

Entered Parliament not to create ruckus; interventions documented: Raghav Chadha on Punjab row

NATION | NEWS

US rescues downed airman in Iran in a daring operation

Washington: The United States has rescued a second crew member of a fighter jet shot down over Iran, President Donald Trump said, describing the operation as one of the most daring search-and-rescue missions in recent military history.



WORLD | NEWS

Lionel Messi Marks New Stadium With Goal But Inter Miami Held By Austin

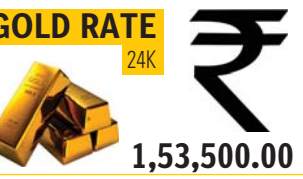
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OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



INBRIFS

Telangana urges Centre to pass bill to restore five villages merged with Andhra

Hyderabad (TSIT): The government of Telangana has urged the Centre to pass a Bill in the Parliament to restore five villages that were merged with Andhra Pradesh in 2014. Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has written a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, urging him to table a bill during the current session of the Parliament to re-merge five villages with Telangana. The state minister, who comes from Khammam district, demanded that the five villages near Bhadrachalam be restored to Telangana for administrative convenience. He also highlighted the problems faced by tribals due to these five villages being under the control of Andhra Pradesh. The demand for passing a bill to restore five villages comes close on the heels of Parliament passing a Bill to accord statutory status to Amaravati as the only and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh.

At least 14 people killed in Israeli strikes across Lebanon

Beirut (TSIT) Israeli strikes across southern Lebanon and the capital, Beirut, have killed at least 14 people, a day after Israel threatened to hit Lebanon's main border crossing with Syria, forcing its closure. Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday killed at least four people while 10 people – including a family of six – were killed in Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon. A further 39 people were wounded in an Israeli strike on Beirut's Jnah neighbourhood, according to Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health. The strike hit about 100 metres (330ft) from Rafik Hariri University Hospital, the country's largest medical facility, a medical source told the AFP news agency. Israel has launched air strikes across Lebanon since March 2 after the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel in response to the United States-Israeli war on Iran. Israeli forces have also launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon.

All pillars of democracy must work with mutual respect, says Revanth

Hyderabad (TSIT) : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Sunday that all pillars of democracy must work with mutual respect and avoid confrontations. He stated that his government gives the highest respect not only to all court verdicts and judgments, but also to various observations and feedback. He was speaking at the foundation-laying of Zone-II of the new building of Telangana High Court in the presence of Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant.

"In our democracy, the three branches operate with autonomy, inter-dependence and respect for each other: legislature, executive and judiciary. For a common citizen, the court represents the final door to knock, the last resort. Therefore, it is a great opportunity for me, maybe of a lifetime, that my government could initiate the project to build a new High Court complex for Telangana," he said. Revanth Reddy said many governments and Chief Ministers in the past could have taken up this project, but for some reason, it was left for his government to undertake



Many governments and Chief Ministers in the past could have taken up this project, but for some reason, it was left for his government to undertake this noble task. **CM Revanth**

this noble task. "The new High Court will become an icon, a functional lifeline for society and democracy. This will be the platform where the poor and weak will come seeking justice. For the next 100 years, the poor, the weak, the voiceless and the oppressed will come to this temple of justice, seeking to be heard, and will hope to find justice," said the Chief Minister.

He noted that the current High Court, a building of great historical significance, was no

longer able to physically support the needs of all stakeholders. "Beyond legacy, this building shows my government's view and values of democracy. We believe that all pillars must work collaboratively, with mutual respect. My government gives the highest respect for the judiciary," he said.

He believes that it is the duty of the political executive to provide the judiciary with the best modern facilities to perform to their highest level of capabilities. "What we are building here will not only be one of the largest High Court buildings in India, but a benchmark of modernity and excellence in public infrastructure.

Malda gherao reflects TMC's maha jungleraj: Modi in Bengal

Kolkata (TSIT): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday made the Malda gherao of judicial officers the fulcrum of the BJP's campaign on lawlessness in West Bengal, accusing the TMC government of running a "maha jungleraj" and pitching the 2026 assembly polls as a straight contest between the "bhay" spread by the ruling party and the BJP's "bharosa".

Addressing his first election rally in Cooch Behar in north Bengal after the poll schedule was announced, Modi used the Malda incident to sharpen the BJP's twin campaign planks of "poor law and order" and alleged demographic change, besides the issues of safety of women and infiltration from Bangladesh to attack the TMC. "Just a few days ago, the entire nation witnessed judicial officers being held hostage in Malda. What kind of government is this, where judges and constitutional procedures are not safe? We cannot expect such a government to keep the people of Bengal safe," Modi said.

The Prime Minister was referring to Wednesday night's incident in Malda's Kaliachak-II block office, where seven judicial officers, including three women, were gheraoed for sev-



eral hours by a mob during hearings on names marked "under adjudication" in the draft electoral rolls prepared during the Special Intensive Revision exercise. "What happened in Malda is an example of TMC's maha jungleraj," he said, alleging that the ruling party was "bent on carrying out the funeral procession of law and order" in the state.

Modi also sought to frame the contest in binary terms. "On one side, there is the 'bhay' (fear) of the TMC, and on the other side, you have the BJP's 'bharosa' (trust). On one side is the fear of TMC's cut money and corruption, and on the other side is the BJP which accelerates development," he said. The PM also contrasted the fear of infiltration and settling foreigners in Bengal with the BJP's confidence in stopping infiltration and driving infiltrators out.

Andhra town tense as temple row escalates; several detained

Amaravati (TSIT): Tension prevailed in Akiividu town of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday as police detained leaders of several organisations attempting to hold a rally demanding construction of a temple at a disputed structure. Police



stopped and took into custody members of Hindu groups heading towards the town, while imposing prohibitory orders to prevent gatherings amid tensions between sections of Hindus and Dalits. Authorities made it clear that no rallies or public meetings were permitted and warned of strict action against violators. Heavy security was deployed, with checkpoints set up at entry points and vehicles, including RTC buses, being thoroughly inspected to prevent outsiders from entering and escalating the situation. Actor Karate Kalyani was detained at Kaikalur while en route to Akiividu in support of the temple demand. She was placed under preventive detention and later condemned the police action.

BENGAL POLLS: MAMATA CALLS FOR 'REVENGE' OVER VOTER LIST DELETIONS

Samsanganj (TSIT): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday, April 5, urged people to cast their votes to "take revenge" for the deletion of people's names from the electoral rolls. The Trinamool Congress chief urged people whose names have been deleted from the voter list during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to move appeals before the tribunal.

Addressing an election rally at Samsanganj, which was the epicentre of violence during the protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act in Muslim-majority Murshidabad district in April 2025, she said, "Cast your votes to take revenge for deletion of people's names, and against the SIR so that the results reflect that." Banerjee asked the TMC workers to remain vigilant till the counting date on May 4. Assembly polls in West Bengal will be held in two phases on April 23 and 29. In an apparent reference to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Banerjee alleged that he was behind the deletion of voters' names in West Bengal during the SIR exer-



cise. "If you have the guts, fight directly," she said.

Asking all TMC workers to be on guard during the poll period, Banerjee said, "I hope none of our booth agents will sell themselves off to the BJP, in the interest of West Bengal." Claiming that EVM machines will be made to malfunction at some places, the TMC chief instructed party workers not to allow EC officials to repair the machines and instead demand replacements. Speaking at the rally in support of Mohammed Nur Alam in Samsanganj and Mohammed Amirul Islam in Farakka, Banerjee accused the BJP of spreading canards against her that she did not do much for the interest of the Muslims, maintaining that she has fought hard against the implementation of the Waqf (Amendment) Act.

Rahul slams Assam CM for corruption, vows accountability ahead of elections

Guwahati (TSIT): Rahul Gandhi, senior leader of the Congress Party, on Sunday launched a fierce attack on Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of corruption and divisive politics, and



promising that the people of the state would hold him accountable. Addressing a rally in Biswanath district, Gandhi said, "Himanta Biswa Sarma is the most corrupt and the most communal chief minister in the country. He has betrayed and misled the people of Assam—the evidence is before the public."

West Asia tensions: Govt to boost gas supply to fertilizer plants to 90% from April 6

New Delhi, April 4 (TSIT) From April 6, gas supply to fertilizer plants will be increased to about 90 per cent of their average consumption over the past six months, as the Government of India steps up efforts to maintain stability across key sectors amid the evolving situation in West Asia. In a comprehensive update, the government said it continues to take coordinated measures to ensure uninterrupted energy supplies, smooth maritime operations, and the safety of Indian nationals in the region, even as geopolitical tensions impact global energy flows, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The government said natural gas supply to urea plants is currently steady at 70-75 per cent of their six-month average consumption and will be enhanced to around 90 per cent from April 6, supported by existing inventories and scheduled LNG cargo arrivals. Supply to other industrial and commercial consumers, including those connected through city gas distribution (CGD) networks, will also be increased by an additional 10 per cent from the same date. Priority continues to be accorded to domestic PNG and CNG transport segments, which are receiving 100 per cent supply. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said adequate stocks of petrol, diesel, and LPG are available across the country, with all retail outlets functioning normally.

Citizens have been advised to avoid panic buying of fuels and unnecessary LPG bookings, and to rely only on official sources for information. The government has also urged consumers to conserve energy and use alternative cooking fuels such



as PNG and electric appliances wherever feasible.

While LPG supplies have been affected due to the geopolitical situation, there have been no reports of stock-outs at distributorships. Around 51 lakh domestic LPG cylinders have been delivered on a single day, with online bookings rising to 95 per cent. Measures such as Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) have been expanded significantly to curb diversion. The government has prioritised domestic LPG and essential services, while commercial LPG allocation has been capped at 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels. Over 5.7 lakh 5-kg free trade LPG cylinders have been sold since March 23 to ease demand pressures.

Authorities have intensified enforcement to prevent hoarding and black marketing. More than 3,700 raids were conducted in a single day, while public sector oil companies have issued around 1,000 show-cause notices and suspended 27 LPG distributorships so far.

Territories have been directed to carry out daily press briefings, set up control rooms, and counter misinformation actively. The government is accelerating the expansion of PNG infrastructure to reduce dependence on LPG. Over 3.5 lakh new PNG connections have been activated since March, with an additional 3.8 lakh registrations underway. CGD companies have been instructed to prioritise connections for commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants, while states have been asked to expedite approvals for pipeline infrastructure. Additional kerosene allocations and increased coal supplies have also been arranged to ease pressure on LPG demand.

Officials said all refineries are operating at high capacity with sufficient crude inventories. Domestic LPG production has been ramped up to support consumption.

To shield consumers from global price volatility, the government has reduced excise duty on

petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre and imposed export levies on diesel and aviation turbine fuel to ensure domestic availability. Retail prices of petrol and diesel remain unchanged.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said Indian vessels and seafarers in the region remain safe, with no incidents reported in the past 24 hours. Seventeen Indian-flagged vessels with 460 seafarers are currently in the western Persian Gulf, while over 1,300 seafarers have been repatriated so far. Port operations across India continue without disruption. The Ministry of External Affairs said Indian missions across West Asia remain in close contact with the Indian community, providing assistance and facilitating travel amid airspace restrictions. Since February 28, around 6.75 lakh passengers have travelled from the region to India. Special arrangements are being made through alternative routes where direct flights are not operational.

All Indian seafarers in Persian Gulf are safe: Govt

New Delhi, (TSIT) : All Indian seafarers in the Persian Gulf region are safe, and no incident involving Indian-flagged vessels has been reported in the past 24 hours, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways on Sunday. A total of 17 Indian-flagged vessels with 460 Indian seafarers remain in the western Persian Gulf region, with Director General (DG) Shipping, in coordination with ship owners, placing agencies and Indian Missions, actively monitoring the situation, the statement said. The Ministry also said that it continues to closely monitor shipping movements, port opera-



tions and the safety of Indian seafarers, while ensuring continuity of maritime trade. The DG Shipping Control Room remains operational 24x7 and has handled 5,088 calls and 10,547 emails since activation; in the past 24 hours, 73 calls and 122 emails have been received. The DG Shipping has facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 1,479 Indian seafarers so far, including 159 in the last 24 hours from airports and various regional locations

across the Persian Gulf. Port operations across India remain normal, with no congestion reported, as confirmed by State Maritime Boards of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways continues to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Missions and maritime stakeholders to ensure seafarer welfare and uninterrupted maritime operations. Meanwhile, across the region, Indian Missions and Posts remain in close contact with the Indian community, while continuing to provide assistance and issue necessary advisories for their safety and well-being, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

ENTERED PARLIAMENT NOT TO CREATE RUCKUS; INTERVENTIONS DOCUMENTED: RAGHAV CHADHA ON PUNJAB ROW

New Delhi, April 5 : Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha has strongly refuted allegations made by leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), who accused him of failing to raise issues concerning Punjab in Parliament. In a detailed public statement released on Sunday, Chadha termed the accusations "completely false" and politically motivated, asserting that his parliamentary record clearly contradicts such claims.

"I outrightly dismiss the baseless and maliciously motivated allegations being levelled... that I failed to raise Punjab's issues in Parliament," Chadha said, emphasising that his interventions are documented and accessible in official records. He added, "This is not a matter of opinion, propaganda, or political convenience. It is a matter of official record, available for every citizen to verify."

Addressing one of the key



accusations -- that he failed to raise the issue of pending funds for Punjab -- Chadha stated, "I categorically raised this demand on 31st July 2024," pointing to recorded proceedings available via Sansad TV. He specifically mentioned raising concerns about pending Rural Development Fund (RDF) dues and what he described as "financial injustice" toward the state.

