trace the IP addresses and identify the sender to determine whether the threat is a hoax or linked to a larger plan.

The incident has once again raised concerns about the security of key government establishments in Delhi. It follows earlier instances of similar threats, including one targeting the Delhi Assembly. Recently, a significant security lapse was also reported when a car

breached a security gate and entered the Assembly premises, intensifying concerns over vulnerabilities in the system.

In the wake of the latest threat, security at the Delhi Secretariat has been significantly tightened. All visitors and vehicles are undergoing strict screening before entry. Police officials said the situation is being closely monitored and assured that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure the safety of the premises and its occupants.

## Patanjali turns 'impossible' into reality; Google looks to tap data for AI systems



HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HARIDWAR

A task once abandoned midway as "impossible" by the world's leading health body has not only been completed in India but transformed into a historic achievement through sheer resolve.

This is the story of extraordinary perseverance, where dedication, research, and vision came together to create the monumen-

tal Vishwa Bhashaj Samhita., however, in a remarkable turn of events, Patanjali claims US tech giant Google is now seeking access to the very knowledge compiled by the organisation to train its artificial intelligence systems.

In 1999, the World Health Organization, WHO, launched an ambitious project to compile a global document on plant-based medicinal systems, medicinal plants, and traditional knowledge from across the world. After nearly 11 years of effort, the WHO discontinued the project in 2010, citing its vast scope, complexity, and near-impossible nature.

Ultimately, it could produce only three limited volumes. A parallel effort in India, Around the same time, without global attention, Patanjali Yogpeeth began working on a similar initiative around 2003-04. The institution was unaware of WHO's earlier attempt. According to Acharya Balkrishna, General Secretary, Patanjali Yogpeeth, the difference lay in approach, patience, and dedication.



**Woman borrows key to friend's home; flees with cash, gold**

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

TAKING advantage of her friend's trust, a woman allegedly "borrowed" the key to her house on the pretext of applying mehendi, using it later to rob her residence and escape with Rs 3.2 lakh in cash and several gold ornaments in outer Delhi's Sultanpuri area, police said on Thursday.

Two persons, including the woman, have been arrested in this connection, they added. According to an official, an FIR was registered on April 4 after a complainant reported a theft at her house between 1 pm and 5 pm the same day. The complainant said unidentified persons had entered her locked house and fled with cash and jewellery. "The stolen items included around Rs 3.2 lakh in cash and multiple gold ornaments such as necklace sets, rings, a chain and anklets," a senior police officer said. Police analysed CCTV footage from the area, which showed a man -- accompanied by a woman wearing a burkha -- carrying a bag near the spot.

On April 7, police conducted a raid in Sultanpuri area after receiving information that a man was attempting to sell jewellery which were suspected to be stolen. "The accused, identified as Rajinder (22), was apprehended at the spot," the officer said.

During interrogation, Rajinder revealed he had committed the theft with the help of his aunt, who has been a friend of the complainant for several years. Police said the accused woman had gained access to the complainant's house keys earlier on the day of the theft under the pretext of applying mehendi, and later used them to carry out the theft.

## 4 held for running fake air ticket racket; Rs 47 lakh cash seized

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

FOUR cyber fraudsters have been arrested for allegedly running a multi-city racket for duping people on the pretext of booking discounted air tickets, an official said on Thursday. The police recovered Rs 47 lakh in cash and a Mercedes S-Class car, among other things, from the possession of the accused, the official said. The accused have been identified as Mridul Joshi (35), the mastermind, Himanshu Anil Sharma (24), Gaurav (20) and Rakesh (52).

"The syndicate was operating across Delhi, Goa and Mumbai, targeting victims through social media platforms and fake travel booking services," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Amit Goel said in a statement. According to the police, the case came to light after a complaint was lodged at the Cyber Police Station in the Southwest district on April 7.

The complainant alleged that his brother, based in



Canada, was cheated of Rs 3.8 lakh while attempting to book flight tickets from Toronto to Delhi through a social media page offering discounted fares. The victim was contacted via a US-based number and persuaded to transfer money on the assurance of confirmed bookings, which later turned out to be fraudulent. A team was constituted to probe the matter and analyse digital footprints, call detail records and financial transactions. Investigators traced the operation to a coordinated network spanning multiple locations.

Police said Joshi was running the operation from Patel Nagar in Delhi and had set up a fake call centre in Goa to target victims.

## DDA conducts demolition drive in Delhi's Sainik Farm

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Development Authority on Thursday carried out a demolition drive in the affluent Sainik Farm area of south Delhi, officials said. According to the Resident Welfare Association, the drive targeted two residential plots located on Western Avenue. "This is a completely illegal action. They came around 5 am

and carried out the drive despite us having a stay order from the court. This is a private land, and DDA does not have a clear demarcation of the Kharsa number of this plot," Hardeep Singh Bhalla, president of the Western Avenue Residents' Welfare Association (WARWA), alleged. While the government is talking about regularising unauthorised colonies, the DDA is taking action against the residents in the area, Bhalla said.

## It would have been better if AICC had directly intervened in Jeevan Reddy's issue: Jagga Reddy

- In a media chit-chat, Jagga Reddy responds to Jeevan Reddy's resignation
- Says it's unfortunate that a senior Cong leader like Jeevan Reddy has left the party
- This is my personal opinion, says Jagga Reddy
- We will discuss his leaving the party internally

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

IT would have been better if the AICC leadership had directly intervened and resolved the issue regarding T Jeevan Reddy, said TPCC working president T Jagga Reddy.

In a media chit-chat, he responded to Congress senior leader Jeevan Reddy leaving the party, saying "it is unfortunate that a



senior Congress leader like Jeevan Reddy has left the party. In his case what was happening internally should have been reviewed at the AICC level. It would have been better if the Delhi leadership had directly stepped in and resolved the issue.

However, Reddy clarified: "this is my personal opinion. MLAs and leaders switching parties is common in present-day politics. The reasons behind Jeevan Reddy changing the party cannot be discussed

openly with the media; we will discuss them internally within the party."

He said: "It is indeed unfortunate that Jeevan Reddy, who has been loyal to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi's family, and the Congress, has moved away from the party. Jeevan Reddy is a very senior leader in the Congress. He served as an MLA in 2014 and was later made an MLC for four districts. He is a big personality in the Congress party"

The senior party

stated that "based on media reports, it appears that Jeevan Reddy has distanced himself from the Congress. In my personal opinion, it would have been better if the Delhi leadership had intervened in Jeevan Reddy's issue. It would have been good if Jeevan Reddy had been called to Delhi and consulted.

Why Jeevan Reddy changed the party is his personal opinion. In the past, during MLC elections, I had requested the high command to give importance to Jeevan Reddy."

"In any case, the absence of a leader like Jeevan Reddy in the Congress is something to think about. We will discuss his leaving the party internally; we cannot speak about it publicly. Whatever is happening internally should have been reviewed at the AICC level. I cannot comment now on what Jeevan Reddy has said.

In my view, the Delhi leadership should have directly stepped in and resolved this issue," he pointed out.

# Infra projects worth Rs 4.5 cr launched in Rajouri constituency

PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government on Thursday rolled out development projects worth Rs 4.5 crore in the Rajouri Garden assembly constituency, covering Khyala, Vishnu Garden and nearby areas, with a focus on strengthening basic infrastructure and addressing long-standing civic issues.

The works include expansion

**The works include expansion of drinking water supply lines, development of sewer networks, construction and repair of roads, building of drains, installation of toilet complexes and improvement of greenery in parks**

of drinking water supply lines, development of sewer networks, construction and repair of roads, building of drains, installation of toilet complexes and

improvement of greenery in parks. Officials said the initiative is aimed at meeting long-pending demands of residents and upgrading essential services in the



locality. Cabinet Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, who inaugurated the projects, said the government is committed to giving Delhi a new identity through large-scale infrastructure improvements. He stated that strengthening basic civic amenities remains a top priority and added that neglect over the past decade is now being addressed with accelerated efforts.

He said that in many ar-

ea, problems such as damaged roads and unplanned infrastructure continue to persist, and the government is working to resolve them at the root level.

Detailing the projects, he said they include reconstruction of roads in Khyala village, road improvement works in the Chaukhandi area, expansion of sewer lines, and construction of a key road along with an adjoining drain, which had

been a long-standing demand of local residents.

He further said that the government has significantly increased its focus on infrastructure this year, with a budgetary provision of Rs 32,000 crore to drive development across the capital. He described the current projects as the beginning of a broader effort, adding that similar large-scale works will be undertaken across the entire constituency.

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## Tepid campus hiring reflects changing contours of IT industry

CAMPUS hiring of engineering graduates has been moving at a snail's pace in recent years. One of the major employers, which are Indian IT firms—are altogether missing or hiring very low numbers. According to HR consultancy firm—Xpheno, fresher hiring in India's IT sector has fallen from a peak of 600,000 in FY22 to about 120,000 in FY25. Many analysts see no change in the overall numbers for FY26, which will be known in a few weeks.

Such tepid hiring trend is driven by a combination of factors. Firstly, demand environment in the IT industry remains subdued. With geopolitical situation remaining volatile owing to Russia-Ukraine war, Iran versus US & Israel conflict and Trump tariffs; enterprises

are cautious in their technology spend since last financial year.

Especially, the US government's decision to impose tariffs on its trading partners has created an uncertainty in several sectors. Though deal pipeline remained robust for most Indian IT companies, the implementation rate of those projects was low. That is the reason that freshers are not required in large numbers as they used to be in earlier years. Second and the most important change has been driven by adoption of AI (artificial intelligence)-powered solutions in the industry.

Many of the entry-level works are getting automated through agentic AI tools. It means companies no longer require as many fresh engineering graduates as

compared to previous years. Such fundamental shift is driving the recruitment trend in engineering colleges. For three decades, Indian IT industry's operational model has been focussed heavily on hiring of new engineering graduates from college campuses.

