

THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES

Essence of the South

NATIONAL DAILY NEWSPAPER

For Website Visit epaper.thesouthindiatimes.com www.thesouthindiatimes.com [/thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in](https://www.facebook.com/thesouthindiatimes)



PM outlines nine-pillar citizen charter for Viksit Bharat 2047 from Adichunchanagiri Mutt

NATION | NEWS

US and Iran discuss next round of peace talks as Pakistani mediators arrive in Tehran

WORLD | NEWS



'Mega Prince' Varun Tej Undergoes Surgery After Sustaining Knee Injury During 'Bhari' Volleyball Training

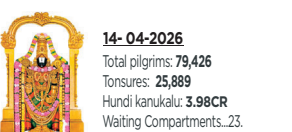
CINEMA | PAGE



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



14-04-2026
Total pilgrims: 78,426
Tonsures: 25,889
Hundi Kanakalu: 3,98CR
Waiting Compartments: 23

Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens), 6H

WEATHER



39 °C | °F
Precipitation: 5%
Humidity: 31%
Wind: 11 km/h

GOLD RATE



24K ₹ 1,57,340

INBRIFS

MOB VIOLENCE IN MANIPUR AFTER DRUG BUST LEAVES 18 INJURED, VEHICLES TORCHED

Imphal (TSIT): Tensions escalated in Bishnupur district after a drug-related operation triggered mob violence, leaving at least 18 civilians, including five women, injured on Tuesday. The unrest followed a joint operation at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport, where personnel from the Central Industrial Security Force and local police arrested a suspected drug peddler. Authorities recovered around 6.74 kg of suspected brown sugar concealed in containers inside his luggage. During initial questioning, the accused reportedly disclosed information about hidden arms and ammunition in Bishnupur district.

RAGHAV CHADHA GRANTED Z+ SECURITY amid political tensions and internal party changes



New Delhi (TSIT): The Ministry of Home Affairs has extended 'Z+' category security cover to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha, with protection to be provided across Delhi and Punjab, sources confirmed on Wednesday. The decision comes shortly after the Punjab government withdrew Chadha's existing security earlier in the day, a move that coincides with reports of increasing strain between the leader and his party in recent weeks. According to officials, paramilitary personnel will now be deployed for his protection. The enhanced security arrangement follows a threat assessment conducted by the Intelligence Bureau (IB), based on inputs reviewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. These developments come against the backdrop of recent organisational changes within the AAP. On April 2, the party appointed Ashok Mittal as its new Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha, replacing Chadha — a shift widely interpreted as a significant internal reshuffle, particularly with Mittal emerging as a new representative from Punjab. Responding to the change a day later, Chadha remarked that he had been "silenced, not defeated," signaling possible dissatisfaction over the decision.

Siddaramaiah submits memorandum to PM Modi on key Karnataka issues

Bengaluru (TSIT): Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah submitted a detailed memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the city, highlighting several long-pending issues requiring urgent intervention by the Union Government.

The Chief Minister stated that while Karnataka remains a major contributor to the national economy, addressing these concerns is essential to ensure equitable development and strengthen cooperative federalism.

Among the demands, Siddaramaiah sought revival of the proposed railway coach factory at Kolar, inclusion of the Bengaluru-Mysuru stretch in the high-speed rail corridor, and expedited release of funds for the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project. He also urged the Centre to initiate the Bengaluru-Mumbai high-speed rail corridor.



Siddaramaiah sought revival of the proposed railway coach factory at Kolar, inclusion of the Bengaluru-Mysuru stretch in the high-speed rail corridor, and expedited release of funds for the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project.

The memorandum highlighted pending financial dues, including Rs.17,554 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission, Rs.2,860 crore in Finance Commission grants for Gram Panchayats, and Rs.5,495 crore in revenue deficit grants. The state also requested a special grant of Rs.6,000 crore for Bengaluru's infrastructure development.

Siddaramaiah called for speedy approvals for major irrigation and water projects such as the Mekedatu project, Upper Bhadra project, and Upper Krishna project, along with wildlife clearance for the Kalasa Nala diversion project

under the Mahadayi dispute.

He further urged the Centre to ensure equitable water allocation under interlinking of rivers projects and to provide Rs.5,000 crore annual support for the development of the Kalyana Karnataka region under Article 371(J). The Chief Minister also sought national project status for key irrigation schemes, establishment of an AIIMS in Raichur, and faster clearances for the Sharavathi pumped storage project. The memorandum underscores Karnataka's push for enhanced infrastructure, water security, regional development, and financial support from the Centre.

Naidu orders action plan for utilisation of Godavari waters



Amaravati (TSIT): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed the officials to prepare an action plan for utilisation of Godavari waters once the Polavaram Project is completed. He emphasised that water from the right and left main canals should be efficiently distributed to reservoirs and tanks to meet irrigation and other needs. During a review meeting held at his officials with Water Resources department officials, the Chief Minister

assessed the progress of major irrigation projects including Polavaram, Veligonda, Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi, Polavaram-Nallamala Sagar Link, Chintalapudi Lift Irrigation Scheme, Varikapudiselu and North Andhra projects.

He also reviewed initiatives aimed at groundwater augmentation, Jaladhara and Jal Harathi programs. The Chief Minister instructed officials to accelerate works on North Andhra projects such as Tharakarama, Mahendratana, Thotapalli Barrage, Maddulavalasa, Janjathi, and Hiramandalam Lift schemes. He set deadlines for interlinking rivers: Vamsadhara-Nagavali by December and Nagavali-Champavathi by July. With obstacles cleared, he directed that tenders for the prestigious Neradi Barrage on the Vamsadhara River in Srikulam district be floated at the earliest.

Mamata alleges central forces tried to check her car, dares ECI to do so daily

Kolkata (TSIT): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday alleged that central forces tried to check her car on the way to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport earlier in the day. The allegation from the Chief Minister came a day after the Election Commission allegedly ordered checks on vehicles of Trinamool Congress leaders and their family members.



Addressing an election rally in Islampur in North Dinajpur district, Banerjee said, "Today, the central forces also came to check my car at Dum Dum airport. I said, check, check. I want them to check. If all the Trinamool leaders' cars are being searched, will the Prime Minister's, Home Minister's and CRPF vehicles not be searched? Why will the BJP's cars not be searched? Why will it be only the Trinamool's cars? Why is the election being held in this way?"

Intensifying her attack against the Election Commission of India (ECI), the Chief Minister further said: "If you have the courage, search my car every day, excluding everyone else. Even today, they came in a hurry, I let it go. But they ran away in fear. They came to search my car, I was happy. I am not a thief or a robber... I do not take a single paisa as salary from the government." On Tuesday, the Trinamool Congress accused the Election Commission of India (ECI) of issuing specific instructions to all Flying Surveillance Teams (FSTs) deployed for the forthcoming two-phase West Bengal Assembly elections to check the vehicles of all Trinamool Congress leaders and their close relatives.

PM Modi holds impressive roadshow in Tamil Nadu, says DMK losing 'for sure'

NAGERCOIL (TSIT): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday held a well-attended roadshow here in support of NDA candidates for the April 23 Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu and asserted that the AIADMK-led alliance "will win for sure," while the ruling DMK will be shown the door in the hustings.

Joined by AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, BJP state president Nainar Nagenthiran, his predecessor K Annamalai and local BJP leader and former union minister Pon Radhakrishnan, Modi stood on top of a decorated vehicle and waved at and greeted the good number of people who had lined up on either side of the road here in Kanyakumari district.

People showered flower petals on the PM, who embarked on the near 1.5 km roadshow from Veppamoodu junction to Vadaseery in this town, during



the near one-hour event. Chants of "Modi, Modi" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai," rent the air, even as the party flags of NDA constituents— AIADMK, BJP and AMMK, among others were displayed prominently all through the roadshow route. Classical dance performances were held by artistes.

During his engagement, the PM paid floral tributes to garlanded portraits of BR Ambedkar and late Dravidian stalwarts CN Annadurai and MG Ramachandran (MGR), the latter being the founder of the AIADMK.

SAMRAT CHOUDHARY SWORN IN AS BIHAR CM, ENDS NITISH KUMAR ERA



Patna, Apr 15 (TSIT): In a significant political development, senior BJP leader Samrat Choudhary was sworn in as the 21st Chief Minister of Bihar on Wednesday, marking the end of Nitish Kumar's long-standing leadership in the state. The oath of office was

administered by Governor Syed Ata Hasnain at a ceremony held at Raj Bhavan, attended by senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies. Choudhary's elevation follows a major political shift, with the BJP assuming direct control of the government. He

was elected leader of the BJP legislature party a day earlier, paving the way for his appointment. Nitish Kumar, now a Rajya Sabha MP, resigned from the post on Tuesday after dissolving his Cabinet. In the previous government, Choudhary served as Deputy Chief Minister and held the crucial Home portfolio.

Having joined the BJP in 2017, Choudhary has steadily risen within the party ranks. His appointment also holds caste significance, as he becomes the second leader from the Koeri community to become Chief Minister after Satish Prasad Singh. He also joins the league of leaders like Bharat Ratna awardee Karpoori Thakur who have held both the posts of Deputy Chief Minister and Chief Minister in Bihar. The development signals a new political phase in the state, with the BJP now firmly steering governance.

CM Revanth calls for unity in Jagtial congress after Jeevan Reddy's exit



HYDERABAD (TSIT) Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy held a meeting with key Congress leaders from Jagtial district, discussing the prevailing political situation in the state and strategies to strengthen the party at the grassroots level.

Addressing the leaders, the Chief Minister clarified that the party had always respected senior leader T. Jeevan Reddy and never undermined his stature. He emphasized that the

Congress leadership and cadre had collectively worked hard for Jeevan Reddy's victory in the 2023 Assembly elections.

Revanth Reddy stated that during the Parliament elections, the party had suggested Jeevan Reddy contest from Karimnagar. However, respecting his preference to contest from Nizamabad, the party allotted him the ticket. Unfortunately, he could not secure a win, he noted.

The Chief Minister further

said that even in municipal elections, tickets were given to candidates recommended by Jeevan Reddy. Despite assurances regarding his political future and that of his family, Jeevan Reddy chose to leave the party, he added.

Expressing disappointment, Revanth Reddy remarked that a leader who had been supported by Congress cadre for over four decades aligning with K. Chandrashekar Rao was deeply unfortunate. He

alleged that such a move had compromised the self-respect of Congress workers in Jagtial.

However, he reiterated that he had never spoken a word that would hurt Jeevan Reddy's dignity and maintained that personal respect should be upheld despite political differences. Questioning attempts to destabilize a democratically elected government, the Chief Minister said that countering such conspiracies was the responsibility of the party. "Let people decide whether what I am doing is right or wrong. Time will reveal the truth," he stated. Calling upon party leaders and workers to stay united, Revanth Reddy urged them to work towards bringing Congress back to power with greater strength. He assured that he would soon visit Jagtial to meet party cadre personally.

He concluded by appreciating the leaders for proving that the party is greater than any individual and called for collective efforts towards the development of Jagtial district.

14 killed, several critical in boiler blast at Vedanta Limited power plant



Sakti (TSIT): The death toll in the devastating boiler explosion at a thermal power plant operated by Vedanta Limited in Chhattisgarh's Sakti district has risen to 14, with around 20 injured workers still undergoing treatment, several of them in critical condition.

The incident occurred around 2.30 pm on Tuesday at the facility in Singhitara, when a high-pressure steam tube connected to the boiler and turbine exploded with massive force. The blast caused severe burn injuries to workers present at the site, many of whom were engaged in maintenance and painting work.

According to police, four workers died on the spot, while others succumbed to injuries during treatment at different hospitals. In total, nearly 30 workers were injured in the mishap. Sakti Superintendent of Police Praful Thakur said

Heavy police deployment continues at the site, as anxious family members gather outside hospitals awaiting updates on their loved ones.

that 14 deaths have been confirmed so far, while 20 injured persons remain under treatment. Five of the critically injured have been referred for advanced medical care. He added that extensive searches have confirmed that no workers remain trapped at the site.

Preliminary findings indicate that a leak in the high-pressure steam pipeline may have triggered the explosion, leading to extensive damage and panic within the plant premises.

Satisfying poor's hunger is true development: Chandrababu Naidu



Amaravati, April 15 : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday asserted that true development is achieved only when the hunger of the poor is satisfied. He believes that no matter how much development is achieved, it is all in vain if the poor are deprived of even a square meal. For this very reason, he explained, 'Anna Canteens' have been established across the state to alleviate the hunger of the needy. He was speaking at the inauguration of 'Anna Canteen' in Dhanrikota of

Palnadu district. The Chief Minister purchased a token for Rs 5 and sat down to dine alongside the labourers. Prior to this, he personally served food to the poor and labourers who had gathered at the canteen. Engaging in conversation with the beneficiaries, the Chief Minister partook of his meal right there within the 'Anna Canteen' premises. He also inquired about the taste, hygiene, and quality of the food being served at the 'Anna Canteens.' CM Naidu recalled that former chief minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) founder

N. T. Rama Rao (NTR) pioneered the food security scheme by providing rice at just Rs 2 per kilogram. NTR had declared that serving a morsel of food to the poor is true politics, he said.