Chadha further highlighted a wide range of issues he claims to have consistently raised in Parliament. These include groundwater depletion, farmers' distress, Minimum Support Price (MSP) concerns, rising agricultural costs, and the need for crop diversification. He also cited discussions on federalism, industrial revival, employment generation, infrastructure gaps, and border security challenges in Punjab. In addition, Chadha pointed to his advocacy on sensitive and culturally significant

matters, including the expansion of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor and improved pilgrimage access to Nankana Sahib. He stressed that these were "serious, documented interventions" rather than symbolic gestures.

"My role as a Member of Parliament has never been to indulge in noise, theatrics, or performative outrage," he stated. "I entered Parliament to create impact, not to create ruckus." Concluding his remarks, Chadha criticised what he described as a "coordinated misinformation campaign" against him, asserting, "No smear campaign can silence my voice or weaken my resolve. Truth will prevail. Facts will prevail. And every lie will stand exposed." The statement comes amid ongoing political tensions within AAP, with Chadha positioning his record as evidence of his continued commitment to Punjab and its people.

Right to Education does not include right to choose school: High Court

NEW DELHI: A child's right to education does not encompass the right to select a particular school for it, the Delhi High Court has held.

A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said the Right to Education (RTE) Act was a beneficial legislation, enacted to achieve the objectives of social inclusion and ensuring that schools become a common space which was not differentiated by barriers of caste, ethnic group or caste lines.

"However, such a right to education cannot be translated into right to select a particular school," the court ruled on March 25.

The court's verdict came on a mother's appeal seeking to admit her ward in Class 2 under the EWS category in a private school for the academic session 2024-2025.

The appellant had earlier approached a single-judge bench of the high court for admission of her ward under the EWS category in Class 1 of the private school for the 2023-2024 academic session.

In the appeal, the appellant assailed the single judge's order, which said that although the school lacked a legitimate basis for refusing admission to the appellant's ward, the conclusion of the relevant academic year precluded the court from issuing an order for her ward's admission in the subsequent academic year, i.e. 2024-25.

The single judge, however, had said that the unfilled EWS seats in Class 1 for the academic year would be carried forward next year for the same class and would be available to any EWS candidate, including the appellant's ward, if they choose to apply.

The appellant, however, argued before the division bench that her ward ought to be given admission in Class 2 in the school for the academic year 2024-2025.



R Gandhi alleges Kerala CM linked to those 'attacking' minorities, slams 'LDF-BJP tie up'

ALAPPUZHA: Top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday targeted the ruling LDF in Kerala and the BJP, alleging that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is in a partnership with people who "attack minorities" in other parts of the country.

Addressing an election gathering here, Gandhi reiterated his allegation of a BJP-LDF understanding and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of not speaking about the Sabarimala issue during the election campaign.

Elections to 140 Assembly seats in the state will be held on April 9.

Referring to former CPI(M) leader G Sudhakaran, who shared the stage with the Congress leader, Gandhi said his presence reflected a deeper shift within the CPI(M)-led LDF.

Sudhakaran is contesting as an Independent with UDF support from Ambalapuzha.

"We have a senior Left leader on the stage. There is a reason he is sitting here. It is not that he has suddenly changed his thinking. People who spend many years in a political organisation absorb its values. He is not here out of opportunism. He is here because something fundamental has happened to the LDF," Gandhi said.

He said for many years the Congress-led UDF fought the LDF as opponents, but they stood for certain ideas and were known as a symbol of the Left.

"What does LDF stand for-- Left Democratic Front. Now, frankly, there is nothing Left in the LDF. After the election, there will be nothing left in it," he added.

Gandhi alleged that what was disturbing leaders and workers within the Left was a "hidden hand" guiding the LDF.

"That hidden hand is communal, does not accept the Constitution of India, divides people and spreads hatred. Everyone in Kerala can see the connection between BJP, RSS and CPI(M)," he charged.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha further said there were two types of leaders in the LDF -- "opportunists who want power and do not care about the help of BJP and RSS," and those who had worked for the party for years but now feel "betrayed" and upset with its direction.

Gandhi also targeted Modi, saying he frequently speaks about religion and temples in his speeches elsewhere but remained silent on the alleged Sabarimala issues in Kerala, apparently referring to the gold loss cases.

"I fight BJP and RSS; they attack me, cases are filed, I am interrogated, but I do not back down. Modi attacks me daily. But why does he not attack the Kerala chief minister and his family," he asked.

He said Modi speaks about God, religion and temples in every speech.

"But when he comes to Kerala, he forgets all that because he wants to help the LDF. The truth is he knows the LDF will never challenge him nationally," Gandhi alleged.

Gandhi further alleged that minorities are facing widespread attacks in different parts of the country.

"Two nuns from here were attacked in Chhattisgarh. In Manipur, churches were burnt. The chief minister (Vijayan) has a partnership with the people who are doing this. The very people who are attacking minorities--Muslims, Christians and Sikhs--have a partnership with the chief minister," he alleged.

He alleged that both PM Modi and Vijayan, after being in power for a long period, have become "arrogant" and disconnected from the people.

He claimed that when five to six women MPs stood up in Parliament, Modi perceived it as an attempt to attack him.

Drawing a comparison with Vijayan, Gandhi alleged that when a few Congress workers showed black flags, they were "physically beaten almost to death".

"He imagines that they are going to attack him to kill him, so he attacks them. Both these are examples of people who are drunk on power. They have already broken their relationship with the people," Gandhi charged.

Cong betrayed northeast; BJP govt bridged "gap" between region, country: Nitin Nabin

RAM KRISHNA NAGAR/LAKHIPUR: BJP chief Nitin Nabin on Saturday accused the Congress of betraying the people of the northeast and playing with their sentiments, while asserting it was his party's governments that have "bridged the gap" between the region and the rest of the country.

He alleged that successive Congress governments in Assam had turned the Barak Valley into a "crime hub" for its vote bank politics.

People punished the Congress for "appeasing" infiltrators by voting it out of power in the state, Nabin told an election rally



in Cachar district.

Canvassing for the BJP's Lakhipur candidate, Nabin said, "When the opposition asks what we have done in this last decade, I want to ask them about their policy and intention. For 70 years, they

every nook and corner of the northeast. This has been possible as development is reaching every corner under Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

He maintained that the Modi government's biggest achievement has been opening bank accounts for the marginalised sections under Jan Dhan Yojana, which has ensured that the benefits of all schemes reach the intended beneficiaries directly.

Asserting that the BJP-led government will score a hat-trick of winning the Assembly polls, Nabin said, "We do not contest elections for power but to bring change in people's lives. People have blessed

us in the last two Assembly elections, and they will do so again this time."

Nabin claimed the Barak Valley was discriminated against by the Congress governments, and travelling to this region from Guwahati 12 years ago was an ordeal.

"Now, the roads are good... Once known for violence and unrest, the state is now known for development and hope," he added.

Speaking at another rally in Sribhumi district, Nabin said, "Previous governments had turned Barak Valley into a crime hub for vote-bank politics. Appeasement politics was at its peak during the Con-

gress rule, as they were more concerned about infiltrators."

Canvassing for the party's Ram Krishna Nagar candidate, he said people decided to "punish" the Congress and brought the BJP-led NDA to power with a "clear vision for development".

Asserting that the BJP-led government has ensured taking 'Virasat and vikash' together, Nabin said crime has been checked in the southern part of the state.

"No criminal dares to trouble the people anymore as they know that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will not spare anyone," he said.

UP: Man sentenced to life for killing nephew in 2019

BUDAUN: A court here on Saturday sentenced a man to life in prison for the murder of his nephew in a seven-year-old case, officials said.

Additional District and Sessions Judge (Court Number 1) Rinku Kumari pronounced the verdict, holding the accused Shahid guilty of murder.

According to Special Public Prosecutor Sanjeev Kumar Gupta, the incident dates back to February 5, 2019, in the Bisauli area. The complainant, Mohammad Miyan, had received information that his nephew Farooq, was killed while he was asleep at his house.

The victim was brutally attacked with sharp construction tools, including a chisel-like implement and an iron tool, causing fatal head injuries, the prosecution said.

During investigation,



police identified the accused Shahid, who is Farooq's uncle. Evidence and witness statements revealed that a dispute over money had taken place between the two on the night of the incident.

Shahid had also allegedly stolen the victim's mobile phone and later killed him out of fear of being caught.

The court relied on witness testimonies and material evidence, including blood-stained tools, to convict the accused under Sections 302 (murder) and 452 (house trespass) of the Indian Penal Code.

BJP targets Congress, Rahul Gandhi over remarks on West Asia conflict

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Saturday accused the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi of using falsehood to "praise" Pakistan and criticise India's stance on the West Asia conflict, and alleged that "INC now means Islamabad National Congress".

It said some Congress leaders are also holding up a mirror to Gandhi, who has "undermined India's position simply because he opposes the BJP".

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, in a series of posts on X, alleged that the Congress had wrongly claimed that Indian vessels such as Shivalik and Nanda Devi were not reaching the country and that India's ties with Iran had collapsed.

"Facts: seventh tanker of India Green Sanvi crosses Hormuz for India in another big embarrassment for 'Islamabad National Con-

gress," he said, adding that India has not only secured its people in the affected region but has safeguarded its energy interests.

Poonawalla, in a video message shared on X, accused Rahul Gandhi of "continuously spreading falsehoods and politicising foreign policy".

"Politicising foreign policy has become Rahul Gandhi's standard operating procedure and that too based on falsehoods," he said.

"Rahul Gandhi, as Leader of Opposition, seems to behave like a 'Leader of Pakistan'. The same Pakistan he praises is not even in a position to stabilise its own economy. It is struggling to repay loans, and fuel is being distributed in small bottles. Iran and other countries have rejected Islamabad as a mediator," he said.

Poonawalla accused Gandhi of prioritising "pol-

itics over national interest" and alleged that even leaders within the Congress had publicly disagreed with his statements on the issue.

"Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly undermined India's position simply because he opposes the BJP; Every time national interest is discussed, Congress resorts to petty politics, even on foreign policy. Once again, Congress leaders themselves are holding up a mirror to Rahul Gandhi. Will he accept it?" Poonawalla said.

He cited remarks by former Union minister Ashwani Kumar backing the government's handling of the situation, and claimed that it exposed the Congress party's "double standards".

"After Tharoor, Tiwari, Kamal Nath, Anand Sharma, now Ashwini Kumar holds a mirror to Rahul Baba," he said.

Poonawalla said Kumar

has openly praised the Modi government's stance on the Iran-Israel war issue while holding a mirror to the Congress party.

"He clearly stated that the contribution of India's prime minister in these difficult circumstances is commendable.

"This statement of his completely exposes the Congress party's false propaganda and double standards because, on the very issue where the Congress has been continuously trying to spread confusion, one of its former senior leaders has acknowledged the truth and praised the Modi government's policy and leadership," he added.

BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari also said that despite reports of large-scale disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz due to escalating tensions, India has managed to secure its critical energy supplies without interruption.

EC suspends four cops for 'failing' to maintain order during Suwendu Adhikari's nomination filing

KOLKATA: The Election Commission on Saturday directed the suspension of four Kolkata Police officials and initiation of disciplinary proceedings against them for "failing" to maintain law and order during BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari's nomination filing in the hotly contested Bhabaniour seat.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had accompanied Adhikari for the filing of the nomination papers on April 2 in the seat in south Kolkata, where the leader of the opposition in the outgoing Assembly is pitted against incumbent Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

In a communique to the West Bengal chief secretary, the poll panel said the direction is based on a recommendation from state Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal.

The missive directed



action against Kolkata Police's Deputy Commissioner (DC-II), South Division, Siddhartha Dutta, Officer-in-Charge of Alipore Police Station Priyankar Chakraborty, Additional OC Chandni Charan Banerjee, and Sergeant Saurabh Chatterjee.

"The commission has agreed to the proposal and directs that the aforementioned police officers be suspended and disciplinary proceedings be initiated

positions at Alipore Police Station. The BJP held a massive roadshow before the filing of the nomination on April 2 that moved through the constituency, considered Mamata Banerjee's bastion, with Shah and Adhikari standing on an open-hood, flower-decked vehicle. As the convoy approached Kalighat, barely a few hundred metres from Banerjee's residence, Trinamool Congress workers and supporters gathered on the roadside waving green-and-white party flags, shouting 'Joy Bangla' and 'Mamata Banerjee zindabad' slogans.

However, the situation turned tense when the BJP roadshow and the TMC protest came face to face near Kalighat.

For several minutes, supporters of the two rival camps stood barely a few metres apart, hurling slogans at each other.

Rajasthan anti-narcotics force carries out 258 ops in 175 days of its formation

JAIPUR: Rajasthan's Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) has carried out 258 operations within 175 days of its formation, seizing narcotic substances worth approximately Rs 563 crore, police said on Saturday.

The seized value pertains only to drugs and does not include the cost of confiscated vehicles, weapons or factories, officials said, terming it a record in terms of scale and effectiveness since the unit's inception on October 7, 2025.

Director General of Police Vikas Kumar said the ANTF has taken strong action against all forms of drug trafficking across the state.

"Major consignments have been seized, and five significant cases of illegal cultivation of ganja and opium have been busted," he said. He added that 30 illegal MD drug manufacturing units have been busted, including six directly by ANTF teams.

The force has also intercepted five major opium smuggling consignments and taken action against 45 notorious and wanted drug traffickers, he said.

Officials said the ANTF has established 18 outposts, one police station and a dedicated headquarters across the state, with trained personnel deployed to intensify anti-narcotics operations.

