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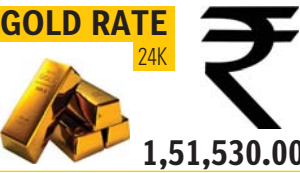
GACHIBOWLI:

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E-PAPEROM NAMO
VENKATESAYA02-04-2026
Total pilgrims: 62,642
Tonsures: 23,887
Hundi kanakalu: 4,18CR
Waiting Compartments: 31Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam
(with out SSD Tokens), 12 H

WEATHER



INBRIFS

RUPEE DEPRECIATION POST FEB 27 IN LINE WITH OTHER CURRENCIES

New Delhi (TSIT): The Indian rupee depreciation post February 27 is, in fact, in line with other currencies, and better than currencies which appreciated significantly in the earlier period (April 2, 2025 to February 27, 2026), indicating that in an uncertain world pushing the limits on rupee depreciation as a shock absorber does not hold beyond an inflection point, according to SBI Research. Interestingly, the Indian rupee depreciated by 6.4 per cent between April 2, 2025 to February 27, 2026. At the same time, the dollar index also depreciated by 6 per cent during the same period. This was the time when most currencies were appreciating against the dollar but not the rupee and thus perhaps the argument of using rupee as a shock absorber may have been overblown, according to the report. The attempt to rationalise the open position for banks by the RBI though useful is likely to have created a significant divergence of the Onshore and Offshore markets.

EIGHT KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENTS IN ANDHRA, TELANGANA

Amaravati (TSIT): Eight people were killed in four separate road accidents in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on Friday, police said. One person was killed, and four were injured when a tourist bus from Gujarat rammed into a mini lorry near Dornala in Markapuram district. The tourist bus with 40 passengers onboard was travelling from Rajkot to Srisaillam. The accident occurred when the bus driver lost control after the vehicle suffered a tyre puncture and hit the stationary DCM on the roadside. The mini lorry had broken down, and the driver had stopped it by the roadside. Police rushed to the spot and shifted the injured to the government hospital at Dornala. In another accident in

5 Indians among 12 injured by falling missile debris

Abu Dhabi (TSIT): As many as 12 people, including five Indian nationals, were injured on Friday due to the falling missile debris after a successful interception carried out by UAE's air defence systems in Ajban area of Abu Dhabi.

"As part of the ongoing follow-up to the previously reported incident in the Ajban area caused by falling debris following the successful interception by air defence systems, authorities confirm that the incident has resulted in minor to moderate injuries sustained by six individuals of Nepali nationality and five individuals of Indian nationality, and one major injury sustained by an individual of Nepali nationality. The public is reminded to obtain information only from official sources and to avoid spreading rumours or unverified information," Abu Dhabi Media Office posted on X. Earlier in the day, the office said that authorities responded to an incident of falling debris in the Ajban area after a successful interception by air defence systems.

Meanwhile, UAE's Ministry of Defence said that its air defence on Friday engaged 18



ballistic missiles, four cruise missiles and 47 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) launched from Iran.

According to the statement, UAE's air defences have engaged 475 ballistic missiles, 23 cruise missiles and 2085 UAVs since the start of Iranian attacks. "The attacks resulted in the martyrdom of two members of the armed forces while performing their national duty, in addition to the martyrdom of a Moroccan civilian contracted by the Armed Forces, as well as nine fatalities of Pakistani, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Palestinian and Indian nationalities.

Kerala CM Vijayan hits back at CM Revanth, defends Kerala Model

Thiruvananthapuram (TSIT)

: A sharp political exchange erupted between Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Telangana counterpart Revanth Reddy on Friday, with the former launching a detailed rebuttal to remarks made by the latter during his campaign tour in the state. Reddy, who has drawn crowds in Kerala with his fiery speeches, including a swipe using a popular dialogue associated with Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, had criticised the Vijayan government, alleging corruption and governance failure.

Responding through a strongly worded Facebook post, Vijayan accused the Telangana Chief Minister of "misleading himself" and attempting to "belittle Kerala". Vijayan countered the allegations by highlighting Kerala's performance across key social indicators. He pointed out that Kerala ranks first in the NITI Aayog Sustainable Development Index (2023-24) with 79 points, while Telangana stands sixth.



He also stressed that Kerala has the lowest poverty rate in the country at 0.55 per cent, compared to Telangana's 5.88 per cent and was on track to eradicate extreme poverty entirely by the end of 2025. The Chief Minister further underscored Kerala's achievements in literacy and healthcare, noting a literacy rate of 95.3 per cent against Telangana's 76.9 per cent, and an Infant Mortality Rate of just 5 per 1,000 births, lower even than that of the

United States. He added that Kerala's robust public health system enables its citizens to live 5 to 7 years longer than the national average.

Taking a swipe at Reddy's criticism, Vijayan remarked that instead of spending heavily on political campaigns in Kerala, the Telangana leader should focus on addressing poverty and improving literacy back home. He also termed it "political hypocrisy" that a Telangana delegation had earlier visited Thiruvananthapuram to study Kerala's 'Ente Bhoomi' digital land records system, even as its Chief Minister now derides the state. Vijayan also rejected allegations of collusion with the Centre, accusing the Congress of acting as a "B team" of the BJP by failing to oppose policies that "financially constrain Kerala".

In a pointed conclusion, Vijayan asserted that Kerala has little to learn from a government where salaries and pensions are reportedly delayed, instead inviting Reddy to study Kerala's welfare model firsthand.

Congress accuses Centre of using special Session for electoral gain amid delimitation row

New Delhi (TSIT) Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh launched a scathing attack on the union government on Friday, claiming that the hasty extension of the current Parliamentary session until this month is intended to gain political advantage ahead of important state elections

while avoiding proper consultation with the opposition. Addressing reporters in Delhi, Ramesh said the government had

ignored repeated requests from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for an all-party meeting, despite formal correspondence with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju. He described the decision to proceed unilaterally as a "gross violation" of the Model Code of Conduct, particularly with elections imminent in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

Telangana to Emerge as Textile Capital of South Asia: CM Revanth

HYDERABAD (TSIT) Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday declared that Telangana is poised to transform into the Textile Capital of South Asia, outlining an ambitious roadmap at the inauguration of the 13th Asian Textile Conference (ATEXCON 2026) held in Hyderabad. The global summit, jointly organized by the Telangana Government and the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI), was inaugurated by the Chief Minister in the presence of Ministers D. Sridhar Babu and Tummala Nageswara Rao.

Addressing over 1,200 delegates from across India and abroad, the Chief Minister highlighted the State's vision to build a robust, end-to-end textile ecosystem and emerge as a global hub by 2047. He emphasized that Telangana offers world-class infrastructure, ample land, reliable power and water supply, investor-friendly policies, and swift execution capabilities.

Linking the textile vision to the broader "Telangana Rising" agenda, the CM reiterated the State's goal of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2034 and \$3 trillion by 2047, supported by



Telangana Targets Global Textile Hub Status with Mega Parks, Investor-Friendly Policies, and Sustainable Growth Plan

strong policy frameworks and skilled human resources.

Highlighting Telangana's rich textile heritage, he referred to globally renowned Pochampally Ikat, Gadwal sarees, Warangal durries, and Narayanpet weaves, stating that textiles are not just an industry but a lifeline for thousands of weaving families.

"Telangana is one of the larg-

est cotton-producing states in India, known globally for the quality and richness of its cotton," he said, adding that the State has both the "skill and will" to lead the global textile sector. The Chief Minister underscored key infrastructure initiatives such as the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park in Warangal, along with multiple apparel parks, positioning Telangana as a preferred destination for textile investments.

Inviting global investors, he said, "If you have a vision, we are your perfect partners for global success. From cotton fields in Telangana to fashion runways in London, New York, Paris, Milan, Tokyo, or Dubai, we will be your partners across the value chain." He also high-

lighted Hyderabad's growing prominence as a global hub for film production, noting that international platforms like Netflix have established studios in the city, and emphasized plans to integrate the fashion and textile sectors with the film industry.

Stressing sustainability, the CM announced plans to develop green textile hubs, with a focus on eco-friendly production practices and large-scale skill development, particularly for women, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern technology.

The conference, themed "Reimagining the Future of Global Textiles," will feature discussions on Fibres & Fabrics, Manufacturing & Supply Chains (AI and Automation), and Markets & Trade. Prominent industry leaders attending ATEXCON 2026 include Kihak Sung (Chairman, YoungOne Corporation), Ashwin Chandran (Chairman, CITI), Dinesh Nolkha (Deputy Chairman, CITI), Dr. S.N. Modani (Vice Chairman, Sangam India), and RCM Reddy (CEO & MD, School Net India).

Amaravati to be growth engine for \$2.4 trillion economy: Andhra CM

Amaravati (TSIT) Amaravati, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, will serve as a growth engine for the state to achieve a 2.4 trillion-dollar economy by 2047, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Friday. Addressing a press conference, he asserted that no one can stop the development of Amaravati.

He exuded confidence that all major works in the state capital will be completed by 2028, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who laid the foundation for Amaravati in 2015 and re-started the works last year, will inaugurate major projects in 2029. Chandrababu Naidu remarked that, with the Bill's passage by Parliament, Amaravati is unstoppable. He described the passing of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill 2026 by both Houses of Parliament as a victory of five crore people for "people's capital" Amaravati.

The Chief Minister, who celebrated the occasion by distributing sweets at his official residence, said that, barring the YSR Congress, all parties supported the Bill aimed at providing legal status to Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh. He expressed surprise over the opposition to the Bill by YSRCP MPs who got elected from Andhra Pradesh but failed to



protect and honour the interests and sentiments of the people.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) president thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and MPs from all parties, including the Lok Sabha Speaker and Rajya Sabha Chairman, for extending support to the Amaravati Bill. The Chief Minister said that while the entire country supported Amaravati in passing a Bill in Parliament, the YSRCP began opposing it from the beginning and hatched conspiracies to prevent the development of Amaravati as the state capital in the name of the three capitals.

He remarked that they are still making efforts to create hurdles for Amaravati. The Chief Minister said that the states ruled by regional parties should honour the Bills passed in Parliament and expressed surprise over the remarks of YSRCP on changing the capital if they come to power.

Trump links Hormuz crisis to oil opportunity

Washington, April 3: With tensions still simmering in the Gulf, U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday suggested the Strait of Hormuz could be reopened for oil gains, describing it as a chance to "MAKE A FORTUNE," as maritime traffic shows early signs of revival. "With a little more time, we can easily OPEN THE HORMUZ STRAIT, TAKE THE OIL, & MAKE A FORTUNE. IT WOULD BE A 'GUSHER' FOR THE WORLD???" Trump said in a social media post.

His remarks come as new data indicate a cautious return of shipping activity through the strategic waterway, a key artery



for global energy supplies. Maritime intelligence firm Windward said 16 ships transited the strait on April 1, marking the third consecutive day of movement after a period of severe disruption. Separate data showed 16 cargo vessels passed through on Wednesday, up from

11 the previous day, signalling a gradual recovery, though still far below pre-conflict levels.

The disruption began in mid-March, when Iran imposed a mandatory navigation corridor, overseen by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), forcing vessels to alter their routes and operate under Iranian supervision. Recent vessel movements suggest some operators are beginning to test those restrictions. According to Windward, as of April 2, about 656 vessels were present in the Arabian Gulf, split between cargo ships (55 per cent) and tankers (45 per cent).

Bengal Will Be Divided Through Assembly Seats Rearrangement if BJP Comes to Power: CM Mamata

KOLKATA (TSIT) West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday alleged that if the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) comes to power in the poll-bound state, the division of Bengal through Assembly constituency rearrangement will be inevitable.

Addressing a campaign rally at Harirampur in South Dinajpur district, Banerjee claimed, "The BJP is plotting to divide West Bengal by rearranging Assembly seats. It has been planned to create a separate state with some areas from Bihar and some from West



Bengal. They (BJP) will be able to do that only if they come to power. So we have to defeat them again this time."

The Chief Minister urged the people to remain vigilant about the possibility of the BJP trying to

prevent genuine voters from going to polling booths by using Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) deployed for the forthcoming two-phase Assembly election in West Bengal later this month. "There is no room for complacency. So I am asking my brothers and sisters in the district to be extremely vigilant," she said. Banerjee praised the West Bengal Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for arresting Mofakkarul Islam, the mastermind behind the harassment of judicial adjudication officers at Kaliachak in Malda district, on Wednesday night.

Raghav Chadha sent to RS to raise Punjab issues, was scared to walkout: AAP's Saurabh Bharadwaj

New Delhi, April 3 : Widening the rift within the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), its Delhi President Saurabh Bharadwaj on Friday hit back at MP Raghav Chadha following the latter's sharp-worded response after he was replaced by MP Ashok Mittal as Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha, asserting that Chadha was sent to the upper house to raise issues of Punjab while also accusing him of being "scared to walkout" with the Opposition. "I do not think Raghav Chadha needed to get so upset that he has almost opened a front against the party," Bharadwaj said.

While maintaining that it was not a big issue, Bharadwaj told IANS that the party had "objections on several grounds".

He highlighted that Chadha was "not sent to the Lok Sabha by the people".

"He (Chadha) was sent to the Rajya Sabha by the party so that he could raise issues related to Punjab in the house. It was his responsibility to raise the issues of lakhs of farmers in Punjab," he said.

Listing the issues that, accord-



ing to him, Chadha should have raised in the House, Bharadwaj said: "Crores of rupees of the farmers are being held by the Central government. Money under MNREGA is also being held back, and so are the dues of the Punjab government. He (Chadha) should have raised those issues there (in the Rajya Sabha)."