In a project, freshers and junior employees with 2-3 years of experience comprise the bulk of the man power. Such employee pyramid has helped IT services companies to keep their employee cost lower as entry level salaries remain low for the industry as whole. However, such established operating model is going through a shift as of now. Many L1 & L2 work loads are being handled by agentic AI tools in recent quarters.

In a way, these AI tools should

be seen as responsible for replacing new engineering graduates in India for now. Do these factors make engineering graduates redundant in the evolving landscape? Answer to this question is still not known to the industry. Because Accenture—world's biggest IT services & consulting company—recently added headcount by hiring freshers.

The CEO of Accenture has said during analyst call that AI will create more jobs for freshers with new roles emerging under the AI domain. This is in contrast to the popular narrative given by analysts, company management and other stakeholders for the last two years. So, no body exactly knows how fresher hiring landscape will evolve in the coming quarters.

But one view that has started

rolling out from HR experts in recent months is that AI is creating demand for new kind of roles. Job roles like prompt engineer, AI ethics analyst, AI data scientist, AI Product Manager, AI product developer, AI data curator, AI integration consultant and others are getting created with the development of AI. It means new job roles are getting created for which young graduates need to be trained for leading in the future. Therefore, the demand for freshers may have come down temporarily but is likely to continue in the wake of new technology developments. Moreover, Indian IT industry's whole operating model revolves around hiring freshers and any pivot from such established way will take time to evolve.

## When global fragility becomes everyone's burden

APURVA RAKESH PANDEY

### SEARCH FOR STABILITY IN AN UNEQUAL GLOBAL ORDER

WHEN fuel prices surge on the streets of Colombo, fertilisers slip beyond the reach of African farmers, and Asian governments exhaust fiscal space to hold down subsidies, the reflex explanation is domestic mismanagement. That diagnosis is convenient—and often wrong. The drivers of these crises are frequently located far from national capitals, embedded in strategic decisions taken by a handful of power centres whose economic aftershocks travel effortlessly across borders. Contemporary conflicts may be geographically contained, but their costs are anything but.

This asymmetry—between where decisions are made and where consequences are felt—has become a defining feature of the global order. Power is concentrated; risk is globalised. Energy markets, shipping routes, insurance premia, and capital flows no longer merely reflect economic fundamentals. They have become transmission belts for geopolitics, carrying strategic intent into household budgets, food prices, and balance sheets across the developing world.

History makes this pattern unmistakable. The oil shocks of the 1970s did not remain an OPEC-West confrontation; they translated into 10-15 per cent inflation and debt crises across much of the Global South. The 1991 Gulf War and the sanctions regime that followed erased nearly half of Iraq's GDP, but their secondary effects reverberated through energy markets and regional

economies. The lesson was clear even then: when conflict intersects with global systems, its radius expands dramatically.

Globalisation was supposed to temper such outcomes. Interdependence, it was argued, would raise the cost of conflict and therefore restrain it. In practice, interdependence has done something else—it has accelerated the export of conflict-related costs. The Russia-Ukraine war of 2022-23 offers a textbook illustration. Wheat prices rose by 35-40 per cent; fertiliser exports were disrupted by 20-25 per cent. For low- and middle-income countries, this translated into food inflation of 8-12 per cent, fiscal stress, and renewed balance-of-payments pressures. The war did not have to be global to destabilise global livelihoods.

The problem intensifies when conflict threatens strategic chokepoints. The Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade—and significant volumes of LNG and LPG—passes, has once again become a pressure point amid escalating tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. Even limited disruption here sends oil prices swinging and insurance costs soaring, with immediate consequences for transport, manufacturing, and household energy bills far beyond West Asia. Geography, in such cases, becomes a multiplier of instability.

What emerges is a consistent sequence. Strategic choices are taken first, often



Globalisation was supposed to temper such outcomes. Interdependence, it was argued, would raise the cost of conflict and therefore restrain it. In practice, interdependence has done something else—it has accelerated the export of conflict-related costs. The Russia-Ukraine war of 2022-23 offers a textbook illustration. Wheat prices rose by 35-40 per cent; fertiliser exports were disrupted by 20-25 per cent. For low- and middle-income countries, this translated into food inflation of 8-12 per cent, fiscal stress, and renewed balance-of-payments pressures. The war did not have to be global to destabilise global livelihoods

with narrow security or political objectives. Economic consequences follow later, diffusing through global markets. Advanced economies, cushioned by deeper capital markets and institutional buffers, absorb part of the shock. States with limited fiscal capacity and high import dependence absorb far more. When Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister James Marape remarked that countries like his are forced to pay for conflicts in which they have no role, he was not making a moral appeal; he was describing a structural reality.

This is why the prevailing international order increasingly looks less like a system that resolves imbalances and more like one that manages them—often poorly. It reacts

to crises after costs have already been socialised across vulnerable economies, rather than preventing those costs from being externalised in the first place.

It is in this context that India's contemporary diplomacy merits attention. Its shift from Cold War non-alignment to present-day multi-alignment is not rhetorical flexibility; it is strategic realism. India's engagement with the Global South has focused less on symbolism and more on stabilisation—through vaccine diplomacy, food and fertiliser assistance, and diversified energy sourcing. Securing permanent membership for the African Union in the G20 was not merely an act of inclusion; it linked representation to agenda-setting

in the world's premier economic forum.

Yet stabilisation cannot rest on ad hoc measures alone. The next phase demands institutional ballast. Groupings such as BRICS and the wider Global South offer part of the answer, not as ideological counterweights but as shock absorbers. Instruments like the Contingent Reserve Arrangement and the New Development Bank, combined with local-currency trade and cross-border payment systems, can reduce exposure to volatile capital flows and dollar liquidity cycles. Their promise, however, depends on political discipline—on whether members can place collective resilience above bilateral competition. Still, alternative platforms are not substitutes for systemic reform. The architecture of global governance itself must be recalibrated to internalise the costs it currently externalises. Sanctions regimes need clearer economic impact assessments; trade rules must become more flexible in the face of supply-chain disruptions; financial systems require mechanisms that prioritise crisis liquidity for vulnerable economies.

Coordinated responses through the United Nations could strengthen multilateral crisis management, while the World Trade Organisation needs the mandate and agility to keep trade flowing during geopolitical shocks. In parallel, the United Nations Security Council must become more representative

and more accountable, particularly when sanctions and interventions impose diffuse economic costs far beyond their intended targets.

Representation alone, however, is insufficient without accountability. Emerging powers must deploy their growing economic weight not just to expand markets, but to shape rules. Rule-making, not rule-following, is where lasting stability is built.

None of this assumes an end to power politics. Competition will persist; rivalry is intrinsic to international life. The challenge is not to abolish it, but to contain it within frameworks that dampen volatility rather than amplify it. If that effort fails, global fragility will cease to be episodic and become structural—a permanent condition rather than a recurring crisis.

A more inclusive and accountable decision-making order would not eliminate conflict, but it could prevent its costs from being indiscriminately exported. Stability, then, would no longer be a privilege enjoyed by a few resilient economies, but a shared global public good. The question confronting the international system is stark: will competition be allowed to slide into cascading instability, or will it be balanced by cooperation capable of sustaining a more predictable world?

(The writer is an alumnus of the University of Allahabad and writes on International Relations and Strategic Affairs)

## BR Ambedkar: A national thinker and reformist beyond misconceptions

DR KIRAN KUMAR GOLLA

BR AMBEDKAR, whose birth anniversary is celebrated on April 14, is often misunderstood, seen narrowly as a Dalit leader or as a critic of Hinduism. The fact is that he was neither anti-Hindu nor anti-national. He was a reformer who challenged social injustice, not religion itself, and a patriot who sought to strengthen India's unity through justice and fraternity. His writings and books reveal a thinker deeply committed to building a modern, democratic India.

Ambedkar's intellectual legacy is preserved in his books, which show the breadth of his concerns. In *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution* (1923), his doctoral thesis at the London School of Economics, he analysed India's monetary system and argued for a managed currency. This was not a sectional concern but a national economic vision, anticipating debates that would later shape India's financial policy. In *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), perhaps his most famous work, Ambedkar evaluated caste as a social system, not Hinduism as a faith. He argued that caste was incompatible with democracy and justice, and importantly, appealed to Hindu reformers to reinterpret scriptures in ways that aligned with equality.

His *Thoughts on Linguistic States* (1955) examined how India should reorganize states based on language, showing his concern for national integration and federal stability. Finally, *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (1957), published posthumously, outlined his interpretation of Buddhism as a rational, ethical, and egalitarian philosophy. His turn to Buddhism was not anti-Hindu but a reaffirmation of India's plural spiritual heritage.

Ambedkar's take on caste was often misread as hostility toward Hinduism. In An-



nihilation of Caste, he wrote: "The Hindu society must be reorganized on a religious basis which would recognize the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity."

This shows he was not rejecting Hinduism but urging reform so that its ethical core could shine through. His challenge was to social practices, not to faith itself. He believed that religion, when aligned with justice, could be a force for national unity.

Ambedkar's nationalism was pragmatic and ethical. In *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, he warned that ignoring linguistic identities could weaken India; however, his solution was not separatism. Instead, he proposed a federal structure that respected diversity while preserving unity. Similarly, his role in drafting the Constitution was a patriotic act, as he embedded safeguards for minorities and fundamental rights to strengthen the country's democratic fabric.

