

www.swatipearls.in

## SWATI PEARLS & JEWELLERS

**NAMPALLY:**  
Opp. Public Garden, Beside Hero Show Room,  
Chappel Road, Ph: 9949971337/23200048

**GACHIBOWLI:**  
Near Telecom Nagar, Beside Cafe Coffee Day,  
Ph: 9849026916/23002992

**BANJARA HILLS:**  
Road No. 10,  
Ph: 9848910502/23550896

SCAN FOR  
E-PAPER

### OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



10-04-2026  
Total pilgrims: 65,534  
Tonsures: 24,560  
Hundi kankaku: 3,22CR  
Waiting Compartments: 08

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

WEATHER

38 °C | °F

Precipitation: 5%  
Humidity: 32%  
Wind: 10 km/h

GOLD RATE

24K ₹  
1,55,180/-

INBRIFS

#### ASHA BHOSLE HOSPITALIZED AFTER SUFFERING CARDIAC ARREST



**Mumbai (TSIT):** Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle has been admitted to the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai after she suffered a cardiac arrest on Saturday. The 92-year-old singer is currently undergoing treatment in the Emergency Medical Services unit. Breach Candy Doctor Pratit Sandani has shared a statement saying, "Legendary playback icon Asha Bhosale suffered a cardiac arrest on Saturday, April 10 and has been admitted to Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai where she is currently undergoing treatment in the Emergency Medical Services unit." One of the most influential singers of her time, Asha Bhosle, sang her first song as a playback for the 1943 Marathi drama "Majha Bal". Later, she made her Bollywood playback debut, giving her voice to the song "Sawan Aya" in the Hindi film "Chunariya", which was

#### BJP STRATEGY WILL NOT WORK IN BENGAL: SHATRUGHAN SINHA

**Patna (TSIT):** Veteran Bollywood actor-turned-TMC MP Shatrughan Sinha launched a sharp attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), asserting that its political strategies in West Bengal would not succeed (cholbe na). While interacting with the media persons in Patna on Saturday, Shatrughan Sinha referred to a recent viral video and claimed that it contains substantial truth and has exposed alleged conspir-

## Bhatti flags delimitation concerns, reaffirms social justice commitment



**Hyderabad (TSIT):** Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Saturday expressed serious concerns over the proposed delimitation of constituencies based solely on the 2011 Census, warning that such a move could weaken the political significance of southern states.

Addressing the Mahatma Phule Bicentenary celebrations at Ravindra Bharati, the Deputy Chief Minister said that ignoring caste census data while undertaking delimitation would adversely impact weaker sections across the country. He emphasized that southern states, which are leading social transformation, are being unfairly treated in the distribution of central tax revenues.

Highlighting disparities in tax devolution, he pointed out that

Telangana receives only 37 paise for every rupee contributed to the Centre, while states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh receive significantly higher returns. He termed this imbalance as discriminatory and detrimental to federal principles. Calling for unity among Bahujan communities, Bhatti Vikramarka cautioned against attempts by feudal forces to regain influence and urged people to stand united in support of the people's government.

On the issue of backward class empowerment, he said the 42% BC reservation bill in education, employment, and political representation is currently pending with the Centre. He expressed hope that the Centre would approve the bill soon, enabling the state to implement it effectively. He also noted

that Telangana has conducted a caste survey, identifying 56% of the population as belonging to backward classes. The Deputy CM reiterated the government's commitment to social justice under the leadership of A. Revanth Reddy, stating that welfare policies are being designed with a focus on equitable development.

He further announced key initiatives in the education sector, including the launch of Young India Integrated Residential Schools, expansion of welfare hostels, and introduction of a breakfast scheme for nearly 20 lakh government school students from June 2. He added that the state has allocated 13.5% of its budget to education, reflecting its priority towards building an inclusive society.

## PM Modi urges change of Bengal regime ruling over lies for 15 years

Promises probe into corruption and justice for victims if BJP comes to power

**Kolkata (TSIT):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the last of his three campaign rallies in West Bengal on Saturday amid the crucial two-phase Assembly polls in the state next month, gave a call to the people of the state to change the Trinamool Congress regime, which he said had been ruling the people "over lies" for the last 15 years.

He said, "You gave a chance to the previous Left Front regime for 34 years. Then you gave three consecutive chances to the Trinamool Congress government, which ruled over you for the last 15 years. They are winning consecutive elections, just making fake promises and abusing me."

"But I want to ask you, when there was no development in the state for the last 15 years, then how could there be any future development if you give Trinamool Congress another term of five years? For the last 15 years, a ruling model of corruption and terror. So change this regime this



**If the Bharatiya Janata Party comes to power, it will probe corruption, reopen major crime cases, and ensure justice, especially for women.**

—NARENDRA MODI,  
PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

time, which has been ruling on lies for the last 15 years. Give us a chance for five years." The Prime Minister was addressing a campaign rally in Kushmandi, South Dinajpur district, West Bengal. Earlier, he addressed two other campaign rallies, first at Katwa in East Burdwan district

and the other at Jangipur in Murshidabad district.

Speaking on the occasion, he also said that if the BJP comes to power in West Bengal, it would constitute a special committee with representation from retired judges of the Supreme Court to reveal instances of corruption and other related misrule during the 15 years of the Trinamool Congress regime.

"The said committee will ensure justice for the victims of such misrule and corruption. Our sole aim is to bring out the people of West Bengal from this constant feeling and assure them of future development and peace," PM Modi said.

He also said that after coming to power, the first task of the BJP government in West Bengal will be to reopen all the rape and rape-and-murder-related files in the state. "This is my guarantee to the women of West Bengal. Each such file will be reopened, and every culprit will be accounted for," PM Modi said.

## Another 312 Indian fishermen safely evacuated from Iran to India through Armenia: EAM Jaishankar



**New Delhi (TSIT):** External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, on Saturday said that another 312 Indian fishermen were safely evacuated from Iran to India through Armenia. He further thanked the government of Armenia for making it possible.

EAM S. Jaishankar took to social media 'X' and said, "Another 312 Indian fishermen safely evacuated from Iran to India through Armenia. Thank the Government of Armenia and my friend Ararat Mirzoyan for making it possible." Earlier on April 5, a total of 345 Indian fisher-

men stranded in Iran amid the ongoing West Asia conflict had arrived safely in Chennai after being evacuated through Armenia. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the fishermen were brought back as part of India's continued efforts to ensure the safety of its nationals in the conflict-affected region. EAM Jaishankar, in a social media post had expressed gratitude to the Armenian government for facilitating the evacuation and thanked his counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan for enabling the safe transit of Indian nationals from Iran to India

amid the conflict. Armenia has been facilitating the evacuation of Indian nationals in Iran.

The MEA had said that more than 1,200 Indian nationals have been safely evacuated from Iran, out of which 996 moved to Armenia. Meanwhile, the delegations from the United States and Iran reached Islamabad for negotiations aimed at addressing the escalating tensions in the Gulf region. US Vice President, J.D. Vance, arrived in Islamabad at around 11:15 A.M. (IST) to lead the American delegation for the crucial US-Iran talks. All eyes are on Islamabad this weekend as high-stakes negotiations between the US and Iran get underway, carrying major implications for stability in the Middle East and the global economy. Speaking to reporters before departing from Joint Base Andrews aboard Air Force Two, Vance struck an optimistic tone about the upcoming discussions.