Congress and UDF Alliance Will Win Two-Thirds Majority in Kerala: Shivakumar

Kannur (Kerala) : Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka D K Shivakumar today expressed confidence that the Congress-led UDF would come to power in Kerala with two-thirds majority. "We are one hundred percent confident that the people of Kerala, who desire change and justice for Swami Ayyappa, will elect the Congress and UDF alliance with a two-thirds majority," he said while speaking to reporters during an election campaign rally here.



When asked about the election mood in Kerala, he said: "The CPI(M) government has not conducted a proper investigation into the gold theft case at the Ayyappa temple. The central BJP government has also not ordered a CBI inquiry into the matter. Amid rising prices, lakhs of people are returning to Kerala from Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations. Every year, lakhs of youth leave Kerala in search of employment. This is a major problem for the state. Only Congress can solve the people's problems, and Keralites will elect the UDF alliance. The Pinarayi Vijayan government's ten years have been a failure — we see no sign of development whatsoever."

When asked who would be Chief Minister if UDF comes to power, he said: "The Congress party will be in the CM's seat. Here, the party matters more than any particular individual. Congress stands by its ideology and we have faith in the Congress party's leadership." When asked about

allegations of match-fixing between BJP and Congress, he said: "Is disqualifying Rahul Gandhi from Parliament called match-fixing? When the people of Kerala elected Rahul Gandhi to Parliament with a massive mandate, they used his speech in Kolar as a pretext to disqualify him — and in doing so, insulted the people of Kerala. Is that what you call match-fixing?"

Asked about Karnataka-style guarantee schemes being announced for Kerala, he said: "As Karnataka Congress President, I announced the five guarantee schemes. We have kept our word. Roots are essential to a tree, trust cannot grow without roots. The people trusted us, and we have honoured that trust by doing what we said. In Karnataka, Telangana, and Himachal Pradesh, we have implemented the guarantee schemes as promised. In Kerala too, we will launch Indira Canteen as promised. When the UPA government was in power at the Centre, we implemented food security, the right to education, and the employment guarantee scheme."

When asked whether the Sabarimala issue would impact LDF, he said: "It will definitely have an impact. This is God's own country. The people here have faith in God, religion, and culture. We must protect the interests of the deity. People from all parts of the country come to Sabarimala with devotion. The roots of this country and this state rest on faith. For this reason, the LDF government will be uprooted entirely in this election." When asked about the Malayalam language policy, he said: "I will not comment on that matter. Law and order has deteriorated in Kerala, the people are dissatisfied, and that is why they supported UDF in the Lok Sabha elections. In the local body elections too, people gave Congress and UDF a strong majority, and they will give a two-thirds majority in the assembly elections as well."

When asked about a Kerala girl who went missing while trekking in Karnataka, he said: "I do not have information on this matter. Since you have raised the question, I will get the details and respond."

Sankesh Surana Studio is a contemporary fine jewellery brand



Bengaluru: Sankesh Surana Studio is a contemporary fine jewellery brand rooted in storytelling, craftsmanship, and artistic individuality. Founded by Sankesh Surana and Preethi Chopda, the studio is known for creat-

ing pieces that go beyond ornamentation—each design is conceived as a narrative, reflecting emotion, identity, and timeless elegance. Every creation is handcrafted with a deep focus on detail, ensuring exclusivity through limited

editions and one-of-a-kind designs for a discerning clientele. Sankesh Surana is celebrated as one of India's finest storyteller-designers, known for transforming emotions and narratives into timeless creations. A defining strength of the brand lies in its integration of rare art forms such as enamel and micromosaic, bringing depth, colour, and intricate artistry into fine jewellery. This distinctive design language is enriched by Preethi Chopda's expertise, adding a refined and artistic dimension to every creation. Together, the founders are redefining jewellery as more than luxury—positioning it as meaningful, wearable art.

DK Shivakumar Appeals to Voters in Kerala, Puducherry: "Your Opportunity to Solve Problems is in Your Hands"

Mahe (Puducherry) / Orkkatteri (Kerala): Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka D K Shivakumar urged the people of Kerala and Puducherry to use their vote to address unemployment, price rise, and governance issues, emphasizing that the opportunity to solve their problems lies in their hands.



Speaking at campaign events, Shivakumar questioned the performance of the ruling LDF in Kerala and the Rangasamy government in Puducherry, highlighting stalled development projects such as the Kochi Metro and Kannur highway. He asked whether citizens had benefited from any meaningful schemes over the past decade and

stressed that only the Congress-led UDF could ensure progress and protect citizens' rights.

Shivakumar also raised concerns about justice and law enforcement, citing a case of gold theft from Ayyappa Swami temple in Kerala, and criticized the lack of action by central investigative agencies. "If God gets no justice in God's own country, how can

ordinary people expect it?" he questioned.

Highlighting his party's past achievements, Shivakumar recalled the Congress-led government in Karnataka that implemented five guarantees and safeguarded citizen welfare. He appealed for unity among South Indian states, urging people to uphold the Constitution, national anthem, and flag.

Addressing the overseas electorate, Shivakumar expressed concern that citizens living in the Middle East are being denied the opportunity to vote due to central government inaction. He emphasized that a Congress government is the only way to protect their rights and ensure development in the region.

Saikat Sarkar Reimagines Divinity Through Abstract Art; Announces New Krishna Series with ISKCON Bangalore

Bengaluru: In a compelling fusion of spirituality and contemporary art, artist Saikat Sarkar is redefining the visual language of devotion through his latest body of work, "Lord Shiva in Abstract Form." Rooted in a deep philosophical inquiry into the infinite, Sarkar's creations move beyond traditional depictions, presenting divinity as an experiential and meditative phenomenon.

Hosted by Dwija Art Gallery, the exclusive exhibition brings together the artistic

message. In the spirit of seva, 30% of the proceeds will be contributed to The Akshaya Patra Foundation, supporting its mission of providing nutritious meals to millions of children across India.

The series gains further depth through collaboration with Urmila Barman, whose intuitive interpretation complements Sarkar's vision. Together, they dissolve boundaries between the tangible and intangible, presenting Shiva not as an image, but as an immersive experience. The event will be



brilliance of Saikat Sarkar and Urmila Barman, offering audiences a rare opportunity to experience spirituality through abstract expression.

Rather than portraying Lord Shiva as a mythological figure, Sarkar's work seeks to evoke the essence of Shiva—as cosmic energy that transcends form, structure, and convention. Through layered textures, fluid abstraction, and expressive compositions, the artist translates themes of creation, destruction, silence, and transcendence into a powerful visual narrative. Each artwork becomes a space for contemplation, inviting viewers to feel rather than merely observe.

This distinguished showcase is valued at approximately USD 9.5 million, reflecting both artistic excellence and cultural significance. The exhibition also carries a strong social

graced by Chief Guest Savitha Srinivas (IPS, ADGP), adding prominence to this significant cultural showcase. Looking ahead, Saikat Sarkar is set to expand his spiritual and artistic exploration with an upcoming series titled "Ananta: The Krishna Continuum," in collaboration with ISKCON Bangalore. This new body of work will explore the eternal and boundless nature of Krishna consciousness—where time, devotion, and divinity merge into a seamless continuum.

With this, Sarkar continues to bridge sacred philosophy with contemporary art, offering audiences a deeper engagement with spiritual expression. At the heart of his evolving journey lies a singular belief that divinity is not confined by form, and art, in its purest essence, becomes a pathway to realizing the infinite.

Mangaluru: 3rd Moodluru-Adduru Jodukere Gurupura Kambala inaugurated at Manibettu

Mangaluru, Apr 4: The third edition of the Moodluru-Adduru Jodukere Gurupura Kambala was inaugurated on Saturday, April 4, at Manibettu Guthu under the leadership of Kambala Committee president and KPCC general secretary Inayat Ali.

The Kambala was inaugurated by the priest of Kateel Sri Durgaparameshwari Temple, Anantha Padmanabha Asranna, who said, "Just as buffaloes are central to Kambala, spectators are equally important. Let us come together to support Kambala, which represents the identity and culture of Tulunadu."

He also lauded Inayat Ali as a kind-hearted leader who treats all communities with respect and noted that through Kambala, he is showcasing the culture of Dakshina Kannada district at an international level.

During the inaugural function,



Bantara Yane Nadavara Mathru Sangha president Ajith Rai Malady lit the lamp, observing that, under Inayat Ali's leadership, the third-year Kambala is being conducted in a unique and special manner compared to other Kambalas.

The programme was presided over by Inayat Ali. On the occasion, financial assistance totaling Rs 25 lac was distributed for social causes, including marriage support and housing for needy families.

Prominent attendees included

Moodluru Mundittaya Daivasthana Tantri G T Vasudeva Bhat; District Kambala Committee working president Gunapala Kadamba; Manur Subraya Temple president Shashidhar Bhat Bollarguthu; Golidadi Guthu Gadikara

Vardhaman Shetty; Kodetturu Guthu Nitin Shetty; Padmaraj R Poojary; Ravish Shetty Nitteguthu; Gurupura Venkataramana Temple administrative Moktesar Panduranga Kamath; Adyapadi Daivalangalagudde Neelakantha Umamaheshwari Temple administrative Moktesar Manjunath Bhandary; Doninje Guthu Gadipradhan Pramod Kumar Rai; Chandrasa Poojary; Taniya Poojary; Jatti Poojary; State Dharmika Parishat Member Mallika Pakkala; Purushothama Chitrapur; M J Hegde; District Dharmika Parishat member Lakshmeesha Gabaladka; Shivarama Multi; Shelton Pinto; Kambala Committee honorary president Padmanabha Kotyan; working president Jagadeesh Shetty Manibettu Guthu; and general secretary Yashwanth Kumar Shetty Bellurguthu, among others.

Childhood trauma increases risk of chronic pain in adulthood

Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect, either alone or combined with other types of childhood trauma, increases the risk of chronic pain and related disability in adulthood, according to a new research.

The new findings underscore the urgency of addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) — potentially traumatic events that occur before 18 years of age — and taking steps to mitigate their long-term impact on people's health.

ACEs may affect a child or teenager directly through physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect — or indirectly through exposure to environmental factors like domestic violence, living with substance abuse or parental loss.

Chronic pain is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide. Long-term painful conditions such as low back pain, arthritis, headache and migraine, can affect a person's daily functioning to the point they



can't work, eat properly, or participate in physical activities. For the study, published in the European Journal of Psychotraumatology, the team conducted a systematic review that included 85 studies. Of those, results from 57 studies could be pooled in meta-analyses.

They found that individuals exposed to a direct ACE, whether physical, sexual, or

emotional abuse, or neglect, were 45 per cent more likely to report chronic pain in adulthood compared to those not exposed.

Childhood physical abuse was associated with a higher likelihood of reporting both chronic pain and pain-related disability.

The odds of reporting chronic pain or pain-related disability in adulthood increased with exposure to

any direct ACE, either alone or combined with indirect ACEs.

The risk of reporting chronic pain in adulthood significantly increased from exposure to one ACE to four or more ACEs. "These results underscore the urgency of addressing ACEs, particularly in light of their prevalence and health repercussions," said Prof Jan Hartvigsen, from the University of Southern Denmark.

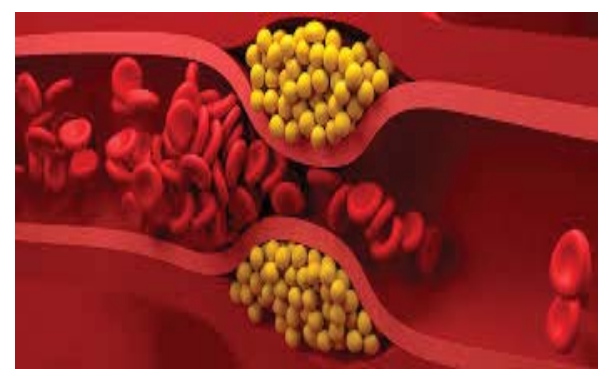
"A more nuanced understanding of the precise relationship between ACEs and chronic pain will empower healthcare professionals and policymakers to devise targeted strategies to help diminish the long-term impact of early-life adversity on adult health."

The researchers proposed that future research should delve into the biological mechanisms through which ACEs affect health across the lifespan, aiming to deepen understanding and develop ways to mitigate their impact.

New low-cost vax to lower cholesterol a 'game-changer': Study

New York: Researchers have developed a new vaccine that could be a game-changer, providing an inexpensive method to lower "bad" LDL cholesterol, which creates dangerous plaques that can block blood vessels. High cholesterol contributes to a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases, such as heart disease and stroke. Worldwide cardiovascular diseases claim nearly 18 million lives every year, according to the World Health Organization.

The new vaccines, detailed in a paper published in the journal npj Vaccines, lowered LDL cholesterol almost as effectively as an expensive class of drugs known as PCSK9 inhibitors. "We are interested in trying to develop another approach that would be less expensive and more broadly applicable, not just in the US, but also in places that don't have the resources to afford these very, very expensive thera-



pies," said Bryce Chackerian, Professor in the Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, at The University of New Mexico (UNM). The PCSK9 monoclonal shot targets the PCSK9 protein. Basically, the more PCSK9 the body makes, the higher the LDL cholesterol will be.

Cardiologist Abinash Achrekar, vice chair and professor in the UNM Department of Internal Medicine said the twice-monthly injections to block that protein reduce his bad

cholesterol by about 60 per cent, but they are expensive and require prior authorisation from a primary care doctor or cardiologist.