In his final speech to the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar cautioned against hero worship and authoritarianism, saying democracy in India must rest on "constitutional morality." Such warnings were not anti-national; they were protective of India's demo-

In *Annihilation of Caste*, he wrote: "The Hindu society must be reorganized on a religious basis which would recognize the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity." This shows he was not rejecting Hinduism but urging reform so that its ethical core could shine through. His challenge was to social practices, not to faith itself. He believed that religion, when aligned with justice, could be a force for national unity. His nationalism was pragmatic and ethical.

cratic experiment. His economic writings reveal his concern for national development. In *The Problem of the Rupee*, Ambedkar argued for stability in currency to protect India's economy. He also wrote on agricultural reforms, advocating redistribution of land to ensure productivity and fairness. These were not sectional demands, but national policies aimed at uplifting all Indians. His economic vision was about creating a fair system for all, ensuring that India's modernization did not leave its rural majority behind.

Ambedkar's embrace of Buddhism was a reclamation of an Indian tradition that embodied rationality and compassion.

In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he presented Buddhism as a philosophy of equality and ethics. His choice was not a rejection of India's heritage but a reaffirmation of its pluralism. He sought a spiritual foundation for modern India within its own civilizational resources. By turning to Buddhism, Ambedkar was not abandoning the country's traditions but reinterpreting them to meet contempo-

rary needs. Ambedkar's vision of democracy went beyond institutions. He insisted democracy must be a social ethic, respect for dignity, equality of opportunity, and fraternity. His writings and speeches consistently warned that political democracy could not survive without social democracy. This was a profoundly nationalist concern, as he wanted India's democracy to endure and flourish. His insistence on fraternity was not divisive but integrative, binding India together across caste, religion, and language.

Examples of his national spirit abound. In the Constitution, Ambedkar ensured fundamental rights and affirmative action were enshrined in law, not to divide but to integrate India.

His work on currency and agriculture addressed national stability and growth. His ideas on linguistic states balanced diversity with unity. His call to reinterpret Hindu scriptures was aimed at strengthening India's moral foundation. Each of these contributions shows a thinker deeply invested in India's future, not an adversary of its traditions or unity.

Ambedkar was not anti-Hindu or anti-national. He was a reformer who sought to purify religion of social distortions and a patriot who worked tirelessly to build a just and united India. His books—*Annihilation of Caste*, *The Problem of the Rupee*, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, and *The Buddha and His Dhamma* illustrate his breadth as a thinker.

His legacy is one of integration, bringing together India's ancient values and modern aspirations. To honour Ambedkar is to recognize him as a national visionary whose ideas belong to all Indians.

(The writer is Asst. Professor, EFLU, Hyderabad)

## LETTERS

### Defining moment for Indian democracy

WITH reference to the article published in The Hans India newspaper on April 9, the call to push forward women's reservation marks a defining moment in India's democratic journey. The essence of the article is to bring out the urgency of stepping up women's participation in legislative bodies and to carry forward the long-pending vision of equality rooted in our Constitution. The origin of this initiative can be traced back to decades of debates, draft bills, and committees that sought to carve out space for women but could not see it through. Now, with renewed political will, the nation is set to take this reform forward and turn it into a transformative force. It seeks to reach out to women from all walks of life: rural homemakers, urban professionals, tribal women, and those from marginalized communities thereby opening up equal opportunities. Women from both rural and urban areas will benefit as the policy aims to break down structural barriers and bring them into the mainstream. Language, too, should not stand in the way, as empowerment cuts across linguistic divides and builds on shared aspirations. Only when institutions and citizens come together can this initiative truly turn into a nationwide movement that lifts up women and strengthens democracy.

Raju Kolluru, Kakinada

### Is Pakistan the new 'Vishwa Guru'?

THE proposed ceasefire for two weeks between Iran and the USA was indeed a welcome move. The entire world was looking forward to freedom from war's repercussions namely the energy crisis and crippling of the world economy. Pakistan taking the aid of China took the initiative of arranging a meet of warring nations in Islamabad. Pakistan, despite its record of sheltering the terrorist groups, seems to succeed in assuming a 'Vishwa Guru' facade.

P R Ravinder, Hyderabad

### II

THOUGH fragile, the two week US-Iran truce is crucial for stopping a high casualty, 39-day regional conflict, reopening of critical Strait of Hormuz to stabilize global oil prices, and creating a temporary diplomatic window to manage nuclear tensions. The temporary truce has helped global markets react positively with falling oil prices and rising stocks, while regional sectors seek stability amid continued yet restricted military threats. A lasting truce could ease global supply chain pressures and reduce shipping insurance premium. Despite the truce, deep disrupt persists with reports of continued violation in Lebanon and potential for a swift return to a conflict if negotiations fail. Anyway, President Trump's acceptance of Pakistan's proposal for a two week ceasefire in the war with Iran is a welcome move, since the truce has brought a sigh of relief to the international community especially to the Indians.

P Victor Selvaraj, Tirunelveli

### III

THE terrorist country like Pakistan is not a "credible player" in the ongoing Iran-US diplomatic process, even as Islamabad has been involved in facilitation efforts. United States is using Pakistan's role for its own strategic reasons. Under President Donald Trump has given importance to Pakistan by trusting them and sidelining the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has back stabbed him in the name of bogus friendship which is humiliation and insult to Modi in the eyes of the world countries.

Bhagwan Thadani, Mumbai

### Sooryavanshi, the man of the moment

VAIBHAV Sooryavanshi is making waves in the cricket world with his explosive batting style. The 15-year-old sensation is known for his fearless approach, as evident from his record-breaking performances in the IPL and Youth ODIs. He smashed a 35-ball century in the IPL, the fastest by an Indian, and a 52-ball hundred in the Youth ODI series against England U-19. His fearless way of hitting sixes came to view when he hit Jasprit Bumrah for a first ball six. His deft placements and sound defence add to his repertoire as a class batsman in the top order. Moreover he is confidence personified and would like to become top star in the days to come.

Gundu C K Maniam, Tiruchi

thehansreader@gmail.com

## BENGALURU ONLINE

### Despite losing mother during exams, student tops state

MANGALURU: In an extraordinary story of courage and determination, Disha, a student of Alva's College in Moodbidri, has emerged as the state topper in the Commerce stream of the Second PUC examinations—despite losing her mother in the middle of her exams. A Commerce stream student from Moodbidri, Disha secured the first rank in the state by scoring a perfect 600 out of 600 marks. Alva's PU College authorities and lecturers congratulated Disha on her outstanding achievement. Disha, daughter of Dinesh and Savita from Puttige Padavu near Vidyagiri, was preparing for her board examinations when tragedy struck. Her mother suffered a sudden fall on the eve of her Mathematics exam and passed away just a day before her Economics paper.

Even as she grappled with profound grief, Disha chose to continue writing her exams, refusing to let the setback derail years of hard work. Her disciplined preparation played a crucial role. She had been waking up as early as 3.30 am daily to study and had completed her syllabus well in advance through rigorous internal assessments conducted by her college. In her darkest hour, support came from her lecturer Veena, who not only comforted her but also provided her a place to stay, ensuring she could attend the examinations without interruption.

"I was slightly worried about scoring full marks in English, but my teachers' guidance helped me overcome that," Disha said. She credits the student-friendly teaching approach, timely syllabus completion, and continuous evaluation system at her college for her success.

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

# 3 ANDHRA VILLAGES LEAD RAINWATER REVOLUTION

- Murugummi, Marella and Thangella boost groundwater with over 260 water structures, storing nearly 30 lakh cubic metres
- Community-driven efforts like pond revival, rooftop harvesting, crop planning lifted agriculture, dairy, and livelihoods for 5,900 residents
- Murugummi won 2nd-best panchayat at Water Awards 2024; Marella and Thangella also earned honours

NEW DELHI

THREE villages from the coastal district of Prakasam in Andhra Pradesh have emerged as models of water resilience through community-led rainwater conservation initiatives implemented under the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' campaign, the Jal Shakti ministry said on Thursday.

The ministry noted that villages such as Murugummi, Marella, and Thangella have significantly improved groundwater availability, strengthened livelihoods and reduced distress migration through sustained community participation.

Highlighting the outcomes, the ministry said that Murugummi saw the



construction of 71 water conservation structures with a cumulative storage capacity of about 8.11 lakh cubic metres, providing protective irrigation to 264.5 hectares of agricultural land. In Marella, 53 such structures were developed with a cumulative storage capacity of around 10.04 lakh cubic metres, enhancing agricultural sustainability across 220.5 hectares, it

said, adding that renovation of community ponds and tanks contributed an additional 5.95 lakh cubic metres of storage capacity.

Thangella recorded the construction of 71 water conservation structures with a storage capacity of about 5.89 lakh cubic metres, supporting irrigation across 185.3 hectares, while the revival of traditional water bodies added around



A water conservation structure in Marella

3.98 lakh cubic metres more, the ministry said.

The initiative has improved groundwater levels, benefiting around 5,900 people by enhancing access to water for domestic and agricultural purposes, the ministry said in a statement. Earlier, these villages faced acute water scarcity due to erratic rainfall, declining groundwater levels and frequent borewell failures, adversely affecting agriculture and livelihoods, it said.

The ministry said the situation began to change with active community mobilisation through gram sabhas, door-to-door awareness campaigns, Kalajathas (traditional folk theatre), workshops and field demonstrations. Farmers, women, youth and local institutions collectively adopted practices such as water budgeting, crop planning and groundwater sharing, fostering a strong sense of ownership, the statement added. Adopting a ridge-to-valley approach, the villages implemented a range of rainwater harvesting and conservation measures to capture, store and recharge rainwater, including percolation tanks, farm ponds, staggered trenches, rooftop rainwater harvesting systems and the rejuvenation of community ponds.

It also led to enhanced agricultural productivity, increased milk production supporting dairy activities, restoration of soil moisture and reduction in distress migration as livelihood opportunities improved, the statement said. Murugummi village was conferred the second-best village panchayat award at the sixth National Water Awards, 2024, while Marella was among the top 30 villages, and Thangella was nominated for national recognition, it added. (PTI)

# War of words erupts as Atchanna targets Jagan, YSRCP hits back

HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

A fierce political confrontation erupted after agriculture minister K Atchanna made allegations against YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, triggering a strong and emotional rebuttal from senior YSRCP leader Botcha Satyanarayana.