## 20+ Karnataka MLAs to visit Delhi amid reshuffle buzz

**Bengaluru (TSIT):** Amid speculation over a cabinet reshuffle, more than 20 senior MLAs of the ruling Congress in Karnataka are planning a visit to Delhi to meet the party high command, a move that has gained significance against the backdrop of the leadership tussle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President D.K. Shivakumar.

The Congress government has completed three years in power, and senior MLAs who have been elected three to five times are



sensing an opportunity. They have decided to place their demands before AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and the national leadership. Congress insiders revealed that the proposed cabinet reshuffle could become another flash-point between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, as both have reportedly prepared

their own lists accommodating their supporters. In addition, party sources stated that the high command has also prepared a separate list.

Reacting to the development, seven-time MLA and Special Representative of the Karnataka Government in Delhi, T.B. Jayachandra, said in Bengaluru on Saturday that those planning to visit Delhi are senior and experienced MLAs who have contributed significantly to the party.

"MLAs who have been elected three, four, and five times have come together, held a meeting, and decided

## Tejashwi Yadav alleges BJP-RSS trying to replace democracy with dictatorship

"RSS and BJP want to replace the Constitution of India with that of RSS. They seek to eliminate democracy and establish a dictatorship. For us, this is a time for struggle," he said.

**Patna (TSIT) RJD leader** Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday alleged that the BJP and RSS were attempting to change the Constitution, and replace democracy with dictatorship. Addressing a programme organised by the RJD minority cell in Patna, the leader of the opposition in the assembly called on party workers for a united fight against "adversaries of the Constitution".

"RSS and BJP want to replace the Constitution of India with that of RSS. They seek to eliminate democracy and establish a dictatorship. For us, this is a time for struggle," he said. "If such changes occur, they will adversely affect backward classes, extremely backward classes, Dalits, and other marginalised communities," he asserted. The RJD leader urged party workers to fight against the alleged



"divide and rule" policy of the "communal forces." "If any leader, Hindu or Muslim, including me, delivers an inflammatory speech or engages in communal politics, they should be strongly opposed," he said. Yadav alleged that the BJP and RSS were working to "derail peace and fraternity" in the country by "instigating conflict" for decades.

"I am the son of Lalu Prasad, who stopped LK Advani's 'rath' and got him arrested for trying to

facilitate Babri Mosque demolition. Neither my father bowed down to communal forces, nor will I," he said. He accused the Centre of filing false cases against him and his family members as "part of a conspiracy to defame and divide" them. "Cases are filed against my entire family and me. There are conspiracies to defame and divide us. Whenever Tejashwi raises questions about law and order, false cases are filed against him to divert public attention," he said.

Yadav accused AJUP founder Humayun Kabir of allegedly taking Rs 1,000 crore from the BJP to defeat "secular forces" in poll-bound West Bengal, referring to a viral video shared by the TMC. "The BJP is trying to topple governments in opposition-ruled states to make sweeping changes in the Constitution," he claimed.

## Modi, Rahul share rare brief exchange at Parliament amid earlier tensions

**New Delhi, April 11:** It was a brief, cordial exchange unlike those been witnessed when the House is in session as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi met in Parliament complex on Saturday.

A visual, viral online, showed the leaders sharing a candid moment at an event to pay tribute to social reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on his 200th birth anniversary. It marked one of the few direct encounters between the two leaders. According to people present nearby, the



**HIGHLIGHT POINT:**

During the interaction, Narendra Modi enquired about the health of Sonia Gandhi, and Rahul Gandhi said she is recovering.

interaction lasted approximately five minutes and appeared amicable despite

the escalating political tensions that have characterised the ongoing Budget Session. One such witness termed the exchange as "genuine gesture" where they greeted each other respectfully and

shared a short conversation.

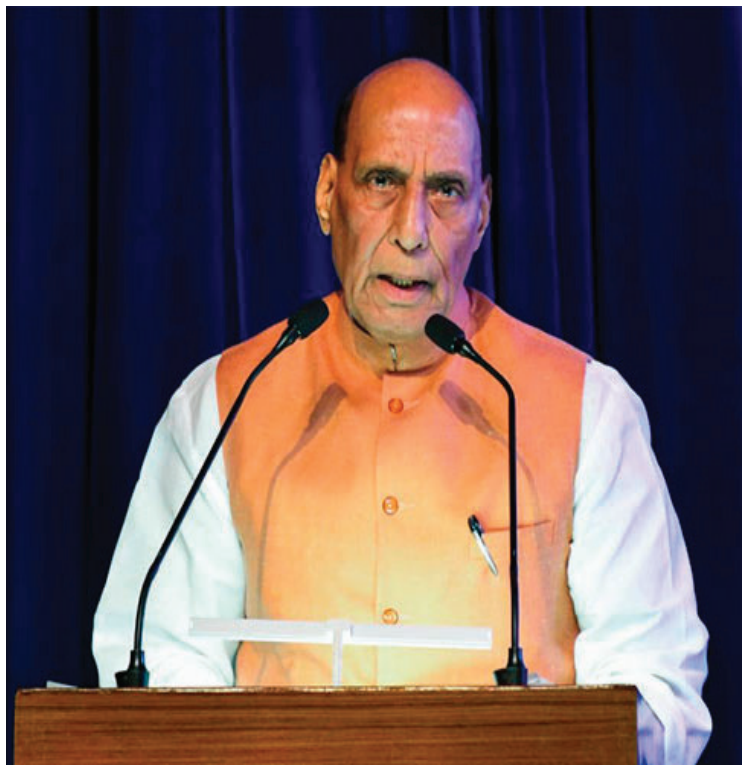
Another source added that the Prime Minister asked the Congress leader about the health of his mother, Sonia Gandhi, who was hospitalised recently following complaints of vomiting and nausea. It was learnt that Rahul Gandhi answered that her health is improving, to which the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction and extended his best wishes. Incidentally, Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on March 24 and was discharged seven days later after recovering from a systemic infection.

## Rajnath highlights growth, defence boost and development vision in Lucknow

Lucknow, Apr 11: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that India continues to remain one of the fastest-growing major economies despite ongoing global geopolitical challenges, while stressing that the vision of a developed nation by 2047 requires collective effort.

Speaking at an event in Lucknow, he underlined that the idea of "Viksit Bharat@2047" is rooted in inclusive growth, where every citizen contributes to and benefits from development. He said the principle of ensuring that "no one is left behind" must guide the country's progress.

Highlighting Lucknow's growing importance in the defence sector, Singh said the city has emerged as a key hub, having been designated a defence node along with Agra and Kanpur. He noted that the BrahMos missile is now being manufactured in Lucknow, with the first batch already delivered to the armed forces. He added that several small and large defence manufacturing units are being set up in the region, strengthening local industry.



Earlier, addressing the annual celebration of the Jan Kalyan Maha Samiti in Gomti Nagar, the minister reflected on Uttar Pradesh's transformation. He said the state, once labelled as

"BIMARU," is now being recognised as "Uttam Pradesh," pointing to improvements in law and order and overall development.

He also spoke about cultural initiatives, mentioning the Lucknow Culture and Art Museum at the Hussainabad Clock Tower, which aims to preserve and showcase the heritage of Awadh. According to him, such projects will not only strengthen cultural identity but also boost tourism and create employment opportunities for local artisans and businesses.