The AAP Delhi President further accused the Rajya Sabha member of being "scared" to sign the impeachment motion against the Chief Election Commissioner.

"Lakhs of voters are being deleted in various states due to SIR (Special Intensive Revision). Fake voters are being made. Elections are being won through deception.

Amid this, he was scared to sign the impeachment motion against the Chief Election Commissioner. He did not sign."

He also alleged that Chadha was "scared" to stage a walkout with the Opposition leaders.

"When the Opposition stages a walkout on a national issue, he gets scared and keeps sitting (in the House), not even able to walk out. If I look at his X timeline, leave PM Modi, he has not even used 'BJP'. Politics cannot function through such fear," he said.

Bharadwaj asserted that one needs to be "brave" in politics.

Moreover, he advised Chadha "to do politics concerning issues".

Further, Bharadwaj accused the BJP of being involved in petty things rather than focusing on genuine issues.

"The real issue is that today we don't have gas (LPG) due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy. Tariffs have been imposed on the country due to PM Modi's attitude. We had to agree on a ceasefire with Pakistan. These are the issues which should be raised," he said.

Jogi convicted in murder case of NCP leader; HC orders surrender in 3 weeks

BILASPUR: Nearly 23 years after the murder of NCP leader Ramavatar Jaggi, the Chhattisgarh High Court on Thursday convicted former CM Ajit Jogi's son Amit Jogi in the case, and directed him to surrender within three weeks, the CBI's counsel said.

A trial court had in 2007 acquitted Amit Jogi, president of the Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J), founded by his late father.

The HC, however, reopened proceedings in the 2003 murder case last month following directions from the Supreme Court on an appeal by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The SC in November last year said though the CBI had filed the application after a significant delay, it was equally true that "the charges against respondent Amit Jogi were very grave, involving a conspiracy to murder a member of a rival



political party". On Thursday, a division bench of Chhattisgarh High Court's Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha and Justice Arvind Kumar Verma set aside the acquittal of Amit Jogi, convicted him and issued the surrender directive, CBI counsel Vaibhav A Goverdhan told PTI.

Reacting to the HC's order, Amit Jogi said injustice was done to him as he was previously acquitted and

now declared guilty without being allowed to be heard. He expressed hope that the truth would prevail and that he would get justice from the Supreme Court.

"Dear friends and well-wishers, today the Hon'ble High Court accepted the CBI's appeal against me in just 40 minutes, without giving me an opportunity to be heard. I regret that a person who had been acquitted by a court has now been declared guilty without even a single chance for a hearing. This has never happened before," he said in a post on X.

"The court has given me three weeks to surrender. I believe a grave injustice has been done to me. I have full faith that I will receive justice from the Supreme Court. I have complete trust in the judicial system and will move forward with peace, faith, and patience. Truth will ultimately prevail," he added.

Delhi up for another artificial rain; IIT Kanpur reviewing past findings

NEW DELHI: Delhi may witness another cloud-seeding trial this summer, according to an official familiar with the matter. Two rounds of cloud-seeding trials were conducted in the national capital late last October. The trials came following a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Delhi Environment Department and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, signed on September 25, 2025.

The experiment, however, failed to cause any rain in the city.

IIT Kanpur, in a statement, attributed the failure to low moisture levels in the clouds.

The institute, however, said that the observations from the trials would strengthen planning for future operations and help

them identify the ideal conditions.

Cloud seeding is a weather modification technique designed to enhance a cloud's potential to produce rainfall. It involves dispersing substances such as silver iodide and other compounds into clouds to trigger changes, promoting the formation of ice crystals or raindrops.

As part of the trial last year, each time, eight chemical flares containing silver iodide and sodium chloride were released.

In the wake of the experiment, the Delhi government released a report, claiming that the trials helped reduce particulate matter at targeted locations.

Now, IIT Kanpur has approached the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for a renewed per-

mission for another trial.

"IIT Kanpur is going through the findings and studies that they got from the last two trials, following which a further trial might be planned this summer, though the final time will be decided by IIT Kanpur. The final findings will be shared with the government at a later stage by the institution," the official said.

The Economic Survey of Delhi 2025-26, released on March 23, also mentioned that more cloud-seeding trials will be conducted in consultation with the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The trials have been envisioned as part of a short-term emergency measure for artificial rainfall generation to disperse and reduce ambient air pollution levels, the survey said.

Unseasonal rains lash Pune city; tree fall claims flower seller's life

PUNE: A 60-year-old woman was killed on Thursday in Sinhad Road area after a tree fell on her as the city was lashed by unseasonal rains, a Fire Brigade official said. The deceased was identified as Ranjana Navnath Giri, resident of Anandnagar in Sinhad Road area who sold flowers and garlands from a makeshift stall under an old peepal tree. "Due to the gusty winds and rain, the tree collapsed this afternoon. She was injured and admitted to hospital, but died during treatment," the official said. There were several incidents of tree fall or uprooting in the city while some areas also reported hail showers. Dhayari, Sinhad Road, Kharadi, Balajinagar, Hadapsar, Lohegaon, Bibewadi, Sadashiv Peth and Kothrud witnessed heavy rainfall.

IAF's Tejas fleet set to resume flights next week after 2-month grounding

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force's Tejas light combat jets are set to return to the skies next week, two months after the entire fleet was grounded following an accident involving one of the aircraft at a frontline airbase.

D K Sunil, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the manufacturer of the jets, said the entire fleet of 34 Tejas will fly most likely from April 8 as the glitch found on-board the aircraft's software has been resolved.

"All the Tejas jets are set to fly again from next Wednesday," he said.

The fleet was grounded in the first week of February after one Tejas jet sustained damage to its airframe after it overshot the runway at the airbase following a suspected brake failure.

The IAF had also or-

dered a comprehensive scrutiny of the jets following the accident.

On delays in delivery of Tejas Mark 1A variant to the Indian Air Force (IAF), Sunil said HAL will be able to deliver over 20 jets by December and that six of them could be supplied soon as the final tests of radar, avionics and missile-firing systems were currently underway.

The delivery of the jets is facing delays primarily due to GE Aerospace missing several deadlines for supply of its F-404 aero engines to power the jets.

To a question on IAF flagging certain issues relating to performance of the jets, the HAL CMD said a project review committee in May is expected to clear the jets for deliveries.

US defence major GE Aerospace has delivered five jet engines to the HAL and the sixth one is expect-



ed to be supplied in the next few days.

It is also learnt that the HAL has imposed penalties under the provision of Liquidated Damages on GE Aviation for delay in deliveries of the engines for the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft Mark 1A. The penalties are being imposed on GE Aerospace as per the contract. In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a Rs 48,000 crore deal with the HAL for the procurement of 83 Tejas Mk-1A jets for the IAF.

The defence ministry in September last year sealed

another deal worth Rs Rs 62,370 crore with the HAL to procure 97 Tejas Mk-1A light combat aircraft for the IAF.

Tejas is a single-engine multi-role fighter aircraft capable of operating in high-threat air environments.

It has been designed to undertake the air defence, maritime reconnaissance and strike roles.

The IAF is looking at inducting the warplanes as the number of its fighter squadrons have gone down to 29 from officially sanctioned strength of 42.

LDF, CM Vijayan Modi's 'B-team': Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi on Thursday accused the ruling LDF in Kerala and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan of being Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "B-team" and of secretly joining hands with the BJP, desperate to stay in power in the state.

Priyanka, speaking at a corner meeting in Puthanthopu in Thiruvananthapuram as part of the Congress-led UDF poll campaign for the Kerala assembly elections, alleged that Modi "bowed down" before the US and Israel in connection with the West Asia conflict, and as a result

created a situation where India will also suffer along with other nations.

"Our PM is a coward who has no spine and is compromised. We are paying every day because he does not have the guts to stand up for India..." she alleged.

She reiterated her allegations at UDF public meetings in Kollam and Kowdiar in Thiruvananthapuram.

In her speeches at the public events, she also alleged that Modi's policies have not provided safety and security to Indians stranded in the Gulf region during the conflict there.

Priyanka also accused the LDF and Chief Minister

Pinarayi Vijayan of being Modi's "B-team".

"Think about it. Name one leader who has stood up and expressed himself or herself against Narendra Modi and not been attacked either by the Enforcement Directorate, the Income Tax department, the CBI or his other agencies," she said.

Priyanka said that it makes her laugh when the Kerala CM says he is fighting the PM as there is not a single case against Vijayan nor are any central agencies after him.

She alleged that the Kerala CM was compromised, just like the PM.

"Your chief minister

bows before Narendra Modi to protect himself and his corruption, while our PM bows before the US and Israel to protect himself. So, whether it is India or Kerala, we are ruled by cowards," she alleged.

The Congress leader claimed that the PM has handed over India's energy security to the US, which decides from where and how much the country should buy oil.

She also questioned why no Left leader in Kerala has been attacked by the PM and contended that Modi was silent with regard to the alleged misappropriation of gold from Sabarimala.

Manipur CM directs officials to ensure smooth movement of people across state

IMPHAL: Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Thursday directed officials to take firm action against disruptive elements to ensure safe and uninterrupted movement of people across the state. Chairing a high-level review meeting with senior officials at the secretariat, Singh stressed the need to strengthen measures for safety and security along National Highways.

The meeting followed his discussion with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday, during which the law and order situation in the state was reviewed, and the acceleration of the peace process was urged.

ED files 2nd supplementary chargesheet in PMLA case against Arvind Joshi, others

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Bhopal Zonal Office, today said that it has filed a second supplementary chargesheet in the matter of Arvind Joshi and others under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED initiated the investigation based on a case registered by the Special Police Establishment, Lokayukta, Bhopal, against late Arvind Joshi and Tinoo Joshi (both former IAS officers of the Madhya Pradesh cadre) for alleged possession of movable and immovable assets worth Rs. 41.87 crore, which were disproportionate to their known sources of income.

There were widespread allegations, complaints, and evidence indicating that Arvind Joshi and his wife Tinoo Joshi misused their official positions and indulged in corrupt practices.

The ED investigation revealed that Arvind Joshi and Tinoo Joshi had amassed substantial movable and immovable assets in their own names as well as in the names of their family members.

Further investigation established that the Joshis had also acquired properties in the names of unrelated persons and intentionally created third-party interests to obscure the ownership trail of these as-

sets. This pattern of layering of proceeds of crime has been established through evidence collected during the course of the PMLA investigation.

Earlier, the ED had issued three Provisional Attachment Orders, attaching illegally acquired properties of Arvind Joshi and his family members worth Rs. 8.60 crore.

Subsequently, another Provisional Attachment Order was issued on January 28, 2026, attaching properties worth Rs. 5 crore belonging to late Arvind Joshi and his family members, which were acquired from proceeds of crime.

Allegations against Praful Patel, Tatkare 'unfounded, speculative': Parth Pawar

MUMBAI: Amid allegations that Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare tried to take over the NCP after the death of then Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, his son Parth Pawar on Thursday said that the reports targeting the two senior leaders were "baseless and speculative".

Such narratives were "nothing but fiction", he said in a statement, and claimed that attempts were being made to drag these respected leaders into "manufactured controversies".

Patel and Tatkare have demonstrated decades of commitment and leadership which continue to guide the party, said Parth, adding, "Such unfounded allegations are deeply



unfortunate and must be called out."

Parth's statement came amid speculation that his mother and deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar was upset with Patel and Tatkare.

NCP (SP) leader Rohit Pawar claimed last week that Sunetra Pawar had written to the Election Commission of India on March 10, intimating the poll body

about her appointment as party president and stating that any earlier communication received from the party after her husband Ajit Pawar's death in an air crash on January 28 should be ignored.

As per the political grapevine, Sunetra Pawar was not convinced by the clarification Patel and Tatkare gave regarding a letter sent to the ECI before she took over as party chief.

Patel and Tatkare had written to the ECI on February 16, informing that the party constitution had been amended and all powers given to working president Praful Patel, Rohit Pawar claimed, alleging that they were trying to seize control of the party.

India urges protection for UN Peacekeepers following UNIFIL incident

NEW DELHI: India, the longest and largest troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping missions, on Thursday stressed that the "invulnerability of UN missions" must be ensured and the safety and security of its peacekeepers must be guaranteed.

Reaffirming its commitment to UN peacekeeping operations, the External Affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal highlighted the importance of protecting Indian personnel following recent attacks on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) troops in Lebanon.

Jaiswal said that India currently has around 600 troops serving in UNIFIL.

Describing India's long-standing peacekeeping efforts, he added, "India, the largest troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping missions, has had its contribution well noted and regarded for global peace and security."

He further stated, "We had also issued a statement condemning the recent attacks on UNIFIL in which several troops, unfortunately, lost their lives. Once again, we would like to emphasise that the invulnerability of UN missions must be ensured, and the safety and security of our peacekeepers must be guaranteed."

India has a long history of participating in UN peacekeeping efforts, with its personnel serving across multiple missions worldwide. The country has repeatedly called for



enhanced protection for peacekeepers to allow them to carry out their mandates effectively without facing threats to their lives.

The statement by India follows the death of an Indonesian peacekeeper in a "roadside explosion" in southern Lebanon, according to UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix, citing an initial investiga-

tion. This was the second fatal incident in 24 hours. Another Indonesian peacekeeper was killed on Sunday when a projectile of unknown origin exploded in Adchit Al Ousayr, southern Lebanon.

In a separate statement, the UNIFIL said the explosion was of "unknown origin" and destroyed the peacekeepers' vehicle near Bani Hayyan. A third peacekeeper was "severely" injured, and a fourth was also hurt.