To make it more affordable, the team created a new vaccine that specifically targets PCSK9. "The vaccine is based on a non-infectious virus particle," Chackerian explained. "It is just the shell of a virus, and it turns out that we can use that shell of a virus to develop vaccines against all sorts of different things." In this case, Chackerian said he stuck

tiny pieces of the PCSK9 protein to the surface of these virus particles. "So, your immune system makes a really strong antibody response against this protein that's involved in controlling cholesterol levels," he said. "In the animals that we vaccinated, we see strong reductions in cholesterol levels — up to 30 per cent — and that is going to be correlated with reduced risk of heart disease."

Over the past 10 years, the vaccine has been tested on mice and monkeys with promising results. Chackerian said the next step is to find funding to move into vaccine manufacturing and clinical trials with humans. That process can take years and several million dollars, but it is worth it to develop a vaccine that is pure, safe and affordable. He estimates his vaccine could be cheaper than \$100 per dose because it is made with a simple and relatively inexpensive bacteria.

EDITORIAL

The Himanta Biswa Sarma Show: Forever No.2 To No.1

Assam election 2026 is Himanta Biswa Sarma's litmus test. While he has been around in Assam politics, and very visibly so, since the 1990s, this is the election when he is the incumbent and the face. The last two BJP victories were also largely credited to him, but in 2016, he was a neo-convert to the BJP, which picked Sarbanand Sonowal as the Chief Minister after the party's first win, and fought the next election in 2021 under his leadership. Himanta was not on the ballot, so to say. He became the Chief Minister after the victory. But this time he is. After a full 5-year-term, he is trying to deliver a hat-trick for the BJP, but more than that, he is trying to make a bigger political and personal point: that he is the winner, not just a backroom boy. The stakes are highest for Sarma in 2026 than ever.

The No.2 who always wanted to be No. 1

When former Assam Chief Minister and Congress veteran Hiteshwar Saikia was trying to bring young people to the party fold after the restive 1980s of the Assam Agitation, he found his man in Himanta Biswa Sarma. A young student activist in those days, Sarma, who had built a name for himself in campus politics by then, was associated with the influential All Assam Students Union. Since joining the Congress in 1991 and quitting it in 2015, he remained the go-getter for both Saikia and later, Tarun Gogoi. Sarma helmed key ministries such as finance, health, PWD, and was the driver of key govt programmes. But he remained No. 2. The man who was trusted by the top. The man who would get the job done. The trusted lieutenant, not the general. He thrived, he rose, but not to the top. As Tarun Gogoi's health started to fail after 2011 Assembly elections, Sarma was transparent in his ambition to be the Chief Minister. When it became clear to him that Gogoi would rather push his son, and not him, for the top, he walked away. Since joining BJP in 2015, Sarma has been the party's face not just in Assam but the entire northeast. He is the party's chief strategist, alliance maker, the opposition breaker. The man trusted by the Centre. But even in the BJP, with all the accolades, and being credited for the party's first win in 2016, he remained the necessary No.2. That jinx broke in 2021, and the BJP put Sarma in the driver's seat as Sarbanand Sonowal stepped aside. Sarma got what he always believed he deserved and worked tirelessly for it.

Enter Chief Minister Himanta Sarma

This is the first election where Himanta is the face, front and centre, not a backroom planner and manipulator. This is his election. And he has consciously worked for it to be this way. His five-year reign has been all about himself. He is the face of the government. Learning from his own experience and political curve, Sarma has made sure that there is no No. 2 in his regime. He is a one-man show. From addressing press conferences, to inaugurations, to levelling stunning charges against his rivals, it is only the Chief Minister you see. To the extent that he even announces the board exam dates himself. It was Sarma, not a top cop, who addressed the press on the findings of SIT against Gaurav Gogoi over his alleged Pakistan connections. Sarma has imbibed the rule book of three BJP leaders - Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is the face of all things in his government, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who created an image of a benevolent 'mama' (uncle) for himself, and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, whose contested bulldozer governance has made him a darling of hardliners as an unapologetically majoritarian leader. Sarma plays all three with great success. Welfare push of Modi, personal touch of Shivraj, and the muscular Hindutva of Yogi. The presence of bulldozers at rallies, where he dances and mingles with the people, is a stark contrast - presenting Sarma as a leader who cares for his people and would go to any extent to "protect" their interests and their "land".

From Punishment to Reform: A Trust-Based Judicial Journey



In India's democratic system, the purpose of law is not merely to punish, but also to create an environment of order, discipline, reform, and trust. With this perspective, the Jan Vishwas Bill 2026, after being passed by the Lok Sabha, has now also been approved by the Rajya Sabha, clearing the way for its implementation as law. Through this legislation, an effort has been made to move away from a system in which minor mistakes or routine violations of rules resulted in imprisonment; now, such violations will attract monetary penalties instead. Undoubtedly, the passage of this bill is an important and historic step—like a new dawn in India's legal environment. This law clearly signals a transition from a punitive system to a reformative one. This legislation amends about 79 central laws and introduces changes in 784 provisions, with more than 700 minor offences being decriminalized. This will reduce the burden of cases in courts and ease the pressure on the judicial system. For example, even if a driving license expires, it will remain valid for 30 days, and creating a traffic jam on a national highway will attract a fine instead of imprisonment. Similarly, in many other cases, imprisonment has been replaced with financial penalties. Several of these changes are related to business regulations; for instance, earlier, violations under the Drugs and Cosmetics rules could lead to imprisonment, but now only fines will be imposed. Small business owners,



who were often fearful of punishment due to unintentional violations of complex regulations, will now feel relieved and more confident. One of the major goals of the BJP government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been to simplify India's systems and laws, and this legislation is a constructive step in that direction. This law will not only reduce the burden on the judicial system but will also increase trust among citizens, entrepreneurs, and investors in the government. It can be seen as a practical implementation of the concept of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance." By emphasizing reform rather than punishment, this law will free common citizens from complicated legal procedures and corruption-prone systems. For a long time, India's legal system remained punishment-oriented, where even minor violations resulted in criminal cases. This led to a backlog of cases in courts and unne-

cessary legal complications for ordinary citizens. The Jan Vishwas Bill attempts to change this mindset. The objective of law will now not be to punish, but to reform and maintain order. Determining penalties according to the seriousness of the offence is more aligned with the fundamental principles of justice. This law will speed up judicial processes and allow greater focus on serious crimes. It is also a major step toward judicial reform because it will save the time and resources of courts, making the justice system more efficient. Another important objective of this law is to create an environment of trust in the business and industrial sectors. Previously, even minor regulatory violations led to criminal cases, creating fear among entrepreneurs and investors. Now, with provisions for monetary penalties instead of criminal prosecution, compliance burdens will be reduced and ease of doing business will improve.

This will encourage small entrepreneurs, startups, and industries, and further improve the investment climate in India. Globally, India's image as a simple and investment-friendly country will also be strengthened. One of the most significant aspects of this law is that its spirit closely reflects Indian culture. In Indian tradition, reform is valued more than punishment, forgiveness more than revenge, and correction more than condemnation. Our scriptures and traditions acknowledge that human beings are prone to mistakes, but they must be given an opportunity to improve. Harsh punishment for minor mistakes may sometimes be closer to injustice than justice. Therefore, if the legal system incorporates forgiveness, reform, and correction, society can become more humane and sensitive. Indian culture has historically been reformative and harmonious rather than punitive.

The journey from generic to innovative



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(Leading in export of low-cost medicines, but dependent on imports for active ingredients)

India has today become one of the largest suppliers of affordable medicines globally. Its recognition as the "pharmacy of the world" is not just a metaphor, but a powerful testament to its production capacity, export expansion, and contribution to global public health. By 2025-26, the Indian pharmaceutical market will surpass \$50 billion and contribute more than 20 percent to the global generic drug supply. Even in developed countries like the United States, Indian companies supply approximately 40 percent of generic medicines, while India plays a crucial role in the availability of life-saving medicines in regions like Africa and South Asia. This achievement is a result of changes in patent laws in the 1970s, when India adopted a process patent system, empowering domestic industry and paving the way for the production of affordable medicines. But behind this dazzling achievement lies a profound contradiction. While India is a major exporter of finished medicines, it is also heavily dependent on imports for the raw materials and active pharmaceutical ingredients needed for their manufacture. It is estimated that India imports approximately 60 to 70 percent of its active pharmaceutical ingredients, with the major share coming from China. For critical ingredients like penicillin G, clavulanic acid, and paracetamol, this dependence exceeds 80 percent. This situation is a serious concern not only from an economic perspective, but also for national security and supply chain stability. The COVID-19 pandemic starkly exposed the reality of this dependence. As soon as the lockdown in China disrupted supplies, pharmaceutical production in India was affected. Many pharmaceutical manufacturing units had to reduce production and some had to temporarily

shut down. This made it clear that disruptions in the supply of raw materials could immediately impact India's pharmaceutical production capacity. This experience made the need for self-reliance even more relevant. In this context, the government announced an investment of approximately ₹16,000 crore through the Production Linked Incentive Scheme, which aims to promote domestic production of active pharmaceutical ingredients. Although some progress has been made, several structural problems remain. High production costs, technical limitations, and stringent environmental regulations have led to the closure of many manufacturing units, limiting domestic production capacity. Weak regulatory frameworks also pose a major challenge in this sector. Drug regulatory agencies at the central and state levels clearly lack resources and trained manpower. Several Indian pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities have faced international criticism due to lapses in quality control. In some cases, import restrictions have been imposed by foreign regulatory bodies due to manufacturing process flaws and violations of quality standards. This impacts India's global reputation and adversely affects export prospects. Additionally, the growing market for counterfeit drugs is emerging as a serious problem. This not only poses a threat to consumer health but also undermines the credibility of the pharmaceutical industry. Price control policies limit companies' profitability, preventing them from investing adequately in research and development and limiting them primarily to generic production. Lack of investment in research and development is a major weakness of the Indian pharmaceutical sector. While global pharmaceutical companies spend a significant portion of their revenue on research, this proportion in India is relatively low. As a result, India lags behind in emerging areas such as innovation-based medicine, biological drugs, and personalized medicine. These areas are expected to grow rapidly in the future, and if India does not increase investment in these areas in time, it could fall behind in global competition. Lack of skills development also poses a significant obstacle. Advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence-based research require trained human resources, which are currently insufficiently available. Lack of proper coordination between

educational institutions and industry prevents students from gaining practical knowledge, which hinders the pace of innovation. Environmental challenges are also affecting the sector. The pharmaceutical manufacturing process is energy-intensive and polluting, making it expensive to comply with environmental standards. This increases production costs and reduces competitiveness. Furthermore, limited use of digital technology creates obstacles in supply chain management and quality monitoring. To address these challenges, a comprehensive, balanced, and long-term strategy is essential. First, domestic production of active pharmaceutical ingredients must be promoted. This should be done by expanding production-based incentive schemes and developing industrial clusters. Small and medium-sized enterprises must be encouraged and enabled to actively participate in this sector. Second, the government must prioritize research and development by taking concrete steps to increase tax incentives and strengthen public-private partnerships. The use of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning can make the drug discovery process faster and more effective. Third, regulatory reforms are essential. Drug regulatory bodies must be provided with greater resources, technical capacity, and autonomy. Quality monitoring and transparency must be ensured through digital platforms. Skill development also requires special attention. Developing a better synergy between educational institutions and industry will promote practical training to create a competent and innovative workforce. Adopting green technologies is also essential for environmental sustainability. This will not only ensure environmental protection but also reduce production costs and increase competitiveness. Ultimately, India must not limit its role to merely a supplier of affordable medicines, but must move towards establishing global leadership in innovation-based medicines, biological products, and personalized medicine. This requires a clear vision, strong policy support, and sustained investment. If India successfully addresses these challenges, it will not only strengthen its self-reliance but also emerge as a leading force in the global pharmaceutical landscape.

(Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

From Red Corridors to Strategic Horizons: India After Naxalism

"For communities that lived for decades between fear and neglect, this transition marks the first credible and continuous presence of the state in everyday life." After decades of internal unrest, India stands at the cusp of a structural transition—from chronic insurgency to a new phase of consolidated state authority. This milestone goes beyond the resolution of a security challenge; it opens a new chapter of deeper integration, sustainable governance, and expanded strategic horizons, positioning the nation with renewed credibility both domestically and globally. Tracing back to Naxalbari in 1967, the movement evolved into a contest over state authority across central and eastern India. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) entrenched itself in inaccessible terrain, social grievance, and chronic administrative absence. As Manmohan Singh observed, Naxalism was India's "single biggest internal security challenge"—not only for its violence, but for the structural limits it imposed. Long before casualties were inflicted, the insurgency curtailed governance reach, stifled developmental momentum, and constrained strategic confidence. The insurgency's rollback reflects a steady consolidation of state authority across regions once defined by absence rather than governance. Coordinated security operations cleared territory, disrupted insurgent networks, and reasserted the state's writ. These gains were reinforced through roads, telecommunications, banking access, schools, and health infrastructure. What unfolded was a security-led state-building enterprise. This sequence—from stabilisation to governance—transformed episodic presence into enduring authority, laying the foundation for long-

term integration. Central to this transformation was sustained political prioritisation, particularly under Narendra Modi, whose tenure integrated security, development, and governance into a unified strategy. The aim was not only to neutralise insurgency, but to dismantle the conditions that sustained it, ensuring territorial control became durable rather than transient. This vision converted the fight against insurgency into a blueprint for institutional expansion and developmental integration. Geography underscores the broader stakes. Former Left Wing Extremism-affected districts coincide with mineral-rich and rare-earth-bearing belts essential to India's industrial base and strategic autonomy. For decades, insecurity imposed a silent tax—detering investment, fragmenting logistics, and excluding regions from national supply chains. Stabilisation now transmutes these liabilities into strategic economic assets, enabling infrastructure corridors, regulated resource extraction, and integration into national production networks. Where violence once vetoed development, governance can now accelerate it. This trajectory has been consistently recognised in policy and institutional assessments. National security leadership, articulated by Ajit Doval, has underscored that internal instability imposes enduring strategic and economic costs. Global institutions, including the World Bank, document how conflict suppresses growth and deters long-horizon investment. Domestic evaluations by the NITI Aayog identified affected districts as persistent development outliers due to chronic insecurity. The difference today is tangible: diagnosis has

translated into decisive action. The convergence of security, development, and governance now projects India's credibility beyond its borders. Internal instability was long perceived as political risk; territorial control is now a prerequisite for investor trust and strategic partnership. Rival powers often assumed domestic disorder would cap ambition. As India positions itself as a manufacturing hub and supply-chain alternative, internal stability underwrites confidence, attracts long-horizon capital, and reinforces global credibility. For the first time since Independence, India's internal map no longer constrains external ambition. Foreign policy credibility for rising powers rests as much on domestic control as diplomatic articulation. The international system evaluates states not only by growth metrics or rhetoric, but by their ability to govern territory and integrate peripheries. A post-Naxal India signals durable state capacity—an unambiguous marker of strategic bandwidth expanded through domestic consolidation. Achieving this outcome required sustained sacrifice. Thousands of personnel from the armed forces, Central Armed Police Forces, civil services and state police served in unforgiving terrain under constant threat. Many were injured; many did not return. As Amit Shah has emphasised, success stemmed from decisive political resolve, coordinated Centre-state action, and frontline courage. Victory here is measured not abstractly, but in lives placed at risk and duty fulfilled. With the security phase receding, the imperative now is governance. Integration must be comprehensive—regions, commu-



- Apurva Rakesh Pandey
Alumnus of the University of Allahabad Writes on International Relations, Strategic Affairs and Governance

GOLD RATE TODAY:

Yellow metal falls 7% during the US-Iran war. Is it a right time to buy gold?

US-Iran war: Safe haven asset gold has remained volatile since the beginning of the US-Iran war. Despite continued geopolitical tensions, gold prices have declined by nearly 7% since February 28, indicating a shift in investor preference toward the US dollar as the primary safe-haven asset. Gold prices rose around 2.2% over the week, though gains were limited as crude oil jumped more than 10%, heightening inflation worries and disrupting the usual safe-haven appeal, according to Sugandha Sachdeva, Founder of SS WealthStreet. COMEX gold settled at \$4,679.70 per ounce, while MCX gold closed at ₹1,49,650 per 10 grams for the week. Why are gold prices falling? Sachdeva further explained that the geopolitical developments remain uncertain as early indications from Donald Trump and Iran pointed toward a possible ceasefire, but the tone has since shifted, with stronger rhetoric and fresh threats of extended military action. Meanwhile, Iran's IRGC Navy continues its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz,



keeping oil prices elevated, fuelling concerns around imported inflation, and strengthening expectations of a tighter monetary policy stance in the US. From a macro standpoint, the US economy showed resilience in March, with labour market data exceeding expectations. Non-farm payrolls rose by 178K against estimates of 65K, the unemployment rate came in lower at 4.3% versus the 4.4% forecast, and wage growth remained steady. These factors reinforce the likelihood of the Federal Reserve main-

taining a hawkish stance, which supports the dollar and caps gains in bullion. Meanwhile, continued ETF outflows during March, with redemptions far outpacing inflows, signal weakening investor demand for gold, Sachdeva opined. Gold prices likely to remain volatile Sachdeva believes that as long as oil prices remain elevated and rate-cut expectations stay delayed, bullion is likely to witness sharp, headline-driven volatility rather than a sustained directional rally. "In essence, gold remains

caught between geopolitical uncertainty and macro headwinds, with price action increasingly dictated by crude oil trends and dollar strength," she added. Meanwhile, Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, said that overall sentiment remains cautiously optimistic, with commodities slowly transitioning from consolidation to a recovery phase. However, the lack of strong follow-through buying across global markets clearly indicates a wait-and-watch approach. "Investors are pricing in uncertainty,

but not committing to a clear trend. Near-term direction will remain event-driven, influenced by currency movement, central bank signals, and evolving geopolitical developments, particularly in the Middle East and global growth outlook," Ponnudi added. Technical outlook of the gold prices On the technical outlook of COMEX gold, Ponnudi said that the prices are holding above key short-term moving averages while continuing to face resistance in the \$4,700-\$4,750 zone. Price action indicates underlying weakness, with geopolitical support failing to generate strong upside momentum. "A decisive breakout above \$4,800 can push prices toward \$4,850, with further upside extending to \$4,900, where strong supply is expected. On the downside, a sustained break below \$4,600 may accelerate selling toward \$4,550-\$4,500, with extended weakness dragging prices toward \$4,400. The overall structure remains fragile, with downside risks dominating unless key resistance levels are reclaimed," he added.

Amul crosses Rs. 1 lakh crore mark, reports 11% growth



New Delhi: Dairy major Amul on Sunday said its total turnover rose 11 per cent in the last fiscal year to cross the Rs 1 lakh crore milestone on better demand for dairy products. In a statement, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) said the total turnover of the Amul brand crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark for the financial year 2025-26. "The total unduplicated revenue of the Amul brand has increased by 11 per cent over a base of Rs 90,000 crore in 2024-25," it added. The turnover of GCMMF, which sells products under the Amul brand, grew 11.4 per cent to Rs 73,450 crore last fiscal from Rs 65,911 crore in the preceding financial year.

"The surge is powered by a massive product portfolio of more than 1,200 product packs, a vast distribution network, and a rapid adaptation to the evolving needs of modern consumers," GCMMF said. Amul's entry into overseas markets, including fresh milk sales in Europe and the US, played a key role in FY26 growth. This expansion aligns with a broader strategy to make Amul a household name globally, echoing India's ambition to place its food products on dining tables worldwide. The move also ensures that gains from technology and trade reach farmer-members directly. India's dairy sector is experiencing renewed export momentum,

with rising global demand and diversification away from traditional suppliers. Amul's scale, cost advantages, and processing capabilities position it well to capture market share. However, sustaining this growth will require navigating global competition, compliance with evolving standards, and consolidating its domestic dominance. If Amul successfully scales its cooperative model nationally and deepens overseas penetration, it could emerge as a top-tier global dairy brand within the decade. Alternatively, failure to adapt to global regulatory and competitive pressures could slow momentum, confining growth largely to domestic markets.

Apple at 50: Products that changed how we live - and that really didn't

Few companies have managed to define how people use technology in their everyday lives as resoundingly as Apple. The company, which celebrated its 50th birthday this week, was started by two Steves in a San Franciscan garage. It has had some truly standout successes - and some notable flops. These days, nearly one out of every three people on the planet owns an Apple product - a success that Emma Wall, chief investment strategist for financial services company Hargreaves Lansdown, said had as much to do with the company's marketing as it did its hardware. "They sold a dream," she said, and they added something that was "quite new at the time - the idea that branding was as important as the product line". Apple's string of hits has arguably slowed since the death of its visionary co-founder Steve Jobs, as the company focuses more on refining its existing technology. Ken Segall, Jobs's creative director for 12 years, told the BBC that Apple's current chief executive, Tim Cook, had done an "amazing job" at



changing with the times and keeping the company profitable. But he added that many Apple purists still do not feel as excited by the company's current phase because "they remember that older Apple was Steve Jobs". As the company pushes past its half-century, we asked technology analysts and experts to take a look at some of the significant ways the company changed the tech world, and some of the ways it arguably missed the mark. While by no means the first portable digital music player when it was released in 2001, the iPod

is one of "Apple's most iconic products" argued Craig Pickering of The Apple Geek. Not just because of what it was, but "because of what it changed". "MP3 players were clunky, storage was limited, and managing your music library felt like a chore," he said. "The iPod changed all of that almost overnight." The click-wheel design distinguished the device and introduced the iTunes library, paving the way for legal digital music downloading to hit the mainstream. Released in 2007, the iPod Touch was designed by the same team,

who later invented the iPhone - which quickly overshadowed the iPod. "Without the iPod, Apple would likely have lacked both the financial strength and the operational maturity required to take on the complexity of the smartphone industry," said Francisco Jeronimo, technology analyst at market research firm IDC. More than 200 million iPhones are sold each year - with roughly seven purchased somewhere in the world every second. To Ben Wood of CCS Insight, a market research firm, it is the "Hotel California of smartphones" - once you have one, you are "very unlikely to leave" the Apple ecosystem for a rival Android-powered device. "An iPod, a phone, and an internet communicator. These are not three separate devices, this is one device," said a beaming Steve Jobs holding up the first edition of the phone at its unveiling to the world in 2007. Like many revolutionary Apple products, the iPhone was not the first example of its kind - other phones had internet capabilities.

Moody's cuts India's FY27 GDP growth estimates to 6 pc amid West Asia conflict

New Delhi: Moody's Ratings has slashed India's economic growth estimates for the current fiscal to 6 per cent from 6.8 per cent earlier, saying the ongoing conflict in West Asia will moderate growth momentum and raise inflation risks. In its credit opinion report on India, Moody's said prolonged disruptions, particularly LPG shipments due to the conflict, would lead to near-term household shortages, higher fuel and transport costs, and spillovers to food inflation through India's reliance on imported fertilisers. The region accounts for around 55 per cent of crude oil imports and over 90 per cent of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supplies to India. "While inflation remains contained for now, geopolitical risks have tilted the inflation outlook to the upside," Moody's said while projecting inflation to average 4.8 per cent in FY27, up from 2.4 per cent in FY26. With inflation risks re-emerging and growth remaining robust, policy rates are like-



ly to be held steady or raised gradually in fiscal 2026-27, depending on the duration of geopolitical tensions and their pass-through to food and fuel prices, Moody's said. "In light of India's economic exposure to the ongoing military conflict in the Middle East, we expect real GDP growth to moderate to 6 per cent in fiscal 2026-27 from 6.8 per cent earlier, driven by subdued private consumption, softer industrial activity and a weakening in the momentum of gross fixed capital formation amid elevated prices

and higher input costs," according to the Moody's report, dated March 31, accessed by PTI. Last month, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected India's GDP growth to moderate to 6.1 per cent in the current fiscal from 7.6 per cent growth recorded in 2025-26. Besides, an Economy Watch report by EY has said that India's real GDP growth for FY27 could erode by around 1 percentage point, while retail inflation could rise by about 1.5 percentage points from their baseline estimates if the

West Asia conflict persists through 2026-27. Domestic rating agency Ica expects the growth to moderate to 6.5 per cent in FY27, owing to the adverse impact of elevated energy prices and concerns around energy availability amid the West Asia conflict. It further said the government's sustained emphasis on infrastructure spending and a gradual easing of trade barriers will continue to support investment activity. India's real GDP growth remained robust at 7.5 per cent in calendar year 2025, up from 7.2 per cent in CY 2024 and the highest among G-20 economies, driven primarily by a strong rebound in manufacturing. Moody's said elevated oil, gas and fertiliser prices would intensify pressures on targeted subsidies, resulting in higher outlays, alongside revenue erosion compared to the budget. Global crude prices have risen by almost 50 per cent since the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran on February 28, triggering sweeping retaliation from Tehran.

RBI policy, US-Iran tensions likely to drive stock market next week

Mumbai: Indian stock markets ended their sixth consecutive week lower, with benchmark indices slipping nearly 0.5 per cent amid heightened volatility triggered by a mix of global uncertainties and domestic concerns. Investors are now bracing for another eventful week, where the Reserve Bank of India's policy decision, escalating geopolitical tensions, and surging crude oil prices are expected to dictate market direction. The holiday-shortened week began on a weak footing, as rising tensions between the United States and Iran, coupled with a sharp spike in crude oil prices, dented investor sentiment and led to broad-based selling. However, markets staged a midweek recovery as fears of an immediate escalation eased and oil prices showed some signs of cooling. Despite the rebound, volatility remained elevated due to inconsistent global cues, persistent foreign institutional investor outflows, concerns over inflation, and



a weakening rupee. By the end of the week, the Nifty settled at 22,713.10, while the Sensex closed at 73,319.55. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that from a technical standpoint, the 22,150-21,900 zone is likely to act as a key support area. "On the upside, resistance is seen in the 23,000-23,500 range. The Relative Strength Index (RSI) on the weekly time-frame stands at 27.88," an analyst stated. Looking ahead, all eyes will be on the upcoming monetary policy decision by the Reserve Bank of India. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to meet from April 6 to April 8 for its

first session of FY27. Geopolitical developments will also remain a key overhang. The ongoing conflict between the United States and Iran appears to be intensifying, with reports of military escalation and strong warnings issued by Donald Trump. Any further deterioration in the situation could significantly impact global risk sentiment and trigger fresh volatility in equities. Crude oil prices, already on a sharp upward trajectory, will be another crucial factor. Brent crude has surged to around \$109 per barrel following disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for global energy supplies.