On infrastructure, Singh announced the construction of National Highway 927, a 101-kilometre four-lane corridor from Barabanki to Bahraich, with an estimated investment of Rs 7,000 crore. The project is expected to significantly cut travel time between the two locations from about 2.5 hours to nearly 1.25 hours.

He added that the highway will also support the development of a new corridor around the state capital region, further accelerating economic growth and connectivity in and around Lucknow.

## Global delegates laud India's electoral system after witnessing Kerala, Puducherry and Assam polls

New Delhi, Apr 11: A group of 38 international delegates from 22 countries has praised the Election Commission of India after observing the conduct and organisation of the April 9 Assembly elections in Kerala, Puducherry, and Assam, describing India's polling system as a model of efficiency and participation. The delegation, hosted under the Election Commission of India's International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP) 2026, closely witnessed multiple stages of the electoral process, including dispatch centres, mock polling exercises, and live voting at designated polling stations.

Branimir Farkas of Croatia described India's



elections as a "true festival of democracy," highlighting the enthusiasm of voters and the scale of operations involved. He noted that the experience demonstrated how a complex democratic exercise can be conducted smoothly and effectively.

Uuc-Kib Espadas Ancona from Mexico also praised the process, saying that India's election sys-

tem serves as a valuable learning example for democracies worldwide.

During the visit, delegates were taken to polling stations across Assam (Kamrup Metro and Kamrup Rural), Kerala (Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram), and Puducherry, where they observed live voting procedures and election management practices.

## 'Punjab govt should announce crop insurance scheme during Apr 13 special Assembly session'

CHANDIGARH: Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar on Friday said the state government should announce the implementation of a crop insurance scheme for farmers during the special Vidhan Sabha session scheduled for April 13.

Jakhar said he has also written a letter to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann in this regard.

He said that although the Centre has already implemented a crop insurance scheme, the Punjab government has not notified it.

By doing so, the chief minister is committing a major injustice toward farmers, Jakhar alleged. He said that farmers in Punjab are currently facing severe natural calamities. "Unseasonal rains and hailstorms have caused large-scale crop damage.

Earlier, floods in 2023 and 2025 also led to massive destruction, and even now many farmers have not received compensation because no crop insurance scheme is in place in Punjab. Even today, farmers remain worried about how their losses due to such disasters will be compensated," the BJP leader said.

He reminded the chief minister that three years ago, it was announced that the Punjab government would introduce its own agricultural insurance scheme in place of the central government's Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

"However, despite three years having passed and farmers suffering losses worth thousands of crores, the scheme is still awaited," he said. Jakhar said that since

the Punjab government has called a special Assembly session on April 13, Mann should fulfil his promise and, without delay, announce Punjab's own crop insurance scheme during this session so that farmers can be compensated during natural disasters.

The AAP government has convened a special session of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha on April 13 to amend the Jagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar Act, 2008, for stricter punishment against sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib and other religious texts.

He further advised that if the state government's financial condition is weak, it should immediately implement the central government's crop insurance scheme, which is already operational in other states

and has proven beneficial for farmers.

The BJP leader alleged that every section of society is unhappy with the current government; with farmers not receiving compensation, traders and industrialists not getting a peaceful environment, and poor law and order along with drug issues have created fear among the people.

Jakhar also said that thousands of government employees and pensioners in Punjab are facing financial hardship because the state government has not provided the due increase in Dearness Allowance (DA).

He pointed out that while the central government and neighbouring states are giving 58 per cent DA, Punjab is providing only 42 per cent.

## Kharge flags delimitation, women quota timing

NEW DELHI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday raised concerns over the proposed delimitation exercise and the timing of a special Parliament session on the women's reservation Bill, calling for wider consultations.

Addressing a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, Kharge said the proposed delimitation could have "serious consequences" and requires detailed discussion.

He said the special session of Parliament scheduled from April 16 to 18 to consider constitutional amendments related to women's reservation raises concerns, alleging that the timing could influence upcoming Assembly elections.

## Kanhaiya hits out at Centre, flags threats to democracy

JALNA: Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar has slammed the BJP-led Central government, accusing it of weakening democratic institutions, and stated that power has become concentrated in the hands of a few, reducing citizens to mere members of a crowd.

Kumar lamented that leaders across party lines pay symbolic tributes to Dr B R Ambedkar but fail to follow his teachings.

The Congress leader was speaking on the topic "Indian democracy and its challenges" at Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar lecture series in Maharashtra's Jalna on Thursday, to mark the Dalit icon's 135th birth anniversary.

He alleged that electoral processes are being manipulated by money power, with voters being influenced before elections and elected representatives being "purchased" afterwards.

Referring to the ideas of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, he stressed that political democracy cannot survive without social and economic democracy.

He said that the current situation in the country reflects Ambedkar's warnings, alleging that public assets are being handed over to a select group of industrialists.

"Today, only those with money can contest and win elections, while the common man is left behind," the

Opposition party leader said, adding that citizens have become part of a crowd and have been stripped of their identity.

Issues like polarisation and hatred are deliberately used during elections to garner votes, he claimed, and accused the ruling party of spreading false narratives and diverting public attention from real issues by creating artificial problems and encouraging social divisions.

The National Students Union of India (NSUI) in-charge criticised Ambedkar's ideology, and urged people to unite around the principles of equality to safeguard democracy and the Constitution.

The country is being run with the

power of lathis and guns, he claimed, alleging that the government is deepening social divisions based on caste and religion.

Kumar also alleged that dissent is being suppressed, with those raising their voices against the government being labelled as anti-national.

"The real power does not lie with the visible faces of governance, but with those controlling the system from behind," he claimed.

Kumar called for the creation of an egalitarian society based on Ambedkar's ideology, and urged people to unite around the principles of equality to safeguard democracy and the Constitution.

## Delhi Govt to study transplanted trees, bring in new machines to improve survival rates

NEW DELHI: Amid concerns over the low survival of transplanted trees, the Delhi government has commissioned a scientific study to understand survival trends and planned to import advanced tree planter machines from abroad to make the process more effective.

Officials said the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun has been asked to conduct a study within three months. "These steps are being taken to make changes in the Delhi Tree Transplantation Policy 2020 based on scientific evidence," they said.

The move follows concerns over low survival rates of transplanted trees, with a previous report by the Forest Research Institute estimating an overall survival rate of 35.45 per cent, with significant variation across species.

Forest department data also showed that of the 1,357 trees transplanted between 2019 and 2022, 578 survived, translating to a survival rate of 42.5 per cent.

Delhi Environment and Forest Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa told PTI, "We are taking steps

to make the tree transplantation process in Delhi more effective and better. We are conducting this study to understand why transplantation has faced persistent challenges over the years.

"The findings will help us adopt a more scientific approach based on field evidence and expert inputs, and make the city greener," he said. The minister further said that a new Expression of Interest has been floated that will also help in bringing advanced tree planter machines from abroad to the national capital that can improve survival rates and help the process.

A senior official aware of the matter said the institute had sought a year to complete the study but that they have been asked to submit the report within three months "so that necessary changes can be made and further loss of transplanted trees can be prevented".

Speaking about the new machinery, officials said that existing methods use backhoe loaders that often damage roots and cause transplant shock.