UNIFIL said investigations have been launched to determine the circumstances of both incidents. The findings of an initial investigation into Monday's explosion "point to a roadside explosion striking the convoy," Lacroix told the UN Security Council.

Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, added that the deaths "most likely" resulted from an improvised explosive device (IED). Speaking about Sunday's incident, Dujarric said it was likely caused by "an explosive that landed in the position that the Indonesians were holding."

Mangaluru: NMPA surpasses 50 million tonnes cargo in golden jubilee year, eyes further expansion

Mangaluru, Apr 2: The New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA) has achieved a major milestone by handling 50.04 million tonnes (MMT) of cargo during its golden jubilee financial year, exceeding the 48.5 MMT target set by the ministry of ports, shipping and waterways, deputy chairperson S Shanthi said. Shanthi was speaking at a seminar on 'Maritime Adversities and the Role of Stakeholders' and the 'Indian Port Act 2025,' organised by NMPA on Wednesday.

She said the increase in cargo handling strengthens the port's status as a fast-growing maritime gateway, contributing significantly to



India's trade and economic growth. Detailing upcoming projects, Shanthi said the redevelopment of Berth No 9

for liquid bulk cargo will improve draft levels and increase handling capacity to 10.5 MMT.

She added that Berth No 13 is proposed for allocation to captive users, which is expected to ease congestion at the port, while the long-pending Berth No 17 project will soon be put out to tender.

Shanthi also noted that eight key maritime infrastructure projects have been initiated recently. Among them, a dedicated cruise terminal gate for international passengers and a 150-bed hospital have already been completed, she said.

Highlighting NMPA's green initiatives, Shanthi said the port is implementing Harit Sagar guidelines to reduce carbon emissions by 2030.

"A 4 MW solar power plant has already been installed as part of our efforts towards energy self-sufficiency," she added.

In addition, digital platforms such as Sagar Samridhi, Sagar Manthan and the Sagar Setu app are being used to streamline operations and enhance efficiency.

The seminar also featured discussions on maritime challenges, regulatory changes, and stakeholder roles, with inputs from Capt L K Panda, former nautical adviser to the government of India, and Capt Anand W Karkare, former deputy conservator of Mumbai Port Authority.

Mangaluru: Crude oil shipment from China arrives for ISPRL underground facility

Mangaluru, Apr 3: The vessel 'Leela Jamnagar' has arrived at the New Mangalore Port (NMP) carrying 2.7 lac metric tonnes of crude oil from China.

The ship, which sailed from Zhooshan port in China, is expected to supply the crude oil to the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) underground facility in Mangaluru. Additionally, another vessel, 'Al Ain', has

vessel 'Desh Bhakt' is scheduled to arrive with 63,171 metric tonnes of Mangala crude oil from Rajasthan for Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL). Furthermore, on April 5, the vessel 'Jag Vasant' is expected to reach the port with 9,500 metric tonnes of LPG for Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL), Indian Oil (IOCL), and Bharat Petroleum (BPCL). On the same day, a massive tanker,



arrived at the port carrying 19,600 metric tonnes of LPG. The port is witnessing a surge in energy shipments this week. On April 3, the

'Gabon Prosperity', is slated to arrive at Mangaluru with 2,75,021 metric tonnes of crude oil destined for MRPL.

Not Annaramaiah, but Kannaramaiah: CM Siddaramaiah Is Stealing Rice Given by Central Government – Opposition Leader R. Ashoka

Davanagere : Opposition Leader R. Ashoka alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who is stealing the rice provided by the Central Government under the Annabhagya scheme, has become "Kannaramaiah" (a play on words implying a rice thief). He accused the CM of falsely claiming the Central Government's scheme as his own.

Speaking at a press conference, Ashoka said it is unfortunate that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah repeatedly lies and misleads the people. People should call him "Annaramaiah" (provider of rice/food), not that he should claim it himself. Because of this, the situation has arisen where he has to be given the title "Sullu Ramaiah" (Liar Ramaiah). Even in the matter of the Annabhagya scheme, he is blowing the trumpet of lies. He claims, "I am not the Ramaiah of loans, I am the Ramaiah of rice/



food." However, the Indra Gandhi Kit – which included 5 kg of dal, oil, and several other items promised during the elections – has remained a mirage for the people to this day. The state government is putting its own bag on the rice given by the Central Government and putting up boards saying "This is my scheme." This kind of deception will not work on the people, he said. On the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, they are making false allegations

against the BJP. Saying that the BJP is opposed to the guarantee schemes is completely wrong. The Congress government must answer why it has not released two months' money under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme – approximately Rs.5,000 crore. It is known to everyone that when questions were raised in the Assembly, they ran away without giving clear answers.

Even Rs.700 crore under the Annabhagya scheme has not been

released yet. It is wrong to say that the BJP is obstructing the guarantee schemes. In reality, it is the Congress government that is deceiving the public. Where has the total Rs.5,700 crore gone? Who ate it? The people of the state should be given an account, he demanded.

The Congress government has also committed large-scale deception regarding backward classes. Even though chairpersons should have been appointed to eight corporations for backward classes, it has not been done yet. There has also been a massive cut in grants. While the BJP government gave Rs.60 crore to the Ambedkar Development Corporation, the Congress government has given only Rs.20 crore.

For the Tanda Development Corporation, the BJP government gave Rs.110 crore, while the Congress gave Rs.50 crore. For the Devaraj Arasu Backward Classes Development Corporation, the BJP

government gave Rs.190 crore, while the Congress gave Rs.90 crore.

For the Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Development Corporation, the BJP government gave Rs.106 crore, while the Congress gave Rs.55.5 crore. In total, during the BJP government's tenure, Rs.1,699 crore was given, whereas the Congress government has given only Rs.1,055 crore. There has been a cut of around Rs.600 crore, he alleged. The Rs.165 crore scam in the Valmiki Development Corporation is known across the country. On the other hand, although they promised to provide jobs to youth, the assurance of giving 56,000 jobs is still hanging in the air. Even if a Cabinet decision is taken, without allocating the required Rs.500 crore for salaries in the budget, how will they provide jobs? This is a big question. In the name of guarantee schemes.

Biocon Foundation, BeST Cluster & NCBS Onboard First BioWISE Cohort of Postgraduate Women Students

BENGALURU, April 3, 2026 – Biocon Foundation, the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of Biocon, in collaboration with the Bengaluru Science and Technology Cluster (BeST Cluster) and the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), formally onboarded the first cohort of the BioWISE (Women in STEM Empowered) program at Biocon Park, Bengaluru. The first BioWISE cohort comprises 15 postgraduate women students selected through a rigorous, multi-stage process from over 350 applicants across Karnataka for a six-month internship program, including scholarship and mentorship.

As part of the BioWISE program, 25 women students – 15 postgraduates and 10 undergraduates – from tier 2 and tier 3 universities across Karnataka will be supported with academic training spanning biotechnology, life sciences, microbiology, bioinformatics and allied disciplines, enabling them to build sustainable careers in STEM.

The 15 participants onboarded in the first phase have been placed with leading academic and industry partners, including the National Centre for Biological Sciences (1), Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology (2), Indian Institute of



Science (5), and Biocon (7), where they are working alongside scientists and industry professionals on live research and development programs.

The formal onboarding event was graced by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairperson, Biocon; R. Anantharaman, CEO, BeST Cluster; Dr. Anupama Shetty, Mission Director, Biocon Foundation; Naveen Narayanan, Chief Human Resources Officer, Biocon; and representatives from NCBS, along with leaders from academia, research institutions, and industry. Dr. Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA), addressed the gathering through a virtual message.

Speaking at the event, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairperson, Biocon

Group, said, "India does not have a pipeline problem in science; it has a transition problem. While women enter STEM education in large numbers, too many drop out at the stage of entering professional roles in industry. BioWISE is a strategic intervention at precisely this moment, where talent must meet opportunity. This program by Biocon Foundation, BeST Cluster, and NCBS is about building confidence and ecosystems of support so women not only stay in science, but lead, innovate, and shape the future of India's scientific enterprise."

Dr. Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, Office of PSA, commented, "The future of science and innovation will depend on how inclusively we nurture and strengthen our talent pipeline. When women are given equal access to

opportunities, supported in their growth, and empowered to lead, the entire ecosystem benefits. Initiatives like BioWISE reflect this vision by bringing together academia, industry, and government to bridge the gap between education and workforce readiness."

R. Anantharaman, CEO, BeST Cluster, said, "Bengaluru Science and Technology (BeST) Cluster is grateful to Biocon Foundation, NCBS, and other leading institutions for backing BioWISE 25-26 - Cohort 1, a six-month internship giving 15 postgraduate women students from tier 2 and tier 3 colleges learning opportunities, structured mentorship, and guidance to empower women in STEM, focusing on life sciences."

Prof. L.S. Shashidhara, Director, NCBS, commented, "The BioWISE program is a significant and timely initiative aimed at empowering women in STEM. The entire STEM community is indebted to Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and the Biocon Foundation. The BeST Cluster has played a catalytic role in bringing together a strong network of collaborators and mentors from leading institutions, fostering a truly collaborative and enabling ecosystem."

Good Friday devotional song penned by Suja George, wife of Energy Minister, K. J. George



Bengaluru: Good Friday is one of the holiest days for the Christian community, commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in 33 AD, when he sacrificed his life for the redemption of humanity's sins. Observed on the Friday preceding Easter, the day is marked with prayer, fasting, and solemn church services, symbolizing reflection, repentance, and devotion. Ms. Suja George, wife of Karnataka's Energy Minister K. J. George, has penned the lyrics of a deeply moving devotional song inspired

by the profound words of Jesus Christ on the cross: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." The composition reflects the message of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness that defines the spirit of Good Friday.

The music for the song has been composed by noted music director Ouseppachan, with soulful vocals rendered by singer Leo Risson. The adaptation credits go to Louis Meneses and Lijo Jose of Meggie Audios, Bengaluru, where the song was recorded. The mixing and mastering have been carried out by Sai Prakash, while the video has been directed by Dinson Devassy. The song beautifully captures the prayer of Jesus Christ seeking forgiveness for humanity, even as he endured immense pain and suffering during the crucifixion.

CHANGE OF NAME
I hitherto known as **MEENAKSHI GANESH RAO**, D/o. **DABBIR SURYANARAYANA NAGARAJ**, W/o. **R. GANESH RAO**, residing at 129, 2nd Main, AGS Colony, Ananda Nagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560 024, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **MEENAKSHI G RAO**.

CHANGE OF NAME
I hitherto known as **RAMCHANDRA GANESH RAO** alias **R GANESH RAO**, S/o. **S R Rao**, residing at 129, 2nd Main, AGS Colony, Anandnagar, H.A. Farm Bangalore, Bangalore North, Karnataka-560024 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **R GANESH RAO**.

PUBLIC NOTICE – LOSS OF DOCUMENT
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Kumari Thirumalai Sreedhidi D/o Sri. Thirumalai Vijayaranghavan, the Donee, that the original Gift Settlement Deed bearing Document No. 1997/2016 dated 19.04.2016, registered in the Office of the Joint Sub-Registrar, Golconda, Hyderabad, pertaining to the immovable property (more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder) has been misplaced/lost from the custody of the Donee and is not traceable despite diligent search.
Any person who finds or has knowledge of the whereabouts of the said original document is requested to kindly inform the undersigned at the address mentioned below.
The general public is hereby cautioned not to deal with or rely upon the said original document in any manner. Any person dealing with the said document, if found, shall be doing so at their own risk, cost and consequences, including possible civil and criminal liability.
If any person has any objection or claim in respect of the said document, they shall notify the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which our clients shall proceed to obtain certified copies/duplicate documents from the concerned Sub-Registrar Office and take such further steps as may be deemed necessary.

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All that the Flat No. 202, bearing Municipal No. 10-5-327/202, in First Floor, in the building complex known as "VASUDHA APARTMENTS", measuring 1080 Sq. Feet (including balconies, common areas) and scooter parking area of 50 Square Feet, together with undivided share of land measuring 53.40 Sq. Yards, out of total land area of 690.00 Square Yards, in premises bearing Municipal No. 10-5-327, Situated at MASAB TANK, Hyderabad, Telangana State, and bounded as under: NORTH: Corridor & Staircase, SOUTH: Open to Sky, EAST: Corridor & Flat No. 203, WEST: Open to Sky.
Contact: **LOTUS LAW ASSOCIATES**, N. Sudarshan, Advocate, Flat No. 1403, MPM SS Pinnacle Apartment H.No. 8-3-322/4/1403, Near Pillar No. A-1061 Ameerpet, Hyderabad - 500073 Phone: 984911320

Continuous Phone-In Programme by the Commissioner for Improvement of Civic Services

Bengaluru: With the objective of listening to citizens' grievances and providing prompt solutions within the jurisdiction of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar conducted a Phone-In programme from 7:00 AM at the Commissioner's Office hall located on Amruthahalli Main Road, receiving complaints directly from citizens. During the programme, several complaints received from various wards were heard, and necessary instructions were issued to the concerned officials for their immediate redressal.

Progress of the Phone-In Programme: Since its inception on September 26, a total of 1,563 grievances have been registered over the past 27 weeks,



out of which 1,110 grievances have already been addressed.

A total of 93 grievances not falling under the jurisdiction of North City Corporation have been forwarded to the concerned civic bodies and departments, while strict instructions have been issued to officials to take prompt

action on the remaining 316 grievances.

Details of Programme: In Phone-In programme, a total of 47 calls were received, resulting in the registration of 63 grievances. All complaints were reviewed, and officials were instructed to respond immediately. Priority to Proper Road

Maintenance: A total of 29 complaints related to road maintenance were received. Officials were directed to ensure quality in repair works, expedite the works on priority, and provide safe commuting conditions to the public.