IPO PIPELINE STRENGTHENS; 38 COS FILE DRAFT PAPERS IN MARCH

New Delhi: As many as 38 companies, including SBI Funds Management and Manipal Health Enterprises, filed preliminary IPO papers with Sebi in March 2026, signalling improving issuer sentiment even as regulatory timelines contributed to the surge. This marks a sharp jump from 22 filings in March 2025 and 16 in March 2024, data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed, indicating a stronger pipeline of public issues. The momentum is expected to continue, with several high-profile companies, including the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Reliance Industries' telecom arm Jio, preparing to submit their draft papers in the coming weeks, according to merchant banking sources. In addition, Singapore-based Sencorp Industries' Indian renewable energy arm, Sweden-based Modern Times Group's subsidiary PlaySimple, TPG-backed



online lending platform Fibe and Tiger Global-backed BatterySmart are also likely to file DRHPs soon, they added. Of the 38 companies that filed their draft papers with Sebi, a total of 9 firms, including Zetwerk, SNVA Traveltech, Rediff.com India, Torrent Gas, Synergy Advanced Metals, Garuda Aerospace, and Sohan Lal Commodity Management, opted for the confidential filing route. According to Axis Capital report, as many as 64 companies have filed Draft Red Herring Prospectuses (DRHPs) with

Sebi and are awaiting clearance, while 124 companies have already received regulatory approval but are yet to hit the market. Another 20 firms have filed confidential DRHPs since March 2025. The report further noted that FY2025-26 (up to March-end) saw 109 mainboard IPOs, of which 69 listed above their issue price, while three companies were yet to debut on the exchanges as of March 31, 2026. The IPO market is expected to gain further momentum in the first quarter of FY2026-27, supported

by a robust pipeline, with a large number of companies both awaiting Sebi approval and holding valid approvals for launch, it added. So far in 2026, 18 companies have launched IPOs, with 8 issues hitting the market in March alone despite volatile market conditions and geopolitical tensions. On the other hand, digital payments company PhonePe temporarily deferred its public market listing process due to the current geopolitical conflicts and market volatility. However, Sameer Nigam, PhonePe's CEO, stated the company remains committed to a public listing in India. Market participants said the spike reflects a combination of improved issuer confidence and regulatory considerations. Feroze Azeez, Joint CEO at Anand Rathi Wealth, said the surge cannot be attributed to timelines alone. "It is a mix of both issuer confidence and regulatory compliance pushing filings before

March-end, but it would be too simplistic to attribute it only to timelines," he said. Echoing a nuanced view, Pratik Loonker, MD & Head-ECM and Co-Head-Financial Sponsor Group at Axis Capital, said the trend is driven more by preparedness than outright confidence. "Given regulatory approval timelines and the difficulty of timing markets, companies are filing early to stay ready for favourable windows as they emerge. Regulatory approvals are valid for up to 12 months," he said. Typically, companies tend to file towards the end of the financial year to keep their approval window open. However, the scale of filings this time is notable, with more than a dozen firms submitting DRHPs in the last two days of March alone, Azeez added. Importantly, the quality of companies entering the IPO pipeline also points to improving sentiment.

Trump issues expletive-laden threat to Iran demanding Strait of Hormuz be opened

US President Donald Trump says he is considering "blowing everything up and taking over the oil" in Iran if a deal to end the war is not reached quickly, Fox News reports. But, in the interview with Fox's chief foreign correspondent, Trump says there is a "good chance" a deal will be reached tomorrow. Mahdi Tabatabaei, an aide at Iran's President's Office, says the Strait of Hormuz "will be reopened" when "a portion of transit tolls is used to compensate for all the damage caused" by the war. Iranian officials and lawmakers have previously raised the possibility of imposing transit fees or tolls on vessels using the strait. Responding to Donald Trump's latest comments, Tabatabaei says the US president "has instigated a full-scale war in the region and is still issuing threats". He says Trump's "insults and nonsense" are born of "sheer desperation and anger". The key battleground between Iran



and the US may now be at sea, not on dry land. President Trump has repeated that the Strait of Hormuz must be re-opened or - come Tuesday - Iranians will be "living in hell". The narrow waterway, which connects the Gulf and the Arabian Sea, used to be the route for one fifth of global oil supplies. Not anymore. With the US countdown under way, we headed for the strait - or as

close as we could get - setting sail from the port of Khasab, on the coast of Oman. The view from our dhow, a traditional wooden sailing boat, was of ships at anchor close to the mouth of the strait. We counted eight vessels just one nautical mile ahead of us. Maritime organisations say as many as 2,000 are stranded in the area. Under clear blue skies, with the sun glinting on the waves, the strait

looked calm and peaceful - but is now perhaps the most powerful weapon in the hands of Iran. A container ship in the UAE has reported "multiple splashes from unknown projectiles" nearby, according to UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO). The incident happened at Khor Fakkan Port while the container was being loaded, UKMTO says. UKMTO is a Royal Navy-led

organisation that liaises between merchant shipping and military forces for maritime security. Iran has said "non-hostile vessels" can use the Strait of Hormuz, but the war - in which several ships have been attacked - has halted normal transport activity. Last week commercial ships anchored off the UAE and Qatar were struck by projectiles. The Strait of Hormuz is a key trade artery through which around 20% of the world's oil passes. Since the beginning of the US-Israeli war with Iran, numerous ships have come under attack in the area. About 3,000 ships usually sail through the strait each month but this has dramatically decreased recently, with Iran threatening to attack tankers and other ships. About one-third of the world's fertiliser trade also passes through the strait, and it is a vital channel for imports to the Middle East, including food, medicines and techno-

logical supplies. The effective blockade of the the strait has caused energy prices to spike. There are fears it could fuel higher inflation. Donald Trump has just repeated his threats to Iran unless it opens the Strait of Hormuz by 6 April. He has shifted his deadlines during the war - here's a recap. Deadline 1: On 21 March, Trump said he would "hit and obliterate" power plants, "starting with the biggest ones first", if Iran didn't reopen the waterway within 48 hours. Deadline 2: Two days later, he said there had been "very good and productive conversations" between the countries and postponed strikes against energy infrastructure for five days. Deadline 3: On 27 March, Trump said he would postpone attacking energy plants for 10 days, "as per [an] Iranian government request", bringing the deadline to 6 April. 48-hour warning: Yesterday, with the 6 April deadline looming.

AI VIDEOS FUEL RHETORIC AS ORBÁN BIDS FOR FOUR MORE YEARS IN HUNGARY



When a video went viral appearing to show a Hungarian soldier's execution, its disturbing nature came as a shock to anyone who saw it. Ahead of pivotal Hungarian elections on Sunday 12 April, the AI-generated, fake clip was posted on the social media accounts of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party in February. It tells the story of a young girl at a window yearning for her father's return home from war, and then the video cuts to him - blindfolded, bound by the hands, and then shot by his captors. The video targeted Orbán's election rival, Péter Magyar, who could unseat him after 16 years in office.

The Fidesz campaign has made unsubstantiated claims about the war in Ukraine and Magyar's intentions, at times using AI-generated videos like this, even though it makes clear the video is fake. "The video is an AI video, but the war is really horrible," the video says. "Péter Magyar doesn't want you to see this video. He doesn't want you to see what an irreversible tragedy it is to join a war." Fidesz alleges that Magyar, from the centre-right party Tiszta, will bring Russia's war against Ukraine to its doorstep if elected, even using pension money to support Ukraine and imposing forced conscription.

Man charged over fatal shooting of baby in pram in New York



A man has been charged with murder after a seven-month-old baby died after being shot while sitting in her pushchair in New York. Amuri Greene, 21, has been charged with three counts of murder and one of attempted murder after police accused him of fatally shooting Kaori Patterson-Moore on 1 April. Greene appeared in court on Friday where he pleaded not guilty, according to CBS News, the BBC's US partner. Officers believe the baby was the unintended victim of a gang-related shooting. Police said a second suspect, Matthew Rodriguez, 18, had been arrested in connection with the shooting in Pennsylvania and charges were pending. Footage from the incident appears to show two men on a motorcycle riding against the flow of traffic through the Williamsburg neighbour-

hood of Brooklyn, before a man on the back of the vehicle took out a gun and fired, police said. Officers believe Greene carried out the shooting and was on the back of the scooter, CBS reported. He was thrown from the vehicle following the incident and was taken to hospital for treatment where he was placed in police custody. Greene also pleaded not guilty to charges of five counts of criminal possession of a weapon, two counts of attempted criminal possession of a weapon, and two counts of assault, CBS reported. Rodriguez is believed to be the man seen driving the scooter the gunman was on during the shooting. The driver crashed into oncoming traffic after the gunfire and fled, police said. Family and friends gathered on Friday night for a candlelight vigil at the corner where the shooting took place.

CAMBODIA UNVEILS STATUE TO HONOUR FAMOUS LAND-MINE-SNIFFING RAT



A famous mine-clearing rat, who was awarded a gold medal for his heroism, has been commemorated with the world's first statue dedicated to a landmine-detecting rat. Magawa, who lived to eight years old, sniffed out over 100 landmines and other explosives in Cambodia during his five-year career that started in 2016. A statue of the rodent carved from local stone by artists was unveiled in Siem Reap, Cambodia on Friday, in time for the International Day for Mine Awareness on 4 April.

Landmines remain an ongoing risk to Cambodia, and more than a million people continue to work and live on land contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance, according to the United Nations. Magawa, an African giant pouched rat, was trained by the Belgian charity Apopo before moving to Cambodia to begin his bomb-sniffing career in 2016. Using his acute sense of smell and training to detect a chemical compound within explosives, Magawa would then alert human handlers of mines that could be later safely removed. During his time, Magawa cleared more than 141,000 square metres (1,517,711 sq ft) of land - the equivalent of 20 football pitches - and could search a field the size of a tennis court in just 20 minutes.

US AIRMAN INJURED BUT SAFE AFTER RESCUE FROM INSIDE IRAN

A second US crew member who was missing in Iran after an American F-15 fighter jet was shot down has been rescued. Posting to social media, US President Donald Trump said the rescued weapons systems officer had "sustained injuries" but would be "just fine", describing the rescue as "one of the most daring search and rescue operations in US history". Following the downing of the aircraft on Friday, both the pilot and crew member ejected - with the pilot recovered shortly afterwards. Following this, both the US and Iran scrambled to locate the missing crew member in a mountainous region of southwestern Iran. The search presented a serious test for the US, with the possibility of a prisoner of war situation if Iran found



the missing airman - something which would have likely involved him being used as part of propaganda material. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was said to have launched its own search for the missing American, reportedly using troops and locals, and offering them a reward of about \$66,000 (£50,000) to capture him alive. Videos on social media

appeared to show hundreds of people heading to a mountainous area in south-western Iran to search for the missing US airman. Details of the second airman being rescued emerged in US media late on Saturday night. A short time later, Trump confirmed the successful mission on Truth Social, writing "WE GOT HIM!", adding the crew member was a "respected colonel".

The US rescue operation was described to the BBC as "huge" by one person familiar with the details. The BBC understands that there was an engagement between the US and Iranian forces during the rescue, and that the pilot may have been injured during his initial ejection from the aircraft. Tasnim, the semi-official news agency associated with the IRGC, said five Iranians were killed during the operation. Trump said dozens of aircraft had been involved in the operation, with the White House not giving an update after the pilot was recovered on Friday to protect the ongoing rescue. Earlier reports suggested the missing crew member might be in the mountainous area of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, in the southwestern regions of Iran.

POPE LEO CALLS FOR GLOBAL LEADERS TO CHOOSE PEACE IN HIS FIRST EASTER MASS

Thousands of worshippers flocked to St Peter's Square on Sunday to hear Pope Leo XIV deliver his first Easter Mass address as pontiff. Framed by white roses on the central balcony of the Vatican's basilica, the pope called on "those who have the power to unleash wars" to choose peace. "On this day of celebration, let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged by wars," he said. The first US-born pope has become a vocal critic of the Iran war, and has used recent public addresses to denounce global conflicts and urge de-escalation.



Pope Leo waved to the crowd gathered in the square below before delivering his "Urbi et Orbi" blessing - Latin for "to the city and the world". St Peter's Square was decorated with bright spring blooms, with rows of daffodils and thousands of pur-

ple, red and white flowers arranged for the Easter Mass. "We are growing accustomed to violence, resigning ourselves to it, and becoming indifferent, indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people," the pope said in his address. "Let those who have

weapons lay them down. Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace." In a break with recent tradition, Leo did not explicitly name any country or conflict in his message. He paid tribute to his predecessor, Pope Francis, who gave his final address on Easter Sunday last year hours before his death. Referring to the Easter story of Christ's resurrection, three days after he was nailed to the cross, he said Jesus had been "entirely nonviolent" in the face of suffering. For Christians, Easter is the most important date in the liturgical calendar, marking the resurrection of Christ - a central tenet of the faith.

Artemis's stunning Moon pictures - science or holiday photos?



Nasa is releasing a steady stream of stunning pictures of the Moon and Earth taken by the astronauts on its Artemis II Moon mission. Attracting millions of likes on social media, the images show the two bodies from unusual angles in glorious high definition. There is no denying the drama: four astronauts are embarking on a mission that will take them further from Earth than any human has ventured since 1972. But is there unique scientific value in these images, or are these simply the equivalent of holiday photos? Nasa wants the American public behind them to support the mission. They are live-streaming the 10-day journey, and the four astronauts are doing regular video updates, describing their progress in triumphant tones. The crew have been so excited to watch the world and Moon go by, Nasa has said, that the window inside the Orion spacecraft got dirty and the astronauts were sent instructions on how to clean it. This is the first time that digital cameras have been taken this far into space. Orion has 32 cameras and devices - 15

mounted onto the spacecraft and 17 handheld by the crew. According to Nasa, the astronauts are using standard 10-year-old cameras, including the Nikon D5, as well as GoPros and smartphones. Nasa's photostream on flickr even tells you the device used to take each of the published photos. On Friday we saw the first results of their intense observations. "Hello, World" was taken by Commander Reid Wiseman when the mission was about equidistant from the Moon and Earth - 142,000 miles (228,500 km) from Earth, and 132,000 miles from the Moon. It shows two auroras as the Earth eclipses the Sun, and the planet Venus glowing at the bottom of the image. Our planet appears upside down, with the Sahara desert and the Iberian peninsula visible to the left and the eastern portion of South America to the right. It's a lovely picture, but nothing new when it comes to science. In fact, Nasa has a satellite with its Deep Space Climate Observatory with a camera called Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera (Epic).