He claimed that welfare has been an integral part of the TDP's ideology. From the Rs 2-per-kilo rice scheme of the past to the 'Anna Canteens' of today, we have consistently accorded the highest priority to food security, he said.

Immediately after assuming power in 2024, we set about establishing 'Anna Canteens' across the state. We initially launched these canteens in urban areas. Starting today, 62 'Anna Canteens' have become operational in rural areas as well. With the existing 204 canteens in urban areas and the 65 in villages, the total count has now risen to 269. Another five canteens are currently being readied and will be operational very soon, the Chief Minister said.

Follow the rules of the road while traveling



Suryapet District Correspondent (April 15) District Collector and District SP asked students to write letters to their parents to follow the road rules. District Collector Tejas Nand Lal Pawar advised parents to follow the road rules while traveling.

As part of the 99-day program of the Public Administration Progress Plan, the Suryapet Traffic Police of Suryapet town organized the Arrive Alive Road Safety Program on the 3rd day at City Talent High School in Suryapet town. District Collector Tejas Nand Lal Pawar and District SP Narasimha attended the road safety awareness program organized for the stu-

dents on this occasion. Town CI Venkataiah, Suryapet ACP Prasanna Kumar and Transport Department Officer Jayaprakash Reddy explained to the students about the precautions that students should take while using the road and the rules that they should follow.

Pamphlets and posters explaining the road safety rules were distributed to the students. Later, the District Collector asked the students to study hard. He said that one should be alert while traveling on the roads, negligence on the roads destroys life. He advised to stay away from bad habits like drug use, and to bring to the attention of parents any wrongdoings suggested by someone to the attention of teachers.

He said that parents should wear helmets and wear seat belts while traveling on vehicles. Later, the District SP said that many children have been involved in road accidents due to parents' caution on the roads. He said that students should inform their parents at home about the precautions to be followed on the roads, explain about using helmets and wearing seat belts. He suggested that parents should be informed through letters about not driving under the influence of alcohol.

He called on children to take a promise from their parents that they will wear helmets while traveling and will not drive under the influence of alcohol. He said that parents have many hopes for their children and it is their responsibility to make these dreams come true. He reminded that if they are negligent, accidents on the roads will occur and they will die. It was advised to wear a helmet and fasten a seat belt while riding on two-wheelers. Later, a pledge was taken on road safety and pamphlets were distributed.

Vigilance Crucial to Prevent Fire Accidents ADGP Mahesh M. Bhagwat



Hyderabad TSIT: Additional Director General of Police (Law & Order) Mahesh M. Bhagwat emphasized that constant vigilance is key to preventing fire accidents, warning that even minor negligence can lead to serious consequences. He was speaking at a fire safety awareness programme organized by Fire Department officials at the DGP Office on Wednesday, as part of Fire Week celebrations. Highlighting the importance of preparedness, the ADGP said that a timely and calm response during fire emergencies can significantly reduce loss of life and property. He advised that in case of a fire, people should immediately alert the Fire Control Room by dialing 101 and evacuate the premises without delay.

He cautioned against using lifts during fire emergencies and stressed that staircases are the safest means of evacuation. In situations involving heavy smoke, he advised individuals to stay low, crawl along the ground, and cover their nose and mouth with a wet cloth to avoid suffocation. Referring to common fire hazards, Bhagwat said that if a person's clothing catches fire, they should "stop, drop, and roll" instead of running, to effectively extinguish the flames. The ADGP also underlined the need for basic fire safety awareness among citizens, particularly in schools, hospitals, and multi-storey buildings. On the occasion, Fire Department officials conducted demonstrations on essential safety measures and precautions to be followed during fire emergencies. IGP (P&L) Gajrao Bhupal, RFO Harichandra Reddy, DFO Venkanna, and other officials were present at the programme.

PM outlines nine-pillar citizen charter for Viksit Bharat 2047 from Adichunchanagiri Mutt

Bengaluru, Apr 15 (UNI) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday unveiled the "Nine Resolutions for Viksit Bharat" framework, describing it as a citizen-driven behavioral transformation roadmap aimed at accelerating India's journey toward becoming a developed nation by 2047. Addressing a large public gathering at Adichunchanagiri Mutt in Mandya district, the Prime Minister said that the initiative transcends regional boundaries and represents a nationwide call for collective participation and lifestyle change.



He stressed that the individual habits and daily choices of citizens would play a decisive role in shaping the country's future. "If we all move forward with sincerity and determination on these nine resolutions, we can accelerate progress towards a developed Karnataka and a developed India," he said. Framing development as a people-led movement rather than solely a government-driven

effort, the Prime Minister stressed that transformation must begin at the level of everyday behaviour. He highlighted water conservation as a key priority, particularly in regions dependent on river systems, and urged citizens to take a collective pledge. "Let us all take a pledge to conserve water and manage it better," he said.

On environmental sustainability, the Prime Minister called for largescale tree plantation under the "one tree in the

name of mother" initiative. "Let us plant trees in honour of our mothers and protect Mother Earth," he said.

Emphasising cleanliness as a civic duty, he said maintaining hygiene in public places, religious sites, villages, and cities was a shared responsibility. "Whether it is a religious place, public space, village or city, maintaining cleanliness is our collective responsibility," he said. Regarding economic self-reliance, the Prime Minister

stressed the importance of promoting domestic production and supporting Indian industries. "Let us adopt Indian products and strengthen our industries," he said, reinforcing the "Vocal for Local" vision as a key pillar of economic empowerment. Promoting national awareness and cultural integration, he urged citizens to travel across the country and explore its diversity. "Let us travel across India and promote domestic tourism," he said, adding that greater people-to-people connection would strengthen national unity and boost the cultural economy.

Turning to agriculture, he encouraged farmers to adopt sustainable and chemical-free farming practices. "Let us move towards chemical-free natural farming," he said. On health and nutrition, the Prime Minister highlighted the importance of millets in daily diets. "Young people should include millets like ragi in their diet," he said, noting that rising obesity has become a

major public health concern and urging citizens to reduce oil consumption by 10 per cent. He further emphasised physical fitness, stating, "Yoga, sports and fitness must become part of our daily lives," positioning wellness as a national priority.

Concluding the framework, he called for a stronger spirit of public service. "Service to the needy strengthens society and gives life a greater purpose," he said. The Prime Minister said the nine resolutions represent a mass participatory governance model where behavioural change at the citizen level can collectively drive national transformation. He added that such collective commitments would significantly contribute to the vision of a "Viksit Karnataka and Viksit Bharat," reinforcing India's long-term development goals. Earlier in the day, he inaugurated the Sri Guru Bhairavaikya Mandira at the historic Adichunchanagiri Mutt complex in Mandya district, a new spiritual landmark dedicated to late seer Sri Balangadharanatha Swamiji.

CBSE declares Class 10 Board results, students can access via UMANG and Digilocker

New Delhi, Apr 15 (UNI) The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced the results of Class 10 Board Exams on Wednesday, ending the wait for over 25 lakh students who appeared for the examination. At 4 pm on Wednesday, government portals, including UMANG and Digilocker, went live and announced the results and a flash message emerged, "CBSE Board Result - 2026. Class X Results are Out!" Under the CBSE's newly introduced two-board system, Class 10 results are now being announced earlier in May rather than in April. The new system splits the academic year into two separate examination sessions. The first session, mandatory for all students, was held from February 17 to March 11, 2026, across 8,075 exam centres and covering 83 subjects. A total of 25,08,319 students were registered to appear, of whom 14,08,546 were male, and 10,99,773 were female. The second phase of board examinations is scheduled to begin on May 15.

Delhi High Court orders removal of viral videos of Kejriwal court proceedings

New Delhi, Apr 15: The Delhi High Court has directed police authorities to take immediate steps to remove all social media videos showing Arvind Kejriwal during court proceedings, following concerns over alleged unauthorized recording and circulation of judicial hearings. The direction relates to viral clips of Kejriwal arguing before Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma during the hearing of his plea seeking the judge's recusal in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy case. The court observed that the circulation of such recordings appears to be in violation of established rules governing virtual court proceedings. Registry officials noted that action is already being initiated against individuals responsible for recording and uploading proceedings, reiterating that similar enforcement measures have been taken in past instances of violations. Earlier in the day, advocate Vaibhav Singh lodged a formal complaint with the court, alleging that audio and video from the April 13 hearing were recorded and widely circulated on platforms such as X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube without permission. The complaint claimed that several political figures, including Kejriwal and members of the Aam Aadmi Party, had "intentionally and deliberately" shared court proceedings in violation of the Delhi High Court Rules for Video Conferencing, 2021 and the Electronic Evidence and Video Conferencing Rules, 2025, which prohibit unauthorized recording or publication of hearings.

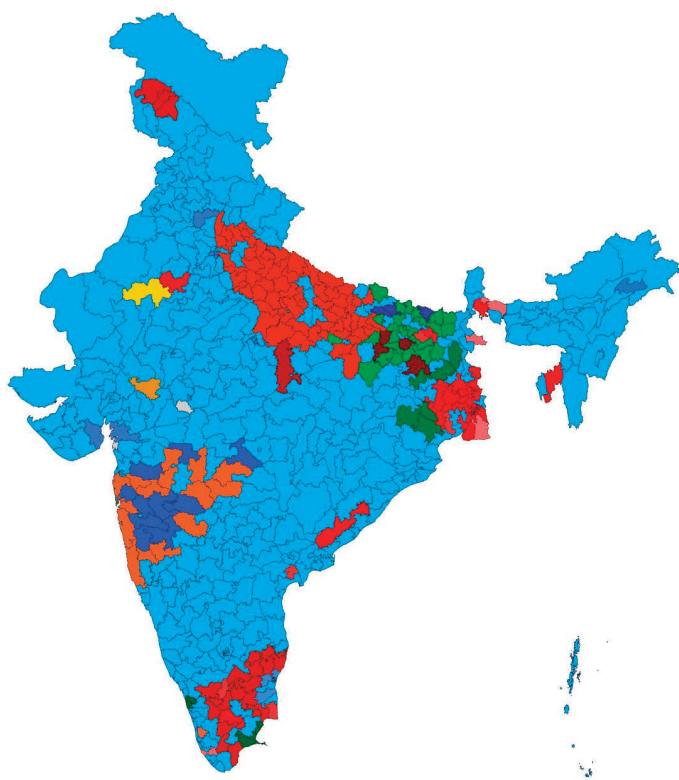
Seats, stakes and suffrage: High-voltage special session to redraw India's political map

New Delhi, Apr 15 (UNI) As Parliament prepares for a rare three-day special sitting from April 16 to 18, the stage is set for a defining legislative confrontation that could reshape India's democratic architecture, expanding the Lok Sabha, redrawing constituency boundaries, and finally bringing long-promised reservations for women closer to reality. At the centre of the government's agenda is the push to fast-track the implementation of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 through the proposed Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The move seeks to operationalise 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, with an eye on rollout by the 2029 general elections.

Projected as a landmark step towards gender parity, the initiative is being paired with a politically sensitive delimitation exercise that could significantly alter India's electoral landscape.

The proposed Delimitation Bill, 2026 aims to redraw parliamentary constituencies based on updated population data, potentially raising the strength of the Lok Sabha to 816 or more seats. Rooted in constitutional provisions



that froze seat allocation based on the 1971 Census until after the first post-2026 census, the government argues that demographic shifts over decades now necessitate a comprehensive recalibration.

A senior government func-

tionary underscored the twin objectives of reform and representation, stating that the effort is to ensure women's reservation is implemented without delay while aligning democratic institutions with present-day realities. Union Law

Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, who is set to introduce the Bills, has described the initiative as one that will "promote inclusivity and strengthen participatory democracy," tying it to the broader vision of a developed India.

However, the proposals have already ignited a fierce political backlash. The Congress has accused the government of "deliberate deceit," with senior leader Jairam Ramesh questioning the abandonment of assurances on maintaining a uniform increase in parliamentary representation. He warned that southern and smaller states could see their influence diminish, asking what had become of the promise of proportionate expansion and cautioning against upsetting the federal balance.

The timing of the session—on the cusp of key state elections—has further intensified the debate. Opposition parties argue that linking women's reservation to delimitation and census processes could delay its implementation while serving electoral considerations. Ramesh also invoked constitutional morality, citing B. R. Ambedkar's warnings against governance

detached from foundational principles, and termed the move an affront to his legacy.

The Trinamool Congress has sharpened the attack, with Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien accusing the Centre of using women's reservation as a "pretext" for a "devious delimitation agenda." In a strongly worded critique, he alleged that the government was trivialising both Parliament and the cause of women's empowerment, reiterating long-standing demands for a clear and time-bound roadmap for implementing the quota.