Focus on Waste Management: A total of 11 complaints related to waste collection and disposal were recorded. Instructions were given to ensure timely collection in all wards and to implement scientific waste disposal systems. Additionally, 3 complaints related to removal of dangerous tree branches, 3 complaints related to the health department, and 2 complaints related to Khata services were recorded. Concerned officials were directed to take immediate action.

PlumbexIndia 2026 to Spotlight Water Sustainability and Urban Water Challenges in India

Bengaluru : India is confronting an intensifying water crisis, driven by the dual pressures of rapid urbanization and finite freshwater resources. According to NITI Aayog, nearly 600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress, while 21 major cities are projected to run out of groundwater, underscoring the urgency of systemic reform. With water demand expected to double available supply by 2030, the need to transition from supply-side augmentation to demand-driven, efficiency-led water management has never been more critical.

Urban centers such as Bengaluru illustrate the gravity of this crisis. Once celebrated for its extensive network of over 1,000 interconnected lakes, the city now retains less than 100 functional water bodies, many of



which are severely polluted or encroached upon. Studies by Indian Institute of Science

highlight that over 85% of Bengaluru's lakes are eutrophic, significantly impairing their ability to support biodiversity or recharge groundwater. As natural recharge systems continue to degrade, Bengaluru's dependence on unsustainable water sources has surged.

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This is hereby informed that the Company has decided to close its Bengaluru branch situated at "First Floor, Katha No. 1441/12, BDA No. 1441, Municipal No. 12, Hosahalli, Vijayanagar Pipeline, Krishnadevaraya Road, Old Ward No. 33, Present Ward No. 123, BBMP, Bengaluru-560040 (Karnataka)" and relocate the operations of the said branch to new location, situated at "1st Floor, 317/A, 9th Main Road, 5th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560041 (Karnataka)" with effect from 5th July 2026.
The Company has taken steps to ensure that the process is seamless, with minimal inconvenience to our customers. For any queries or assistance, please contact our Customer Care at 0141-6699999 or email us at info@finoval.in. For more information, you can also visit our website at www.finoval.in. Date: 04.04.2026

EDITORIAL

THE PROBLEM WITH TRUMP'S FANTASY OF A 'CRIPPLED' IRAN

On April 1, 2026, President Donald Trump addressed the American nation from the Cross Hall of the White House in what was clearly intended to be a moment of strategic reassurance and political signalling. Nearly five weeks into the ongoing US-Israel military campaign against Iran, codenamed 'Operation Epic Fury', the speech sought to consolidate a narrative of control, success, and inevitability. Yet, beneath the rhetorical certainty lay the familiar tensions that accompany modern warfare: contested outcomes, economic anxieties, and geopolitical unpredictability.

In his carefully choreographed address, Trump began with a brief, almost perfunctory, acknowledgement of domestic achievement, the Artemis II launch, before pivoting sharply to the war effort. This transition itself was telling: a juxtaposition of American technological prowess with military dominance, reinforcing a broader message of national supremacy. What followed was a sweeping declaration of battlefield success. Iran, he claimed, had suffered unprecedented losses in a matter of weeks - its navy dismantled, air force crippled, command structures decimated, and weapons infrastructure largely neutralised.

A Maximalist View

Such assertions, while not unusual in wartime rhetoric, reflected Trump's characteristic maximalism. His framing of the conflict as a near-total victory in progress leaves little room for ambiguity, even as independent verification remains elusive. More importantly, it underscored his longstanding strategic worldview: that overwhelming force, applied decisively, can reshape adversarial behaviour in compressed timeframes.

The justifications he offered were equally familiar. Iran's nuclear ambitions, its ideological hostility toward the United States and Israel, and its history of supporting militant proxies were presented not as discrete concerns but as part of a continuous, almost civilizational threat. Trump's reference to past decisions, particularly the killing of Qassem Soleimani and the withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, served to position the current conflict as the logical culmination of a policy trajectory he had set in motion years ago.

Yet, what stood out was not merely the articulation of threats, but the moral clarity with which they were framed. Iran was depicted as both aggressor and destabiliser, leaving little space for nuance or alternative interpretations. This binary framing, good versus evil, order versus chaos, has been a consistent feature of Trump's foreign policy discourse, and it was on full display here.

Behind All That Optimism

On the question of timelines, Trump struck an emphatically optimistic tone. He suggested that core strategic objectives were "nearing completion" and indicated that the most intense phase of military operations would conclude within two to three weeks. This is a bold claim, particularly in a conflict involving a regional power with asymmetric capabilities and a demonstrated willingness to absorb losses while prolonging engagement. His assertion that "we have all the cards" may resonate politically, but strategically it risks underestimating Iran's capacity for recalibration and indirect retaliation.

The economic dimension of the conflict received a more cautious treatment. Rising gas prices - always a politically sensitive issue in the United States - were acknowledged but dismissed as temporary disruptions caused by Iranian actions in the Strait of Hormuz. Trump's emphasis on American energy independence was meant to reassure domestic audiences, yet it glossed over the deeply interconnected nature of global energy markets. Even a relatively insulated US economy cannot entirely escape the ripple effects of sustained disruptions in one of the world's most critical energy corridors.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE SELLING BOOKS BY TAKING COMMISSION



Education has always been considered the soul of society, the foundation of development, and the bridge to equal opportunities. It is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a process of developing sensitive and responsible citizens. However, when this very education becomes a means of profit, it becomes not only a matter of concern but also a serious warning for social consciousness. Recent news that some private schools are selling books for up to 50 percent commission further deepens this concern. This is not merely an administrative irregularity, but a direct attack on the very essence of education.

Today, the nature of education is rapidly changing. The number of private schools has increased, competition has increased, and so has the cost of education. However, if this increased cost is supported by quality, improved facilities, and modern resources, it can be justified to some extent. The problem arises when, in the name of education, parents are burdened with unnecessary financial burdens. The hefty commissions charged on textbooks are an example of this trend. Many private schools instruct parents to purchase books only from school-designated stores or directly from the school premises. This creates a monopoly, leaving parents with no choice. They are denied the freedom to purchase cheaper or alternative books available on the open market. As a result, they are forced to pay higher prices, a significant portion of which is covered by commissions.



There's also a severe lack of transparency in this entire process. Parents are not informed about the criteria for selecting these books, their actual price, and the added bonuses. It's even been observed that books for the same subject are replaced every year, rendering the old books useless and forcing parents to purchase new ones. This practice not only encourages economic exploitation but also wastes resources unnecessarily. This situation is not only economical worrying, but it also undermines the very purpose of education. When schools become profit-generating tools rather than centers of knowledge, the value of education itself begins to decline. The relationship between teacher and student, once based on trust and guidance, gradually devolves into a formal transaction. The institution's financial gain becomes a priority over the holistic development of children.

Parents face the most dire situation in this entire scenario. They want the best education for their children's

future, but they face repeated financial pressures. This burden becomes even more severe for middle-class and lower-income families. They often have to cut back on other needs to meet these expenses. This situation also fuels social inequality, with quality education becoming increasingly inaccessible to those with financial means. Another important aspect of this whole issue is the frequent changes to the syllabus. Every year or two, minor changes are made to the curriculum, rendering older books irrelevant. These changes often seem driven more by commercial interests than academic necessity. If there are no major changes to the curriculum, simply changing editions of books and making new books mandatory raises suspicion. The most worrying aspect is the inaction of the Education Department. Rules clearly state that no school can force parents to purchase books from a particular shop. Despite this, this practice continues openly. This means that either the rules are not being followed, or there

is a lack of will to ensure their compliance. This silence seems to give tacit approval to this system. It's also essential that we not limit this problem to mere criticism, but instead take concrete steps toward resolving it. First, the Education Department must seriously investigate this matter and take strict action against institutions found guilty. Mere warnings or formal notices will not suffice; punitive action is also essential in such cases to send a clear message.

Second, transparency in book sales must be ensured. Schools should clearly explain which books they are prescribing and their prices. If possible, a catalog of all books should be made available online so that parents can purchase them from anywhere. This will also foster healthy competition and prevent unnecessary price increases. Third, frequent, unnecessary changes to the syllabus should be controlled. If there are no major changes to the curriculum, there should be no need to change textbooks frequently.

In Data: How US-Iran War Changed After First 48 Hours? What Strike Patterns Reveal

On the first day, it looked like a war of overwhelming force. Missiles and drones surged across the Gulf, with Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates absorbing hundreds of strikes in a matter of hours. The charts capturing those opening hours are stark: towering spikes that dwarf everything that follows. For many observers, the conclusion seemed obvious - Iran had unleashed a dramatic opening salvo, and then the intensity quickly faded.

But that reading depends on a single assumption: that Day 1 is the right benchmark. It isn't. Remove the first 48 hours from the data, and the war looks entirely different. What emerges instead is not a decline, but a pattern; a campaign that stabilises, repeats and adapts. The initial barrage, it turns out, was not the war itself, but the announcement.

The Illusions Of Decline

The charts below show a combined view of attacks across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain. Kuwait spikes to nearly 400 launches. The UAE follows close behind. Then the lines collapse. At a glance, it resembles a story of escalation followed by exhaustion. But this is a classic statistical distortion. When one extreme event dominates a dataset, everything else appears insignificant by comparison. In reality, the opening strike functions less as a baseline and more as an outlier; a deliberate shock designed to establish presence, disrupt defences, and shape perception. Once that outlier is removed, the rest of the campaign comes into focus.

A War That Settles, Not Ends

In the below adjusted view, where the first two days are excluded, the lines do not fall to zero. They oscillate. Attacks continue across all



four countries. The UAE remains consistently active, though at lower levels than its initial spike. Saudi Arabia, which appeared secondary in the opening phase, emerges as a major theatre in the middle of the campaign, with repeated peaks. Bahrain and Kuwait, while lower in volume, show periodic bursts rather than silence.

The key change is conceptual. The conflict shifts from looking like a single event to looking like a system. This is reinforced by the rolling-average chart, which smooths out daily volatility. After the opening drop, the trend stabilizes. It does not collapse. Instead, it settles into a band of sustained activity; a level of pressure that appears calibrated to be maintained over time.

In military terms, this is the difference between a blitz and a campaign. The Rhythm of the Strikes The next layer of analysis: Autocorrelation. This indicated whether something happening today is likely to happen again after a few days - in other words, whether there's a repeating pattern over time. Thus, it asks a simple question. Do these attacks follow a pattern? The answer is yes.

The data shows that high-activity days are likely to be followed by other high-activity days. More importantly, it reveals repeating signals roughly every two to four days. In practical terms, that suggests a cycle. A burst of attacks, a brief pause, and then another burst. For a lay observer, the pattern might feel intuitive. For analysts, it is significant. It indicates that the campaign is not reactive or random, but structured. Each wave likely reflects a sequence: targeting, execution, assessment and recalibration, before the next wave begins. This is not how a force behaves when it is losing momentum. It is how a force behaves when it is managing it.

Measuring The Tempo Of The War

The War Tempo Index compresses multiple variables: volume, momentum and geographic spread into a single line. If the war had truly faded after the first strike, the index would show a sharp peak followed by a steady decline. Instead, it shows multiple peaks. There is the initial shock, but also renewed surges in early March, another set of peaks in mid-March, and contin-

ued activity into the final week of the month. The intensity fluctuates, but it repeatedly returns. This is the defining feature of the campaign, persistence. Not constant escalation, but sustained presence.

A Regional Pattern, Not Isolated Strikes

Perhaps the most revealing insight comes from examining how these peaks align across countries. On some days, multiple countries experience peak activity simultaneously. On others, peaks occur within a 24-hour window of each other. The coordination matrices show that while exact same-day alignment is inconsistent, near-synchronous activity is common. This suggests a campaign that is coordinated but not rigidly synchronised. Instead of launching identical strikes across all theatres at once, the pattern appears staggered, a rolling wave moving across the region. It is a subtle distinction, but an important one. Perfect simultaneity is not always operationally optimal. Staggering allows for flexibility, reduces predictability and maintains continuous pressure across multiple fronts.