"These machines have been used in Gujarat and can uproot medium-sized trees. The proposed study will help assess their effectiveness in Delhi conditions," officials said.

The Forest Research Institute report noted that survival rates remain below expectations and vary widely, prompting a review of existing practices which officials said need greater standardisation and scientific inputs.

According to a minutes of a meeting of the Delhi forest department with empanelled agencies held in January noted that agencies were not consistently following permissions issued by Tree Officers or adhering to approved Tree Preservation Plans and timelines. The meeting also stressed the need for stronger oversight, including inspection of transplantation sites by Tree Officers and directions to improve survival outcomes.

Officials further suggested developing a system to capture detailed data on each transplanted tree, including species, girth and survival rates, to guide future policy decisions.



Consultations with the empanelled agencies highlighted that factors such as species, age, girth and size play a critical role in determining survival, reinforcing the need for a more scientific and standardised transplantation process.

The meeting identified species-specific trends. Trees such as peepal, bargad, gular, pilkhan, arjun, semal, amaltas, sahan, gulmohar, peltophorum and alstonia showed relatively higher survival and can be transplanted up to a girth of 350 cm. Ficus species were found to have the best survival performance among transplanted trees, and officials noted that their branches could also be used for plantation through vegetative propagation where feasible.

## Man arrested for sharing misleading 'zombie drug' video

BENGALURU: A day after a video of a man seen in a disoriented state went viral on social media with claims that he was under the influence of a so-called "zombie drug", police on Friday arrested a 29-year-old employee of a private firm here for uploading the "misleading" video. Hemanth, a resident of Vidyanayapura, was issued a notice to join the inquiry, police said.

Learning that the police were looking for him, he posted an apology on social media.

He was later taken into custody, a senior police officer said.

A case has been registered against him under Sections 353(2), relating to statements conducing to public mischief, including spreading false information or rumours that could incite public disorder, and Section 352, dealing with intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace, among others, under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police added.

**NORTHERN ARC Capital Ltd**  
Head Off: 10th Floor - Phase 1, IIT-Madras Research Park, Kanagam Village, Taramani, Chennai 600113

**(RULE - 8 (1))**  
**POSSESSION NOTICE**

Whereas  
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Northern Arc Capital Ltd under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 calling upon the Borrower (1) M/S. Rajalakshmi Garments (Business Name) (2) Mrs. Sureshkumar Rajalakshmi (Borrower) & (3) Mr. Sureshkumar (Co Borrower) having address at 12 Athipattu main road Ambattur, kuppam I Estate Chennai Estates, Tamil Nadu 600058 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice of INR 3306012 (Rupees Thirty Three Lakh Six Thousand Thirteen Only) as on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 along with interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor/Co Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this possession notice dated 10/04/2026. The Borrower/Guarantor/Co Borrower and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Northern Arc Capital Ltd for an amount of INR 3306012 (Rupees Thirty Three Lakh Six Thousand Thirteen Only) as on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 along with interest, costs, etc. thereon.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGE PROPERTY**

All that piece and parcel of land measuring an extent of 512.5 Sq. Ft. together with the building thereon, along with an undivided 1/3rd rights in Passage measuring 320 Sq. Ft. (ie. 106.5 Sq. Ft.) together measuring an extent of 619 Sq. Ft., out of total land measuring an extent of 1960 Sq. Ft. being Southern portion of Plot No. 12 and Northern portion of Plot No. 13 (Part), situate at Door No. 12/1, Athipatt Main Road Ambattur, Chennai-600058 (as per Property Tax Records), comprised in Survey Nos. 463 and 463/12, Ambattur Village, as per Town Survey Land Register Extract - T. S. No. 30/2, Block No. 70, Ward B situated at Ambattur Town and Taluka, Chennai District and bounded on the: BOUNDARIES - North by: Northern portion of Plot No. 12, South by: 4 Feet wide common passage, East by: Part of Southern portion Plot No. 12 settled to Parthiban, West by: Plot No. 17

Date: 10/04/2026  
Place: Ambattur, Tamil Nadu

Authorised Officer  
For Northern Arc Capital Limited

## 2026 TN ELECTIONS | WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, CHILD WELLBEING CLOSE TO MY HEART, SAYS CM STALIN

He further said "we immediately introduced the breakfast programme in schools so that not a single child should go to school hungry."

CHENNAI: The women's monthly entitlement scheme and the Chief Minister's Breakfast scheme, among the numerous welfare initiatives launched by his government, were close to his heart, DMK president and Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin has said. While the women empowerment scheme, which is being replicated in other states in the country will go down in history as a very important programme, the breakfast scheme, aimed at improving the children's health, has immeasurable benefits, the Chief Minister told PTI in an interview.

"All the schemes that we have implemented in the Dravidian model regime are very important initiatives. However, I would like to say that though we have implemented various schemes, two schemes are close to



my heart. They are the women's monthly entitlement scheme and CM's breakfast scheme," he said when asked if he could name schemes, among the slew of welfare programmes being implemented by his government, that gave him immense satisfaction.

"The women's entitlement scheme provides Rs 1,000 per month to the heads of families. When we first announced this

scheme as a promise (in 2021 polls), the opposition parties criticised it saying that it could not be implemented at all, that it was announced for elections. But today, the women's rights scheme is the best implemented scheme in India," he said. Those who criticised it then, were the ones who are implementing this scheme today in the states ruled by their parties. "In our next

regime, we are going to increase this amount to Rs 2,000. This scheme will go down in history as a very important scheme," he added.

"Similarly, another program close to my heart is the breakfast programme for school children. The cost of this programme is less than the others, but its benefits are immeasurable."

He further said "we immediately introduced the breakfast programme in schools so that not a single child should go to school hungry. Later, we expanded it to government-aided schools. Now, in our next government, we are going to expand it up to class 8." "Now, we have created a situation where not a single child comes to school hungry. The children's stomachs are full and they are studying well. I am truly satisfied with the implementation of this programme."

## Kamal Haasan to campaign for DMK-led alliance from April 17 to 20

CHENNAI: Ahead of the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, Makkal Needhi Maiam party president and MP Kamal Haasan will undertake a four-day campaign tour from April 17 to 20 in support of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance candidates.

2026 TN elections | Annamalai refutes TVK's allegations linking Union Minister Murugan to 'Jana Nayagan' leak As per the party head-



quarters' announcement, he will campaign across several constituencies in Chennai, Tiruppur,

Coimbatore and Tiruchi districts. On April 17, Kamal Haasan will campaign in the Harbour, Perambur, Kolathur and Villivakkam Assembly constituencies in Chennai. On April 18, he will cover Thyagaraya Nagar, Mylapore, Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni and Velachery constituencies. 2026 TN elections | Don't compare Vijay with MGR, says AIADMK chief Palaniswami On April 19.