Delimitation has historically been a politically sensitive process, often viewed through the lens of regional equity. States that have successfully controlled population growth, particularly in the South, fear that a population-based redistribution of seats could erode their parliamentary weight, while more populous states stand to gain. Earlier constitutional arrangements attempted to balance these concerns by freezing seat allocation while permitting limited adjustments, but the current proposals signal a far more sweeping overhaul.

The government, for its part, insists the exercise will

remain firmly within constitutional bounds and is essential to address distortions caused by decades of demographic change, migration and urbanisation. The proposed Delimitation Commission will not only redraw constituency boundaries but also determine the allocation of seats reserved for women, including within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes quotas—effectively linking the two reforms.

With major parties issuing three-line whips to ensure full attendance, the coming session promises intense debates and high political stakes. Its outcome could trigger the first major expansion of the Lok Sabha in decades and redefine the contours of political representation in India.

As Parliament convenes, the focus extends beyond the passage of key legislation to a larger question: how to balance representation with federalism, reform with political intent, and long-standing promises with timely implementation. Whether this moment marks a milestone in democratic deepening or a flashpoint of political contestation will be decided on the floor of the House in the days ahead.

TCS BPO staff booked over rape, harassment, forced religious acts



Nashik, Apr 15: Serious allegations of sexual harassment, coercion, and attempts at religious conversion have surfaced against several employees of a BPO unit of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Maharashtra's Nashik, police said. The case involves women aged between 18 and 25 and spans incidents reported between 2022 and early 2026. Police have registered nine FIRs against eight employees, including six men and two women. At least seven accused have been arrested, while further investigations are underway. Those arrested include Asif Ansari, Danish Shaikh, Shafi Shaikh, Shahrukh Qureshi, Raza Memon and Tausif Attar. Ashwin Chainani, operations manager of the POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) committee, has also been arrested. HR manager Nida Khan is currently absconding. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted to probe the matter has so far identified at least 12 alleged victims.

Why is caste census not being used to pass Women's Reservation Bill, asks Rahul Gandhi



New Delhi, April 15 : Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday attacked the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Central government, alleging that the 2011 census is being used to pass the Women's Reservation Bill, rather than the current caste-based census that is being conducted in the country.

Women's Reservation" and that the Parliament had unanimously passed the Bill in 2023. Attaching a video message along with his post, he called it an important issue, "especially for the backward classes, Dalits, tribal communities, and women. "It is about your participation," he noted.

"We are saying that the new census has begun, they (BJP) are saying that OBC census is being conducted, then why is that census not being used to pass the Women's Reservation Bill?" Gandhi asked.

MANGALURU: YOUTH CONGRESS PROTESTS LPG PRICE HIKE WITH MOCK FUNERAL PROCESSION

Mangaluru, Apr 15: Condemning the steep rise in cooking gas prices and alleging the failure of the BJP-led central government, the Dakshina Kannada District Youth Congress Committee staged a protest on Wednesday near Kadri Circle.



In a symbolic demonstration to highlight the plight of the common man, protesters carried out a mock funeral procession, placing a garlanded empty LPG cylinder on a stretcher. They also displayed a gas stove and empty utensils to signify the impact of rising fuel costs on households.

Mangaluru: 15-year-old SSLC student electrocuted while playing cricket

Mangaluru, Apr 15: A 15-year-old boy died of electrocution while playing cricket with his friends near Mahakalipadpu on Saturday evening. The incident came to light late.

Mahakalipadpu underpass. During the game, the ball landed on the roof of the mandir. When Varun climbed up to retrieve it, he accidentally came into contact with a live overhead electricity wire. He was immediately rushed to a hospital by those present at the spot, but he was declared dead on arrival. Varun was born and raised in Mangaluru and had appeared for the SSLC examinations just a week ago. He was reportedly looking forward to his results during the summer vacation. He is survived by his parents, an elder brother, and a three-and-a-half-year-old sister.

Kanyakumari-Mangaluru Parasuram Express tops India's occupancy chart; Kerala routes dominate demand



Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 15: The Parasuram Express running between Kanyakumari and Mangaluru has emerged as the train with the highest occupancy in India, underscoring exceptionally high demand on Kerala routes.

operate in Kerala, highlighting the sustained pressure on the state's busy rail corridors. Six of these services are operated by Southern Railway, including the Mangaluru-Kanyakumari Parasuram Express, Thiruvananthapuram-New Delhi Kerala Express, Kanyakumari-Katra Himsagar Express, Ernakulam-Okha Express and Gandhidham-Nagercoil Express. Kerala leads in Vande Bharat occupancy rankings. Kerala also features prominently in the Vande

Bharat Express occupancy rankings, with four trains from the state among the top 10 in the country. The Thiruvananthapuram-Mangaluru Vande Bharat Express leads the list with an occupancy of 187.78%. The Vande Bharat services placed in positions two to 10 are: Varanasi-Meerut (181.53%), Mangaluru-Thiruvananthapuram (173.33%), Kasargod-Thiruvananthapuram (172.87%), Meerut-Varanasi (172.16%), Patna-Gomti Nagar (163.08%), Thiruvananthapuram-Kasargod (159.36%), Ajmer-Chandigarh (158.21%), Delhi-Jodhpur (156.69%) and Gomti Nagar-Patna (155.97%). The figures highlight consistently high passenger demand on Kerala-linked rail routes across both conventional and semi-high-speed services.

Strict Action Against Illegal Dumping - Rs.80,000 Penalty Imposed



Bengaluru: Strict action has been taken against illegal dumping of waste in Ward No. 9, along the Railway Parallel Road in Byatarayanapura Division under the jurisdiction of Bengaluru North City Corporation.

The enforcement action was carried out in the presence of AGM Thirthaprasad and Junior Health Inspector (JHI) Kavitha. As illegal dumping adversely impacts public health and the environment, the Corporation is following a strict Zero Tolerance policy against such violations. Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar has warned that stricter action will be taken if such violations are repeated in the future.

Karnataka unveils India's first quantum ecosystem map

Bengaluru, April 13: Karnataka has unveiled India's first Quantum Ecosystem Map and launched Phase-1 of its Quantum Roadmap on the occasion of World Quantum Day 2026, marking a major step in advancing deep-tech innovation.



significant development, Arindam Ghosh has been appointed as Chairman of the Karnataka Quantum Task Force. The government also announced a Rs.10 crore grant to support skilling, research, and startup growth in the sector. IT & BT Minister Priyank Kharge highlighted the state's vision of making the coming years a "Deep Tech Decade," backed by a Rs.400 crore fund

and equity-free grants to startups. He noted that Bengaluru continues to be a major global tech hub, with efforts underway to expand innovation ecosystems across the state. The event witnessed participation from senior officials, scientists, and industry leaders, reinforcing Karnataka's commitment to emerging technologies and future-ready innovation.

DMK and allies will easily win two-thirds majority: DCM D K Shivakumar



Coimbatore : Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said that the DMK and its alliance partners will easily secure a two-thirds majority in the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. Speaking to reporters before participating in an election rally here, he said, "The Indian National Congress and DMK have a long and great history of alliance and we will easily secure two-thirds majority."

Citizens are living a good life in a multicultural environment: S.E. Sudheendra

Bengaluru: Citizens from all parts of the country are living a good life in a multicultural environment in Bengaluru, said S.E. Sudheendra, Chairman of the Karnataka State Biofuel Development Board. Speaking after participating in the celebration of Vishu, the solar new year and a symbol of prosperity, organized by the East Cultural Association (ECA) in Indiranagar, one of the city's major cultural centers, he analyzed the importance given to the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage.

Franklin Templeton Announces Launch of Sapphire Equity Long-Short SIF - Its First Specialised Investment Fund Strategy

Bengaluru : Franklin Templeton (India) announced the launch of Sapphire Equity Long-Short SIF, its first offering under the Specialised Investment Funds (SIF). It is an Equity Long Short Fund under the SIF framework, investing across Nifty 500 stocks to enable diversified



exposure across large, mid and small-cap segments. Sapphire Equity Long-Short SIF aims to seek long-term capital appreciation

potential for relatively higher returns while also being tax efficient. What differentiates a SIF strategy from a conventional mutual fund is that SIFs can potentially take advantage of market shifts by taking short positions upto 25% of their net assets, which can help reduce downside risk during market corrections." He added, "The Sapphire Equity Long Short SIF leverages Franklin Templeton's decades of experience in systematic and quantitative investing. Our proprietary, data driven quantitative approach evaluates stocks using over 40 factors across Quality, Value, Sentiment and Alternative indicators, with a dedicated framework for identifying short opportunities. Our SIF is built on a structured,

CLIX CAPITAL SERVICES PVT. LTD. (CLIX) POSSESSION NOTICE (Appendix IV Rule 8(1))

BAJAJ FINANCE LIMITED POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

GODREJ FINANCE LIMITED DEMAND NOTICE

EDITORIAL

Mines, Submarines, Drones: Why World's Mightiest Navy Won't Get Too Close To Hormuz

When the US and Israel launched pre-emptive strikes into Iran on February 28, the 'existential' and 'imminent' threats cited by them were more associated with Iran's nuclear programme and its ballistic missile capabilities. Obviously, the regime in Iran was a major irritant too. What was definitely not in any equation or calculation was the Strait of Hormuz and how this narrow sea passage connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean could become the primary issue in the conflict. Result? Iran blockaded the Strait of Hormuz early in the war claiming that it is open but only if the ships follow its 'technical instructions'. As soon as a few tankers defying the diktat were bombed and up in flames, the Strait became automatically closed, remaining open technically only to select ships on a case-by-case basis and, as per reports, payment of a premium to Iran. Iran also claimed to have mined the main channels in the Strait and redesignated the 'in-and-out channels' closer to its shores, on either side of its Larak Island. The US Navy, threatened by Iranian missiles and drones, had to retreat out of the Persian Gulf, into a safe distance into the Sea of Oman, and President Trump issued a warning that if the free passage through the Strait of Hormuz is not opened by 8.00 PM EST on April 7, 2026, the US and Israel will bomb and destroy Iran's power infrastructure and bridges. With Iran not relenting, Israel in fact, bombed and damaged a crucial railway bridge, the Yahya Abad railway bridge in central Iran's Kashan city on April 7, while the US conducted airstrikes on the Kharg island of Iran targeting critical oil infrastructure on the same day. Just as it was looking like the conflict could escalate sharply, against the run of play, Trump unilaterally declared a 15-day ceasefire mere 90 minutes before the deadline was to expire, stating that it was based on conversations and request from Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, and subject to the Islamic Republic of Iran agreeing to the "COMPLETE", "IMMEDIATE", and "SAFE OPENING" of the Strait of Hormuz. He added that the US had received a 10-point proposal from Iran, and believed it was a workable basis on which to negotiate. As a result of the ceasefire, which Iran agreed to, the first ever face-to-face talks since the 1979 Iranian Revolution between Iran and the US took place in Pakistan on April 10. The extremely high-profile and crucial meeting was led by Vice President JD Vance from the US and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. However, after 21 hours of talks, there was no breakthrough and President Trump promptly announced a 'naval blockade' of the Strait of Hormuz, virtually blocking the 'technical blockade' imposed by Iran earlier, making it clear that the Strait of Hormuz has emerged as the most important point of contention in any efforts to break the deadlock. The Geography Of Hormuz The narrow sea passage is about 30-50 km wide, with the narrowest point being just about 21 km. It links the vital Persian Gulf to the West to the Oman Sea, and further the Arabian Sea to the East, making it a crucial sea link that has no physical alternative in near vicinity. It is a global lifeline through which 20% of global crude oil and LPG transits. In 2025, about 20 million barrels of oil and oil products passed through the Strait of Hormuz per day, according to estimates from the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), which itself was worth nearly USD 600 billion. It has two distinct sea channels earmarked for passage, deep enough for Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCC) tanker ships, each having a capacity to carry up to 2 million barrels of oil, to pass through. Iran's Military Edge The closure of Strait of Hormuz, first by Iran and now by the US, is raising the prospects of a potential military option to forcefully open it. The question however, of whether the Strait of Hormuz can be forcefully opened, needs to be examined in detail.