Rs 30 Petrol Hike To Currency Crisis, What Oil At \$150 Can Really Do To The World

In 1979, the Iranian Revolution removed between 2 and 3 million barrels per day from the global oil supply. Prices roughly doubled within a year, from around \$13 per barrel to \$34. The world called it the Second Oil Shock and waited for prices to correct. They did not. They stayed elevated until 1986, when Saudi Arabia, tired of bearing the burden of production cuts alone, flooded the market, crashing prices to below \$10. The recovery from a supply shock, in other words, took seven years. And that was a demand-side solution, one country choosing to overproduce. No one had to rebuild the infrastructure. The taps were simply turned back on. In the Gulf today, the taps cannot simply be turned back on. This is the distinction that gets lost in the daily movement of Brent crude prices, and it matters more than almost anything else in this story. A demand shock (the 2008 variety, when booming Chinese and American consumption strained global capacity) corrects when demand falls. A financial crisis, a recession, a change in driving habits, all of these reduce consumption, and prices fall accordingly. A supply shock caused by physical destruction of infrastructure is a different animal. It corrects only when the infrastructure is rebuilt. And infrastructure, unlike demand, does not respond to policy announcements or diplomatic signals. In 1979, the Iranian Revolution removed between 2 and 3 million barrels per day from the global oil supply. Prices roughly doubled within a year, from around \$13 per barrel to \$34. The world called it the Second Oil Shock and waited for prices to correct. They did not. They stayed elevated until 1986, when Saudi Arabia, tired of bearing the burden of production cuts alone, flooded the market,



crashing prices to below \$10. The recovery from a supply shock, in other words, took seven years. And that was a demand-side solution, one country choosing to overproduce. No one had to rebuild the infrastructure. The taps were simply turned back on. In the Gulf today, the taps cannot simply be turned back on. This is the distinction that gets lost in the daily movement of Brent crude prices, and it matters more than almost anything else in this story. A demand shock (the 2008 variety, when booming Chinese and American consumption strained global capacity) corrects when demand falls. A financial crisis, a recession, a change in driving habits, all of these reduce consumption, and prices fall accordingly. A supply shock caused by physical destruction of infrastructure is a different animal. It corrects only when the infrastructure is rebuilt. And infrastructure, unlike demand, does not respond to policy announcements or diplomatic signals. Advertisement - Scroll to continue Calculating The Damage Rystad Energy's damage assessment, released on March 23, gives some idea. The headline figure is \$25 billion: the mini-

mum cost to repair and rebuild Middle East energy infrastructure damaged in the US-Israel-Iran conflict. Engineering and construction will account for roughly half of that. At least 40 energy-producing assets across nine countries have been "severely or very severely" damaged: oil and gas fields, refineries, pipelines. The International Energy Agency's (IEA) Fatih Birol described the conflict as "worse than the two oil shocks of the 1970s, as well as the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on gas, put together". The facility numbers are worth sitting with. Qatar's Ras Laffan complex, the world's largest LNG supplier, lost two trains to missile strikes: a 17% capacity reduction totalling 12.8 million metric tonnes per year. QatarEnergy declared force majeure on March 4 and has extended it to June. A \$4-billion contract awarded to Saipem and China Offshore Oil Engineering for North Field development is now suspended. The Ras Laffan Pearl gas-to-liquids plant, jointly owned by QatarEnergy, Shell, and ExxonMobil, is still assessing its losses. Iran's South Pars offshore gas field has sustained heavy damage. Iraq's Zubair oilfield, operat-

ed by Eni, has had output cut by 70,000 barrels per day from its normal 330,000-bpd level, a 21% reduction in a field that accounts for a meaningful share of Iraq's export revenue. Bahrain's BAPCO Sitra Refinery, just commissioned in December after a \$7-billion modernisation programme designed to increase capacity from 2.67 lakh to 4 lakh barrels per day, built under a \$4.2-billion contract by TechnipEnergies, Samsung Engineering, and Técnicas Reunidas, was struck twice. Two crude distillation units and a tank farm are confirmed damaged. The facility had been in commercial operation for approximately three months. A Long, Long Recovery Rystad's prognosis for the worst-affected assets: "full recovery could take up to five years". Large-frame gas turbines, the equipment required to power LNG main refrigeration compressors, are manufactured by exactly three original equipment manufacturers globally: GE Vernova (US), Siemens (Germany), and one other. All three began 2026 carrying production backlogs of two to four years, driven by demand from data centre electrification and coal plant retirements.

Oil prices jump and shares drop after Trump threatens more Iran strikes

Oil prices started climbing again after US President Donald Trump reiterated threats to hit Iran "extremely hard" in the coming weeks and failed to give concrete details on how the war will end. Brent crude briefly surged past \$109 (£82) a barrel and stock markets in the US, Europe and Asia fell following Trump's address from the White House. He said that the US would complete its strategic objectives for the war "very shortly" and spend the next two to three weeks bombing Iran "back to the Stone Ages". Earlier on Wednesday, oil prices dipped below \$100 ahead of the speech on hopes Trump would say how the US would exit the conflict but his address repeated the same points he made previously. The Iran war has severely disrupted global oil and gas supplies. Oil shipments through the critical Strait of Hormuz waterway have mostly been halted after Iran threatened to attack tankers that try to cross in retaliation to US-Israeli strikes, which began on 28 February. In his speech, Trump said the US did not need the Middle East's energy and urged other nations to step in to



free up shipments from the Gulf that have been disrupted as a result of the war. He said: "To those countries that can't get fuel, many of which refuse to get involved in the decapitation of Iran... build up some delayed coverage, go to the Strait and just take it." Oil prices, which had been fluctuating incrementally before, shot upwards moments after the televised speech. Brent crude, the global benchmark, rose more than 8% on Thursday, before retreating a bit. The US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate, which had been somewhat shielded from the price rises earlier in the conflict compared

with Brent, also took off, briefly trading above \$110 a barrel in Thursday morning trade in New York before dropping back a bit. The rise was a "clear market reality check following the earlier optimism for an imminent ceasefire" said Alberto Bellorin, founder and managing director at InterCapital Energy, an oil and gas consultancy. Trump's speech lacked a "concrete timeline" for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, while a return to normal now looks "months away rather than weeks," he added. In urging other nations to step in, Trump has removed hopes that dis-

ruptions to global energy supplies will be resolved swiftly, Bellorin said. In his speech, Trump said oil and gas flows would return quickly when the war ended. "When this conflict is over, the strait will open up naturally. It will just open up naturally," he said. But Anne-Sophie Corbeau, former head of gas analysis at oil giant BP, suggested it could take some time for flows to return to normal. The Gulf's energy infrastructure has been damaged following strikes by Iran, Israel and the US and Corbeau said repairing it could take between three and five years. Corbeau, who is now at Center on Global

Energy Policy at Colombia, told the BBC's Today programme that disruption to traffic through the Strait of Hormuz was likely to persist and that additional costs in the form of fees to use the strait could be "quite substantial". She said currently she understood ships were subject to a charge in the region of \$2m for using the strait, which, if made permanent amounted to "the worst-case solution" for users of the waterway. In the US, the S&P 500 and Nasdaq closed slightly higher - up 0.1% and 0.2% respectively after earlier losses. The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended trading down 0.1%. In the UK, the FTSE 100 index fell in early afternoon trade but closed 0.69% higher. France's Cac index closed down 0.24%, and Germany's Dax closed down 0.79% - both regaining some earlier falls. In Asia, major stock indexes fell after Trump's address, reversing earlier gains. Japan's Nikkei 225 closed down 2.4% and South Korea's Kospi ended 4.5% lower. The region's stock markets have been volatile since the Iran war began. Asia is particularly vulnerable to the impact of the conflict as it is heavily reliant on the Middle East for its energy supplies.

AMAZON TO SLAP SURCHARGE ON THIRD-PARTY SELLERS AS IRAN WAR DRIVES UP FUEL PRICES



New York: Amazon is slapping a 3.5 per cent fuel and logistics surcharge on third-party sellers using its platform starting later this month amid a spike in fuel prices since the war in Iran started. The temporary charge is effective April 17 for many of the sellers who use Amazon's fulfillment services, the online behemoth confirmed to The Associated Press in an email Thursday. "Elevated costs in fuel and logistics have increased the cost of operating across the industry," Amazon said in the emailed statement. The Seattle-based company said it has

absorbed these increases so far but similar to other major carriers, when costs remain elevated, it implements temporary surcharges to partially recover these costs. It noted the charge is "meaningfully" lower than surcharges applied by other major carriers. "We remain committed to our selling partners' success and to maintaining broad selection and low prices for customers," Amazon added. Amazon's fuel and logistics-related surcharge will apply to US and Canadian sellers using its Fulfillment by Amazon option. Starting May 2, the

surcharge will take effect with sellers using the Buy with Prime and Multi-Channel Fulfillment options. Amazon joins a growing list of carriers imposing surcharges to recoup rising energy costs as the Iran war drags on. United Parcel Service and FedEx have increased their fuel surcharges. The United States Postal Service announced last week it was imposing an 8 per cent fuel surcharge that would apply to packages to be shipped starting April 26. The surcharge would remain in place until January 17 2027, it said.

KUWAIT-INDIA FLIGHTS: Jazeera Airways adds four new destinations

Kuwait City: Kuwait-based Jazeera Airways has added four new destinations in India — Kozhikode, Tiruchirappalli, Mangalore and Kannur — expanding its network under Project Vande Bharat and reinforcing air links with key regions in South India. With this expansion, the airline now serves 12 destinations across India, operating 49 weekly flights. The move is aimed at improving travel options for the large Indian diaspora in Kuwait and supporting essential connectivity between the two countries. The new routes build on Jazeera Airways' existing network of Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kochi, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram, offering broader access to both major cities and regional hubs. Services to Kozhikode, Tiruchirappalli, Mangalore and Kannur will operate via King Fahad International Airport in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, forming part of an integrat-



ed travel corridor that combines air and overland transport. The airline said this enables passengers to travel closer to their hometowns with greater convenience. Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said India remains a key market for the airline, noting that more than 11,000 Indian passengers have been transported since services

resumed on March 20. "This expansion reflects our commitment to maintaining connectivity with the Indian community in Kuwait and enabling smoother access to destinations across South India," he said. The airline said the expanded network will also support the movement of essential workforce segments, helping professionals return to their roles

while maintaining continuity in critical sectors. Cargo operations are expected to benefit as well, ensuring the steady flow of supply chains between Kuwait and India. Kaizar Shakir, Chairman of the Indian Business and Professionals Council (IBPC) Kuwait, welcomed the expansion, describing it as timely amid ongoing travel challenges. He said the move underscores a commitment to supporting communities and businesses reliant on Kuwait-India connectivity. Jazeera Airways continues to operate through a dual-base network in Saudi Arabia, including Dammam and Qaisumah airports, providing alternative travel routes despite operational constraints. The airline currently serves more than 31 destinations across 10 countries and plans to scale up operations further, with around 1,000 flights, 250,000 seats and over 2 million tonnes of cargo capacity scheduled by the end of April.

Dettol Launches New Campaign Celebrating a Mother's Instinct to Protect

Dettol, India's leading germ protection brand, has launched a heartfelt new campaign for its iconic Dettol Antiseptic Liquid, built on the universal truth of a mother's instinctive care with the thought: "Nothing protects like Mom & Dettol." The campaign reinforces Dettol's role as a constant companion in moments that call for care, strengthening the brand's emotional connection with families while highlighting its unmatched protection. The new film captures this emotional essence through a tender moment set in the lively chaos of a shaadi ka ghar. Amid the celebrations, a young boy hurts himself and hides his injury from others, putting on a brave face. But the moment he reaches his mother, she instinctively senses something is wrong. As she tends to his wound with Dettol Antiseptic Liquid, his guard drops, revealing his pain, only to be fol-



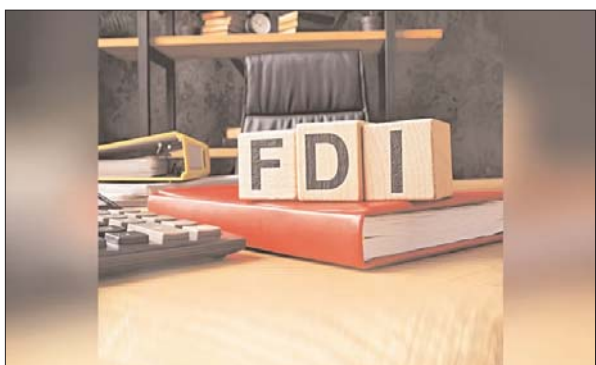
lowed by a touching role reversal where he comforts her instead. The film concludes with the message: "Apnon ki suraksha ka mazboot sahara." The film has been brought to life with concept and writing by Prasoon Joshi, an original track by Vishal Khurana K sung by Javed Ali with lyrics by Prasoon Joshi, and direction by Amit Sharma, weaving together emotion, culture, and authenticity. Commenting on the launch, Gaurav Jain,

EVP Regional Director, Reckitt - South Asia, said, "At Reckitt, we believe our responsibility goes far beyond delivering products—we are here to build a world where people feel safe, protected and empowered to care for one another. Dettol stands at the heart of this mission. This campaign encapsulates that delicate, human truth: a mother senses hurt even before it is spoken, and Dettol strengthens her ability to respond with care and confidence. Together, a mother's instinct and

Dettol's protection create a bond that generations have trusted and will continue to trust for years to come." Prasoon Joshi, Chairman, Omnicom India, said, "I really enjoyed writing this simple, storytelling-led piece of brand communication. Dettol has always stood for care and protection. Because when a child is hurt, no matter how big or small, the first instinct is to reach for their mother, their ultimate safe space. And in that moment, the mother turns to Dettol, something she trusts to protect what matters most. This is the bond we wanted to bring alive. A bond of quiet care, instinctive love, and unwavering trust." As the heart of the Dettol portfolio, Dettol Antiseptic Liquid continues to offer unmatched protection for cuts and wounds, reinforcing its role in safeguarding families across generations.

Money in, money out: Negative net inflows pull down India's FDI status

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) into India contracted for the fifth consecutive month in January 2026, with outflows exceeding inflows by nearly \$1.4 billion, a three-month high. The data shows this was because inflows into India fell nearly 7% while the amount repatriated out of the country nearly doubled. Net FDI into India was negative for the fifth consecutive month in January 2026 due to high levels of repatriation by foreign companies in India. In \$ million According to data released by the Reserve Bank of India on Monday as part of its monthly bulletin, the total amount of money entering India as direct investment, or gross FDI, stood at about \$5.7 billion in January 2026. This was 7% lower than in January last year, and only two-thirds of the amount that came in December 2025. The RBI, however, looked at a longer time period to draw some positive conclusions. "During April 2025 - January 2026, gross FDI inflows remained strong, higher than the corresponding period a



year ago," the central bank noted in its report. "Sector-wise, manufacturing received the highest share of equity inflows, followed by computer services, electricity and other energy, and financial services — these sectors together accounted for over 60% of total inflows." With regard to outflows, the outward FDI by Indian companies increased by 5.4% in January 2026 to \$2.1 billion. This was, however, nearly 30% lower than the outward FDI in December 2025. "Around 75% of the outward FDI flows were directed to the US, Singapore, the UK, and the UAE during the

[April 2025 - January 2026] period," the RBI said. Repatriation and disinvestment by foreign companies doing business in India, on the other hand, increased by 97.3% to \$4.9 billion in January 2026. But this was nearly 18% lower than the amount in December 2025. As a result, net FDI stood at about -\$1.4 billion, the lowest since October 2025. The central bank noted that portfolio investments again flowed out more than they flowed in in March this year. "After staging a comeback in February 2026, foreign portfolio investments (FPIs) turned net sellers again in March 2026.