## Southern Railway announces summer special trains between Tirunelveli and Chennai Egmore

CHENNAI: Southern Railway will operate special trains between Tirunelveli and Chennai Egmore. Udhayanidhi Stalin switches to chartered flight, avoids sharing aircraft with Edappadi Palaniswami

According to a press release, a special train (No 6070) will depart from Tirunelveli at 11.40 pm on April 16, 23, and 30 (Thursdays) and reach Chennai at 10.45 am the following day. In the return direction, a special train (No 6069) will depart from Chennai Egmore at 1.25 pm on April 17, 24, and May 1 (Fridays) and reach Tirunelveli at 1:00 am the next day. April 4 between city. The train will stop at Tirunelveli, Kovilpatti, Sattur, Virudhunagar, Madurai, Kodaikanal Road, Dindigul,



Tiruchchirappalli, Srirangam, Ariyalur, Vriddhachalam, Villupuram, Melmaruvathur, Chengalpattu, Tambaram, and Chennai Egmore. The coach composition will include one AC two-tier coach, six AC three-tier coaches, two AC three-tier economy coaches, seven sleeper class coaches, four general second-class coaches, one disabled-friendly second-class coach, and one luggage-cum-brake van.

## Udhayanidhi Stalin switches to chartered flight, avoids sharing aircraft with Edappadi Palaniswami

CHENNAI: With campaigning intensifying ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly election scheduled for April 23, Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Saturday altered his travel plans to Tiruchy, avoiding sharing a commercial flight with AIADMK general secretary and Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami.

Southern Railway announces summer special trains between Tirunelveli and Chennai Egmore

Both leaders were initially booked on the same IndiGo passenger flight departing from Chennai to Tiruchy at 12.40 pm. The flight was to be operated using a small ATR aircraft, and the two leaders had reportedly been allotted seats in close proximity. This led to heightened activity at the Chennai airport, as security officials weighed potential concerns amid the



heightened political tensions. In recent days, both leaders have traded sharp remarks against each other on the campaign trail. Officials were apprehensive that the two travelling together on the same flight could lead to an uncomfortable situation. In this backdrop, Udhayanidhi Stalin cancelled his booking on the

IndiGo flight around 10 am and arranged to travel separately by a chartered aircraft. He is scheduled to depart from the old Chennai airport terminal at 2 pm and reach Tiruchy at 2.45 pm. Edappadi K Palaniswami will proceed as planned on the IndiGo flight, departing Chennai at 12.40 pm and arriving in Tiruchy at 1.30

pm. ECI transfers Home Secretary Dheeraj Kumar; K Manivasan appointed. The change in travel plans brought relief to officials, who said the revised arrangements would prevent potential tensions at both the Chennai and Tiruchy airports, including during reception events organised by party workers.

# Consumers Beware! Why you should never leave a child alone in a car

Leaving a child alone in a car is fraught with danger. If the car is locked with all the windows closed, the child runs the risk of suffering severe heat stroke, as cars heat up very quickly and children are extremely susceptible to heat. If you keep the engine idling, with the key in the ignition and the air-conditioner running, your child can get kidnapped, or your car may get stolen, along with the child. A couple in Kerala learnt this the hard way when their car got stolen, along with their toddler in the backseat, in January this year. On their way to a relative's house in Kozhikode, the couple stopped at a bakery. Their child was sleeping at the back, so they left the car engine idling to keep the air-conditioning on and stepped out to buy a few items. To their horror, their car was stolen, along with the child at the back! Fortunately for them, it all ended on a happy note — the thief was caught and the child, abandoned after two hours on the roadside, was picked up safe and sound!

There was an almost identical incident in Delhi last June. Here, the couple left their two kids — an 11-year-old girl and her three-year-old brother — in the car, with the AC running, while they went into a confectionery shop in East Delhi. When they returned, they found their car stolen, along with the children. After a three-hour police chase involving 20 police vehicles, the culprits abandoned the vehicle and the children too.

One may find it hard to believe, but there are innumerable instances of parents, and in some cases a grandparent, leaving behind a sleeping child in the car by mistake. There are also cases of parents leaving a child behind in the car while going on a short errand, believing the car to be a safe place. With the windows up and the car locked, the temperature inside the car goes up so quickly that a child is unable to withstand it. In May last year, a couple from Kota district, Rajasthan, lost their three-year-old daughter to vehicular hyperthermia. The parents were going to a wedding with their two daughters and when the father stopped the car in front of the venue, his wife and the elder



daughter exited. The father presumed that all three had left and so parked and locked the car and went in, leaving the sleeping child behind. By the time they realised that three-year-old Gorvika was missing and went to get her, it was too late.

In another tragic incident on October 30, three-year-old Vartika became a victim of heat stroke in a locked car in Meerut. In this case, it was not her parents, but a colleague of her father who took her for a ride in the car and then left her in the parked car, planning to return shortly. The heat inside the car killed the child. There are several websites that help you calculate the temperature inside a car at different ambient temperatures. When the outside temperature is 30°C, for example, the temperature inside a car goes up to almost 50°C (48.89 °C, to be precise) in just 30 minutes! In 15 minutes, it hovers over 43°C. Eighty per cent of the temperature rise, it is estimated, occurs within the first half an hour. A study published in March 2009 in the International Journal of Meteorology reveals that even on cloudy days with lower ambient air temperatures, the temperatures inside a car can reach dan-

gerous levels.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the United States says that a child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's and heat stroke occurs when the body temperature reaches 104°F (40°C). A child can die when it reaches 107°F (41.6°C).

Cars seem to hold a special attraction for children when it comes to playtime and that's how many of them enter the vehicle and get trapped when the doors automatically get locked. In Kochi, Kerala, two-year-old Ritwick got inside his father's car parked in front of the house and locked himself up by pressing the lock button on the key. The parents did not have the spare key and eventually had to call the Fire and Rescue Services to get the child out — the entire process took 45 minutes early in the morning and the child was traumatised inside. There was a similar incident in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in July. Here, the parents were lucky but there are many unfortunate cases where the children are found too late.

In November, four siblings, aged 2-7 years, died in a car in Radadiya

village in Gujarat's Amreli district. The parents had gone to work on a farm and the children got into the car of the farm owner and were unable to get out when the doors automatically locked. By the time they were found, all had succumbed to heat stroke. Earlier, in May, a three-year-old girl in Bhadradi Kothagudem district in Telangana met the same fate when she accidentally got locked inside a car parked in front of her house. The same month, six-year-old Kaunen and his four-year-old cousin in Abdullah, playing in the compound of their house in Raebareli district in Uttar Pradesh, got into a parked SUV and got locked. Heat stroke claimed their lives.

A month prior to that, two children reported missing by their parents in Central Mumbai were found dead in an abandoned car parked in Antop Hill. So, never leave a child alone in a car, even for a short time, and if you are the forgetful type, keep a paper reminding you of the child at the back, pasted on the windshield! Make sure that any child that enters a car exits safely. Always keep your car locked and store the key in a place where children cannot access it.

### Food Talk: Pistachio in the Indian imagination

More than three decades back, I was busy researching Indian aphrodisiac recipes. My good friend, a peerless food impresario, sprang a surprise when he disclosed that he was in possession of the heirloom recipe from the rural kitchens of Patiala — Pistiyān da salān. He had been 'gifted' this recipe by a food-loving scion of the princely family. When we got heritage chef Mohammad Farooq to cook it for us, it turned out to be exquisite. It was creamy chicken curry with the gravy having hardly a hint of the emerald tint. It tasted rich and had, perhaps, served the patrons in urgent need of tonic restorative food well. Chef Farooq's exertions made us realise that, to mix metaphors, this was not everyone's 'cup of tea'. Years passed by, and we had almost forgotten about the magical properties of the pistachio when we suddenly encountered the recipe of 'pista gosht' in Chef Nishant Choube's forthcoming cookbook, 'Stay With the Indus'. This time, the nut was favouring not the murg, but a mutton chop.