38% vs 18%: How Bengal Exposes The Biggest Irony Of Women's Reservation

Long debated and stalled for decades, the legislative odyssey of the Women's Reservation Bill, now formally known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, began nearly 30 years ago when it was introduced in September 1996. In September 2023, the Parliament finally passed the 128th Constitutional Amendment Bill unanimously, reserving 33% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly. The law seeks to correct India's gender imbalance in politics, where women currently account for only about 15% of Parliamentary representation. The catch, however, is that the law was tied to the completion of a fresh census and a subsequent delimitation exercise, pushing implementation to 2034 at the earliest. What The Delimitation Pivot Hides The Union government is now attempting to accelerate this timeline by proposing amendments that would use 2011 census data instead of the pending census and expand Lok Sabha seats by 50% - from 543 to 816, with 273 seats reserved for women - asking the Parliament to pass this in three days while West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are still mid-election. In response, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has accused the government of "rushing the process to gain political advantage" as the Congress Working Committee warns of the profound consequences of the delimitation proposal. While the 50% seat expansion is presented as equitable, the absolute gaps between states widen dramatically: Northern states gain roughly 200 seats against the South's 66. In an 816-member House where the majority mark shifts to 409, the Hindi heartland, where the BJP's base is most concentrated, commands a larger share of power, making Southern states increasingly less decisive in government formation. By using 2011 Census data, which contains no full caste enumeration, the government has also sidestepped the long-standing demand for a quota-within-a-quota for OBC women.



Constitutional scholar Zoya Hasan has noted that basing electoral restructuring on data that is 15 years old, and predates the pandemic, mass migration, and rapid urbanisation, risks misrepresenting the very communities the bill claims to empower. The BJP's Bengal Gambit The timing has an obvious factor: West Bengal, which votes in two phases this month. The BJP's strategy is to use the bill as a direct weapon against Mamata Banerjee's most loyal constituency of women voters, who have consistently given the Trinamool Congress a double-digit lead in post-poll surveys. Modi has framed the legislation as a "historic opportunity", suggesting that Banerjee's record is no substitute for a Constitutional guarantee, while Smriti Irani, campaigning in Rajarhat, accused both the Congress and the Trinamool of failing to support the bill "despite being led by female leaders". The BJP's women-focused campaign also invokes the RG Kar case related to the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in August 2024, with Irani accompanying the victim's mother, now a BJP candidate from Panihati, as she filed her nomination. The message is

pointed: the Trinamool's headline numbers on representation are hollow if the state's institutions fail to protect women on the ground. TMC's Numbers: Ahead Of The Benchmark? The irony here, however, is that the Trinamool Congress already operates beyond the 33% threshold in its own Lok Sabha delegation. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, 11 out of 29 Trinamool MPs were women, amounting to roughly 38%, the highest share among major national parties. By comparison, women account for around 13% of the BJP's elected MPs. At the state level, over 20% of Mamata Banerjee's Council of Ministers are women, including high-profile portfolios such as agriculture, welfare, and public health. In contrast, BJP-ruled states such as Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh still have far lower shares of women MLAs than Bengal, even after decades of national-level discussions on quotas. What distinguishes the Trinamool's record is not just the headcount but the diversity behind it. The party's women MPs span a wide social and professional range: actors with deep constituency ties, doctors and academics, career politicians, a

former bureaucrat, and an Anganwadi worker who arrived at Parliament without the cushion of elite networks or family incumbency. They are drawn from Adivasi, Dalit, Muslim, and urban middle-class backgrounds, reflecting constituencies that cut across rural, peri-urban, and metropolitan Bengal. Mamata Banerjee remains one of only two women Chief Ministers in the country, a product not of reservation but of four decades of street-level political activism. The 'Party Ticket' As West Bengal moves towards the 2026 state elections, the BJP's "women-first" pitch - cash transfers, women-only police battalions, and job-quota promises - will be heavily advertised. On the other hand, Banerjee can leverage not only scheme-based welfare such as Kanyashree Prakalpa and Lakshmi Bhandar, but also a demonstrable record of women's representation in both the Lok Sabha and the state cabinet. And yet, West Bengal, held up as the Bill's best-case argument, is not exempt from the contradictions of the "party ticket". While the Trinamool's 38% women MPs in the Lok Sabha is an impressive achievement.

The Big Takeaways: Deciphering Tamil Nadu's High-Stakes Battle

Over the last 25 days, I have travelled across Tamil Nadu through its southern, central, western, and northern regions-meeting candidates, from high-profile veterans to low-profile newcomers, and speaking with voters in markets, on streets, and among campaign ranks. This is the sixth Assembly election I am reporting from the ground in Tamil Nadu - and it is shaping up to be THE most fascinating one. The arithmetic and grassroots equations in the state remain as complex as its ideological debates and its colorful, emotive, and loud political campaigns. The first 2026 reality is unmistakable: this is not the binary "DMK vs. AIADMK" contest that both alliances claim. It is, at the very least, a three-way fight-with Tamizhaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) at the centre of the conversation. Whether or not people ultimately vote for it, they are talking about it everywhere. Add Seeman's NTK, and this begins to resemble a four-way race; in some pockets, even five- or six-cornered contests are emerging. For pollsters, this election is a nightmare for one reason. Vijay's fan appeal is massive-but how much of it will translate into votes, and whose base it will erode, remains enormously unpredictable. Based on extensive ground travel, here are five broad realities shaping the race-not from data, but from conversations and observation. Anti-incumbency Is Real, But the DMK Is Not Complacent MK Stalin's greatest strength may be his lack of complacency. There is little evidence of hubris. The leadership appears acutely aware that anti-incumbency exists and that the ground is not entirely secure. The DMK has focused on alliance management with precision-holding partners together, even expanding the coalition, and ensuring coordination down to the constituency level. For



instance, in Virudhunagar the two-time DMK MLA ARR Sreenivasan had to give up the seat for party's new ally DMDK. Late actor Vijayakanth's son Vijay Prabhakar is the candidate and the Sreenivasan is on the campaign trail every day with the young Vijay Prabhakar. This is important as the DMDK is a new ally, one the DMK fought till 2024. When asked Sreenivasan said "Stalin has ordered DMDK victory here and I will ensure that happens" Overall, the DMK's campaign is built on arithmetic: tight alliance synchrony, a manifesto aimed at blunting voter fatigue, and a formidable organizational and propaganda machinery operating at full throttle. In a close contest, this could prove decisive. Crucially, the anti-incumbency vote is split-primarily between the TVK and the AIADMK. A united front here would have posed a far more serious challenge. A Generational Battle: Under-40 vs. Over-40 A little over 40% of Tamil Nadu's electorate is under 40-and this is Vijay's natural constituency. Across Chennai, Trichy, Madurai, and Tirunelveli, the energy among younger voters is

unmistakable. From hotel staff to drivers to market vendors, the response is strikingly consistent: Vijay. Many of these voters come from families historically aligned with the DMK or AIADMK. At a DMK rally, when I asked young, dancing band members who they would vote for, the instinctive answer was immediate-"Vijay" - before caution set in! This is where the disruption lies. The DMK's traditional dominance among urban and youth voters is now under serious pressure. That shift alone could reshape the electoral map. AIADMK: Strong Where It Is, But Uneven Overall The "Two Leaves" symbol remains resilient despite five years out of power and the absence of towering figures like MGR and Jayalalithaa. Edappadi Palaniswami has kept the organization intact and disciplined. In western Tamil Nadu-especially around Salem-his influence is unmistakable. The alliance with TTV Dhinakaran's AMMK adds a layer of caste arithmetic in the south. Yet the party's strength is uneven. Where it is strong, it remains formidable; But its strength may not be even across seats, especially in

northern urban centres. Its biggest challenge is structural: the TVK is eating into the anti-DMK vote while also making inroads among women voters-a traditional AIADMK base. For the AIADMK, this election is existential. For the DMK, defeat would be a setback; for the AIADMK, losing space to the TVK could redefine its future. The Minority Calculus The Muslim (about 6%) vote appears largely consolidated behind the DMK alliance. The Christian vote (roughly 6%), however, seems more fluid than before. Vijay's identity and appeal seem to be creating a generational divide within the community-particularly among church leadership. Younger voices appear more receptive; older ones remain aligned with the DMK. With minorities accounting for roughly 12% of the electorate, even marginal shifts matter. In constituencies like Perambur and Trichy East-where Vijay is contesting and where Christian population is higher than the average 6 percent-the contest is being framed on the ground as "Vijay vs. DMK," with the AIADMK squeezed out in the conversation.

Reels, Vlogs and Nonsense



PRIYANKA SAURABH
(Young generation getting directionless in the broadcast of nonsense)

If there's one thing spreading the fastest these days, it's "nonsense." The only difference is that this nonsense is no longer confined to tea shops or community centers, but is being broadcast to society as a whole, emblazoned on smartphone screens in the form of "reels" and "vlogs." There was a time when young people woke up to their dreams, but today they wake up to notifications. Goals used to be set, but trends are now set. Hard work used to get applause, but now nonsense gets likes and shares. It's this shift that has slowly pushed the younger generation into a direction where there's a lot of noise, but no substance. Reels and vlogs, originally intended as outlets for creativity and expression, have become a race where the ultimate goal is not quality but "viral." In this race, it's the noise surrounding the content, not the content itself, that matters. The more bizarre, the more sensational, the more popular

it becomes. As a result, words like seriousness, sensitivity, and wisdom are gradually being marginalized. A large segment of today's young generation is racing to become "content creators," but no one is thinking about what they're creating or why. The moment the camera is on, the acting begins, and the moment it's off, the emptiness of reality is revealed. This is a world where pre-nonsense has become the ultimate identity. The most worrying aspect is that this nonsense has now become considered normal and acceptable. The more time one spends on screens, the more "up-to-date" one is considered. The truth is, this isn't updating, but rather a form of mental fatigue and disorientation. Today's youth spend hours thinking about what to show in the next reel, but don't take the time to think about what they want to do in life. It's ironic that the generation with the most resources appears the most confused and scattered. This problem isn't just a waste of time; it's also affecting our ability to think. The habit of constantly watching short videos has weakened our ability to concentrate. The tendency to think deeply, read, and understand is diminishing. Everything is needed quickly—fast entertainment, quick fame, and quick success. In this era of vlogs and reels, another dangerous trend has emerged—copying. Originality has been replaced by copy-paste. Once a trend catches on, everyone starts replicating it. In this process, nothing new is created, nor is any meaningful message conveyed. It simply results in a pile of the same nonsense. Its impact on society is clearly visible. Demonstration has

replaced dialogue. People now believe more in spectacle than in living. It has become increasingly necessary to capture every event, whether personal or sensitive, on camera. This trend is not only eroding privacy but also weakening sensibilities. It's safe to say we've entered a time where "bullshit" has become an industry. It's taking time, money, and—most importantly—the energy of the young generation. But what do we get in return? A few likes, a few followers, and a false sense of satisfaction that fades away in a matter of moments. To overcome this situation, we must first acknowledge that there is a problem. As long as we ignore it as mere "entertainment," there's no solution. The younger generation needs to understand that it's not necessary to be a part of every trend. It's not necessary to make every Reel. And most importantly—it's not necessary to watch and share every nonsense. We need a balance. Use technology, but don't become its slave. Create Reels, but they should have substance. Vlog, but they should have truth. If we use this medium in the right direction, it can become a powerful tool. But if it is allowed to become a medium of nonsense, it will only give this generation noise and emptiness. Finally, it's important to remember that the future isn't built on likes and views, but on hard work, discipline, and the right direction. If the younger generation doesn't understand this difference in time, "Reels, Vlogs, and Nonsense" will become not just a trend, but a serious social crisis. Today, the question isn't which video goes viral, but which ideas survive.

Iran Threatens To Block Gulf, Red Sea Trade Routes If US Naval Blockade Persists

Iran has warned that it could block trade routes through the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Red Sea if the United States continues its reported naval blockade of Iranian ports. According to Al Jazeera, Iran's military said it would not allow exports or imports to continue through the region's major waterways if restrictions on Iranian shipping remain in place. In a statement carried by Iranian state television, the head of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, Iran's top joint military command, said the continued US naval blockade of all Iranian ports constitutes a violation of the ceasefire. "Our armed forces will not allow trade to flow through the Red Sea if the naval blockade continues. We will not allow any exports or imports in the Gulf and the Sea of Oman if the American blockade continues," the commander said. The statement added that if the US maintains the blockade, "this will be a prelude to violating the ceasefire." Iran's military further warned that any action by the US that creates insecurity for Iranian commercial vessels and oil tankers could prompt retaliatory measures. The semi-official Mehr



News Agency quoted Maj. Gen. Ali Abdollahi of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters as saying, "If the aggressive and terrorist America continues its unlawful actions of maritime blockade in the region and creates insecurity for Iranian commercial ships and oil tankers, this action will be considered a prelude to violating the ceasefire." He added, "The powerful Armed Forces of Iran will not allow any kind of export and import to continue in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Red Sea." "Iran will act with full force

to defend its national sovereignty and interests," Abdollahi said. The warning comes as The Washington Post reported, citing unnamed American officials, that the US is preparing to send thousands of additional troops to the Middle East in the coming days. Tehran maintains its nuclear rights are non-negotiable but leaves room for compromise on enrichment levels amid ceasefire and sanctions discussions. Iran has asserted that its right to enrich uranium remains "indisputable," even as it indicated a willingness to

negotiate the extent of enrichment during ongoing discussions with the United States over a possible ceasefire and sanctions relief, Al Arabiya reported. At a weekly press briefing on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei reiterated that Tehran's access to peaceful nuclear energy cannot be curtailed "under pressure or through war." He stressed that while the core principle of uranium enrichment is not open to negotiation, the country is prepared to engage in talks over its scope and technical limits.

"Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot be taken away," Baqaei said, adding that any discussions would be based on the country's domestic requirements. He further noted that recent engagements with the United States have gone beyond nuclear issues, encompassing broader concerns such as a "complete cessation" of hostilities and what he described as the "realisation of Iran's rights," as cited by state media. The remarks come at a time when diplomatic efforts between Tehran and Washington are ongoing, with both sides exploring pathways to de-escalation alongside potential adjustments to Iran's nuclear programme. ALSO READ: 'China Very Happy': Trump Claims Xi Backing US Move To Permanently Open Hormuz Iran's existing stockpile of enriched uranium, along with its technical capacity to further enrich the material, has remained a key sticking point in the long-running demands made by the administration of Donald Trump. Washington has consistently pushed for Tehran to not only refrain from building a nuclear weapon but also to dismantle its capability to do so altogether.

Caution: Mochi's Latest Collection Is Designed To Attract Attention



Mumbai, April 2026: Mochi, one of India's leading fashion-forward footwear brands, has unveiled its latest collection for the season - a bold, expressive range designed for those who live to be noticed. Built for today's consumer, the collection celebrates individuality through statement-making styles that seamlessly balance trend and comfort. Anchored in the campaign Caution: Attracts Attention, the collection embraces a playful and confident

energy. This campaign celebrates the feeling of being unafraid to stand out. Designed to command attention, the collection is built for women who own their own vibe - bringing together statement, and comfort through embellished details, metallic finishes, and contemporary silhouettes. Big plans or no plans, these styles are ready for whatever's on (or off) the agenda. For men, the brand has launched open-toe chunky sole slip-ons. Featuring bold, sculpted soles with premium textures, the range delivers a strong visual identity while maintaining everyday ease. It redefines casual footwear with an edge where comfort meets statement design. With this collection, Mochi turns up the volume on self-expression. Each pair is designed to complete a look - and turn heads while doing it, effortlessly. The collection is now available across Mochi Shoes stores and online at <https://www.mochishoes.com/>.



ICICI Lombard Q4 Results: Net Profit Up 7.3%; Dividend Of Rs 7/Share Declared

ICICI Lombard General Insurance Co. Ltd. saw a 7% uptick to Rs 547 crore in the net profit for its standalone fourth quarter results for the fiscal 2026, according to a press release from the company on Wednesday. The company had seen a net profit of Rs 510 crore in the year ago period. The firm also declared a final dividend of Rs 7 per share. "The overall dividend for financial year 2026, including the proposed final dividend, is Rs13.50 per share. Last year, the overall dividend was Rs 12.50 per share," the press release said. The company's Net Premium Earned was 10.8% (Year-On-Year) higher at Rs 5,791 crore compared to the previous fiscal's Rs 5,226 crore. The firm's solvency ratio was at 2.67x as at March 31, 2026 compared to 2.69x as at Dec. 31, 2025 which was higher than the minimum regulatory requirement of 1.50x. "The solvency was impacted by 14 basis points, as an outcome of the Mark to Market losses experienced on the equity portfolio as at March 31, 2026," the release said.



The company's return on average equity (ROAE) was at 17.8% in fiscal 2026 compared to 19.1% in the previous financial year. Its ROAE was at 13.3% in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2026 compared to 14.5% in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2025. Share price of ICICI Lombard General Insurance Co. ended 4.25% higher at Rs 1,858 crore compared to a 1.63% uptick in the NSE Nifty 50. Over 10 companies will declare results for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, today. Major companies include HDB Financial Services, ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company, Elecon Engineering Company, Reliance Industrial

Infrastructure and Tejas Networks. The results will help investors and analysts gauge how the companies fared in the fourth quarter and whole of FY26. Some of them have also announced the schedule for their earnings call to discuss the results. The boards could also announce final dividends for the year. Q4 Results Today Live: Tejas Networks Net Loss Widens Tejas Networks (Cons, YoY) Net Loss at Rs 211.3 crore versus loss of Rs 71.8 crore. Revenue declines 82.6% at Rs 333 crore versus Rs 1,907 crore. Ebitda loss at Rs 118 crore versus Profit of Rs 121 crore. HDB Financial Q4 Results Live: Employee Count Of Lending Business

At 62,192 HDB Financial Q4 Key Highlights: Borrowing mix remains well-diversified with 45% of our borrowings as on March 31, 2026 coming from bank loans, 31% from NCDs, rest from a mix of other instruments. Remain well capitalized with total CRAR of 21.40% as at March 31, 2026. Employee Count of 62,192 for the lending business. HDB Financial Q4 Results Live: RoA Stands At 2.48% HDB Financial Q4 Key Highlights: RoA (annualized) for the quarter ended March 31, 2026 stood at 2.48% and for FY26 stood at 2.19%. RoE (annualized) for the quarter ended March 31, 2026 stood at 14.83% and for FY26 stood at 13.94%. Earnings per share for the quarter was ₹9.0 and Book Value per share stood at ₹248.9 Q4 Results Today Live: ICICI Lombard Profit Rises 7% ICICI Lombard Q4 Standalone (YoY) Profit rose 7.3% at Rs 547 crore versus Rs 510 crore. To pay interim dividend of Rs 7 per share. Net Premium Earned rose 10.8% at Rs 5,791 crore versus Rs 5,226 crore.

Shoes To AI: Allbirds Stock Rockets Nearly 400% Following Radical Business Pivot

Shares of Allbirds soared by nearly 400% on Wednesday after the company announced an unexpected pivot from footwear to artificial intelligence infrastructure. The company said it plans to transform itself into an AI compute business under the proposed name "NewBird AI", marking a dramatic departure from the sustainable footwear brand that once became synonymous with Silicon Valley consumers. The stock was trading at \$12.22 in early trade, up 390.76% on the day, giving the company a market capitalisation of roughly \$20 million. In a statement released on its investor relations page, the company said it had secured a deal to raise up to \$50 million in funding, which is expected to close in the second quarter of 2026. "The company will initially seek to acquire high-performance, low-latency AI compute hardware and provide access under long-term lease arrangements, meeting customer demand that spot



markets and hyperscalers are unable to reliably service," it said. The move comes weeks after Allbirds agreed to sell its intellectual property and other assets for \$39 million to American Exchange Group, which is expected to continue operating the Allbirds footwear label. Also Read: Flipkart And Uber To Integrate Reward Programme To Redeem 4% Of Ride Fare The funding raised for NewBird AI is expected to be used to buy high-performance GPU hardware for long-term

leasing arrangements aimed at enterprises and AI developers facing shortages in compute capacity. The company's transformation marks a remarkable turnaround for a business that, until recently, had been preparing to wind down following years of falling sales and intensifying competition in the footwear market. Notably, from a 12-month view, Allbirds' stock is up 153%, whereas the rise is of 183.13% in 2026 so far. Once a brand that soared as the de rigueur footwear for the

Silicon Valley set, Allbirds has fallen out of the sky. The shoemaker, best known for its eco-friendly wool sneakers favored by tech bros, said this week it is selling itself for a mere \$39 million, or roughly 1% of its peak market capitalization of \$4 billion only five years ago—the victim of major strategic missteps in trying to sustain its once meteoric growth. Joe Vernachio, the chief executive brought in two years ago to save Allbirds, said that American Exchange Group, a brand management company, will buy all of the company's assets, pending shareholder approval later this year. The CEO said in a statement that the deal "sets up the brand to thrive in the years ahead." That will be a tall order for a brand that was the symbol of last decade's venture capital boom. Last summer, cofounder Tim Brown conceded as much. "The time we had to evolve and grow that story was compressed in such an intense way," he told Fortune.

S&P 500 Shuns War Bears To Hold Near All-Time High; Morgan Stanley Jumps Over 4%

The main US wall street indices opened in the green on Wednesday, little changed from their previous close on tuesday hopes with Iran. The S&P 500 held near its all-time high at 6,978.87, up 0.16% at open, while Nasdaq Composite and Dow Jones Industrial Average opened 0.3% and 0.19% higher at 23,683.39 and 48,690.37, respectively. However, more than half an hour into trading, Dow Jones erased gains to trade 0.3% lower at 48,389.30; while wider index S&P 500 traded 0.13% higher at 6,976.7, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq index was up 0.5% to \$23,758.13. In early trade stocks of Morgan Stanley and Bank Of America Corp rose nearly 4% after posting strong revenue beats in their financial results for the first quarter. MS added \$5.15 billion from equity trading in the first three months of the year boosting its total trading revenue by 25% to \$8.51 billion. Similarly, BAC beat analysts' \$29.93 billion expectations for revenue after reporting a topline of



\$30.43 billion. As of 10:05 a.m. EST MS shares had jumped 4.3% to \$191.07, while BAC traded 1% up at \$53.97. However, after the market opened almost all of the sectoral indices traded in the red, with only Real Estate sector and Financial sector in the green. Decline was led by Materials sector, Industrial sector, and energy sector. Oil prices dropped slightly as of 9:46 a.m. EST, with the global benchmark Brent crude holding near \$95 a barrel, and the West Texas Intermediate down 0.16% to \$91.13. The magnificent seven stocks traded

mixed, with Tesla Inc. up 1.75% to \$370.82, Meta Platforms Inc. up over 1% to \$668.63, Microsoft trading 2.4% higher at \$402.33, and Nvidia Corp. up nearly 1% to \$198.29. On the other hand, Apple Inc. slipped 0.2% to \$258.33, Amazon.com Inc. traded 0.14% lower at \$248.6, and Google-parent Alphabet Inc. down 0.23% to \$332.22. Almost all currencies remained little changed, including the US greenback. The euro was unchanged at \$1.1796, the British pound held at \$1.3564, and the Japanese yen fell 0.1% to 159.00 per dollar.

INDIA LOSES POSITION OF 5TH LARGEST ECONOMY TO UK, BUT IT MAY BE TEMPORARY

A statistical overhaul and a weakening rupee have quietly undone a milestone that India had been celebrating. The country now sits sixth in the global GDP table, behind the United Kingdom, a position it had displaced three years ago. According to data from the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest World Economic Outlook, India's GDP at current prices is estimated at USD 3.92 trillion for 2025 (FY26) and USD 4.15 trillion for 2026 (FY27). The UK, meanwhile, is projected at USD 4 trillion and USD 4.26 trillion for the same years, which is enough to edge ahead. Japan remains comfortably placed at USD 4.43 trillion and USD 4.38 trillion, respectively, the data shows. The slide comes at an awkward moment. The government had, not long ago, announced with considerable fanfare that India had become the world's fourth-largest economy, a claim that drew on projections that have since been walked back. The IMF's own October 2025 update had been more bullish, placing India ahead of Japan in FY27 and not behind the UK in recent years. Those projections have now been revised downward. What led to the demo-



tion Two factors account for the correction. First, India's statistical establishment undertook a long-overdue revision of the GDP base year, shifting it from 2011-12 to 2022-23. The recalibration corrected what the government's own numbers suggest was an overestimation. The nominal GDP was revised down by between 2.8 per cent and 3.8 per cent across four years from 2022-23 to 2023-24. A smaller base means a smaller economy, at least on paper. Second, the rupee has had a difficult year. A depreciation of nearly 10 per cent

in FY26 has directly compressed India's GDP when measured in dollar terms, the unit by which these global rankings are calculated. The British pound, by contrast, has largely held its ground against the dollar, giving the UK a quiet but significant advantage in the comparison. The April IMF update reflects this, with India's projections being marked down across the board relative to October. For instance, the 2027 estimate has been cut to USD 4.58 trillion from USD 4.96 trillion - a reduction of nearly USD 380 billion. India to get

back on top again The picture is not, however, uniformly bad news. Current projections suggest the setback is temporary. India is expected to reclaim lost ground and reach fourth place by 2027 (FY28), overtaking both the UK and Japan. The margins, at this point, are very small, with USD 113 billion over the UK and just USD 17 billion over Japan. The projections carry the usual caveats - sustained growth and a rupee that does not keep falling. India is still on course to become the third-largest economy by 2031, displacing Germany, even as that milestone has also been deferred by a year or two from earlier estimates. What does the data mean? GDP size reflects the aggregate weight of an economy, not the wellbeing of the people who live in it. On per capita income, which the more meaningful gauge of prosperity, India remains far behind the countries it is now being compared with in absolute terms. The milestone of becoming the fourth- or third-largest economy will matter for geopolitical standing and investor optics. Whether it translates into improvements in living standards is a different, and harder, question.