German males under 45 may need military approval for long stays abroad

'Deeply infuriating': The Irish speakers fed up over fada-less forms and flights



Between Kneecap, CMAT's dual-language single Euro-Country and Jessie Buckley's closing words when accepting her Oscar, it feels like the Irish language is having a moment. Its renaissance in the cultural world has made it more prominent far beyond Ireland's borders, with cúpla focal - a few words

- being heard on streets and in classrooms as far away as New York and Sydney. But inside the Republic of Ireland, where Irish has been the first official language (English is second) for nearly 90 years, there is a problem. The fada, the small, skyward pointing accent placed on vowels, and the inability in recent years of some of Ireland's biggest companies - such as Aer Lingus - to recognise it. The fada changes the pronunciation of words but also, crucially, their meaning. Believe us when we say that you wouldn't want a slice of caca instead of cáca.



LSG BEAT SRH TO ACHIEVE 1ST WIN OF IPL 2026

Mohammed Shami asked probing questions not only to Sunrisers Hyderabad batters but also to the national selection committee with an opening spell for ages while skipper Rishabh Pant upped his game when it mattered to headline Lucknow Super Giants' thrilling five-wicket victory in an IPL 2026 match on Sunday. In a spell that oozed skill and class in equal measure, Shami bowled an astounding 18 dot balls to finish with 2 for 9 in four overs which largely became responsible for Sunrisers Hyderabad being restricted to 156 for 9. LSG rode on Aiden Markram's 27-ball-45 and skipper Rishabh Pant's 50-ball-68 not out to surpass the target with one ball to spare. The chase got a touch tricky towards the end with 9 needed off the final over but Pant smote Jaydev Unadkat for two straight boundaries - second a fore-



hand tennis like slap before another lofted boundary over mid-off to finish the game in style. It was an innings that had nine boundaries and his choice of strokes was measured on a slowish track where SRH spinners Harsh Dubey and Shvang Kumar made the ball talk. But it was Shami, the 35-year-old artist, who

set up the match in the LSG's bowling Powerplay itself. His scalps were the crack opening pair of Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head, dismissed off successive deliveries across two overs with different variation of slower deliveries. Shami was ably supported by young Prince Yadav (2/34 in 4 overs),

whose outswinger (inswinger for Ishan Kishan) was the ball of the match. While Pant would have fancied bowling SRH out for less than 100 after restricting them to 26 for 4 at one stage, Heinrich Klaasen (62 off 41 balls) and all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy (56 off 33 balls) counter-attacked to add 116 runs

for the fifth wicket. But there was a third act to the tale as SRH had another batting collapse losing five wickets for 14 runs in last 2.2 overs. During the chase, LSG did stutter in phases but Pant, who curbed his impetuosity showed glimpses of his vintage self but also concentrated on crossing the line. Overlooked time and again, 35-year-old Shami sent a stern reminder to the national selection committee with an opening spell for the ages that was pivotal to Lucknow Super Giants choking Sunrisers Hyderabad despite the Klaasen-Reddy stand. The cerebral operator in Shami quickly understood that he would have to take the pace off the deliveries on this track and did so promptly. He bowled four fullish blockhole deliveries to Head and allowed a single. When Abhishek took strike.

Liverpool 'gave up' in FA Cup exit - Van Dijk

Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk has apologised to the club's supporters and said his side "gave up" as they were dumped out of the FA Cup by Manchester City. The Reds' hopes of winning silverware this season now rest on Champions League glory following Saturday's humbling 4-0 quarter-final defeat at Etihad Stadium. Manchester City demolished Liverpool in an 18-minute period which spanned the half-time break, scoring twice either side of the interval following an evenly matched opening half an hour. "I can only apologise to the fans for what we have shown, especially the second half," said Netherlands centre-back Van Dijk, 34. "Obviously you come out with the right intentions from the dressing room [after half-time], to hopefully score for 2-1 as soon as possible to change the game. "The opposite happens and to come back from 3-0 is obviously very difficult here - but also you shouldn't give up and that's maybe, at a cer-



tain point, what happened. "We let our fans down, we let ourselves down, and the manager. "The way we played in the second half, especially, must hurt for everyone. It definitely hurts me." It was Van Dijk's foul on Nico O'Reilly which gave Erling Haaland the opportunity to kickstart City's demolition job from the penalty spot after 39 minutes. The Norway striker went on to complete a hat-trick in the second half with 57 minutes played, after Antoine Semenyo had added his

side's third. The result and performance increases the pressure on manager Arne Slot, who led the club to the Premier League title in his first season in charge last year, before the first leg of their crucial Champions League quarter-final tie against Paris St-Germain. On his manager, Van Dijk said: "It's a together thing, isn't it? Obviously he's responsible as the manager but we are the ones on the pitch that have to do it. "The matter of fact is now, PSG are waiting for us.

Sanjiv Goenka's Heartfelt Gesture For Rishabh Pant After LSG's Win Over SRH In Thrilling IPL 2026 Clash

Lucknow Super Giants owner Sanjiv Goenka won hearts with a brilliant gesture for skipper Rishabh Pant after his team's victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad on Sunday. Pant led by example as he slammed an unbeaten 68 off 50 deliveries to guide LSG to a thrilling 5-wicket victory. Chasing a modest target of 157, LSG found themselves in a spot of bother after losing a couple of wickets but Pant ended up playing a gritty knock to clinch the win with one ball to spare. Following the match, Goenka shared a hug with Pant and both of them were seen having a cheerful conversation on the field. Coming to the match, Lucknow Super Giants



(LSG) skipper Rishabh Pant struck the winning boundary with one ball to spare as his side survived a tense final-over scare to defeat Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by five wickets in a gripping Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 encounter at the Rajiv Gandhi International

Stadium on Sunday. Chasing 157, Lucknow looked comfortably placed for much of the innings before Hyderabad's bowlers produced a spirited late fightback to drag the contest down to the wire. Pant eventually finished it in style, driving Jaydev Unadkat over mid-off for four in the

penultimate ball of the match to seal Lucknow's first win of the season. Earlier, Hyderabad had recovered from a disastrous start to post 156/9 thanks to a remarkable counterattacking stand between Heinrich Klaasen and Nitish Kumar Reddy. After being put in to bat, the Sunrisers were rocked early by the Lucknow pacers. Mohammed Shami removed Abhishek Sharma for a duck before sending back Travis Head soon after, while Prince Yadav dismissed Ishan Kishan as Hyderabad slumped to 11/3. Wickets continued to tumble, and when Liam Livingstone fell cheaply, the hosts were in deep trouble at 35/4 at the halfway stage.

Sanjiv Goenka's Emotional Reaction As Rishabh Pant Leads LSG To Thrilling Win vs SRH

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) owner Sanjiv Goenka appeared visibly emotional as his team defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in a thrilling IPL 2026 game on Sunday. Chasing 157, LSG captain Rishabh Pant showed nerves of steel, remaining unbeaten on 68 to guide his side home with one ball to spare. It is LSG's first victory of the season in their second game, having lost their opener to Delhi Capitals. Goenka, who was earlier seen thanking the heavens when LSG's bowlers started well, reacted to Pant's winning boundary with an emotional applause. With 9 runs needed in the final over, Pant slammed three boundaries to clinch victory.



As cameras pointed to Goenka, the LSG owner's relief was clear. SRH vs LSG, IPL 2026: As it happened Skipper Rishabh Pant (68 not out) produced a captain's knock after pacer Mohammed Shami weaved his magic, leading

Lucknow Super Giants to a comfortable five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in an IPL match here on Sunday. Shami (2/9) struck early blows, dismissing the opening duo of Abhishek Sharma (0) and Travis

Head (7), which was crucial in restricting SRH to 156 for nine. Heinrich Klaasen (62 off 41 balls) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (56 off 33 balls) shared a 116-run stand for the fifth wicket to take SRH to a decent total. Aiden Markram (45) and Pant resisted the SRH attack, especially the skipper playing responsibly, shunning his natural aggressive instinct. Brief Scores: Sunrisers Hyderabad: 156 for 9 in 20 overs (Heinrich Klaasen 62, Nitish Kumar Reddy 56; Mohammed Shami 2/9, Avesh Khan 2/36, Manimaran Siddharth 1/29). Lucknow Super Giants: 160 for 5 in 19.5 overs. (R Pant 68 not out, A Markram 45; Harsh Dubey 2/18).

Price calls for Shields fight after beating Pineiro

A bloodied Lauren Price dug deep to beat Stephanie Pineiro on points to retain her welterweight world titles in Cardiff before calling for a future fight with Claressa Shields. The 31-year-old picked up a terrible cut after a clash of heads in the fifth round against the previously unbeaten Puerto Rican. Price rallied to fight to the final bell and was rewarded with a unanimous decision on the scorecards. After the fight, American Shields - who has held 15 world title belts across five weight divisions - stepped into the ring to face off with Price. "I want the biggest fights in boxing, and what a great honour it would be to share the ring with Shields," said Price. "It makes for a great fight, but not just one fight. I said to her tonight, 'Let's do it, I'll come to America



and then you come to Wales," and she shook on it. So hopefully we can make that happen. "It is why I'm in the game, I want to fight the best. Credit to Shields - I respect her - but I back myself!" Shields said the location of any fight would have to be discussed but hinted at a meeting between the two stars at the end of 2026 and said the bout would be at middleweight. "When you are an Olympic champion you

are a special fighter," said Shields. "Me and you have talked online and me and you can make it happen, you did great tonight. "No disrespect to you, you've got a little bit of time. I've got one more fight and then we can fight at the end of the year." Price has spoken often about staging a future fight at either the 33,000-seat Cardiff City Stadium or Principality Stadium, which can hold almost 80,000 fans.

Boxer Anthony Joshua Makes First Public Appearance Since Fatal Car Crash

Former world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua has made his first public appearance since he survived a car crash in Nigeria that killed his close friends Sina Ghani and Latif Ayodele. Joshua had kept a low profile since the accident on December 29, but he was seen at London's O2 Arena on Saturday watching a Derek Chisora bout. The British fighter was ring-side as Chisora made the 50th and final fight of his career against Deontay Wilder. Boxing promoter Eddie Hearn has said Joshua needs time to heal before considering stepping back into the ring himself. Dressed in a white tracksuit, Joshua emerged with Hearn from a black people carrier as he



walked into the arena past a number of camera crews. There was no friendly welcome from his old rival Wilder, who was repeatedly linked with a world title bout with Joshua during the peak of their powers. The American went straight past Joshua without any acknowledgement in a tight corridor inside the arena. Joshua last fought before Christmas

when he faced YouTube-turned-boxer Jake Paul in Miami, but speculation continues over a potential bout with British rival Tyson Fury. During a ring-side interview with DAZN, Joshua said: "It's amazing to be here. Boxing, especially British boxing, is booming. "I'm obviously biased, I'm rocking with Derek regardless, so I'm Team Chisora."

Billie Jean King Cup: Sania Mirza Sends Rallying Cry To Indian Women's Team



As the Indian women's tennis team is set to carry the national flag at the upcoming Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Group I event, women's tennis trailblazer Sania Mirza has called on the squad to play with the "greatest pride" and "100 per cent effort." India is hosting the 2026 Billie Jean King Cup (BJKC) Asia/Oceania Group I event, which will be held at the DLTA Stadium in New Delhi from April 7 to 11. Ahead of the tournament opener, Sania shared a message of support for the contingent. The Indian team comprises Ankita Raina, Sahaja Yamalapalli, Vaishnavi Adkar, Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, Rutuja Bhosale, and Vaidehee Chaudhari. "Hi everyone, here's wishing the Billie Jean King Cup Indian team all the very best. The tournament starts in a couple of days, and it's the greatest pride, greatest honour to represent our amazing country. I hope all you girls do well, give your best, give your 100 per cent, and bring it home. We're all rooting for you," the three-time Grand Slam champi-

on said. Often referred to as the World Cup of women's tennis, the tournament will see six nations compete in a round-robin format, with the top two teams earning promotion to the Billie Jean King Cup Play-offs scheduled for November 2026. Apart from host India, the other participating teams in the Asia/Oceania Group I ties are Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, and Thailand. India entered the competition looking to build momentum, having delivered impressive results at last year's Billie Jean King Cup Asia & Oceania Group I qualifiers, where they secured 2-1 victories over Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and the Republic of Korea. With New Zealand, Indonesia, and Mongolia also in the fray this year, India will be aiming for a top-two finish to keep its World Group ambitions alive. As the team builds toward the qualifiers, the focus remains firmly on performance and taking a decisive step toward returning to the World Group for the third time.