**Northern ARC Capital Ltd**  
Head Off: 10th Floor - Phase 1, IIT - Madras Research Park, Kanagam Village, Taramani, Chennai 600113

**(RULE - 8 (1))**  
**POSSESSION NOTICE**

Whereas  
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Northern Arc Capital Ltd under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 17th April 2025 calling upon the Borrower (1) VENNILA G (Borrower) Address: NO 73/2 SANDROR STREET DHANABAL BUILDING THIRUPURUR CHENGALPATTU 603110, Thirupurur KANCHIPURAM, Tamil Nadu-603110 and also at No. 100, Mettu Street, No.44, Sembakkam, Thirupurur Taluka, Chengalpattu -603108 (2) V GANAPATHY (Co-Borrower) Add. NO 73/2 SANDROR STREET DHANABAL BUILDING THIRUPURUR CHENGALPATTU 603110, Thirupurur, KANCHIPURAM, Tamil Nadu-603110 and also at No. 100, Mettu Street, No.44, Sembakkam, Thirupurur Taluka, Chengalpattu -603108 (to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.2485819.89/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Nineteen and Eighty Nine Paise only), as on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2025 along with interest from 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor/Co Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this possession notice dated 11/04/2026.

The Borrower/Guarantor/Co Borrower and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Northern Arc Capital Ltd for an amount of Rs.2485819.89/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Nineteen and Eighty Nine Paise only), as on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2025 along with interest from 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025, ossis, etc. thereon.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY**

(ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF LAND AND BUILDING COMPRISED IN OLD S. NO. 153/20 PART, AS PER PATTANAM NO. 298, NEW S. NO. 255/6 WITH AN EXTENT OF 23655 SQ. FT. WHICH IS SITUATED AT NO.44, SEMPAKKAM VILLAGE, THIRUPURUR TALUKA, CHENGALPATTU DISTRICT, AND BOUNDED ON, MEASUREMENT - NORTHERN SIDE 110 FEET, SOUTHERN SIDE 110 FEET, EASTERN SIDE 21.5 FEET, WESTERN SIDE 21.5 FEET. SITUATED AT WITHIN THE SUB-REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF THIRUPURUR AND REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF CHENGALPATTU TOGETHER WITH ALL BUILDING AND STRUCTURES ATTACHED TO THE EARTH OR PERMANENTLY FASTENED TO ANYTHING ATTACHED TO EARTH, BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE AND ALL EASMENTARY/MAMOOOL RIGHTS ANNEXED THERETO Within following Boundaries: NORTH - HOUSE BELONGS TO MR. GANAPATHI SOUTH - HOUSE BELONGS TO MR. SHANNIUGAM EAST: HOUSE BELONGS TO MR. MUTHUKUMARA

Date: 11/04/2026  
Place: TAMBARAM

Authorised Officer  
For Northern Arc Capital Limited

**FEDBANK FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD. POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Registered office: Unit No.: 1101, 11th Floor, Cignus, Plot No. 71 A, Powai, Pascoli, Mumbai - 400087

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Fedbank Financial Services Ltd. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice mentioned hereunder calling upon the following borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being also mentioned hereunder within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The following borrowers having failed to repay the amount notice is hereby given to the following borrowers and the public in general that undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

| LAN / Borrower(s) / Co - Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s) |   |
|---|---|
| 1   | Loan Account No. FEDCHNLAP0515407 (1) AMEEN ENTERPRISES (Borrower); (2) MOHAMED AMEEN (Co - Borrower); (3) IFFATH SULTANA T V (Co - Borrower);   Demand Notice Date & Amount : 22/04/2025, Rs. 31,60,594/- (Rupees Thirty One Lac Sixty Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Four Only) as on 22/04/2025   Date & Type of Possession: 06/04/2026 & Physical Possession   Description Of The Mortgaged Property : ALL PIECE AND PARCEL OF LAND AND BUILDING COMPRISED IN R S NO 5592/53, MEASURING WITH AN EXTENT OF 410 SQ FT UDS OUT OF 1230 SQ FT TOGETHER WITH ENTIRE GROUND FLOOR HAVING 1230 SQ FT OF BUILT UP AREA 1230 SQ FT SITUATED AT OLD NO 21, PRESENT MUNICIPAL DOOR NO 49, NEW NO 26, MUTHU NAICKEN STREET GEORGE TOWN, CHENNAI-600001, MUTHIALPET VILLAGE, PURASAWALKAM TALUK, CHENNAI DISTRICT. BOUNDED BY: EAST: MUTHU NAICKEN STREET AND, WEST: R S NO 5592/57, NORTH: R S NO 5592/30 & 5592/56, SOUTH: R S NO 5592/38 SITUATED WITHIN THE SUB REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF SOWCARPET AND IN THE REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF NORTH CHENNAI |

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the Charge of Fedbank Financial Services Limited for an amount mentioned herein above and interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Place: CHENNAI  
Date: 06-04-2026

sdl- (Authorized Officer) -  
Fedbank Financial Services Ltd

# EDITORIAL

## The Art of Institutional Double Standards

Sir Humphrey Appleby, the incomparable bureaucrat of British television, once explained governance to a bemused minister with characteristic wit: "The correct procedure, Minister, is not a means to an end. It is the end. Once you understand that, everything becomes quite straightforward." He was, of course, joking. Those who understood his character, however, know that he wasn't. There is a distinct sophistication to institutional double standards. They arrive cloaked in procedure, bolstered by precedent, and supported by regulation. They do not say we are favouring ourselves. They say the framework requires this outcome. The framework, conveniently was designed by those it now serves. The honourable Supreme Court of India was recently moved to act against three authors of a 14-page chapter in a Class 8 NCERT Political Science textbook. The chapter dealt with one of the pillars of Indian democracy the judiciary. Its fault lay primarily in two paragraphs touching on challenges facing it: pendency and corruption that took up just two paragraphs in 14 pages. The decree that followed, as widely reported, involved excluding the authors from government opportunities without a hearing, and without the due process that courts exist to guarantee. The chapter is understood to be under revision. The stated concern, that 13-year-olds should not be exposed to uncomfortable questions about one institution while others go unexamined, is itself a proposition that warrants examination. Courts routinely ask the most powerful institutions in the land to account for themselves. That is, in fact, the point of having them. I am not a constitutional expert or a lawyer, but I suppose the judiciary should expect of itself what it demands from other institutions: transparency, credibility, legitimacy and due process. A guild, however honourable, that seeks to protect its image ahead of its principles is still a guild. Such examples can be traced to other institutions as well. Consider, for example, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) established in 1997 as an independent buffer between a liberalising market and a government that retained, through Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), a fully state-owned legacy operator. It offers a more nuanced illustration of double standards that have been visible at several points in its regulatory evolution, not just in outcomes but in design. Spectrum, the life force of the telecom sector, has been allocated to BSNL administratively, at rates bearing little resemblance to auction-determined values. Interconnection tells a similar story. Early Interconnect Usage Charges, the fees an operator pays another to terminate calls on a rival network, were structured in ways that favoured the incumbent. Of the nine chairpersons TRAI has had since inception, eight have come from government service. Six of the nine have emerged from a single service cadre. The cadre, like any guild, protects its own. Outsiders are not welcome and criticism even less so. Such regulatory sinecures, prestigious and well-compensated, provide limited incentive to take on the ministry that, for all practical purposes, owns the public sector operator. This is not to suggest that private players have been passive innocents. They have navigated the regulatory environment with considerable skill, litigating effectively, lobbying strategically and occasionally managing to benefit from regulatory shifts. The double standard has therefore not always been binary, even if in the final analysis, BSNL might edge ahead. One solution, as in the case of Air India, would be to sell BSNL at a more appropriate time, excluding the land it owns, and permanently rid the sector of the conflicts of interest and double standards that seep through ownership structures. International institutions are not immune from such tendencies either. Consider the World Trade Organisation's architecture on agricultural subsidies, perhaps the most glaring example in contemporary trade law of process that is now well past its expiry date.