US and Iran discuss next round of peace talks as Pakistani mediators arrive in Tehran

The death toll in Lebanon since the start of the war has reached 2,167, according to an update from Lebanon's health ministry reported by the state-run National News Agency. This is an increase of 43 people on Tuesday's figures. A further 7,061 have been wounded - up from 6,921. The Lebanese are exhausted, and the authorities say the priority here is for a ceasefire in a war that has been devastating for the country. More than 2,100 people have been killed, the health ministry says, without distinguishing combatants from civilians, and over one million have been displaced (or one in five of the population). One of the roots of this conflict is the dispute over Hezbollah's arsenal. Opponents say the group defends the interests of its Iranian patron, dragging the country into unwanted wars, and want it to be disarmed. Supporters, mainly in the Shia Muslim community, say Hezbollah is the only protection they have in a weak



state. The Lebanese government cannot deliver Hezbollah's disarmament without the group's consent. The use of force could lead to violence in a country where the deadly 1975-1990 civil war is still remembered by many. Given Iran's role, any decision about Hezbollah's weapons will likely be made by Tehran. For now, Hezbollah says it opposes the talks between Lebanon and Israel and that it will not

abide by any decision made there. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-affiliated Tasnim news agency says Iran will decide about a next round of talks with the US after meeting with the Pakistani delegation today, citing an "informed source". They say the US and Israel agreeing a ceasefire deal with Lebanon would be a "positive sign for Iran's decision" on the next round of talks. However, it

adds that the US "must adhere to a reasonable framework for negotiations", must not "obstruct the process through excessive demands" or breach commitments made prior to the ceasefire. Tasnim also notes that US media outlets have reported Washington's willingness to begin the next round of negotiations, but the Iranian delegation has emphasised the need for the US to "observe certain principles

required for initiating a reasonable negotiation". In the first 48 hours of the US blockade on ships entering and exiting through Iranian ports, no vessels have made it past American forces, says the US Central Command (Centcom). Centcom adds that during this period nine vessels have "complied with direction from US forces to turn around and return toward an Iranian port or coastal area". A two-week ceasefire between Iran and the US is still in place. Meanwhile, Israel and Lebanese group Hezbollah are continuing to exchange fire across the border. Talks have opened up on both fronts, in the hopes of bringing peace to the region. Here's what you need to know about them: US-Iran talks Twenty-one hours of talks between Washington and Tehran - hosted by Pakistan - ended on Sunday without any breakthrough towards ending the war. On Tuesday, Donald Trump suggested talks could

resume in "the next two days". Iran said it had "no information" about a follow-up meeting. The BBC understands the US is having discussions with Iran about a second round of talks, but nothing has been scheduled yet. Iran said exchanges with the US were "continuing" via a Pakistani intermediary. A White House official has separately told the BBC that talks to extend the current ceasefire were ongoing. Meanwhile, a delegation from Pakistan has arrived in the Iranian capital, Tehran. Lebanon-Israel talks A meeting between the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors to the US was held in Washington on Tuesday. Both parties agreed to launch "direct" negotiations following the meeting. Lebanon's ambassador called the talks "productive", while his Israeli counterpart said they showed the US, Lebanon and Israel to be on "the same side of the equation". As the talks took place, Israel and Hezbollah continued to strike each other.

Nine killed in second Turkish school shooting in two days



At least eight students and one teacher have been killed and several others injured following a shooting at a school in southern Turkey, Interior Minister Mustafa Ciftci has said. The incident happened at Ayser Calik Secondary School in the Kahramanmaraş area. The attacker was also killed during the incident, local governor Mukerren Unluer said. It comes a day after 16 people were injured after an ex-student opened fire at another high school, also in the south of the country, before killing himself. Ciftci said 13 people were wounded, with six in critical condition. The

motive of Wednesday's attack is not yet known and an investigation has been launched. Turkish media reported that the attacker, believed to be a teenager, entered two classrooms and had five guns and seven magazines with him, which Unluer alleged belonged to his ex-police officer father. "The sound of gunfire was very intense," a reporter for Turkish broadcaster NTV said, adding that there was "panic in front of the school". Footage from the scene showed crowds of people, some filming on their mobile phones, and ambulances driving away.

Trump threatens to fire Fed chair Powell if he doesn't leave in May



US President Donald Trump has threatened to fire Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell if he does not step aside at the end of his term in May. The two have been embroiled in a bitter spat over Powell's reluctance to cut the central bank's interest rate, despite Trump's repeated calls. Powell's term expires on 15 May, but he is planning to remain in post until his successor, Kevin Warsh, is confirmed by the Senate. "Then I'll have to fire him," Trump told Fox Business, when asked about Powell's plans to stay on in the job. "I've held back firing him. I've wanted to fire him, but I hate to be controversial," Trump said. Thom Tillis, an influential Republican senator on the committee which oversees nominations for the Federal Reserve chair, has threatened to block Warsh's confirmation. If Warsh is not confirmed before Powell's term expires, he plans to stay on temporarily in the post. "That's what the law calls for. That's what we've done on several occasions," Powell has said. Tillis has warned Trump he will not let Warsh's appointment go ahead unless a criminal investigation into

Powell, linked to the renovation of the Federal Reserve building, is dropped. Trump said he was hopeful Tillis would drop his opposition to the appointment, adding that he "is an American... he knows what to do". But he said he was not prepared to have the probe into Powell dropped. He told Fox Business: "Don't you think we have to find out what happened there? I have to find out." Trump has accused Powell of mishandling the Federal Reserve renovation, spending billions of dollars on a project which he suggested could have been carried out for tens of millions. He has previously branded Powell a "knucklehead" and claimed he was "doing a lousy job" after his repeated calls for interest rate cuts were ignored. Stock markets and the US dollar slipped after it was reported that Powell had broached the idea of firing Powell. The US president quickly denied he was going to sack him, adding: "It's highly unlikely unless he has to leave for fraud." If Trump were to fire Powell, it would be a major break with precedent and mark the first time a Federal Reserve chair has been fired.

SOUTH KOREA JAILS AMERICAN YOUTUBER FOR PUBLIC NUISANCE

American livestreamer Johnny Somali, who caused outrage in South Korea by kissing a statue representing World War Two sex slaves, has been sentenced to six months in jail. Seoul authorities charged him for public nuisance in November 2024 after he posted a clip of himself kissing and performing lap dances on the statue while visiting South Korea. He has been barred from leaving the country since then. The 25-year-old, whose real name is Ismael Ramsey Khalid, is known for his provocative content which has led to him being banned from several streaming platforms. He has also been accused of harassing people while travelling in Japan and Israel. On Wednesday a



South Korean court convicted Khalid of multiple charges, including for being a public nuisance and distributing sexual deepfakes. "The defendant repeatedly committed crimes against unspecified members of the public to generate profit via YouTube and distributed the content in disregard of Korean law," the court said, according to South Korean media.

Israel and Hezbollah continue attacks after Israel-Lebanon talks in US

Fighting between Israeli forces and the Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah has continued after Israel and Lebanon held direct talks in Washington aimed at easing the conflict. On Wednesday, Israeli strikes hit two vehicles on the coastal highway south of Beirut, near the towns of Saadiyat and Jiyeh and outside Hezbollah's traditional strongholds. Videos from one scene showed a burned-out van, with first responders working to extinguish the flames and recover human remains. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. In northern Israel, a man was wounded in the town of Tamra after Hezbollah launched about 30 rockets across the border, according to medics and the



military. Hezbollah said it had launched rockets at 10 locations in northern Israel. The Israeli military also said Israeli troops were continuing ground operations in southern Lebanon and that more than 200 Hezbollah infrastructure sites there, including rocket launchers,

had been struck over the past 24 hours. And it renewed calls for residents across a large part of southern Lebanon to evacuate amid the ongoing air and artillery bombardment. Although Israel has avoided striking Beirut itself since its wave of attacks across the country a

week ago, which Lebanese authorities say killed more than 350 people in only 10 minutes, it has continued to strike southern and eastern areas. Israel has announced that it plans to create what it has described as a security buffer zone extending eight to 10km (five to six miles) inside Lebanese territory, saying the move is necessary to protect Israeli communities from Hezbollah attacks. In the early hours of Wednesday, clashes were reported in several Lebanese border towns and villages, including Khiam and Bint Jbeil, with heavy gunfire and explosions heard throughout the night. The fighting has continued despite a ceasefire between the US and Iran, which Israel has said does not apply to its campaign in Lebanon.

Trump's rift with Pope is playing out in public - it's costing him valuable support

It is not unusual for President Trump to face criticism from Catholic leaders. His hardline immigration policies, promised in his campaign and cheered on by supporters, have prompted condemnation from church leaders. For months it has put the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the US at odds with more right-leaning rank-and-file Catholics. But the broad backlash in the last 48 hours, over Trump's attack on Pope Leo and his sharing of an AI image of himself as a Christ-like figure, is very different. What is striking is where some of this criticism is coming from - loyal, conservative Catholic allies. They are



unhappy, not just because of Trump's public friction with Pope Leo, but at a much deeper level over the Iran war. The uproar over Trump's lengthy social media attack on the first American pope, as too liberal and too "weak on crime", together with the AI image,



have crystallised a shift in opinion among many Catholic conservatives since the war began six weeks ago. "I pray that all of this will clarify for people that we don't look to a national leader, we don't look to those who have the most money or the most weapons. We look

to Christ," says Bishop Joseph Strickland. These words come from a man who, only last year, participated in a prayer event to "consecrate" the president's Mar-a-Lago home. In 2024, Strickland delivered the keynote speech at CPAC where Donald Trump was the guest of honor. In 2020, he addressed a march of Trump supporters calling to overturn the election results. He has been a staunch supporter of Donald Trump through thick and thin. Indeed, his overt political alignment, and open confrontation with the late Pope Francis, even played a part in his removal from office as Bishop of Tyler, Texas.

CHINESE NATIONAL GIVEN ONE YEAR IN PRISON FOR SMUGGLING ANTS OUT OF KENYA



A Chinese national has been sentenced to a year in prison for attempting to smuggle thousands of live queen garden ants out of Kenya. The court in Nairobi on Wednesday also fined Zhang Kequn 1m Kenyan shillings (£5,713; \$7,737). Judge Irene Gichobi described Zhang as not "entirely honest" and lacking in remorse. Last month, he was charged with illegally dealing in wildlife species after being arrested at Nairobi's main airport while attempting to travel to China with more than 2,000 ants in his luggage. Kenyan authorities have warned of a growing demand for the ants in Europe and Asia, where they are prized by collectors. They can be worth around \$20 (£17) each. "There is need for a stiff deterrent sentence," Judge Gichobi said, noting the "rising cases of dealing in large quantities of garden ants and the negative ecological side effects". After serv-

ing his year in prison, Zhang will be "referred to his home country", she added. He has 14 days to appeal against the sentence, which his lawyer says he will do. He initially pleaded not guilty to the charges - including dealing in live wildlife - but later changed his plea to guilty. Following Zhang's arrest at Nairobi's international airport on 10 March, the court heard he had bought the ants from Kenyan national Charles Mwangi at 10,000 Kenyan shillings (£58; \$77) for every 100 of them. Mwangi was also charged and is currently out on bail. In May last year, a Kenyan court sentenced four men - two Belgians, a Vietnamese and a Kenyan - to one year in prison or a fine of \$7,700 (£5,800) for trying to smuggle thousands of live queen ants out of the country. The insects were reportedly destined for collectors in Europe and Asia.

SRI LANKA REPATRIATES 238 IRANIAN SAILORS STRANDED AFTER US TORPEDO ATTACK

More than 200 Iranian sailors left stranded in Sri Lanka after a US torpedo attack are returning home after being stuck in the country for more than a month. On Wednesday, Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister, Aruna Jayasekara, confirmed 32 sailors rescued from the Iris Dena and 206 from Irins Bushehr, had left the country. The Iranian warship, Iris Dena, sank on 4 March about 40km (25 miles) from Sri Lanka's southern coastline after it was hit by a torpedo from a US submarine, killing 104 sailors. On March 5, Sri Lanka took control of the Iranian naval vessel, Irins Bushehr, after it had requested to dock at one of country's ports after one of



its engines malfunctioned. Speaking to Reuters, Jayasekara confirmed the crew of both ships were flown out on Tuesday night. The stranded sailors were

granted 30-day entry visas by the Sri Lankan government and were housed in navy and air force camps. The Iris Dena had been returning from a military exercise

hosted by India when it was attacked. Video released by the US Department of Defense after the incident showed a ship being struck, causing the stern to rise up

before exploding. The bodies of 84 Iranian sailors killed in the attack were recovered and later repatriated in a chartered plane arranged by Iran. Its sinking in international waters came just a few days into the current US-Israeli war with Iran and marked a dramatic widening of the conflict. Iran has since launched retaliatory strikes across the Middle East - targeting Gulf countries allied with the US. About 15 Iranian sailors will remain in Sri Lanka to operate the Irins Bushehr, which is anchored off Trincomalee in the northeast of the island. Sri Lanka had allowed the Iranian vessel to dock at a north-eastern port on 5 March after hours of discus-

sion, with its president saying they would "never hesitate to protect humanity". "Our position has been to safeguard our neutrality while demonstrating our humanitarian values," President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said in a statement at the time. "[Sri Lanka] intervened in a way that demonstrated our commitment to international conventions, protecting the reputation and dignity of our country, and protecting human lives," he said. Sri Lanka has maintained a long-standing policy of non-alignment since it became independent in 1948. It has strong economic and diplomatic ties with both Iran and the US.