Addressing a press conference, Atchanna claimed that even leaders within former chief minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy's own party such as Botcha Satyanarayana, in the past, raised suspicions about Jagan Mohan Reddy's role in his father's death. He alleged that Jagan was driven by an unrestrained ambition for power and would "stop at nothing" to become chief minister. The minister further revived past political controversies, accusing Jagan of amassing wealth during YSR's tenure between 2004 and 2009 by leveraging his father's position. He also questioned Jagan's conduct during the period when YSR's helicopter went missing in September 2009, demanding clarity on his whereabouts at that critical time.

Atchanna also alleged that even before YSR's death was officially confirmed, efforts were allegedly underway to mobilize support for Jagan's elevation as chief minister. He also referred to attacks on a private company establishments following allegations



Minister K Atchanna speaking to media at the Secretariat on Thursday



YSRCP MLC Botcha Satyanarayana addressing a press conference in Visakhapatnam

made at the time, and later political developments involving individuals linked to the same corporate group. In a further escalation, the TDP leader drew parallels with the murder of Y S Vivekananda Reddy, suggesting a pattern of political ambition overriding relationships, remarks that added fuel to the already intense political confrontation.

Reacting strongly, YSRCP senior leader and Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Botcha Satyanarayana lashed out at Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP, accusing them of resorting to "cheap and disgraceful politics" for political mileage. Satyanarayana turned emotional while recalling YSR, visibly moved as he condemned the remarks. "Is this the level of politics? Don't they feel ashamed?" he said, alleging that the ruling party was deliberately making provocative statements to divert attention from the positive discussions around the MAVIGUN (Machilipatnam-Vijayawada-Guntur) proposal put forward by Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Satyanarayana asserted that the aggressive response from TDP leaders indicated political insecurity. "The intention is clear - divert the MAVIGUN debate and indulge in personal attacks. There is nothing beyond that," he said.

He also criticised the repeated references to the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, calling it inappropriate to drag a leader who passed away 15 years ago into current political battles. "Political discourse should have limits. Using deceased leaders for gain reflects the fall in standards," he said.

Rejecting the allegations, Satyanarayana maintained that leadership discussions after YSR's death were natural and that several senior leaders at the time had proposed Jagan's name. He said there were still witnesses who could testify to those developments.

The YSRCP leader further accused TDP ministers of holding frequent press conferences to make "baseless and inflammatory" statements instead of focusing on governance. "If you work well, people will support you. Let the public decide," he added.

# TTD plans expansion of Srivari Seva, ranking system for sevaks

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI TIRUPATI

TIRUMALA Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) executive officer M Ravichandra announced plans to expand the Srivari Seva programme and introduce a ranking system for Srivari Sevaks based on their performance, enabling them to serve in key areas of the temple, including the sanctum surroundings. Speaking to The Hans India, the EO said the initiative aims to strengthen volunteer services and improve pilgrim management across temples.

The EO said that, as sug-

- EO Ravichandra says higher-ranked volunteers may serve in key temple areas, including sanctum surroundings
- The Seva to be linked with nearly 27,000 temples under endowments dept
- Focus is on accommodation facilities for middle-class devotees in Tirumala

gested by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the Srivari Sevak system will be expanded by linking it with nearly 27,000 temples under the endowments department. Volunteers will be engaged in various services such as regulating pilgrim queues during special occasions, assisting devotees, and even performing small ser-

vices like preparing flower garlands.

Based on their dedication and performance, sevaks will be assigned ranks, and higher-ranked volunteers may be given opportunities to serve in important locations within the Tirumala temple.

Ravichandra also said TTD is focusing on improv-



TTD executive officer M Ravichandra

ing accommodation facilities for middle-class devotees. At present, lodging options in Tirumala largely cater to upper, upper-middle, lower-income, and poor sections, while affordable rooms for the middle class are limited.

He clarified that no new buildings will be constructed on the hill, but old and dilapidated structures will be rebuilt and allocated to middle-class pilgrims at reasonable rents. Future expansion of accommodation facilities will mainly take place in Tirupati.

The EO stressed the need to ensure a smoother darshan experience so that

devotees get at least a few moments to pray before Lord Venkateswara. Currently, only 15 to 16 hours a day are available for darshan after accounting for daily rituals, and these rituals cannot be reduced as they follow Agama traditions.

However, changes may be considered in certain Arjitha Sevaks introduced mainly for revenue generation. Since TTD's financial position is stable, some paid services may be modified or conducted in seclusion so that darshan can continue during those periods, after consultations with Agama scholars and Hindu religious heads.

Ravichandra further said TTD is studying pilgrim footprint patterns over the past decade to increase daily darshan capacity. By identifying days with lower crowd levels and issuing more tokens in Tirupati during less crowded periods on the hill, the number of devotees can be increased.

With the help of artificial intelligence technology, TTD aims to gradually raise the daily pilgrim count from the present 80,000 to 90,000 and eventually to one lakh devotees, while ensuring all decisions strictly follow Agama rules and regulations.

# Jeevan Reddy set to join BRS; says endured humiliation for 20 months

- Says experienced leaders key for Telangana's growth; move could boost BRS strength

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

IN a significant political development, the BRS is set to strengthen its base in north Telangana, with senior leader T Jeevan Reddy confirming his decision to join the party, dealing a blow to the ruling Congress party.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Thursday visited the residence of veteran Congress leader T Jeevan Reddy in Jagtial to invite him to join the BRS on behalf of party president K Chandrashekar Rao.

Jeevan Reddy expressed gratitude to BRS working president KT Rama Rao for visiting his residence. Speaking to the media along with KT Rama Rao and BRS leaders on the occasion, he said resigning from the Congress party was an emotional decision but expressed happiness at joining BRS.

He stated that he endured humiliation over the past 20 months with patience and added that, having seen

## KTR visits Jagtial to invite him to join the pink party



BRS working president KT Rama Rao with Jeevan Reddy in Jagtial on Thursday

many governments, he believes the present government is moving in a regressive direction. Jeevan Reddy said his decision was based on public opinion and expressed happiness at the opportunity to work under KCR's leadership.

On the other hand, KTR emphasised that for farmers and the poor in the state to regain stability and happiness, KCR must return

as Chief Minister. He said experienced leaders like Jeevan Reddy are essential for rebuilding Telangana's growth trajectory.

Highlighting Jeevan Reddy's political journey, KTR noted that he has served the Congress party for over four decades with commitment. He also recalled that KCR had invited him to join BRS even before the 2014 elections, but he continued in

Congress at the time due to his loyalty to the party. KTR elaborated on the long-standing personal bond between KCR and Jeevan Reddy, built over four decades of mutual respect.

Recalling that during KCR's first official tour of Karimnagar district as Chief Minister in 2014, development works requested by Jeevan Reddy, despite being in the opposition, were im-

mediately sanctioned—reflecting statesmanship beyond party lines.

He also highlighted Jeevan Reddy's strong advocacy for farmers in the Assembly and his consistent fight on issues like Nizam Sugars. KTR recalled that KCR had even offered to support the revival of the sugar factory under a cooperative model, inspired by Maharashtra, with financial backing and leadership responsibility to Jeevan Reddy if he wished.

KTR thanked the Jagtial district leadership for proactively supporting the initiative and inviting Jeevan Reddy into the party fold.

He appreciated their commitment to strengthening the party and working towards bringing BRS back to power, stating that Jeevan Reddy's entry would significantly strengthen the party.

KTR strongly condemned remarks made by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, stating that such comments were inappropriate and unbecoming of a person holding the highest office in the state.

He accused the Chief Minister of using language that insults the dignity of women and goes against Telangana's cultural values.

# Mahesh slams Jeevan's criticism of Revanth Reddy

Who is he to ask CM to step down, ask PCC chief

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD:

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud termed senior leader T. Jeevan Reddy's remarks against the Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy inappropriate, and asked him to introspect on how Congress contributed to his political career.

"Who is Jeevan Reddy to ask CM Revanth Reddy to step down? The Chief Minister was elected by all the MLAs. Such criticism is not justified," Mr. Goud said, adding that people were not taking Mr. Jeevan Reddy's allegations seriously.

In an informal chat with reporters at Gandhi Bhavan, he said the Congress had issued B-form to Jeevan Reddy on 14 occasions, enabling him to contest elections as the party's official candidate. "Senior leaders who have taken B-forms 14 times from the Congress should remember their own political journey before criticising the party," he said.

The TPCC chief alleged that the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were not different from



each other and they might join hands in the near future. "BRS and BJP are not separate. They may come together tomorrow. No one has benefited under BJP's

leadership," he said, attributing the BRS' electoral defeat to the public's desire for change and growing awareness of alleged corruption during its tenure.

**CENTRAL ORGANIZATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION**  
1, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Prayagraj-211001  
FAX: 0532-2407892, www.core.indianrailways.gov.in

**E-Tender Notice**  
No. RE/Tender/Civil/544 Date: 07.04.2026

**Name of Work:** Zonal tender of Horticulture for Maintenance of Gardens, Potted Plants, Hedges/Edges and execution of other horticultural activities in Headquarters office building, GM/CORE's Camp office, ORH at City side, RE Officers club premises and Community Gardens of GPO colony, Officer's & staff colony at GPO, Rajapur, Rambag etc of CORE at Prayagraj for one year.

1. Completion Period : 12 Months
2. Approximate Cost of the work : ₹ - 5320165.69
3. Tender Cost : ₹ - 0.00
4. Earnest money to be deposited : ₹ - 106400.00
5. Submission/Opening of tender : 30/04/2026 Upto 11:30 Hours for submission of tender through [www.i-reps.gov.in](http://www.i-reps.gov.in) and the Tender shall be opened online using IREPS portal any time after closing of tender.
6. Website particulars: [www.i-reps.gov.in](http://www.i-reps.gov.in) (Where details have been uploaded).
7. Office address : Office of PCE/CORE, 1 Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Prayagraj.