# ECI's Motto of 'No Voter to Be Left Behind' Has Now Been Left Far Behind

As the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in West Bengal has concluded and assembly elections are only days away, about 90 lakh names have been removed from the voter lists. About 57% of them are from districts bordering Bangladesh. According to media reports, Muslims in several districts are disproportionately affected. Exclusions highlighted in the media include a former justice of the Calcutta high court, the 88-year-old grandson of Nandalal Bose who decorated the original copy of the Constitution, a decorated Indian Air Force veteran, and a Kargil war veteran, among many others. Without going into the legality of whether the Election Commission of India (ECI) was empowered to conduct SIR in the manner it is being conducted, we would have been happy if ECI had succeeded in its avowed motto of 'no voter to be left behind.' Till now, SIR has been completed in nine major states viz. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Combined with special revision in Assam, the eligible population covered so far has been more than 63% of persons above 18 years, is quite substantial and diversified. About 45 million names were deleted on account of them having been 'absentee', 'shifted', or 'missing', as per the draft rolls in the nine SIR states. Moreover, in the final rolls, the gap between the expected eligible citizens and the number of registered electors in these 10 states is around 70 million. If a similar trend persists in the remaining states also, the gap for all-India is likely to become more than 110 million. As this significant gap can largely be attributed to deletion of absentees, shifted and missing voters, and logical discrepancies, in this article we propose to discuss whether any eligible citizen, as enshrined in section 19 of Representation of the People Act 1950 (RPA), can be deprived from registration in the



electoral rolls.

### RECAPITULATION OF STATUTORY PROVISIONS

In the SIR, electors whose filled-in enumeration forms were not submitted, have been excluded from the draft rolls, presuming them to have shifted elsewhere without intent to return. The 'absentee' or 'shifted' status hinges on the ordinary residence. Any question as to where a person is ordinarily resident at the relevant time has to be determined with reference to several facts and is to such rules as may be made in this behalf. However, neither the Union government nor the ECI have made any rules defining it. The procedure currently followed is based on the judgement of the Gauhati high court in the Manmohan Singh case, which defined the 'Ordinary Resident' to mean a usual and normal resident of that place, permanent in character, not temporary or casual and for a considerable time. It is the place where one habitually sleeps at night. The Supreme Court has also held that the person has to have an

intention to stay at that place for a considerably long time. RPA's Section 20(1A) also stipulates that persons absenting themselves temporarily from their place of ordinary residence shall not, by reason thereof, cease to be ordinarily resident therein. Accordingly, the ECI manual stipulates that the temporary absence from place of ordinary residence will not deprive a person of the qualification of ordinary residence, if they possess the ability to return and has intention to return to that place.

### EXCLUSION FROM DRAFT ROLLS

In fact, the exclusion of absentee or shifted persons was built into the SIR, as their names were not to be included in the draft rolls. Most of the persons who were absent or temporarily shifted, albeit otherwise ordinarily resident of that constituency, may not have been available to receive the forms. Most of them may not have been in a position to come back immediately from their current place of work or residential to submit required docu-

ments to the BLO. It was quite a demand to expect a person, particularly poor migrant workers, to travel to their home town or village. Most of them may have been very poor to afford travel to their place where they were registered as voters. Though the facility for online uploading of forms and documents was provided by ECI, but the question is how many such migrants are sufficiently digitally literate to avail themselves of it. Moreover, even in case of online uploading, the BLO is to verify the documents by visiting the household. This makes the facility ab initio redundant for the absentee or temporarily shifted voter. Hence, all such electors whose names were not included in the draft rolls, as their filled-in forms were not returned by the stipulated dates, did not get any opportunity to be heard in person under Section 22 of the RPA. Whether the statutory rights of these persons can be curtailed in SIR is to be addressed in the judicial fora.

## This Ceasefire Should Be a Moment of Introspection for India

As Iran negotiates from strength and Pakistan claims a peacemaker's laurels, the Narendra Modi government's silence and strategic drift have left India watching from the margins of a reordering world. The entire world will cautiously welcome the two-week ceasefire in the West Asia conflict between the United States and Israel on one side and Iran on the other. It is a pause, not a peace. But even a pause, in a conflict that threatened to engulf civilisation itself, is cause for measured relief. What the ceasefire has revealed, however, is as consequential as the conflict it has temporarily silenced: a new map of global influence is being drawn, and India is not among the cartographers. The conflict began on 28 February with the targeted assassinations of the topmost echelons of the Iranian regime. These strikes commenced just two days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed his much-trumpeted visit to Israel. A visit that said nothing about Israel's continuing genocide in Gaza, nothing about its aggressively expansionist policies in the occupied West Bank, and everything about where India's moral compass now points. That silence, at such a moment, diminished India's global stature in ways that will take years to recover. The role played by Pakistan in brokering the ceasefire is a severe setback to both the substance and the style of Modi's highly personalised diplomacy. For a decade, the policy has been to isolate Pakistan internationally, to convince the world that it is a failed state, a terror sponsor, unworthy of the global high table. That policy has now collapsed spectacularly in full public view. As recently as 2018, Pakistan was on infamous FATF list for supporting terror networks. Now it is the peace maker. A bankrupt, broken Pakistan could play peacemaker. A resur-

gent India could only watch. The question is not what happened, but why. A bankrupt economy, wholly dependent on the largesse of the IMF, the Gulf states, and China; a country broken in so many institutional ways, Pakistan was able to play the role of indispensable mediator in the most consequential conflict of recent times. This is not merely a diplomatic embarrassment. It is a strategic failure of the first order. One recalls what Manmohan Singh's government accomplished after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks: the methodical, evidence-based international isolation of Pakistan's terror networks, achieved without bellicose posturing and without abandoning India's moral voice on the world stage. The contrast with the present dispensation is not merely stylistic. Modi or his team have also never explained why Operation Sindoor was suddenly and abruptly halted on May 10, 2025. The first public announcement of which came not from South Block but from the United States and for which President Trump has claimed credit almost a hundred times since. Iran, for its part, has written a chapter that history will not forget. Faced with the threat of obliteration, a word Donald Trump used with casual menace, Iran's people became a human shield for their own civilisation. The asymmetry of the conflict was total: the world's most powerful military and the most sophisticated air force in West Asia against a country under decades of sanctions, its infrastructure degraded, its alliances limited. And yet Iran did not capitulate. It extracted conditions at the negotiating table that, a year ago, would have been considered unimaginable. Among those conditions is a principle with enormous long-term strategic significance: the monetisation of the Strait of Hormuz.