Lionel Messi Marks New Stadium With Goal But Inter Miami Held By Austin

Lionel Messi marked the opening of Inter Miami's gleaming new stadium with a goal as the Major League Soccer champions battled to a 2-2 draw against Austin FC on Saturday. Inter Miami's co-owner David Beckham was among the star-studded crowd as the club's 26,000-capacity Nu Stadium made its debut, marking the end of a more-than-decade-long journey to find a permanent home. "To see this stadium come to life, after years and years of trying to get this stadium up and running in Miami is something that's very special," Beckham said

shortly before kick-off. "I came to America in the MLS 20 years ago and I made a lot of promises. And 13 years ago I made a lot of promises again announcing I was coming to Miami. "Today it's just a dream come true for us." But while the match kicked off in celebratory fashion, with Beckham joining billionaire Inter Miami managing owner Jorge Mas in a pre-game ribbon-cutting ceremony, Austin refused to follow the script. The Texas club, who went into the game with only one win from five matches, had stunned the home crowd

after only six minutes, with Guilherme Biro nodding in a corner from Facundo Torres to make it 1-0 to the visitors. Messi though did not take long to open his account in his new surroundings. Right-back Ian Fray burst down the flank and crossed for Messi, who equalized with a rare headed goal to make it 1-1. Inter Miami dominated possession thereafter and carved out a string of chances, with Mateo Silvestri twice going close with a shot in the 34th minute before heading wide four minutes later. But Austin's dogged defence and speed on the

counter continued to pose problems for the hosts, and they once again took the lead after 53 minutes. Messi was dispossessed deep in the Austin half by Joseph Rosales, who released Myrto Uzuni, who in turn sent substitute Jayden Nelson clean through on goal to score. With Miami increasingly desperate, coach Javier Mascherano sent on veteran striker Luis Suarez in the 73rd minute. The Uruguayan duly delivered eight minutes later, prodding home from close range after a Messi corner was flicked on by German Berterame in the Austin defence.



Raakaasa' Emerges as Family Favourite, Wins Audiences with Clean Comedy and Packs Theatres with Laughter, Crossing 10.30 Cr Worldwide with Surging Momentum



Raakaasa has opened to a strong and collective response at the box office, quickly emerging as a commanding crowd puller across centres. The film is witnessing solid footfalls from the outset, with audiences turning up in good numbers and contributing to a lively theatrical atmosphere. Backed by its entertainment-driven appeal, Raakaasa is steadily building traction and establishing a firm hold among moviegoers. Driving this momentum is the film's impressive box office performance across its first two days. Opening with a solid 5.6 crore worldwide gross on Day 1 including premieres, Raakaasa registered a strong jump to reach 10.30 crore worldwide by Day 2, signalling clear growth. The overseas market has also responded positively, contributing over \$257K, further strengthen-

ing its global presence. The steady rise across territories underlines not just a strong opening, but a film that is gaining ground with each passing show. The film is witnessing encouraging responses across centres, with audiences embracing its entertainment-driven narrative and humour. From early shows to packed theatres, Raakaasa has generated strong reactions, with viewers enjoying its engaging tone and lively storytelling. Notably, the film builds effectively as it progresses, with the second half enhancing the overall theatrical experience and contributing to sustained audience engagement. A major strength of the film lies in its wide family appeal. Raakaasa is clearly emerging as families' first choice because of its entertainment and clean comedy. The Sangeeth-Getup Srinu

track has turned out to be a major winner, delivering moments that are drawing consistent laughter across theatres and standing out as a key highlight. Adding further strength to the humour is Vennela Kishore, whose performance is being widely appreciated as one of his best so far. His timing and screen presence elevate several sequences, strengthening the film's entertainment quotient and enhancing its repeat value among audiences. The film is also connecting strongly across age groups. Kids are being glued to the movie for its fantasy elements, while parents are equally engaged by its humour and overall entertainment, making Raakaasa a balanced theatrical outing. This cross-generational appeal is translating into steady occupancies, particularly among family audiences.

'DECOIT' IS A FILM MADE WITH PASSION. AUDIENCE WILL DEFINITELY BE SURPRISED IN THEATERS: HERO ADIVI SESH AT THE PRESS MEET

Adivi Sesh's 'Decoit' Love & High Voltage Action Gripping Trailer Launch Adivi Sesh is all set to impress the audience once again with his pan India film 'Decoit'. Judging by the recently released theatrical trailer, it looks like another intense and emotional story. Debutant director Shanil Deo has directed this film brilliantly. The story of "Decoit" revolves around the intense bonding between Harry and Juliet. The couple, who dream of a peaceful life, are completely changed by a betrayal. Harry is sent to prison. But the story takes a turn again with his escape. Meanwhile, Juliet fights for a large sum of money to save the life of her sick daughter. In this situation, Harry turns from lover to survivor and enters the world of crime, taking advantage of Juliet's need. The way director Shanil Deo has told the story is unique. The way the past memories and current events are shown together in the trailer is impressive. Since Adivi Sesh was also a part of the story writing, the emotional swing between love, betrayal, and survival seems very powerful. Mrunal played the role of Juliet, both as a lover and a mother, brilliantly. Anurag Kashyap brought more tension to the story by appearing in the role of a cool and terrific policeman. Prakash Raj gave strength to the



Adivi Sesh's 'Decoit' Love & High Voltage Action Gripping Trailer Launch Adivi Sesh is all set to impress the audience once again with his pan India film 'Decoit'.

story with his experience. Similarly, actors like Sunil and Atul Kulkarni also did justice to their roles. Technically, Dhanush Bhaskar's cinematography gives the film a raw, stylish look. The background score by Gyanni further increases the suspense. Produced by Supriya Yarlagadda, co-producer Sunil Narang, the film is made with top production values under the banner of Annapurna Studios. The trailer has raised huge expectations among the audience. The film, which will be released pan India on April 10th, is set to deliver a high voltage cinematic experience with Adivi

Sesh and Shanil Deo, as per the trailer. At the Trailer Rage press meet, hero Adivi Sesh said... Hello everyone. My life philosophy is not about how many films I have done, but how many good films I have done. Decoit is a film made with my life. There are many important things in it but they were not revealed in the trailer. The audience will be thrilled while watching the film. The main theme of this story is what a person steals when his heart is broken. We tried to tell a good story on feelings.

The story of this film opens in layers. This is a film based entirely on feelings. Talking about director Shanil, the flavor of Bhojpuri culture is visible when he talks. That is why we brought Pawan Singh to represent that culture. Mrunal has acted wonderfully in this film. It is very difficult to guess what will happen after the first half hour of the film. Abburi

Ravi garu is like a guru to me. We have worked together in almost all the films like Panja, Kshanam, Major, Goodachari, Decoy Goodachari 2. He is a good guide for me. I have a personal connection with Mahesh Babu. I took him as a reference to capture the emotion of Hari's character. We have traveled to many places including Warangal and Tirupati for the promotions of this film. Two songs have already become hits. We are bringing the film at the perfect time. This is a universal story. When I was a child, while dancing at a function, he said, "You are tall, don't dance."

Movie Artist Association Strongly Condemns MLA Anirudh Reddy's Derogatory Remarks Against the Film Fraternity

The Movie Artistes Association (MAA) President Vishnu Manchu and Vice President Madala Ravi condemned the recent controversial statements made by Telangana MLA J. Anirudh Reddy. Responding to the MLA's suggestion MAA President Vishnu Manchu took to social media to provide a sharp reality check. "Good suggestion. Now just wondering — what's the equivalent test before filing a nomination for elections? I am sure the voters would be happy to collaborate on a common framework with the respected MLA." MAA Vice President Madala Ravi responded saying that it is "distasteful," "baseless," and "deeply offensive." He emphasized that the Telugu film industry is built on discipline

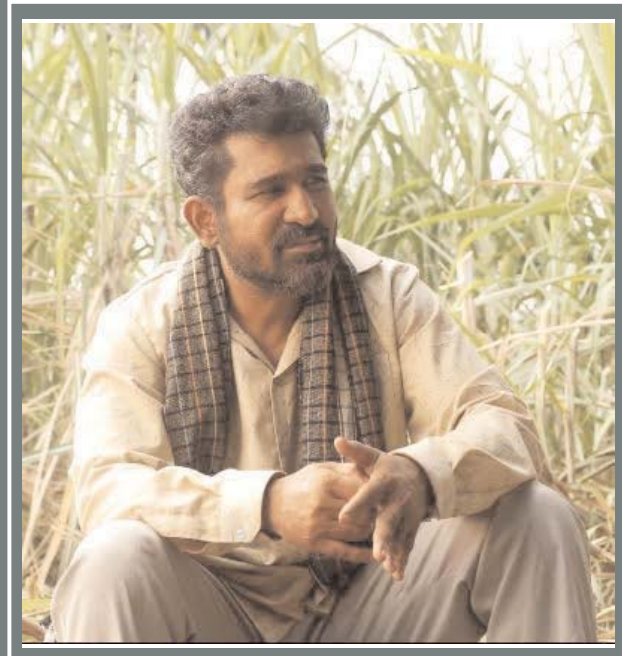


and has consistently contributed to society's growth. Madala Ravi pointed out that many actors are highly educated and respected individuals who have been honored with prestigious national awards like the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan. He cited legends such as N.T. Rama Rao, ANR, Krishna, Krishnam Raju, Chiranjeevi, Madala Ranga Rao, and R.

Narayana Murthy, who used cinema to deliver powerful social messages. Many Tollywood actors are Nationally and Internationally Fame. Madala Ravi criticized the MLA for judging an entire fraternity based on the actions of a few. He questioned if it would be fair to call all politicians corrupt just because of the mistakes of a few individuals.

Madala Ravi highlighted that the Movie Artistes Association is proactive in social causes, specifically in the fight against drug abuse. He noted that MAA works closely with the Telangana State Anti-Narcotics Bureau. Leading actors like Chiranjeevi, Ram Charan, and Vijay Deverakonda have actively led campaigns to warn the youth against harmful substances. Madala Ravi concluded by stating that the film industry remains committed to its social duties and will continue to fight against the drug menace until it is completely eliminated.

Vijay Antony-Sasi's Vanda Devullu Hard Hitting Teaser Released



Multi-talented actor Vijay Antony and critically acclaimed filmmaker Sasi, the duo that created a sensation with the blockbuster Bichagadu, team up once again for Vanda Devullu. The film is produced by Ramanjaneyulu Javvaji under Sarvanth Ram Creations, with Vijay Antony Film Corporation and Fatima Vijay Antony presenting it. Swasika plays the

lead-lady, supported by a strong ensemble cast featuring Ajay, Kavya, Shakthi, Padini, Karnas, Balaji Sakthivel, Divakar, Aruldoss, Bucks, Vinodhini, Munishkanth, and Kodangi Vadivel. The Teaser, unveiled today, strikes hard with its emotional intensity and thematic depth. Inspired by a true incident, the story centres on a courageous mother in a rural village who takes a daring and bold decision, something never witnessed before in their community.

GRAND LAUNCH OF "KOTHA KOTHAGA" SONG ALBUM DIRECTED, PRODUCED, AND ACTED BY SRIJA



The song album "Kotha Kothaga", acted by young heroine Srija and made under her own direction, was launched grandly. In this song, "Devagudi" movie fame hero Abhinav Shaurya acted as the hero. Lyrics and music were given by Raghuram, and it was sung by Lipsika. The launch event of the "Kotha Kothaga" song album was held grandly on Saturday at Prasad Labs in Hyderabad. Producer DY Chowdary said - Srija is very talented. She acted in the serials we produced. I used to see a desire in her to achieve something more. Now she herself acted, produced, and directed the "Kotha Kothaga" song album. This song is very good. Srija made it very richly like a movie song. I am wishing all the best to her and Abhinav Shaurya. Actress Potti Vijaya said - Srija is not only a beautiful heroine but also a girl with a beautiful personality. She takes very good care of the co-artists who act with her. The "Kotha Kothaga" song is very good. Now that she has become a producer and director, I hope she will give opportunities to people like us. Actress Meghana Chowdary said - Srija is a good friend to me. She started a channel called "Srija Music" and is doing good songs. I feel proud that she

became a producer and director. The "Kotha Kothaga" song is very good. It gives the feeling of watching a movie song. She should do many more songs like this. Actress Sandhya said - As good as the "Kotha Kothaga" song is, the performances of Srija and Abhinav Shaurya in this song are also equally good. I am wishing both of them all the best. Music lovers will enjoy this song very much. Actor Phani said - In this song, Srija looks soft, but she is actually very rough and tough. When she did the "Jabardasth" show with us, I understood how energetic and aggressive she is. She also did a program with me on Gemini TV. She is always trying to grow to a good level. Along with movies and TV programs, she is entertaining us with music albums as well. I wish this song album done by Srija gives her big success. Hero Abhinav Shaurya said - Bellam Ramakrishna Reddy garu gave me birth as a hero with the film "Devagudi". Now I could do the "Kotha Kothaga" song album also with his support. I am happy to do this song with Srija. She has a lot of determination. As a director and producer, she has a lot of clarity. She keeps trying until she gets the output she wants.

The Red Bag First Look Promises an Intriguing, Concept-Driven Thriller



The wave of concept-oriented cinema continues to grow stronger, and joining this trend is the newly announced thriller Red Bag, produced by Hari Krishna. At a time when

audiences are eagerly supporting unconventional storytelling, this film arrives with a refreshing premise, a gripping narrative built entirely around a mysterious red bag that sets off a chain of unexpected events.

Director Ravi Kumar Seerpu, who has also crafted the story and screenplay, aims to deliver a genre-bending experience that blends suspense, emotion, and layered character arcs. The team has successfully

wrapped up its shoot, and post-production works are now moving at full speed to ready the film for release. The Red Bag features an ensemble cast including Kabir Duhan Singh, Prasad Behera, Raadya, Monica, Sneha Singh, Aakanksha, Eeshan Shanker, Avinash Badal, and Bhargavi. Each actor plays a significant role in the puzzle-like storyline, where every character's journey is tied to the enigmatic bag at the heart of the plot. Producers have ensured a lavish production value, refraining from any compromises to maintain the film's visual and narrative appeal. Today, the makers unveiled the striking first-look poster, released by actor Dinesh Tej and writer-director Hari Prasad, who congratulated