**NOTE: Only e-Bid shall be accepted against above tender.**  
Dy Chief Engineer  
CORE, Prayagraj  
PR-02/2026 (DG)  
For and on behalf of President of India  
"Serving Customers with a Smile"

"The IPL has started exactly how I expected it to, with flatter pitches and high-scoring games. As always, it's interesting to see how the old school superstars like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli perform, but I think this youngster for Rajasthan Royals, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, is the one to watch in the opening few weeks." - Graeme Smith, South African batting great

**Asian Boxing C'ships**

**Indian women top medal charts with 4 gold**

Ulaanbaatar(Mongolia): The Indian women's team delivered a historic performance at the Asian Boxing Championships 2026, finishing on top of the medal charts with a total of 10 medals, including four gold, two silver, and four bronze, underlining their dominance at the continental stage.

Under the stewardship of head coach Santiago Nieva, every member of the women's team returned home with a medal, stamping their authority on the continental competition. With Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh in attendance, Minakshi Hooda (48kg) got



things going by claiming the first gold of the day with a commanding 5-0 victory over Mongolia's Nomundari Enkh-Amgalan. Preeti (54kg) continued her sensational run, defeating Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time world champion and Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist, by a unanimous 5-0 decision to secure

the top podium finish. Priya (60kg) added to India's gold tally with a clinical 3-0 win over North Korea's Won Un-gyong in the final. Arundhati (70kg) also impressed, registering a 4:1 victory against Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish to clinch gold in her category. India added two silver medals to its tally, with Jais-

mine (57kg) finishing runner-up after a strong campaign, while Alfiyan Pathan (80+kg) also secured silver following her final bout. Earlier in the week, two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (54kg), Ankushita Boro (65kg), Lovlina (75kg) and Pooja (80kg) had settled for bronze medals after semifinal exits. Having confirmed 16 medals, the most of any nation in this edition, India will be looking to finish the tournament strongly, with two men's boxers - Vishwanath Suresh (48kg) and Sachin Siwach (60kg) - in their respective finals on Friday.

**TG finishes runner-up in national gymnastics**

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Telangana gymnastics team delivered an impressive performance to secure second place overall at the Level-wise Boys & Girls National Gymnastics Competition 2026 held in Delhi at The Gymnastic Academy. The team clinched a remarkable tally of 25 silver medals and 2 bronze medals across events, including table vault, uneven bars, balance beam, and floor exercise.

In Level 1, gymnasts Hiya Yadav, Pranavi Shah, Anshul Yadav, and Adwait Akula showcased strong performances. Level 2 saw notable contributions from Manvi Reddy,



Myra Mandava, and Chokkarapu Loukya Virat, while higher levels featured standout efforts from Inara Rukmini, Simone Pestonji, and Khushi Rai.

The team was felicitated in Hyderabad in the presence of Priyanka, an international gymnast, national champion, and judge.

**Dist chess selections from April 11**

HYDERABAD: The Telangana State Chess Association will conduct Hyderabad and Rangareddy district Under-7 and Under-11 boys and girls selection tournaments on April 11 and 12 at Lal Bahadur Stadium, Hyderabad. The tournaments will shortlist players for the state championship.

Details are available at www.chesstelangana.com or contact 7337578899 and 7337399299, said General Secretary A Jayachandra.

**RR, RCB eye top-order show in Guwahati**

GUWAHATI: Riding on explosive starts from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Rajasthan Royals will look to extend their dominance, while defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru will bank on a rejuvenated Devdutt Padikkal as the two in-form sides lock horns in an IPL clash here on Friday.

RCB have a settled top-order under the watch of the talismanic Virat Kohli, who hasn't shown any signs of rust despite stepping away from T20 internationals in 2024, while Phil Salt also unleashed his explosive abilities in the previous game. Batting one down, Padikkal has carried his domestic form seamlessly into the IPL, signalling a return to his fluent best with an aggressive yet controlled approach. Padikkal had made



**MATCH STARTS AT 7:30PM**

an immediate impact in his debut IPL season, scoring 473 runs for RCB and establishing himself as a stylish batter.

However, subsequent stints with Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants didn't

quite yield the desired returns. His return to Bengaluru last season, by his own admission, proved to be a turning point, as he played a key role in the franchise finally clinching their maiden title.

The left-hander has begun this season in similar vein, striking back-to-back fifties-- a 29-ball 50 against Chennai Super Kings and a 26-ball 61 against Sunrisers Hyderabad -- and will look to extend his rich vein of form.

The likes of skipper Rajat Patidar and big-hitting Australian Tim David provide solidarity in the middle. However, it is RCB's bowling transformation that has stood out.

The Royals, meanwhile, have emerged as one of the most explosive batting units this season, powered by the opening pair of Jaiswal and teenage sensation Sooryavanshi.

The duo has consistently provided flying starts, combining clean hitting with fearless stroke-play to put opposition attacks under early pressure.

**Siva powers Golkonda Hotel into final**

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

RIDING on T Siva's swash-buckling unbeaten 82, favourites Golkonda Hotel crushed Radisson Blu Plaza by 63 runs to storm into the final of the 10th edition of the Hotels & Restaurants Association of Telangana State T20 Cricket Tournament 2026, played at the New Madies Cricket Grounds on Wednesday.

Golkonda Hotel, appearing in the final for the first time, will now face The Leela Hotel in the title clash.



Golkonda Hotel: 175/6 in 20 overs (T. Siva 82\*, Pankaj 33; Anil Kumar 2/29) beat Radisson Blu Plaza: 112 all out in 16.4 overs (Babu 41; Pankaj 3/17, Praneeth 2/22, Shiva Kumar 2/11) by 63 runs.

**BRIEF SCORES:**

**BADMINTON ASIA C'SHIPS**

**Ayush enters quarters; Sindhu, Prannoy bow out**

NINGBO: Ayush Shetty continued his fine form at the Badminton Asia Championships as he entered the quarterfinals after beating Chin Yu Jen of Taipei in straight games here on Thursday, while two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy concluded their campaigns with their re-

spective second-round losses. Ayush, the US Open 2025 champion, registered a comfortable 21-16, 21-12 win over the Taipei shuttler in a match that lasted for 41 minutes.

Ayush started off his campaign with a stunning win over world No. 7 and fifth seed Li Shi Feng of China, 21-13, 21-16,

in the opening round. He will look to carry the momentum in the quarterfinal when he faces third seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia. Meanwhile, two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and former world championship medallist H. S. Prannoy bowed out after losing their respective second-round matches.

**Women's Reservation Bill Stalin backs 33% quota, raises suspicion on poll-timed bill**

CHENNAI: Chief Minister M K Stalin on Thursday alleged that the proposed amendment to ensure 33 per cent reservation for women in the midst of polls in states including Tamil Nadu appeared to be yet another political manoeuvre aimed at shaping electoral narratives. Stalin alleged the timing for the proposed amendment led to serious suspicion.

"Why push such a far-reaching decision in the middle of state elections. This appears to be yet another political manoeuvre aimed at shaping electoral narratives, much like earlier attempts to influence women voters ahead of the 2024 Parliament elections," he alleged in a statement titled "This is not reform, this is reengineering power." Further, he said: "Let me be unequivocal: we strongly support 33 per cent reservation for women. Our support is absolute. But it must be implemented without increasing seats and without punishing states that acted responsibly. If the intent is genuine, nothing prevents immediate implementation within the existing framework."

Demanding fair delimitation, he alleged there was complete opacity on the basis for delimitation and



asked would the exercise rely on 1971 figures from a pre-population control era or the 2021 Census. "Conflicting signals and vague assurances only deepen suspicion." This move would also impose a massive financial burden on states, forcing them to expand or rebuild Legislative Assemblies, all without proper consultation.

"This is a direct assault on cooperative federalism. This is not reform, it is a unilateral, politically driven exercise designed to concentrate power, weaken Parliament, marginalise the South, and undermine social justice," he alleged. "The nation deserves answers: why this undue haste, why shift the goalposts, and who truly stands to benefit?" The NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is systematically eroding the very foundations

of Parliament, he alleged. The Dravidian party chief claimed: "What should be a vibrant forum for debate and accountability is being reduced to a hollow ritual, a stage where members may not even get fair time to speak or represent their people. This proposal to increase seats is a direct contradiction of their own slogan of minimum government, maximum governance. It will only inflate expenditure, burden taxpayers, and dilute the quality of parliamentary functioning."

This also went against the spirit of Article 1 of the Constitution, which defines India as a Union of States. Ignoring the voices of states and bypassing meaningful consultation is not democratic - it is unitary overreach that undermines the country's federal and plural character.

**Kerala polling sees minor protests over bogus votes**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Assembly polling across Kerala progressed largely peacefully, but protests were reported at several booths on Thursday over allegations of bogus voting. A minor scuffle broke out between Congress and BJP activists at Manalur in Thrissur district after UDF candidate T N Prathapan arrived in the area.

According to police, BJP activists prevented people accompanying Prathapan from entering the booth premises, leading to the scuffle.

In Wadakkanchery, also in Thrissur district, a voter, Sajeev, was unable to cast his vote after election officials informed him that his vote had already been recorded as a postal ballot. This triggered protests by BJP activists, prompting police intervention.

Although election officials offered to allow him to cast a tender vote, he declined. BJP candidate T S Ullas Babu later arrived at the booth and staged a protest.

A similar incident occurred in Kuttiady, Kozhikode district, where a woman was denied the right to vote after it was found that her vote had already been cast as a postal ballot.

At Malampuzha and Shoranur in Palakkad district, Thrikkaripur in Kasaragod, and Vattiyoorakavu in Thiruvananthapuram, complaints emerged that votes had been cast in the names of original voters, leading to protests.