IPL 2026: Lucknow Super Giants Set 146-Run Target for Royal Challengers Bengaluru

Virat Kohli has come in as the impact player and opened the innings with Phil Salt for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the chase of 147 against Lucknow Super Giants. On the other hand, Rishabh Pant has not taken the field for LSG as Mukul Choudhary is keeping the wickets and Nicholas Pooran leading the side. Earlier, pacer Rasikh Salam Dar produced an impressive spell of 4/24 to spearhead a clinical bowling performance as Royal Challengers Bengaluru bowled out Lucknow Super Giants for 146-their lowest total of the season-in an IPL match on Wednesday. Put in to bat, LSG never managed to find momentum, with Mitchell Marsh (40) and Ayush Badoni (38) emerging as the only notable contributors. LSG skipper Rishabh Pant suffered a blow to his left elbow after being struck by a Josh Hazlewood delivery in the fifth over and was forced to leave the field. Although he returned later in the innings,



he was dismissed cheaply for just one run. Virat Kohli is on fire and fearlessly dealing in boundaries. In the previous over of Mohammed Shami, he hammered two back-to-back boundaries, while one four came from leg bye. In total Shami leaked 15 runs in the over. RCB are on fire despite losing the wicket

of Phil Salt. Royal Challengers Bengaluru are off to a steady start in the chase of 147 against Lucknow Super Giants. In the first over of Mohammed Shami, the duo of Virat Kohli and Phil Salt scored six runs. This also included a boundary from Salt. Lucknow Super Giants have been bundled out for 146

against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the IPL 2026 match on Wednesday. For RCB, Rasikh Salam Dar took four wickets, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar took three. Apart from them, Suyash Sharma and Josh Hazlewood also took two and one wicket respectively. For LSG, Mitchell Marsh scored

40, while Mukul Choudhary scored 39. The total of 146 is the lowest by any team batting first in IPL, 2026. Lucknow Super Giants finally gain some momentum as Ayush Badoni and Mukul Choudhary form a good partnership. In the previous over of Suyash Sharma, the duo scored 10 runs. This included a boundary from Mukul. On the other hand, Badoni is inching towards his half-century. Virat Kohli is playing fearless cricket and dealing in boundaries. Royal Challengers Bengaluru have lost the wicket of Phil Salt but the partnership between Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal has given them an upper hand over Lucknow Super Giants in the chase of 147. Earlier, pacer Rasikh Salam Dar produced an impressive spell of 4/24 to spearhead a clinical bowling performance as Royal Challengers Bengaluru bowled out Lucknow Super Giants for 146-their lowest total of the season-in an IPL match on Wednesday.

"Badminton Will Remember You As One Of The Greatest": Lakshya Sen On Viktor Axelsen's Retirement

Indian badminton star Lakshya Sen shared a heartfelt tribute to Viktor Axelsen after the two-time Olympic gold medallist announced his retirement from the sport and said the Dane will be remembered as one of the "greatest to ever play the game." Axelsen retires as one of the most decorated men's singles players in history. He claimed Olympic gold medals at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024, as well as a bronze at Rio 2016. He also secured World Championships titles in 2017 and 2022. In his post, Sen reflected on their journey together, from training as peers in Dubai to competing on the sport's grandest stages, including the All England Open and the Olympics. "Badminton is blessed to have you and it will remember you as one of the greatest to ever play the game, but what truly sets you apart isn't just the champion you are, it's the person you are, that stays far beyond matches and



medals," Sen posted on X along with a photo with Axelsen from the Paris Olympic semifinal. Sen and Axelsen last played each other at the Paris 2024 men's singles semifinal, where the Dane registered a 22-20, 21-14 win and eventually went on to win the gold. This was his eighth victory over the Indian ace, who has managed just one win in nine career meetings. Sen's only win against the Danish shuttler

came in the German Open over three years ago. "To go from training with you in Dubai to stepping onto one of the biggest stages like the All England Open and then facing you at the Olympics, it's been an incredible journey. Happy retirement! All the best for what's ahead," he added. Axelsen spent more than 100 consecutive weeks as world No. 1, a mark surpassed in total duration only by Lee Chong Wei.

"Hit 5 Sixes In 5 Balls Ages Ago": Rinku Singh Ridiculed, Has Ability Doubted By World Cup-Winner

The Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) puzzle has several missing pieces. Be it their opening batting, middle-order stability, finishing, pace bowling, or even spin, the franchise isn't excelling in any of these factors. While the likes of Cameron Green and Ajinkya Rahane have been in the thick of the criticism, finisher Rinku Singh's barren run of form has also been a big problem. Former India cricketer Kris Srikkanth, a World Cup winner in 1983, has even started to doubt Rinku's ability, saying he isn't even good enough for the No. 5 role that the Knight Riders have given him. Srikkanth is of the opinion that Rinku is a batter who is only good at rotating strikes and not hitting boundaries, which is a



key requirement in his role as a finisher. The former India cricketer wants Rinku to be given the No. 7 role in the team. "Rinku Singh is not an explosive player. He hit five sixes in five balls ages ago, and we keep talking about that. He is adept at

rotating the strike, but he can struggle when the required run rate exceeds 10 or 12. He can't do it," Srikkanth stated in a video on his YouTube channel. "He is more suited for the No. 7 position as a finisher. He can perform when 50

runs are needed off 5 overs. Rinku shouldn't be tasked with batting at No. 5 to build an innings. It won't work," he added, noting that Rinku has been playing the finisher's role for the senior national team as well. Srikkanth expressed disappointment with the entire KKR batting unit, suggesting none of the players, barring Angkrish Raghuvanshi, have shown 'intent' this season. "The key issue with their batting is that none of their batters, except Angkrish Raghuvanshi, have shown intent," Srikkanth commented. "This is when Finn Allen should make an impact. However, he is struggling more than anyone. He is swinging wildly, more than I did in my days.

Ruturaj Gaikwad's Wicket "Big Blow For KKR": Commentator's Gaffe Leaves Fans In Splits

Former Australia captain Michael Clarke's on-air remark regarding Chennai Super Kings (CSK) skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad sparked a social media meltdown during the IPL 2026 match against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). Gaikwad has struggled for runs at the top this season, managing just 63 in five games with a high score of 28. On Tuesday against KKR, Gaikwad managed just seven runs off six balls before being dismissed by Anukul Roy. Following Gaikwad's dismissal in the third over, Clarke had a "brainfade" moment, referring to the wicket as a "big blow for KKR." The comment quickly went viral, with fans highlighting the irony in Clarke's statement, given Gaikwad's



recent form. Meanwhile, CSK registered their second successive win of the season, beating KKR by 32 runs. Undergoing a transition, CSK came into this contest after a comprehensive 23-run win over Delhi Capitals and pro-

duced another convincing show to beat KKR and move one spot up to eighth in the points table. "Slowly, slowly, it is starting to come together, I feel," Gaikwad told broadcaster after the match. "Everyone kind of knows what their role

is, which overs and what lengths to bowl at. I think they are adjusting and adapting really well according to what (the) team needs. "As I said, slowly, slowly, we are getting better and better and that is a good sign for us," he said.

Ravi Shastri's Swipe At RCB After Khaleel Ahmed Showed The Right Approach In CSK vs KKR Game

Former India coach Ravi Shastri, who is performing commentary duties in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, was quick to point out the correct approach for an injured player during a match. While commenting on the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) vs Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) game on Tuesday, Shastri was delighted to see injured pacer Khaleel Ahmed decide to leave the field rather than calling physios onto the ground and extending the match duration-something Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) failed to do in their previous fixture. Khaleel felt discomfort in his leg during the game against the Knight Riders, which saw him halt mid-run-up a couple of times. The left-arm pacer decided against pushing through and left the field for treatment, with Gurjapneet Singh finishing his over. Shastri, closely analysing the match, was pleased to see Khaleel and CSK decide against wasting time, unlike RCB during their recent game against the Mumbai Indians (MI), which lasted four and a half hours. "Rather than calling the physio and wasting ten minutes only to do the same thing, he has decided to walk off," Shastri said on air as Khaleel left the pitch, allowing the game to progress. During the RCB vs MI match, RCB's



Rasikh Dar received treatment on the field three different times over the course of a single over, as the management decided against opting for a solution similar to the Khaleel-Gurjapneet swap. Indian legend Sunil Gavaskar, who was commenting on the RCB vs MI match, was also left furious by the time-wasting. "Just go off the field, get treatment, and then come back... This is the third time the physio has come in. Are we going to see the same thing over and over again?" a frustrated Gavaskar said on air during that match.

VINOD KAMBLI AT RISK OF BRAIN STROKE, FRIEND REVEALS DETAILS

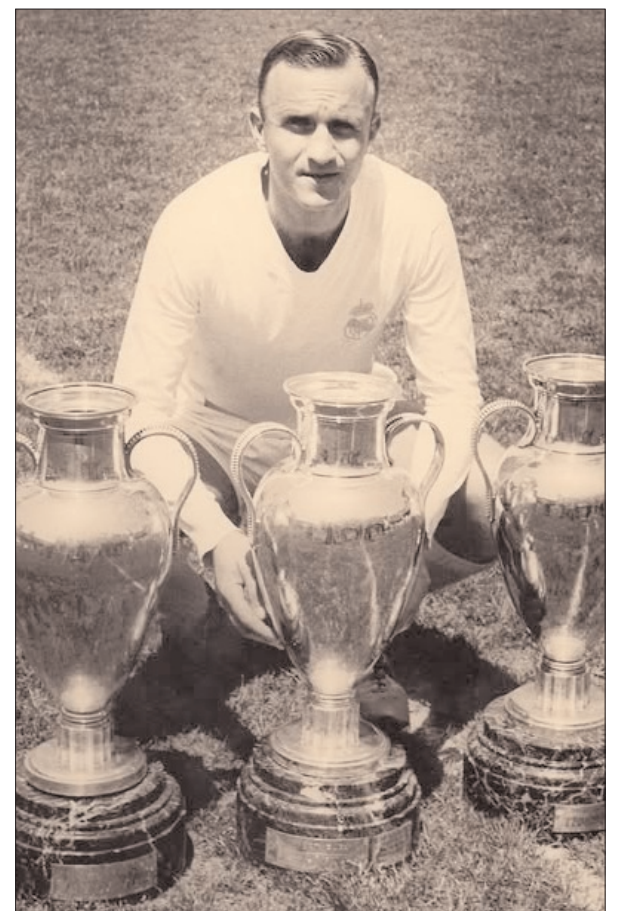
Vinod Kambli was long considered the next big thing in Indian cricket when he arrived on the big stage in the 1990s. At times, he was even compared to his childhood friend and former India teammate Sachin Tendulkar. Despite playing 104 ODIs and 17 Tests for India, Kambli disappeared from the scene after failing to maintain his form. In December 2024, he was admitted to Akruiti Hospital in Thane for a urinary infection and cramps. His poor health condition became the talk of the town, and several big names came forward to offer him financial aid. Kambli is recovering but is still not fully fit. One of his friends has revealed that he has a clot in his brain. "I



have formed a WhatsApp group including his friends-mostly cricketers-and without taking names, they contribute a lot financially. His memory isn't good, but over the last six months, it hasn't declined either. He can't remember much, but when something clicks, he does. Otherwise, it gets difficult

for him. Vinod has a clot in his brain, which cannot be removed because he did not take precautions early. And the doctor has suggested that he could have a brain stroke. Because of his willpower, he is conjuring whatever he can," Kambli's friend Marcus Couto told Hindustan Times.

REAL MADRID GREAT JOSE SANTAMARIA DIES AT 96



Former Real Madrid player and Spain's 1982 World Cup coach Jose Emilio Santamaria has died at the age of 96, Los Blancos said on Wednesday. Real Madrid mourned "one of the greatest legends of our club and of world football." Centre-back Santamaria, who joined Real Madrid in 1957 from Uruguayan side Nacional, played in one of the most decorated eras in the club's history. "Alongside Di Stefan, Puskas, Gento and Kopa,

that team began to build the legend of Real Madrid," said Real Madrid chief Florentino Perez. Santamaria, born in Uruguay, won four European Cups with Madrid in 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1966, as well as six La Liga titles among other trophies. Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com He played 25 times for the Uruguay before becoming a naturalised Spaniard and playing at the 1962 World Cup for Spain, whom he went on to coach.