Xiaomi Launches REDMI Note 15 Special Edition with Premium Design and All-Day Endurance

HYDERABAD, April 3, 2026 - Xiaomi India today announced the launch of the REDMI Note 15 Special Edition, a smartphone that brings together refined design, immersive visuals, and intelligent features in a form factor built for the way users live, create, and stay connected. Immersive Display in a Refined, Ultra-Slim Design The REDMI Note 15 Special Edition features a 6.77-inch curved AMOLED display with FHD+ resolution and a refresh rate of up to 120Hz, ensuring smooth visuals across browsing, streaming, and gaming. With peak brightness of up to 3200 nits and support for a wide colour gamut, the display remains vivid and clear across varied lighting conditions. The immersive experience is complemented by a sleek 3D-curved design, with a thickness starting at just 7.35mm and a weight of approximately 178g, offer-

ing a comfortable grip and a premium in-hand feel. Triple TÜV certifications further enhance viewing comfort during extended usage. Offered in three distinctive colourways—Crimson Reserve, Carbon Black, and Frosted White — the REDMI Note 15 Special Edition is designed to complement individual style while reinforcing its premium identity. Efficient Performance with Intelligent Imaging Powered by the Snapdragon® 6 Gen 3 mobile platform built on a 4nm process, the device delivers efficient and reliable performance across multitasking, content consumption, and gaming. The smartphone features a 50MP AI dual rear camera system and a 20MP AI front camera, engineered to capture sharp, well-balanced images. A suite of AI-powered tools, including AI Erase, AI Sky, AI Bokeh,



AI Beautify, and AI Reflection Removal, allows users to enhance and refine photos quickly and intuitively. Long-Lasting Battery with Immersive Audio and Connectivity The REDMI Note 15

Special Edition is equipped with a large 5800mAh battery designed for extended daily usage, supported by 45W turbo charging for faster top-ups. For an enhanced multimedia experience, the device features dual speak-

ers with Dolby Atmos support, along with AI-powered active noise cancellation for clearer calls. Connectivity includes support for multiple 5G bands and dual-band Wi-Fi. Integrated AI features such as Google Gemini and Circle to Search further elevate usability. Secure, Durable, and Future-Ready The device offers an in-display fingerprint sensor and AI face unlock. Built with Titan Solid durability, it is designed to withstand drops of up to 1.7 metres and is certified to MIL-STD-810H standards by SGS. With IP65 and IP66 ratings, the device is also protected against dust and splashes under controlled conditions. The REDMI Note 15 Special Edition is designed for longevity with 4 years of Android updates and 6 years of security updates, ensuring a clean, fluid, and secure user experience that stays optimized over time.

TRUMP REMOVES US ATTORNEY GENERAL PAM BONDI

US President Donald Trump has removed Attorney General Pam Bondi - a long-time ally and fierce defender of his administration - from her post as America's top law enforcement officer. Trump praised her in a post on Truth Social and said she would be "transitioning" to a role in the private sector. Bondi's time leading the justice department was often overshadowed by its handling of the release of files relating to Jeffrey Epstein and its investigation into the convicted sex offender. She is the second Trump administration official in recent weeks to be cut from her post, after Kristi Noem was ousted as homeland security chief in March. Bondi will be replaced by her former deputy, Todd Blanche. Bondi said she would be "working tirelessly" to transfer her work to Blanche, adding that the job had "been the honour" of a lifetime. She added that in her new private sector position - which she did not



identify - she would "continue fighting for President Trump and this administration". The announcement comes less than two months after a combative congressional hearing in which Bondi was peppered with questions from lawmakers - at times descending into shouting matches in which she called one Democrat a "washed-up loser". As recently as Thursday morning, Trump was defending Bondi,

saying: "She is a wonderful person and she is doing a good job." But hours later, Trump confirmed her departure on Truth Social, saying that her new private sector role would be "announced at a date in the near future". Trump lauded Bondi's performance as attorney general in his post, saying she had done "a tremendous job overseeing a massive crackdown in crime across our country". But the president had report-

edly grown increasingly frustrated with Bondi, in particular over her handling of the Epstein files. When she was sworn into the post in February 2025, she vowed transparency over the Epstein case and promised to release an alleged client list associated with the disgraced financier, who died in 2019. The department later said no such list existed. In the end, millions of files related to Epstein were released under

pressure - including from Trump supporters - and only after Congress passed a law requiring the Department of Justice to make unclassified records public. The agency, and subsequently Bondi, faced bipartisan backlash, with lawmakers accusing the justice department of failing to obscure some identifying information about survivors, while protecting the identities of those who were not victims. A handful of Republicans who worked with her closely over the years praised her on Thursday. "Pam Bondi led this Department with strength and conviction and I'm grateful for her leadership and friendship," Blanche wrote on X. "We will continue backing the blue, enforcing the law, and doing everything in our power to keep America safe." Others celebrated her departure. Among them was Kentucky Republican congressman Thomas Massie, a regular critic of Bondi's handling of

the Epstein files. "I hope the next AG will release all the Epstein files according to the law and follow up with investigations, prosecutions and arrests," he wrote on X. California Democrat Ro Khanna - who worked with Massie on the bipartisan law to compel the release of the files - told the BBC's Newsnight programme: "This shows that Congress isn't a doormat." Khanna said lawmakers should refuse to confirm Blanche as the next attorney general unless he will "submit to investigating and prosecuting this Epstein case, this group of men who felt that they could write their own rules, play by their own rules, and treated the rest of us as dispensable". Another Republican critic of Bondi's, South Carolina representative Nancy Mace, accused her of having "stonewalled every effort to hold the guilty accountable" and "seriously undermined Trump with her handling of the files."

NEW BRAZIL LAW ALLOWS SEPARATED COUPLES JOINT CUSTODY OVER PETS



Courts in Brazil will be able to determine shared custody arrangements for the pets of separating couples under new laws. Lawmakers in the Brazilian Congress viewed the law change as a reflection of the importance people place on their pets. The legislation means that, if a couple separates without reaching an agreement regarding their pet, "a judge will determine the shared custody arrangement and the equitable distribution of the animal's maintenance expenses between the parties". Currently, the country of 213 million people has about 160 million pets, according to the Instituto

Pet Brasil. For the law to apply to separating couples, the animal must have spent the majority of its life with the pair. Shared custody will not be granted in cases in which one of the parties has a prior criminal record, or a history or risk of domestic violence. Members of Congress said there had been an increase in pet custody disputes in courts, while noting the law responds to "changes that have occurred in Brazilian society in recent decades", according to a statement accompanying the law. The statement added that couples with fewer children tend to have closer relationships with their animals.

IRAN WAR COULD MAKE BEER AND BOTTLED WATER PRICIER FOR INDIANS



Indians are bracing for summer, with temperatures expected to cross 45C in some parts of the country. But the war with Iran is already putting India's \$6bn bottled water industry under strain as manufacturers struggle to access crucial raw materials. Last month, market leader Bisleri increased prices by 11%, making a box of 12 one-litre bottles costlier by 24 rupees (\$0.26; £0.20). Brands like Bailley and Clear Premium Water have also increased their prices, Reuters news agency reported. According to a study by Data for India, about 15% of urban households and 6% of rural households depend on bottled water for their drinking needs. Relying on bottled water is expensive, especially for people in rural areas. But access to clean water remains a challenge in many parts of India, especially in summer, due to reasons including water shortages, groundwater contamination and infrastructure gaps. Brands and bottle manufacturers warn that a prolonged war will risk making a crucial commodity prohibitively expensive for many Indians.

About 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas usually passes through the narrow Strait of Hormuz, which is now almost completely blocked by Iran. The disruption in global shipping has sent global fuel prices soaring. India, which relies heavily on oil and gas imports to meet domestic demand, is feeling the pressure. Vijaysinh Dubbal, president of the Maharashtra Bottled Water Manufacturers Association, explains that the main reason bottled water - which is largely sold in plastic bottles - has become expensive is because of the surging costs of crude oil. The price of a barrel of Brent crude oil briefly hit \$119 (£90) earlier this week, close to its highest since the start of the US-Israel war with Iran. Crude oil is used to make Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) resin pellets - granules that are heated and passed through moulds to create PET preforms. These preforms, which look like plastic test tubes, are sold to brands and bottle manufacturers to be shaped into plastic bottles of the desired shape and size.

Hegseth asks US Army's top general to step down



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has asked Army Chief of Staff Randy George to step down from his post, according to CBS News, the BBC's US partner. Chief Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said in a statement on social media that George "will be retiring from his position as the 41st Chief of Staff of the Army effective immediately". The Army chief normally serves a four-year term. George, a career military officer who

graduated from the West Point military academy, was nominated for the role in 2023 by former President Joe Biden. The latest shakeup comes after Trump said in an address to the nation that the US-Israel war with Iran is expected to conclude "very shortly". George served as an infantry officer in the first Gulf War and in recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was not immediately clear why he was being asked to leave. "We are grateful for his service, but it was time for a leadership change in the Army," an unnamed senior defence official told CBS. Pentagon spokesperson Parnell said: "The Department of War is grateful for General George's decades of service to our nation."

ARTEMIS II BLASTS EVER CLOSER TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE MOON

The four astronauts on the Artemis II mission have now left the Earth's orbit, after their Orion spacecraft fired its main engine for a final push towards the Moon. The five minute and 55 second engine burn, known as the translunar injection (TLI), went "flawlessly", NASA's Dr Lori Glaze said afterwards. And from the Orion capsule, Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen said the crew was "feeling pretty good up here on our way to the Moon". Artemis II is now on a looping path that will carry the crew around the far side of the Moon and back again. It is the first time since 1972 that humans have travelled outside of the Earth's orbit. On the livestream from Orion, Earth is slowly shrinking, as the capsule moves further and further into space. Hansen,



who is the first non-American to travel to the Moon - told NASA's mission control that the crew "firmly felt the power" of those who have persevered and worked so hard on this mission. "Humanity has once again shown what we are capable of," he said. "It's your hopes for the future that carry us now on this journey around the Moon." After spending roughly a day in a stretched-out "high Earth

orbit", Orion's engines, navigation and life-support systems were checked, while the capsule looped our planet. At last, the final approval was given, and the engine burn could begin - the mission's last, big move towards the Moon. Behind the crew's seats, the service module lit its single main engine in a long, steady push that added thousands of kilometres per hour to Orion's speed. The TLI propelled the spacecraft on a journey that is expected to carry the crew farther from Earth than anyone has been before - more than 4,700 miles (7,600 km) beyond the Moon - before gravity swings them back. NASA estimates that this could edge past the record set by Apollo 13 in 1970, depending on the fine details of the timing and trajectory. TLI is not a point of no return for Orion - even after the big burn to the Moon, controllers can still carry out the equivalent of a handbrake turn in space and bring the crew back to Earth if something goes seriously wrong. In the event of an emergency, the U-turn is the fastest way home in the first 36 hours after the TLI. After that it can be just as quick, and often simpler, to stay on course around the Moon and fall back to Earth.

'I HAVEN'T SLEPT FOR DAYS': Iranians describe mounting desperation after a month of war

Until that moment the war was something happening in other parts of Tehran. It had not touched the lives of "Setareh" and her colleagues. Then she heard an ominous noise and vibrations reached into the office. She called out to her workmates: "I think it's a bomb." They left their desks and climbed the stairs to the roof of the building. "We saw smoke rising into the sky, but we didn't know what place had been targeted," she recalls. "After that, everyone working in the company panicked. People were shouting and screaming and running away. For one to two hours the situation stayed like that com-



plete chaos." That same day her boss shut the business and laid off his staff. Despite strict state censorship, the BBC has been able to use trusted sources on the ground to obtain testimony from a range of Iranians in different parts of the country. We cannot

give Setareh's real name or say what kind of work she does - no detail that might possibly identify her to the regime's secret police. But we can say that she is a young woman from Tehran who loved going to work, where she could meet her friends, share stories of

their lives and, of course, there was the guarantee of weekly wages. Now the nightly bombing has stolen her ability to sleep naturally. She lies awake worrying about the present, and the future. "I can honestly say I haven't slept for several nights and days in a row. I try to relax by taking very strong painkillers so I can sleep. The anxiety is so intense that it has affected my body. When I think about the future and imagine those conditions, I truly don't know what to do." By "those conditions" she means economic hardship and her fear of future street fighting between the regime and its enemies.