The affected voters were later permitted to cast tender votes.

**From wedding hall to booth: Newlyweds turn up to vote**

PATHANAMTHITTA/WAYANAD(KERALA) A newly-wed couple in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district made a special stop at the polling station on Thursday, heading straight from their wedding to cast their votes. Their detour was a statement on the importance of democratic participation.

Joining them in the spirit of the day, another bride from northern Wayanad district also made sure to vote first before heading off to her own wedding ceremony.

Divyasree and Ashwant, who got married around 9 am, turned up to vote close to noon right from the wedding hall. Speaking to reporters, the couple said it was a joint



decision to turn up to vote. Ashwant said the wedding date was fixed in January much before the polling date was announced and therefore, it was a coincidence that both fell on the same day. He

also said that he had missed many voting opportunities as he worked outside the state, but he used to vote whenever he was in Kerala. His wife said that she always used to exercise her

right to vote. The couple said that their message to society is that everyone should vote. They said that neither was politically active, but voting was a non-political act. Just like them, Akhila Antony, a native of Meppadi in Wayanad district, arrived to vote in her wedding attire barely an hour before her marriage was scheduled at a church in Mananthavady at 10.30 am.

She decided to vote first as it would not have been possible after the wedding, Akhila told media.

On seeing her in the bridal attire, polling officials and locals made arrangements for her to vote quickly and after that she left for the wedding venue. (PTI)

**'Mamata interested in 'Khela Hobe' over sports growth'**

MALDA (WB) BJP national president Nitin Nabin on Thursday asserted that West Bengal has fallen behind in sports and other cultural activities, in which it used to lead the country, since Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is more interested in 'Khela Hobe' (political game).

Lambasting the mess surrounding football legend Lionel Messi's appearance in Kolkata's Salt Lake stadium

in December 2025, he said it happened because of political one-upmanship. Addressing a meeting with members of sports clubs and NGOs here, the BJP chief said that West Bengal has fallen behind in sports and other cultural activities, in which it used to be the leader in the country, since "the chief minister here is more interested in 'Khela Hobe' (political game)".

Criticising the TMC government for the 'Khela Hobe'

(game will be played) slogan, he said, "For them, the sporting arena has become a political playground." The TMC chief is known to raise this slogan during elections in the state.

Stating that the time has come to punish such people, he said that states like Haryana, Gujarat, and Bihar have made tremendous advancements in sporting activities.

Nabin said that to end this culture, "this corruption and cut-money ridden TMC gov-

ernment has to be sent packing." West Bengal is due for assembly elections on April 23 and 29, with the counting of votes scheduled on May 4.

The BJP chief alleged that during the TMC rule, sports clubs are used for preparing a game plan for "booth-capturing during the elections". He asserted it will not be allowed to happen this assembly election, maintaining that misuse of sports clubs for such purposes will be ended by a BJP government.

**AJUP leader terms it AI-generated**

KOLKATA A political controversy erupted in West Bengal on Thursday after an alleged video of Humayun Kabir surfaced on social media, purportedly showing him claiming links with senior BJP leaders and efforts to defeat Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the upcoming Assembly elec-

tions. At a press meet, the Trinamool Congress shared the purported video and demanded an Enforcement Directorate probe into Kabir's alleged claims of proximity with Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the Prime Minister's Office as part of a multi-core

plan to defeat Banerjee in the polls. In the video, which could not be independently verified by PTI, Kabir is allegedly heard saying he is willing to go to "any extent" to unseat Banerjee and has been in touch with senior BJP leaders, including Adhikari. Kabir termed the video as AI-generated and aimed at maligning him and threat-



ened to take legal action. Kabir, who founded the Aam Janata Unnayan Party days after he was suspended by the

TMC late last year, is also purportedly heard claiming that he had communication with the PMO and was advised to coordinate with leaders from other BJP-ruled states. The video further purportedly captures Kabir stating that his strategy revolves around diverting minority votes away from the ruling Trinamool Congress, suggesting that such a shift could

benefit the BJP electorally. In the video, he allegedly mentions having received Rs 200 crore as an advance as part of a Rs 1,000 crore deal to execute the plan. Reacting sharply, senior TMC leader and minister Firhad Hakim said Kabir has been "working in tandem" with the BJP to mislead minority voters. Asking Kabir not to take the emotions and senti-

ment of the Muslim community for granted, he said the video "exposes a deep-rooted conspiracy" aimed at influencing the electoral outcome in the state. Hakim further alleged that Kabir was heard in the video saying that invoking the Babri Masjid issue would be more effective in mobilising Muslim votes, even if it does not ultimately materialise.

"The BJP is trying to manipulate the mandate by using proxy players. This video, if true, confirms our allegations," another senior TMC leader and minister Aroop Biswas said. He also said the AIMIM and its president Asaduddin Owaisi should clarify their stand on the issue. Asked who shot the video, Hakim said, "That is not important."

The current instability has sent shockwaves through the global system. Shockwaves that have disrupted supply chains, erupted geopolitical tensions. At the same time, energy markets have been fundamentally affected, it is in this environment where energy is our backbone

-Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister

## BIZ BRIEFS

## Whirlpool's new products

Whirlpool of India Limited launched new refrigerators range in the single door category, designed to address one of the most common challenges faced by users which is the hassle of manual defrosting. With the introduction of its VitamagicPro and IMPRO PLUS ranges, Whirlpool launched the largest range of Automatic Defrost refrigerators in the single door category, offering consumers a more convenient and stress-free refrigeration experience.

## Offer from Paragon

Paragon unveiled a cashback offer on its women's footwear collection, as part of a key initiative to encourage purchase among women consumers. Under the offer, consumers receive an assured Rs 30 instant cashback through a simple QR-based process. Each product comes with a scratch-enabled QR code on the tag, which can be scanned to access the cashback page.

## UltraTech's CSR activity

UltraTech Cement Limited's integrated manufacturing unit Andhra Pradesh Cement Works (APCW) diverted over 800 metric tons of banana pseudostem waste from landfill through a unique model that enables sustainable waste management. To tackle the dual challenges of landfill burden and open-air burning of banana waste in Tadipatri, the unit undertook Project Uday which enhanced livelihoods for 500 farmers and 100 local women entrepreneurs by helping them convert agricultural residue into marketable eco-friendly products.

## Antony Waste, JFE in pact

Antony Waste Handling Cell Limited, an integrated waste management company, announced a strategic partnership with Japan-based JFE Engineering Corporation for two waste-to-energy plants in Andhra Pradesh. This marks the first Japanese FDI into India's waste-to-energy (WTE) sector and JFE Engineering Corporation's entry into India's waste management market. As part of the partnership, JFE Engineering will invest 750 million Japanese yen to acquire a 25 per cent equity stake in Antony Waste's two special purpose vehicles (SPVs).

## XLRI Delhi-NCR's convocation

XLRI Delhi-NCR successfully concluded its 5th Annual Convocation at its Delhi-NCR campus. A total of 207 students graduated this year, including 178 students from the Business Management (BM) program and 30 students from the Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Venture Development (IEV) program, marking another milestone in the institution's growth journey. The ceremony reflected XLRI's continued commitment to nurturing responsible leaders equipped to contribute meaningfully to business and society. The graduating cohort benefited from robust placement outcomes with 576 domestic and 2 international offers.

## TCS Q4 net profit jumps to ₹13,718 cr

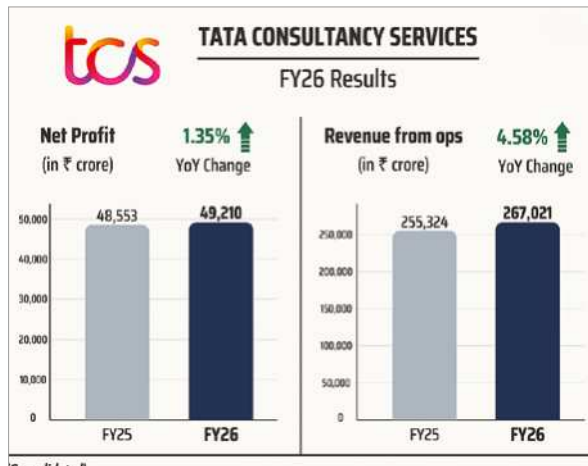
MUMBAI

COUNTRY'S largest IT services company TCS on Thursday reported a net profit of Rs12,224 crore in the January-March period last year and Rs10,657 crore in the preceding December quarter.

The Tata Group company reported a net profit of Rs12,224 crore in the January-March period last year and Rs10,657 crore in the preceding December quarter.

For fiscal year 2025-26, TCS' PAT inched up 1.35 per cent to Rs49,210 crore, as against Rs48,553 crore in FY25. From a headcount perspective, the company added 2,356 jobs in Q4 to take the overall number of employees to 5,84,519 as on March 31, 2026, marking the first quarter of net addition after two consecutive quarters of a fall. The company's employee base declined by 23,460 in FY26, a year in which it began an exercise to cut 12,000 jobs because of changes in the technology landscape.

TCS is the first company in the \$315 billion Indian IT sector to report its earnings for



the fiscal year 2025-26, which saw a deepening of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and subsequent concerns on the employee intensity in the sector which produces one of the best quality jobs in the economy.

In the reporting quarter, its revenue from operations jumped 9.64 per cent to Rs 70,698 crore from the Rs64,479 crore in the year-ago period, while the same for the full fiscal jumped 4.58 per cent to Rs 2.67 lakh crore.

The operating profit margin expanded to 25.3 per cent in the March quarter, up from 24.2 per cent in the year-ago period. Its chief executive and managing director K Krithivasan said this is the third consecutive quarter of sequential growth and added that the momentum was broad based across major markets and industries.

"While the macro-economic headwinds continue, we see sustained customer conviction in technology investments, which positions us well for the opportunities ahead," he said.