World Cup winner Kildunne reveals body dysmorphia struggle

England rugby star Ellie Kildunne says she slipped into disordered eating and unhealthy weight loss during the coronavirus lockdown as her competitive instincts and isolation from her team left her feeling vulnerable. The 26-year-old was a figurehead for the Red Roses' World Cup win last year, scoring five tries including a superb solo effort in front of an 82,000-strong sell-out crowd at Allianz Stadium in the final against Canada. However, away from the big stage, clear goals and obvious opposition, Kildunne says she was prey to self-destructive

behaviour. Now she wants to speak out to help others in a similar situation. "Our lives as athletes are surrounded by control - you've got to reach certain metrics on your GPS, you're chasing weights in the gym, you're trying to score the try, the goal, whatever it is," she told BBC Sport. "Once that's taken away from you, I think I just tried to find that sense of control in other places." During lockdown, Kildunne was part of Great Britain's sevens squad, training for an Olympic Games which was subsequently postponed until 2021. Without access to a gym and

team sessions, and with uncertainty over her playing future, Kildunne focused on running, searching out faster courses to try and improve her times over certain distances. But, at the same time, she was eating less. When she couldn't control what she was eating, Kildunne would exercise to compensate, nipping out for runs to 'earn' the meal friends were about to serve her. "I could probably see myself getting a little bit smaller, but then was still trying to chase being smaller on top of that," Kildunne added. "I wasn't in that team environment with physios

all the time, or my teammates. "And body dysmorphia is such a funny thing, because I would have been small but I would see myself as bigger in the mirror. "It seems really stupid now, and I look back on it - I don't know why I did it. But I just ended up having a terrible relationship with food. "In the rugby world, I'm considered big, but in my world outside rugby, I was considered big - so I never really had that place where I felt comfortable, that I fit in. "Maybe I was rebelling against everything, but not knowing what I was trying to aim for at the same time."



MS Raju's Pan India Mystical Divine Thriller "Agadha" In Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi

MS Raju is a brand by himself. Under the Sumanth Arts banner, the films he produced such as Shatruvu, Devi, Manasantha Nuvve, Okkadu, Varsham, Nuvvostanante Nenoddantana created a trend. As a director too, he has been moving forward with his own distinct style. Dirty Hari and Malli Pelli stand as examples. He does not like to repeat a concept once done. Whatever he does, his goal is to give the audience a unique experience. That is why he is preparing "Agadha." For the past one year, he has been working relentlessly only on this project. The promotions of "Agadha" have begun in a different manner. As part of this, an interesting and funny video was released. In the video, two thieves enter MS Raju's office to steal, and while looking at the film posters there, they recall memories associated with those films. Finally, on seeing one particular poster,

they get frightened as if something is there, and the video ends. What was actually there is the poster of the film "Agadha." That poster was released today.

A dark cave.

A few torches glowing around. Not just the darkness, even that faint light feels frightening.

There stands a huge idol. Its face looks completely mystic. The idol has twelve hands.

In front of this idol stands a girl, turned away from it. Her costume also looks very different.

With this poster itself, MS Raju has generated curiosity.

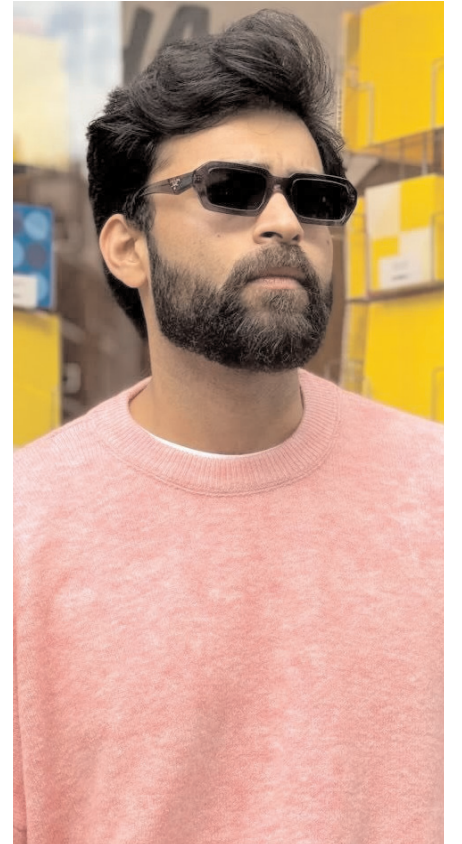
MS Raju is making "Agadha" as a mystical divine thriller. The film is being made on a grand scale under the banner of Sri Adi Varaha Productions, directed by MS Raju. Kasi Visalakshi Balusu is producing this film very prestigiously. The shooting part of "Agadha," which is being made in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi, has been completed. Currently, post production works are in progress.

As a director too, he has been moving forward with his own distinct style. Dirty Hari and Malli Pelli stand as examples.



'Mega Prince' Varun Tej Undergoes Surgery After Sustaining Knee Injury During 'Bhari' Volleyball Training

The team of Bhari has issued an official update regarding the health of Varun Tej, informing that the actor sustained an injury while preparing for his role in the film. The development has drawn concern from across the film fraternity and audiences, with many expressing their support and wishing him a speedy recovery. In a statement released by producer Niharika Konidela, it was confirmed that Varun Tej suffered a knee injury while undergoing volleyball training, which forms a crucial aspect of his character in Bhari. He was immediately provided medical attention and has since undergone successful surgery. The procedure was completed smoothly, and he is currently recovering under expert medical supervision. The team has assured that his condition is stable and expressed gratitude for the outpouring of concern, adding that he is steadily progressing towards full recovery. Bhari has already generated strong interest as a rooted rural sports drama, with volleyball forming an integral part of its narrative. The film was officially launched with a traditional pooja ceremony, with 'Powerstar' Pawan Kalyan giving the ceremonial first clap, marking a grand beginning for the project. Directed by Yadhu Vamsee, the film is being produced under Pink Elephant Pictures and is positioned as an emotionally driven story set against a village backdrop. Known for his inclination towards varied and demanding roles, Varun Tej had been undergoing rigorous physical training to authentically portray a volleyball player, making the injury an unfortunate interruption in an otherwise committed preparation process. Director Yadhu Vamsee, who made a notable impact with Committee Kurrollu, earned widespread appreciation for his grounded storytelling, fresh narrative voice, and emotional depth. The film's recognition at the National Film Awards further established him as a filmmaker of credibility and substance. With Bhari, he now expands his vision onto a larger canvas, aiming to blend rooted storytelling with broader cinematic appeal. On the production front, Niharika Konidela



continues to strengthen her standing with a consistent and content-driven approach. Having produced the National Award-winning Committee Kurrollu and followed it up with the successful RaaKaaSaa, she is on a steady success streak, backing films that resonate with audiences while maintaining strong commercial viability. Under Pink Elephant Pictures, she is carving a distinct identity as a producer with both vision and instinct for impactful storytelling. With a filmmaker who has already earned national recognition and a producer riding on a strong run of successful films, Bhari stands backed by both creative credibility and growing momentum. As the team looks ahead, the film continues to hold strong anticipation, with confidence that Varun Tej will soon return to the sets in full strength.

Nandamuri Balakrishna Appreciates 'M4M' Song; Thriller Directed by Mohan Vadlapatla Starring Jo Sharma



M4M (Motive for Murder) is all set for a grand theatrical release on May 8th. As part of the film's promotions, the makers have released the much-awaited song "Who is the Killer", which has been choreographed by the talented Bhanu Master. The song was officially launched on April 13th by Aditya Music in both Telugu and Hindi and it is already garnering attention for its energetic visuals and engaging composition. The film features Jo Sharma and Sambeth Acharya in the lead roles and is directed and produced by Mohan Vadlapatla. With a gripping title and intriguing promotional content, M4M is

building curiosity among audiences across languages. In a special and memorable moment, Jo Sharma, the American actress and heroine of the film, had the opportunity to meet legendary superstar Balakrishna garu. During the meeting, she presented the M4M song to him. Impressed by the visuals and presentation, Balakrishna garu appreciated the effort of the team and was even seen humming the catchy line "Evadu Vaadu," which added to the excitement of the moment. Jo Sharma also took his blessings for the film's success, making the occasion even more meaningful.

"Thimmarajupalli TV" will Set a Benchmark for Small Films – Producer Kiran Abbavaram at Pre-Release Event

Encouraging new talent, actor Kiran Abbavaram is producing the film "Thimmarajupalli TV" under his KA Productions banner in association with Sumaira Studios. Teja Velpucharla is serving as co-producer. The film introduces Sai Tej and Veda Jalandhar as the lead actors, while V. Muniraju is making his directorial debut with this project. Set against a village backdrop, this period drama is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on the 17th of this month. The pre-release event was held grandly in Hyderabad today. Actor Balaraju said, "Before this film, only a few people knew me. I hope that after this film, I will receive recognition from everyone. Thimmarajupalli TV will entertain every audience member." Hero Sai Tej



said, "I was doing online editing when Kiran garu gave me a chance as a hero. That kind of generosity is rare. Even when others said I shouldn't be a hero, Rahasya garu supported me. I'm grateful to her and to director Muniraju. I feel happier being called Kiran Abbavaram's brother than a hero. Please watch our film on the 17th and support this sincere effort."

Heroine Veda Jalandhar said, "This film gave opportunities to about 60 newcomers. Kiran garu gave us our first step. Only someone who came up without support can understand our emotions. KA Productions is very professional, and Rahasya garu is very passionate. Our film may not have foreign songs or big action sequences, but it will stay with you even after you

leave the theatre." Producer Kiran Abbavaram said, "I am here because of my parents' and brother's blessings. You have always supported my efforts. This film will set a benchmark among small films. You will be surprised at the technical quality achieved within a small budget. The music by Vamsi Kanth is outstanding. I don't want recognition for giving opportunities, I want recognition for making a genuine film. This movie carries the hopes of at least fifty families. Even if I don't recover my investment, I want these newcomers to succeed. Supporting newcomers is not a favor, it's a responsibility. I promise this film will be engaging throughout and will not bore you. Please support Thimmarajupalli TV in theatres."

'Bad Boy Karthik' is an out and out mass action commercial entertainer. The film will definitely surprise everyone: Producer Srinivasa Rao Chintalapudi

Hero Naga Shaurya is all set to make his mass debut with the intense action drama 'Bad Boy Karthik', directed by Ram Desina (Ramesh). Produced by Srinivasa Rao Chintalapudi under the banner of Sri Vaishnavi Films, the film has created a strong buzz with its super hit songs and a power-packed teaser and trailer that showcases Shaurya as intense as ever. Producer Srinivasa Rao Chintalapudi shared the film's highlights at a press conference as the film prepares for its release on the 17th of this month.



be like?

"This is an out and out action commercial entertainer. Shaurya garu has been seen in lover boy characters so far. In this, he will be seen with a completely action tone. Top notch technicians worked in this film. Supreme Sundar garu, who worked in the movie Animal, and Prithvi garu worked as action choreographers. Harish Jayaraj gave a wonderful album.

About your journey as a producer?

"I made Aadi Sai Kumar a partner in the film 'Shashi'. Bad Boy Karthik is our first film as a producer. The film did very well. We are very excited for the release.

What will 'Bad Boy Karthik'

Saiyaara Team Reunites: Mohit Suri, Akshaye Widhani, Ahaan Panday & Aneet Padda return for an intense romance laced with heart-tugging music!

The Saiyaara team is back! After the phenomenal success of Saiyaara, that became the all-time highest grossing love story in the history of Indian cinema, the celebrated team of director Mohit Suri, producer Akshaye Widhani (CEO of Yash Raj Films) and breakout Gen Z stars Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda are set to reunite for an intense romance! The untitled film promises a cinematic experience that blends heartfelt storytelling with unforgettable melodies. Released to unprecedented acclaim and audience love, YRF's Saiyaara emerged as one of the defining musical blockbusters of its time. It collected a staggering 338 crore nett in India & about

580 crore gross worldwide — an extraordinary achievement for a romantic musical with absolute newcomers. Its soul-stirring soundtrack dominated streaming charts for months, even after its release, further reinforcing the film's pop cultural impact in India and worldwide, especially amongst the youth of today. Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda, the Saiyaara pair became sweethearts of Gen Z! Ahneet, as their fans lovingly call them, are set to return with this film, bringing with them the infectious charm, authenticity in acting & scintillating chemistry that made their performances in Saiyaara so memorable. Mohit Suri says, "It's always been love stories for me ... overwhelming — when emotions are so unbound, self-

consuming and become impossible to ignore. Love is supposed to be felt intensely and that's why I naturally gravitate towards this as a storyteller. The film explores this unabashedly... so coming back with the same team from Saiyaara feels incredibly special, maybe it was always written in the stars. Reuniting ... coming back home .. but with a renewed creative hunger. This time I feel like a newcomer... excited, anxious about this story and I hope my music will again touch people like I have always strived for through my films." Akshaye Widhani says, "Mohit and our collaboration is built on a shared creative pulse and an ambition to tell stories that touch the hearts of people.