Judge dismisses most of Blake Lively's claims in harassment lawsuit against Baldoni



A federal judge has dismissed most of the claims in a sexual harassment lawsuit that actress Blake Lively filed against her It Ends With Us co-star Justin Baldoni. Judge Lewis Liman threw out 10 of 13 allegations in Lively's case, including harassment and defamation. He left in place three claims against Baldoni - breach of contract, retaliation, and aiding and abetting in retaliation - which will now go to a civil trial in New York on 18 May. The Hollywood legal battle began in 2024 when Lively sued Baldoni, accusing him of harassment and a smear campaign on the set of their hit movie. He denied it and counter-sued. A member of Lively's legal team, Sigrid McCawley, told the BBC's US partner CBS the case "has always been and will remain focused on the devastating retaliation and the extraordinary steps the defendants tried to destroy" the actress' reputation. She noted that the sexual harassment claims were dropped, "not because the defendants did nothing wrong", but because of a technicality. Lively plans to testify during the trial, McCawley said, and would continue

"to shine a light on this vicious form of online retaliation". The BBC has contacted Baldoni's lawyers for comment. A judge last year dismissed Baldoni's \$400m (£295m) counter-lawsuit against Lively, which alleged civil extortion, defamation and invasion of privacy. The case stems from interactions between Baldoni and Lively on the set of It Ends With Us, an adaptation of a best-selling Colleen Hoover novel. The film features Lively as the main character, Lily Bloom, a young woman who grew up witnessing domestic abuse and finds herself in the same position years later. Lively's legal team have accused Baldoni and his film studio, Wayfarer, of planning to wreck her reputation, including by social media manipulation and using friendly journalists to sow certain narratives. She shared details of the allegations in a New York Times article published before her lawsuit. Lively filed a lawsuit against Baldoni's Wayfarer Studios in December 2024, alleging he sexually harassed her on set and retaliated against her for bringing those complaints, among other allegations.



Artemis II astronauts describe 'spectacular moment' in space after leaving Earth's orbit

Arlo Parks: 'I got out of my head and into my body'



A couple of years ago, Arlo Parks found herself in a nightclub, consoling a complete stranger. "It was the summer in New York and everyone in the club was super-friendly," she recalls. "But there was a group of girls surrounding their friend, and she seemed really upset. I was standing near them and I said something like, 'I hope you're OK, and I got drawn into this whole tale of love

triangles and drama." "We were sort of figuring it out together and, by the end, everyone was like, 'Yeah, you're better off without him'." So we all went onto the dance floor and celebrated this decision she'd made for the rest of the night." It's exactly the sort of experience that inspired the singer's third album, Ambiguous Desire. A pulsing exploration of party culture and collective movement, it's a departure from the tender, introspective ballads on her Mercury Prize-winning debut, Collapsed In Sunbeams and its 2023 follow-up, My Soft Machine. She taps into night rhythms, embracing the heat and the sweat and the permissiveness of the club.

The thorny issues facing F1 over racing, qualifying and safety

The month-long break forced on Formula 1 by the war in the Middle East is a time for reflection after a controversial and incident-packed first three races following the introduction of the biggest rule change in history. Even before the new cars ran for the first time, there was intense debate about the merits of a set of regulations that have created an entirely unfamiliar version of racing. That has continued since the season started. Engines with a 50-50 split between internal combustion and hybrid power - complete with 'overtaking' and 'boost' modes - have led to accusations of artificiality. Critics including four-time world champion Max Verstappen have likened the new F1 to the Mario Kart computer game, and gone as far as to call it "a joke". At the same time, Lewis Hamilton has described his fight with Ferrari team-mate Charles



Leclerc during the Chinese Grand Prix as "the best battle" he has had for more than 10 years, and "like racing should be". Hamilton, though, like all of the drivers, has misgivings about the way the new engines have diminished the importance of their skills. And Oliver Bearman's frightening 191mph crash during the

Japanese Grand Prix has focused minds on long-held concerns voiced by the drivers about the speed differentials inherent in the way the cars and rules operate. Let's take stock of the lessons of the first month of the season, with regards to racing, qualifying and safety. The way the chassis rules have been adapted to fit in with the

demands of the new engines has changed the nature of racing in F1. The need for both front and rear wings to open to increase the amount of energy harvesting possible meant a replacement was needed for the DRS overtaking aid, which had made passing easier since 2011. The result was modes known as 'overtake' and

'boost'. 'Overtake' mode gives a driver within a second of the car in front the ability to harvest 0.5 megajoules more electrical energy per lap. In combination with the 'boost', which allows the driver to override the car's programmed systems to have maximum electrical energy on demand, this has led to what has been referred to as "yo-yo racing". In the past, once a car overtook another, that tended to be that. This year, battles have been going on for several laps, with cars passing and re-passing, as the energy advantage switches between the two cars. Verstappen has derided this as "anti-driving", but many of his colleagues have said they quite enjoy it. Hamilton said: "If you go back to karting, it's the same thing. People going back and forth, back and forth - you can never break away." No one has ever referred to go-karting as yo-yo racing.

Yuvraj Singh Praises AM Green IGPL's Team Format As Squads Are Announced For Ten High-Powered Franchises

The AM Green India Golf Premier League (IGPL) today announced the complete squads for all ten of its franchises in New Delhi. The finalisation of the ten squads marks a defining moment in IGPL's journey for professional golfers from across the globe as they join their respective teams for the season. The teams were announced at a glittering function at The Oberoi, New Delhi, by cricket legend Yuvraj Singh and the CEO of the IGPL, Uttam Singh Mundy. As Mundy highlighted the need to promote golf to boost both player development and tourism in India, Yuvraj hailed the team component in a sport that has traditionally been an individual game. Amidst the announcements, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Tourism, Government of India, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the IGPL for its landmark commitment



to mobilise US\$2 billion in investment towards the development of world-class golf tourism destinations across India. The Minister described the commitment as a watershed moment for Indian sports tourism and a resounding endorsement of India's emergence as a high-value global destination. Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Shekhawat said: "The Indian Golf Premier League's pledge to bring two billion dollars of investment into golf tourism infrastructure is

not merely a sporting initiative-it is a strategic contribution to Brand India. Nations like Mauritius, Vietnam, and South Africa have demonstrated how golf can transform landscapes into internationally coveted destinations, attracting high-net-worth visitors and year-round tourism revenue. IGPL is now positioning India to lead that story in Asia. "Prime Minister Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 demands that we build infrastructure that attracts global capital and creates enduring employment."

LSG Share "True Story" Behind Sanjiv Goenka-Rishabh Pant Controversy Amid Social Media Debate

Lucknow Super Giants on Thursday released a clarification video following widespread speculation over a chat between owner Sanjiv Goenka, captain Rishabh Pant, and coach Justin Langer after their loss to Delhi Capitals in the IPL 2026. "Not everything you see is the true story. Here's the unfiltered post-match vibes, when cameras don't cut," LSG posted on X. Earlier, videos had emerged on social media showing Goenka having a conversation with Pant on the field. Pant appeared quite animated, and even coach Langer got involved. Social media users were quick to draw comparisons with the infamous interaction between Goenka and



the franchise's former captain, KL Rahul, following LSG's loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2024. In the video posted by LSG, Goenka and Pant can be seen sharing a laugh during the same meeting whose earlier clip had gone viral. The following is the clarification video: While some fans claimed that the

video shared by LSG was shot at a later time, one fan pointed out how that couldn't be the case as a post-match presentation was being shown on the giant screen inside the stadium at the same time. It has to be noted that social media often highlights one side of a story without looking into the full context.

Sometimes, a moment can be distorted into a misleading narrative, as demonstrated by the recent Sanjiv Goenka and Rishabh Pant "row." Following Lucknow Super Giants' loss to Delhi Capitals in IPL 2026, a brief, silent clip of Goenka in an animated discussion with Pant went viral, prompting immediate assumptions of a public reprimand similar to the infamous KL Rahul incident from 2024. However, the franchise's subsequent clarification video, captioned, "Not everything you see is the true story" revealed the broader reality of the interaction, showing the pair sharing a warm hug and a light-hearted laugh.

Abhishek Sharma Reprimanded By BCCI, Handed Demerit Point For Code Of Conduct Breach

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) all-rounder Abhishek Sharma was handed a demerit point and a 25 per cent match-fee fine following a sanction confirmed by the Indian Premier League (IPL) after their clash against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on Thursday. Abhishek soared back to form in the match, scoring 48 runs off 21 balls, courtesy of 4 sixes and 4 fours. While his performance in the match enthralled fans, it was his conduct that left the officials disappointed. Though the official IPL statement did not specify the exact incident, it noted that the opening batter admitted to a Level 1 offence under Article 2.3, which pertains to the use of audible obscenities during a match. In its official release, the IPL

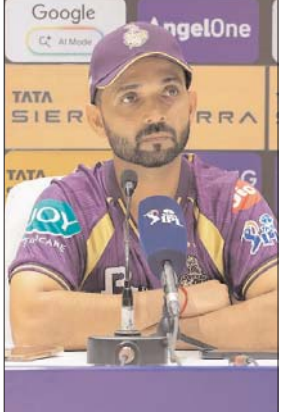


stated: "Abhishek Sharma, All-rounder, Sunrisers Hyderabad, has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees and has also accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's match against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, on Thursday. He admitted to

1 offences are the least severe within the IPL's disciplinary framework, repeated infringements can lead to stricter penalties, including suspensions. How SRH defeated KKR on the pitch, Heinrich Klaasen struck a fluent half-century as SRH defeated KKR by 65 runs at the iconic Eden Gardens. After being sent in to bat, Travis Head (46) and Abhishek Sharma (48) shared an explosive 82-run opening stand off just 34 balls to set a strong platform. Klaasen (52) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (39) then provided a late surge, helping SRH post a formidable total of 226 for 8. In response, KKR were bowled out for 161 in 16 overs, with Angkrish Raghuvanshi top-scoring with a 29-ball 52.

Ajinkya Rahane Doesn't Mince Words, Pin Points 'Big If' For KKR To Resurrect Season

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) captain Ajinkya Rahane attributed his side's defeat against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) to the lack of crucial partnerships during the middle overs while chasing a challenging target of 227 in the sixth match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 on Wednesday. "Yeah, I thought we needed a couple of big partnerships. Guys who were set needed to take it deep. We came back really well with the ball after they looked set for a big total, but while chasing, we couldn't build those partnerships," Rahane said after the match. Rahane noted that despite a strong start in the powerplay, where KKR raced to 84 runs in the first six overs, losing an extra wicket and failing to capitalise in the middle



overs proved costly. He also pointed out that the pitch conditions became slightly tougher during the chase, with slower balls gripping more than expected. "The slower balls were gripping more than in the first innings. We thought the wicket would get better, but the ball was stopping a bit.

Still, no excuses-we got a good start but couldn't carry it forward," he added. The KKR skipper also praised SRH bowlers for their execution, especially their use of variations and angles during the middle overs, which applied pressure on the batters. "I thought SRH bowlers executed their slower balls and angles really well. We just needed those small partnerships. If the batters maintain a positive mindset and awareness, we'll be fine going forward," Rahane said. Nitish Kumar Reddy, who won the Player of the Match for his brilliant 39 runs and two wickets, said, "I have been waiting for a match-winning performance for a long time. I am trying to be positive. The last season didn't go my way.

BIELLE-BIARREY NAMED MEN'S SIX NATIONS BEST PLAYER

France winger Louis Bielle-Biarrey has won the Player of the Championship award after his starring role in the 2026 Men's Six Nations. It is the second year running the 22-year-old has received the best player accolade. He shone in his country's title win - including in the decisive final game against England, where he ran in four tries to help seal back-to-back titles for the French. The Bordeaux Begles man secured 44% of fan votes to claim this year's award, with a record 151,525 supporters having their say. Italy centre Tommaso Menoncello, Ireland centre Stuart McCloskey and



Scotland wing Kyle Steyn were also on the shortlist. Bielle-Biarrey set a record for the number of tries scored in a single Six Nations last season, with eight - and he went one better in this year's campaign, crossing the line nine times. He is already fifth in the rankings of all-time leading try-scorers

in the championship. "I'm just really happy, honestly. It's yet another reward for the team's hard work throughout the tournament," Bielle-Biarrey said. "We were able to defend our title. Winning the tournament two years in a row is no small feat. We're very happy to have done it."

RAIN INTERRUPTS POST-MATCH SHOW IN PSL, HILARIOUS VIDEO LEAVES FANS IN SPLITS



Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2026 has been making headlines almost every day for all the wrong reasons. Within just a week of its commencement, the Pakistan-based T20 league has witnessed several overseas stars opting out, along with ball-tampering allegations involving Fakhar Zaman, Shaheen Afridi, and Haris Rauf. Even the playing conditions have come under scrutiny, triggering a meme fest across social media platforms. On Thursday, Karachi Kings registered a five-wicket win over Rawalpindi, but the match still managed to provide fresh meme material for fans. Following the victory, Karachi Kings batter Azam Khan, who was named Player of the Match for his blistering 74-run knock off 34 balls, appeared for the post-match interaction with the host broadcaster. However, the segment was abruptly interrupted by rain, forcing the presenter to rush off to

fetch umbrellas to prevent the moment from being spoiled. Former West Indies all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite, who was present during the interaction, held an umbrella over Azam as he answered the questions. The heartwarming and humorous moment quickly went viral on social media, sparking a fresh wave of memes. Meanwhile, during the same match, another awkward moment involving Karachi Kings batter David Warner caught fans' attention. Warner was among the standout performers for Karachi, scoring 50 runs off 46 balls and laying the foundation for the successful 198-run chase. However, after the match, Warner was caught in an awkward conversation with some of his teammates, prompting Team Director Haider Azhar to step in and intervene. A fan asked Haider on social media what the incident was about.