It signed new deals of \$12 billion in the three months, led by North America at \$5.4 billion and the banking, financial services and insurance business at \$2.8 billion.

The voluntary attrition stood at 13.7 per cent at the end of the quarter, and the company's chief human resources officer Sudeep Kunnal said it will be reverting to implementing salary hikes across the organisation from April 1 onwards.

## Strong buffers to shield India from oil volatility: World Bank

Growth seen at 6.6% in FY27 despite Middle East-driven oil risks

## WHY INDIA IS RESILIENT

- India has strong buffers: Forex reserves, fiscal space, low inflation
- FY26 growth seen at 7.6%, driven by demand and exports
- India remains fastest-growing major economy despite tariffs

NEW DELHI

THE World Bank on Thursday said India is well placed to weather the ongoing global energy shock, supported by strong macroeconomic buffers such as high foreign exchange reserves, fiscal space and low inflation.

Addressing a conference a day after raising India's GDP growth projection for FY27 to 6.6 per cent, World Bank officials said the country entered the current Middle East-driven oil market volatility from a position of strength. India had already demon-



strated resilience in the face of global trade turbulence in the previous fiscal. World Bank Regional Practice Director for South Asia, Sebastian Eckardt, highlighted that India's strong policy buffers and growth momentum provide room for policy support if required. He noted that structural reforms, including trade agreements and labour initiatives, are reinforcing the country's growth trajectory.

According to the World Bank's latest South Asia Economic Update, India's growth is estimated to have accelerated from 7.1 per cent in FY25 to 7.6 per cent in FY26, driven by robust domestic demand and resilient exports. Growth is projected to moderate to 6.6 per cent in FY27, slightly higher than earlier estimates.

World Bank Lead Econo-

mist for India, Aurelien Kruse, said India remained the fastest-growing large economy in FY26 despite facing high global tariffs. He credited income tax cuts and GST rate reductions for supporting consumption, while exports and investment performed better than expected.

The report described the current scenario as a "major trade shock" with risks tilted to the downside, particularly due to oil price volatility. The World Bank assumes crude oil prices at USD 90-100 per barrel for FY27.

It also commended the government's handling of the energy crisis, noting that authorities balanced supply management with price stability, avoiding extreme measures such as rationing while cushioning consumers from sharp price spikes.

## Blue Star expects 20% volume growth this year

KOLKATA: Air-conditioning and commercial refrigeration major Blue Star Limited expects around 20 per cent growth in volumes and about 25 per cent revenue growth this year, its managing director B Thiagarajan said on Thursday.

He said the air-conditioning industry is currently facing a total cost impact of around 13 per cent, comprising 5 per cent from revised energy labelling norms and about 8 per cent due to higher raw material prices.

"Out of this, the industry has already passed on about 5-6 per cent to consumers, and another 5-7 per cent increase is expected in April to offset the remaining impact," Girish Hingorani, Vice President (Marketing - Unitary Cooling Products), said.

Thiagarajan added that margins, which typically stand at around 8.5 per cent for the business, have been squeezed recently due to cost pressures, with the company focused on pushing sales.

## India Pharma Expo in Hyd from April 23

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

THE India Pharma Expo 2026 is set to emerge as one of the most influential pharmaceutical industry gatherings in India, bringing together the entire pharma ecosystem under one roof. To be held from April 23-25, 2026, at the HITEX Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad, the event will convene industry leaders, policymakers, innovators, researchers, and technology providers to explore the next phase of growth in pharmaceuticals and life sciences.

With the theme "India's Pharma Power - Building Global Bridges in Life Sciences & Innovation," the expo will spotlight India's expanding role in global drug manufacturing, vaccine production, biotechnology research, and pharmaceutical exports. Co-located with the NextGen Pharma Summit & Awards, the event creates a dynamic platform where policy, innovation, and business converge. It offers a unique ecosystem where knowledge meets networking, enabling insights to translate into actionable strategies. The event is being hosted under the leadership of Chief Guest, Shri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Hon'ble Minister for IT,



Electronics & Communication, Industries & Commerce, and Legislative Affairs, Government of Telangana, and Shri C. Damodar Raja Narasimha, Hon'ble Minister for Health, Medical & Family Welfare, Government of Telangana. It will also feature a distinguished lineup of industry leaders, including Sarvesh Singh, CEO & Director, Telangana Lifesciences; Chakravarthi AVPS, Chairman, FOPE (Telangana & Andhra Pradesh) and Global Ambassador, World Packaging Organisation; K Raja Bhanu, Director General, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India; Sudarshan Jain, Secretary General, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance; and Dr. Jitendra Sharma, MD & CEO, AMTZ, among many other eminent speakers shaping the future of the pharmaceutical and life sciences sector.

## Chhattisgarh electricity department bags spl award

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

CHHATTISGARH State Power Generation Company Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Thermal Power Station (DSPM) Korba East achieved the third position at the national level with an outstanding performance in the financial year 2025-26. For this achievement, Secretary of Energy and Chairman of Power Generation and Distribution Company Dr Rohit Yadav has congratulated all the officers/employees of Generation Company.

SK Katiyar, Managing Director, Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company, said "Our plants have performed excellently, with DSPM Korba East performing the best and bagging the third position at the national level. It is the result of our efficient management and regular maintenance of the plants that our plant has achieved this record at the national level by performing much higher than



the prescribed parameters. Power units of both (2x250 MW) capacity of DSPM have achieved 91 per cent PLF (Plant Load Factor) in 2025-26. DSPM has increased the pride of Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company by achieving 91 per cent PLF more than the target of 85 per cent set by CEA (Central Electricity Authority) and CSERC (Chhattisgarh State Electricity Regulatory Commission).

Apart from this, Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company has achieved another achievement. The overall performance of the Chhattisgarh State Power Generation in the annual



evaluation of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has also been good, in which the Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company ranks third among the 33 institutions and ranks in the top three category. Shri SK Katiyar expressed happiness over the excellent performance of the Power Generation Company and said that with this achievement, Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company has got a stronger recognition on the energy production platform of the country. We will continue to give our best presentation and strive for the company's progress. Information of DSPM.

## Silver, gold rally falters as West Asia tensions resurface

NEW DELHI: Silver prices declined by Rs 7,800 to Rs 2.43 lakh per kilogram in the national capital on Thursday while gold fell to Rs 1.54 lakh per 10 grams as investors booked profits amid concerns over the durability of the fragile ceasefire in West Asia. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal depreciated by Rs 7,800, or 3.10 per cent, to Rs 2,43,200 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 2,51,000 per kg.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also decreased by Rs 1,500, or nearly 1 per cent, to Rs 1,54,900 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). The yellow metal had finished at Rs 1,56,400 per 10 grams in the previous market session. Analysts said precious metals witnessed selling pressure as uncertainty around the ceasefire between the US and Iran weighed on investors' sentiment. "Gold prices declined on Thursday, reversing most of the previous session's gains as investors reassessed the fragile ceasefire in West Asia," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

## STOCK MARKETS SLIDE AS CEASEFIRE HOPES DIMINISH

Rising crude prices and Strait of Hormuz tensions dent investor sentiment

## Factors that pulled markets

- Fading ceasefire optimism: Renewed tensions involving Iran and Israel dented investor confidence
- Strait of Hormuz disruption fears: Iran's move heightened worries over global oil supply

MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmark indices ended lower on Thursday, with the Sensex tumbling 931 points after a spectacular rally in the previous session, as renewed tensions in West Asia faded the ceasefire-led optimism. The ceasefire deal appeared to be at risk after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz again in response to Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

Weak trends in Asian and



European markets, a jump in crude oil prices and uninterrupted foreign fund outflows also made investors jittery in the domestic market. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 931.25 points or 1.20 per cent to settle at 76,631.65. During the day, it dived 1,215 points or 1.56 per cent to 76,347.90. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 222.25 points or 0.93 per cent to end at 23,775.10. From the

30-Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation, Larsen & Toubro, Eternal, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the major laggards. Bharat Electronics, Power Grid, NTPC and Tata Consultancy Services were among the gainers. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 3.27 per cent to \$97.85 per barrel. "Ceasefire-led optimism faded as renewed US-Iran tensions and ongoing restric-

tions at the Strait of Hormuz pushed crude back up, reviving concerns around India's inflation. Domestically, profit-booking, rising 10-year bond yields, and rupee weakness reduced near-term risk appetite. Financials led the decline after the previous session's sharp rally amid sustained FII selling, while broader markets held relatively steady," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs2,811.97 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth Rs4,168.17 crore. US markets ended significantly higher on Wednesday. "Indian markets witnessed a pullback, snapping the recent five-session gaining streak as sentiment turned cautious amid fading confidence around the US-Iran ceasefire.

## Morgan Stanley sees bull run in market, says will hit 95k mark

Earnings cycle revival, cheap valuations and strong domestic demand underpin bullish outlook

MUMBAI

GLOBAL brokerage firm Morgan Stanley on Thursday said that Indian markets are poised for a strong rally with Sensex likely to touch 95,000 level by December 2026.

In its latest India Equity Strategy Playbook report, the brokerage firm said that the current combination of depressed valuations, improving earnings momentum and cautious investor positioning reflects conditions typically seen near the end of market downturns.

In the base case, the headline index Sensex is expected to touch the 95,000 mark by December 2026, implying an upside potential of 22 per cent from Wednesday's closing, according to the brokerage. It noted that downside risks appear limited compared to potential gains, describing the present phase as an attractive entry point for long-term investors.

The brokerage also pointed out that India's trailing



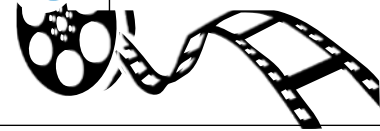
market performance over the past year is close to historic lows, while relative valuations have declined sharply.

However, underlying fundamentals remain strong, supported by robust domestic demand, policy stability and a recovery in capital expenditure. A major factor behind its bullish outlook is the revival in the earnings cycle. High-frequency indicators point to strengthening trends across consumption, investment and services, even as market expectations remain subdued, the brokerage noted.

Analysts also noted that India's share of global corpo-

rate profits now exceeds its index weight by the widest margin on record.

The brokerage has expected positive earnings revisions going forward and said it remains ahead of consensus estimates. Foreign investor positioning -- which has weakened in recent months -- could further support an upside surprise if earnings momentum continues to improve. On valuations, Morgan Stanley pointed out that the Sensex is currently trading at its cheapest level when measured against gold, a long-term indicator often associated with major market turning points.



## Nani's 'Aaya Sher' from 'The Paradise' sets new record; crosses 100 million views

**N**AURAL Star Nani's much-awaited film *The Paradise*, directed by Srikanth Odela, is already creating massive buzz even before its release. The film has been generating strong excitement with its glimpse, posters, and especially the first single "Aaya Sher," which has turned into a sensational chartbuster.

Composed by Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander, the high-energy track has captured the attention of audiences across platforms. Since its release, the song has been trending continuously on YouTube and social media, achieving an impressive milestone of over 101 million views. Notably, "Aaya Sher" has become the fastest song featuring Nani to cross the 100-million mark, making it a record-setting moment in the actor's career. It is also the first Nani song to reach this milestone even before the film's theatrical release.



A major factor behind the song's viral success is Nani's electrifying screen presence. His energetic dance moves, intense attitude, and catchy hook step quickly went viral, inspiring fans worldwide to recreate the steps. Instagram reels and YouTube dance covers featuring the track have further boosted its popularity.

The makers also ensured

that the song matched its musical energy visually. A massive slum set was specially constructed for the shoot, giving the sequence a raw and grand cinematic feel.

Produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under the SLV Cinemas banner, *The Paradise* is slated for a worldwide theatrical release on August 21, with expectations continuing to rise.

## INCA announces first awards winners; Naga Chaitanya, Mirai and Anil Ravipudi shine

**T**HE Indian National Cine Academy (INCA) has officially announced the winners of its first-ever INCA Awards, recognizing outstanding achievements across Indian cinema. Representing twelve languages and twelve film industries, the academy revealed winners in 25 categories, celebrating excellence among actors, filmmakers, and technicians.

In the Telugu category, Naga Chaitanya won Best Actor for his performance in *Thandel*, while Mirai Super Yodha, produced by People Media Factory, was named Best Telugu Film. Popular filmmaker Anil Ravipudi secured the Best Director award for *Sankranthiki Vasthunnam*.

Among the Hindi winners, Ranveer Singh



took home Best Actor for *Dhurandhar*, while Chhaava, produced by Dinesh Vijan and Maddock Films, won Best Film. Meanwhile, Kannada cinema dominated with *Kantara: A Legend - Chapter 1*, earning multiple honours including Best Actor and Best Director for



Rishab Shetty.

The awards also recognised technical achievements such as cinematography, music, editing, choreography, and production design. Winners were chosen by a distinguished jury comprising experienced members from the Indian



film industry. The inaugural INCA Awards ceremony will be held on April 16 in Mumbai, where leading directors, actors, technicians, and producers from across India are expected to attend. The event is set to become a significant annual platform

celebrating the diversity and creative excellence of Indian cinema. The INCA Awards aim to create a comprehensive national platform celebrating talent across multiple regional industries, reflecting the diversity and creative strength of Indian cinema.

## 'Sarkar Bai' launched with grand pooja ceremony

**T**HE upcoming Telugu film *Sarkar Bai*, set against a Telangana social backdrop, was formally launched with a grand pooja ceremony at the Secunderabad Ganesh Temple in Hyderabad.

The film features Sriram Nirmala and Sai Keerthana in the lead roles and is being directed by Lara. During the muhurtham ceremony, producer Tummalapalli Prafull Ram Reddy switched on the camera, while director Lara directed the first shot. Telangana Income Tax officer Dasya Nayak gave the ceremonial clap for the muhurtham scene, and guests extended their best wishes to the film's team.

Speaking at the event, director Lara revealed that the film is inspired by real



incidents from 1985, focusing on issues such as water disputes and caste discrimination. She said the story reflects the struggles and realities of people and aims to highlight socially

relevant themes.

The film also features actors Baahubali Prabhakar, Naga Mahesh, Dil Ramesh, Chalaki Chanti, Chittibabu, Shivani Reddy and Nupur Mukherjee in key roles.

Filmmaker Prem Raj, who attended the event, encouraged audiences to support films rooted in Telangana culture. The makers announced that the remaining cast will be finalized soon and shooting is expected to begin later this month.

## 'Diamond Decoyit' set for release; special free shows announced for women

**T**HE much-talked-about Telugu family emotional drama *Diamond Decoyit* is gearing up for a grand theatrical release across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on April 10. Ahead of the release, the film's pre-release event was held at the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce, where the team shared key details about the project.

One of the major highlights announced by the makers is a special initiative for women audiences. The team revealed that four shows of the film will be screened free of cost for women in theatres across the Telugu states, inviting them to watch the movie in large numbers.

The film features Partha Gopal as the lead actor, who has also produced the project, while Meghana Reddy plays the female lead. Directed by Surya G. Yadav, the movie is described as a family emotional drama filled with strong sentiments and heartfelt moments. The makers believe the film's powerful climax will leave a lasting impact on audiences.



The promotional content has already received encouraging responses. Veteran filmmaker K. Raghavendra Rao appreciated the trailer after watching it, and several film personalities who attended preview screenings reportedly praised the film.

Another notable aspect is that the movie was shot across more than 60 picturesque locations in Kadapa district, offering fresh visuals. With its emotional narrative and family-oriented theme, the team is confident the film will connect with audiences of all age groups.

## ARJUN AMBATI'S 'PARAMAPADA SOPANAM' LOCKS APRIL 24 RELEASE DATE

**A**CTOR Arjun Ambati, who gained recognition with diverse films like *Ardhanari*, *Theppa Samudram*, and *Wedding Diaries*, is gearing up for the release of his latest film *Paramapada Sopanam*. The actor, who also became popular among family audiences through the reality show *Bigg Boss*, is currently playing a key role in Ram Charan's upcoming pan-India film *Peddi*.

In *Paramapada Sopanam*, Arjun Ambati plays the lead role alongside actress Jennifer Emmanuel. The film is presented by Ganaparthi Swetha and produced under the Swayambhu Creations banner by Ganaparthi Narayana Rao and Telaprolu Prasanna Anjaneyulu, with Pulagam Supriya serving as co-producer.

The film is written and directed by Naga Siva, a former assistant director to Puri Jagannadh. He has also handled the story, screenplay, and dialogues, crafting the film as an engaging entertainer aimed at appealing to audiences across dif-



ferent sections. Music for the film is composed by Davzand, who previously gained recognition for his work in the film *Eagle*. As part of the promotions, lyrical songs like "Chinni Chinni Tappulevo" and "Boom Boom," along with the teaser, have received a positive response from audiences.

With post-production work now completed, the makers have officially announced that *Paramapada Sopanam* will hit theatres on April 24. The recently released poster featuring Arjun Ambati in an intense look has also garnered considerable attention online.



## Priyanka Mohan captivates with striking photoshoot

**A**CTRESS Priyanka Mohan made a strong impression in Tamil cinema with her breakout performance in *Doctor* alongside Sivakarthikeyan. The film became a massive success, and Priyanka's charm, natural acting, and confident screen presence quickly won over audiences. With such a powerful debut, many expected the young actress to rapidly rise as one of the leading faces of South Indian cinema.

However, after the success of *Doctor*, Priyanka has been waiting for another major project that can match the scale and impact of her debut. Although she has continued to appear in several films, fans believe she deserves a stronger, more impactful role that can fully showcase her talent and bring her back into the spotlight in a big way.

Despite the wait for a major blockbuster, Priyanka is keeping the spotlight firmly on herself through her growing presence on social media. The actress recently grabbed attention with a striking new photoshoot that quickly went viral online.

In the pictures, Priyanka dazzles in a stylish black embellished spaghetti-strap midi dress paired with a flowing pink organza cape and elegant black heels. Her smoky eye makeup, confident posture, and graceful presence have impressed fans, who flooded the comments section with praise.

The glamorous look has once again reminded audiences of her strong screen appeal and star potential. While fans continue to wait for her next big film announcement, Priyanka Mohan's latest photos prove that she remains a captivating presence both on and off the screen.

## Thiruveer, Aishwarya Rajesh's 'Oh..! Sukumari' wraps filming

**Y**OUNG actor Thiruveer and talented actress Aishwarya Rajesh have teamed up for the upcoming village-based entertainer *Oh..! Sukumari*, which has now completed its entire shooting schedule. The film is directed by debutant Bharath Darshan and produced by Maheshwara Reddy Mooli under the Ganga Entertainment banner.

Both Thiruveer and Aishwarya Rajesh are currently riding high on the success of their previous films, and their collaboration has already generated considerable interest among audiences. The film

marks the second project from Ganga Entertainment after the critically acclaimed *Shivam Bhaje*. Earlier released first-look posters received a positive response, raising expectations around the film.

To celebrate the completion of the shoot, the makers shared a special photograph featuring Thiruveer and the entire team, capturing a cheerful moment as they marked the milestone together.

The film boasts a strong technical crew. Cinematographer C.H. Kushender, known for his work in *Razakar* and *Polimera*, is handling the

camera. Music for the film is composed by Bharath Manchiraju, a disciple of legendary composer M. M. Keeravani. Tirumala M. Tirupati of Balagam fame serves as the art director, while Sri Varaprasad is the editor. Costume design is handled by Anu Reddy Akkati, and popular lyricist Poornachari has penned the songs.

The makers have also announced that *Oh..! Sukumari* will release in multiple languages including Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi, aiming to reach a wider audience across India.