Borussia Dortmund Out To End Big-Game Woes Against Ascendant Stuttgart

Borussia Dortmund's 2025-26 Bundesliga campaign is statistically among their best ever, but their hopes of major honours this season have been derailed by a poor record against top sides. Nine points behind title-bound Bayern Munich, second-placed Dortmund have 61 points after 27 games. Only four times have Dortmund had more points at this stage of a season, two of which were title-winning campaigns. And while Dortmund have lost just twice in the Bundesliga all season - both times to Bayern - the 2024 Champions League finalists have struggled against the better sides. Against the top eight

teams in the Bundesliga table - the only sides with a realistic shot at European qualification - Dortmund have just two wins in nine matches. The victories came against Hoffenheim and Bayer Leverkusen, the latter of whom knocked Dortmund out of the German Cup just three days later. A win at Stuttgart on Saturday would help turn the tide. Stuttgart are third, eight points behind Dortmund, and look on track for a second top-four finish in three seasons. The German Cup holders have had the wood over Dortmund since Sebastian Hoernes took over in April 2023, winning five and drawing two of their seven

clashes. "I feel we'll do better against Stuttgart than we've done in the past few games," Dortmund coach Niko Kovac said Thursday. "But this club (Stuttgart) has developed sensationally. They're a serious team who have grown well together in recent years and that's no coincidence. "That means we'll really need to stretch ourselves in the game on Saturday." Bayern travel to Freiburg on Saturday but may do so without Harry Kane, who missed England's friendly loss to Japan at Wembley with an ankle injury coach Thomas Tuchel described as "minor". Kane has a history of ankle complaints and the league leaders look set to rest the

England captain with Tuesday's Champions League quarter-final first leg at Real Madrid on the horizon. One to watch: Deniz Undav (Stuttgart) Dortmund will need to keep red-hot Stuttgart striker Deniz Undav quiet. Undav scored the winner in Germany's 2-1 victory over Ghana on Monday, continuing his excellent form. In 38 games in all competitions, the former Brighton forward has 23 goals and 13 assists. Speaking Thursday - hours after Undav was named player of the month for March - Hoernes praised the striker's central role in Stuttgart's rise. "We've moved in the right direction in many areas. And we can't for-



'Rakasa' Team Celebrates Blockbuster Success

R'akasa' has opened to a strong and unanimous wave of positive response across theatres, with audiences embracing the film's entertainment-driven storytelling and humour. From early premieres to widespread theatrical screenings, the film has received encouraging reactions, with packed houses and consistent appreciation reflecting its growing connect. The team came together to celebrate this success, sharing their happiness over the reception the film has garnered from both audiences and media. Sharing his happiness, *Sangeeth Sobhan said*, "Thank you very much, we are very happy." We are receiving a very good response everywhere, and we're especially happy that the media is also enjoying the film. I don't know what else to say... thank you very much." Reflecting further on the response, he added, "We first went to Vimal Theatre, and an elderly person came and said, 'You did a nice film man,' and that gave me such happiness. The second half is working very well, especially the climax, and our producer is also very happy." Expressing her excitement, *Nayana Sarika said*, "I'm so happy guys, you can see it in my face." It is my fourth hit and this film is really special, especially because of this team. I'm



really happy, we gave the audience what we wanted to give. Since yesterday's premiere, it took some time to process it - I even texted Sangeeth saying, can you believe that it is housefull everywhere? Even he was like, 'Even I'm unable to take it.'" Speaking about the response, *producer Niharika Konidela said*, "Hello all, thank you so much. I'm unable to express my happiness in words. The audience reaction in theatres has been so great; whatever we intended to show is working exactly as expected, and they are getting entertained. Since the beginning, I kept saying I wanted to make an entertaining film, and I'm just so happy that 'Rakasa' is being received the way we wanted it to be received. Thank you so much." Sharing her experience,

director Manasa Sharma said, "Finally, I feel comfortable to talk... Thank you so much, guys." I really want to thank the media because they took every piece of content we made to the audience in such a great way - thank you so much for that. I'm really grateful, because of you guys the film got a great lift, especially among family audiences. This is my first theatrical release, and yesterday at the premieres, I was literally running between two screens just to watch the audience response. I was really happy... I felt so happy seeing the audience respond to the film exactly the way I intended it to." Highlighting the film's reception, *Anudeep Dev said*, "Thank you so much for making 'Rakasa' such a blockbuster. Everything we planned has landed exactly

the way we wanted it to, and we are really happy about it. Please watch the film with your family and friends - you guys will enjoy it a lot. Thank you." Adding to the celebratory mood, *Getup Srinu said*, "Thank you everyone, and I want to specially thank the media - from the beginning of our promotions, you all have given us strong support and a big boost." The film has opened to blockbuster talk, and I'm really happy that everyone is enjoying it, especially family audiences. Like we said, this is not a horror film, this is a Chandamama katha kind of film. Please watch it with your entire family - from kids to grandparents. Once again, thank you so much." The film has also been generating strong buzz across social media platforms, with audiences describing it as a fun-filled,

entertaining theatrical experience. Positive word-of-mouth, especially around its humour, performances and engaging second half, has been driving conversations online, with viewers recommending it as a perfect watch with friends and family. The growing digital chatter and repeat audience engagement further underline the film's strong connect with viewers. Adding to this momentum, the film's promotional content has already registered impressive traction, with the trailer crossing 4.2 million views and the songs gaining wide popularity among listeners. The overall response indicates a strong recall factor, with audiences continuing to engage with the film's content across platforms. Headlined by Sangeeth Sobhan and Nayana Sarika, 'Rakasa' features a supporting cast including Vennela Kishore, Brahmaji, Tanikella Bharani, Ashish Vidyarthi and Getup Srinu. Written and directed by Manasa Sharma, the film is produced by Niharika Konidela under Pink Elephant Pictures in collaboration with Zee Studios. With its entertainment-driven approach, strong audience response and growing word-of-mouth, 'Rakasa' continues to hold momentum in theatres following its release on April 3, 2026, establishing itself as a crowd-favourite entertainer.

'RAKASA' REVIEW:

A Familiar Fantasy with Flashes of Fun

Following the success of 'Committee Kurrollu', producer Niharika Konidela returns with 'Rakasa', a comedy-fantasy thriller directed by debutant Manasa Sharma, starring Sangeeth Sobhan and Nayana Sarika. The film follows Veeru (Sangeeth Sobhan), who returns from the USA only to find his childhood sweetheart marrying someone else. A drunken night at a haunted fort triggers a chain of events tied to a dark village mystery. Sangeeth Sobhan delivers a strong performance with excellent comedic timing, while Getup Srinu

and Vennela Kishore provide solid laughs. However, veterans like Brahmaji are underutilized. The production design and cinematography are highlights, but Anudeep Dev's music falls short, with an overbearing background score. The film borrows heavily from tropes of films like 'Anji' (2004), making the mystery predictable. The climax, which gives the antagonist a forced "humane" backstory, feels dated. Verdict: A routine fantasy ride that survives on Sangeeth Sobhan's shoulders. A passable entertainer for summer, but lacks the promised "monster" impact.



#SDT19 Promises Grand Scale Mythic Sci-Fi with Sai Durgha Tej



In a striking announcement that has already begun to spark excitement, #SDT19 brings together a powerful collaboration, hinting at a cinematic spectacle mounted on a grand scale. Headlined by Mega Supreme Hero Sai Durgha Tej, the film marks a promising phase in his career. Known for exploring unique and rooted concepts, the actor now steps into a world that promises secrets of the ages and power beyond imagination, as teased by the first poster.

ment poster reflects an ambitious cinematic world, suggesting a film that aims to deliver both visual grandeur and immersive narrative depth. Backing this grand venture is Sahu Garapati under the banner of Shine Screens, a production house that has consistently delivered successful and impactful films. Riding on a streak of successful projects, the banner continues its momentum by backing yet another ambitious concept. The poster, featuring a lone warrior standing before a massive celestial formation, hints at a story that is both epic in scale and rich in imagination. With a strong creative vision, a powerhouse performer at the forefront, and a proven production house backing it, #SDT19 is shaping up to be a high-concept cinematic experience.

Aadi Sai Kumar's next film titled 'Saira Banu'

Telugu star Aadi Sai Kumar's next film, which is being directed by Phani Krishna Siriki, has been titled 'Sairabanu', its makers announced on Friday. Well known producer Razes Danda, fresh off the sensational success of 'K-Ramp', is to bankroll the film under the Hasya Movies banner, with Krishnakanth Paruchuri as co-producer.

Bandhavi Sridhar has been roped in as the female lead opposite Aadi Sai Kumar for this film. Sources say that Aadi Sai Kumar, who scored the biggest blockbuster of his career with 'Shambhala', is now steering towards concept-driven films with strong commercial appeal.

Titled fascinatingly 'Saira Banu', the film was unveiled through a visually delightful poster. The design radiates a vibrant, dreamy romantic tone. A gigantic heart-shaped pink cloud, brushed in soft pastel textures, floats across the top. Beneath it lies the tagline 'A Fun Filled Journey of Love, Faith & Destiny.'

The bottom half paints a striking fantasy-infused visual - a water-drenched Charminar, a peaceful Vizag beach road, and Rajahmundry Godavari bridge, all set in a surreal, storybook-like landscape. The clear, serene sky and gently scattered clouds add to the whimsical, imaginative world the film seems to promise.

Hasya Movies took to its social media timelines to announce the title of the film. Sharing the title poster, it wrote, "A formal beginning... to a love story that breaks

every boundary. #SairaBanu Pooja Ceremony commenced today. Clap by @Kiran_Abbavaram. Camera switched on by @RamAbbaraju. @saikumaractor garu Script handover by @konavenkat99 @JainsNani. First shot direction @filmsyogi. Shoot begins soon."

Sources claim that Phani Krishna Siriki has crafted a unique Hindu-Muslim love story laced with humour, with the narrative unfolding in Rajahmundry and Hyderabad. The project was launched on Friday with an auspicious pooja ceremony. Backed by a strong technical

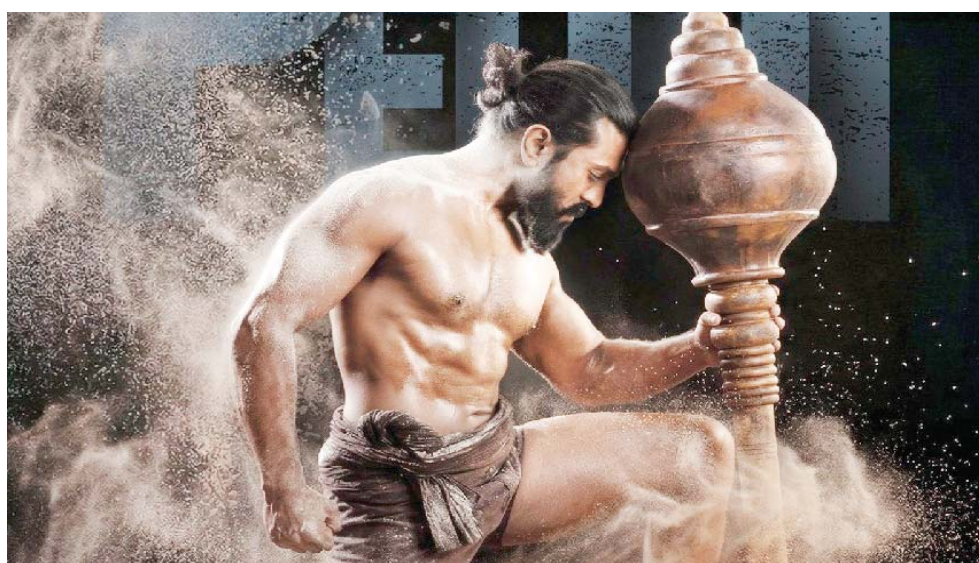
team, the film aims to be a rich visual and emotional experience. The film is to have cinematography by Raam Reddy and music by Shekar Chandra. Chota K Prasad is to handle the editing of this film while Brahma Kadali will serve as the production designer.



Ram Charan drops big update on 'Peddi'; says talkie portions of film done!

Actor Ram Charan, who plays the lead in director Buchi Babu Sana's eagerly awaited rural action drama 'Peddi', has now dropped a big update on the film's status, much to the delight of fans and film buffs. The actor has now disclosed that the talkie portions of the film have been completed and that there is just one song left to be shot in the film. Ram Charan made this disclosure, while speaking to the team of 'Rakasa', which had visited him on the sets of 'Peddi'.

It may be recalled that the makers of the film had only recently released a glimpse video titled 'Peddi Pehelwan Glimpse' from the film to mark the birthday of actor Ram Charan. The glimpse video that was released on Friday showcased another completely different facet of the actor in the film, much to the delight of fans and film buffs. While a



clip from the film that was released some months ago had showcased Ram Charan's skills with a cricket bat, leading many to believe that he could be playing a cricketer in the film, the glimpse video released on Friday had showed Ram Charan as a menacing wrestler as well. The glimpse video begins with a voiceover that says, "Kusthi (wrestling) is not a sport where you carry a bat and face an oncoming ball. This is a sport where you pledge your life and stand against death. Now tell me, are you going to get into the ring or are you opting out?"

The glimpse video then, among other things, shows Ram Charan practising with a mace. The actor sports a well toned body and the glimpse video makes it evident that the actor has put his heart and soul into the role. The glimpse video ends with Ram Charan responding to the question

asked to him earlier. He says, "The game is my pride." 'Peddi', which has triggered huge excitement among fans and film buffs, has been in the limelight right from the time it was first announced. Recently, the film was in the news when Indian cricketer Tilak Varma, who was part of the T20 World Cup winning Indian cricket team, paid a visit to its sets. The film brings together a strong cast with Janhvi Kapoor playing the leading lady. Senior actors Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyenndu, and Boman Irani will all be seen playing important parts in this film. On the technical side, the movie is backed by some of the best in the industry. R Rathnavelu is handling the camera work, Navin Nooli is in charge of editing, and Avinash Kolla has designed the film's massive and detailed sets.