Through one of history's most critical chokepoints, through which flows a fifth of the world's oil, Iran has now established a framework for transit pricing. Combined with the accelerating shift toward yuan-denominated energy trade, what we are witnessing is not merely a ceasefire but a structural reconfiguration of global energy economics. The dollar's long dominance over oil markets has taken another body blow. Iran answered Trump's threat of civilisational obliteration not with surrender but with negotiating conditions that reshaped the strategic landscape. India has reason to breathe more easily now. The conflict was devastating for Indian interests, threatening energy supply chains, imperilling LPG and CNG imports, exposing vulnerabilities in fertiliser and pharmaceutical inputs, and placing the Chabahar port project and India's entire INSTC investment in jeopardy. The ceasefire gives India space. But space to do what? The Modi government squandered its strategic position before and during the conflict, and there is little evidence that it has the capacity for honest introspection now. India was not at the negotiating table. It was not even in the antechamber. As BRICS chair this year, India had a historic opportunity to articulate the voice of the Global South, to insist on a ceasefire, to refuse the binary of alignment with Western military adventurism. Instead, it chose silence. That silence, calculated, cowardly, and consequential, has betrayed the very architecture of BRICS and the non-aligned tradition that gave India its distinctive global voice for seven decades. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar once asked, in a moment of public candour widely celebrated by his admirers: how can India fight a power like China? It was presented as strategic

realism. But contrast it with what Iran's Foreign Minister said as American bombers circled his country's skies: let them come, we will teach them. One statement diminishes a nation; the other, dignifies one. Jaishankar also once dismissed Pakistan's role in regional diplomacy as that of a dalal, a broker, a middleman, with all the contempt that word carries. Today, that dalal has brokered a ceasefire between nuclear-armed America and a defiant Iran. Words, in diplomacy, have a way of returning. The increased influence of Pakistan, however temporary it may prove, must be a cause of serious concern for India. Pakistan's diplomatic rehabilitation, earned by playing an indispensable role in a global crisis, will have consequences on the margins of every international forum where India seeks to press its case on cross-border terrorism, in Jammu and Kashmir, on the legitimacy of military responses to provocations. The ground that India has lost is not merely rhetorical. It translates directly into reduced leverage, reduced credibility, and reduced room to manoeuvre. And then there is the matter of the relationship with Washington. Donald Trump has humiliated India in ways that would have drawn a sharp public response from any government with a spine. He forced an asymmetric and deeply unfair trade framework on India, extracting concessions under threat of tariffs while India's negotiators smiled for photographs. He sent back Indian nationals, shackled and chained in military aircraft, a deliberate act of degradation that no self-respecting nation should have absorbed in silence. He took credit for halting India's own military operation. And through it all, the government that wraps itself in nationalist rhetoric offered not a syllable of public protest.

## Ahead Of Bengal Polls, Decoding The Bhadrakol's Views On SIR

In Kolkata's social vocabulary, a particular group has long held a special place - the 'bhadrakol', or what is often referred to as the 'mahyabitta' (middle-class). In English-language discourse, this social class was once described as the "middle class", and the term later evolved into the "educated middle class", sometimes simply called the "middle class". During the colonial period, British officials, who first encountered this social group, referred to them as "educated natives." Like most modern social classes, however, the boundaries of the bhadrakol community are difficult to define precisely. In West Bengal, and particularly in Kolkata, the bhadrakol have historically played a central role in shaping public opinion. In earlier decades, the Congress party enjoyed considerable support among Kolkata's urban middle class, while rural Bengal leaned more towards the Left parties. Later, during the final phase of Left rule, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee maintained significant support among urban educated voters, while Mamata Banerjee emerged as the political favourite in rural Bengal. Eventually, Banerjee managed to expand her influence across both demographics. However, in the 2026 Assembly election, a different pattern appears to be emerging in parts of urban Kolkata. In some areas, there is visible anti-incumbency after nearly fifteen years of Banerjee's government. Among sections of the bhadrakol, too, a certain level of dissatisfaction has become evident. Their concerns revolve around several issues that have dominated political debates in the state, including the education recruitment scam, allegations of corruption in political campaigns, and the activities of the so-called



"syndicate" networks involved in construction and local contracting. For many members of the Bengali bhadrakol community, these controversies have created a sense of disillusionment with the present administration. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list has added another layer of controversy. Some argue that the deletions disproportionately affect slum residents or minority communities in Kolkata, while others suggest that the exercise targeted illegal infiltrators, including Bangladeshis living in railway colonies or old refugee settlements. Opinions differ. Renowned filmmaker Arindam Sil said, "We are not against SIR, but we are worried about the abrupt huge deletion. Bengali cultural degradation is a wrong perception because there are good films Bengalis are still creating. Tagore's songs, dance and book fairs - all are still happening. But deleted voters can't get hearings from tribunals. This is unthinkable." Painter and renowned artist Samir Aich disagreed. "After the RG Kar and Sandeshkhali incidents, Bengali culture has completely eroded. I do not subscribe to any particular party but, as a creative per-

son, I think Bengal has lost its cultural glory in the past 15 years. Vote bank politics should be stopped. The SIR idea is good," he said. Retired police officer Nazrul Islam also said implementing the SIR was a good decision and that the Trinamool Congress government in the state had "destroyed" the state's development model. Banerjee and the Trinamool have argued that many genuine voters have been removed from the list and that the deletions do not affect only minority communities, but also a significant number of Hindu voters. There have been several reported instances where academicians, teachers, professors, college students, and government employees discovered that their names were missing from the voter lists. For many people, the process of correcting the records and re-entering their names has proven to be complicated. The SIR verification procedure requires filling out multiple forms and appearing for inquiries, which many citizens have found difficult and stressful. The BJP has tried to counter these criticisms by arguing that voter list revisions have taken place in several other states as well, including Kerala, Assam and Tamil Nadu, without similar politi-

cal turmoil. The party says the protests in West Bengal are largely incited by the Trinamool. Banerjee, however, has argued that there is a political conspiracy behind the process, claiming that it is being used as a method to remove voters sympathetic to her party. In her campaign speeches, she accused the Election Commission of functioning as a political instrument of the BJP, an accusation that the saffron party has denied. Voices Raised As a result, two parallel currents are now visible in Kolkata's public discourse. On the one hand, there is genuine discontent among sections of the bhadrakol community regarding governance issues. Many of these voices regularly appear in television debates and discussions across social media platforms. Among sections of the Bengali middle class, criticism of the government has been growing. However, the SIR controversy has also caused discomfort among several independent intellectuals and professionals who do not align with the Trinamool Congress. For example, Dr Kunal Sarkar, a well-known cardiologist, and Professor Sukanta Chowdhury, emeritus professor of Jadavpur University.

## Iran Says US Agreed To Release Frozen Assets In Qatar, Foreign Banks, Official Denies

Iran on Saturday reportedly claimed that the United States agreed to release frozen Iranian assets held in Qatar and other countries. However, Washington moved quickly to push back as a senior US official denied the report, saying, "False. The meetings have not even started yet." The denial came after a senior Iranian source told Reuters that Washington had agreed to release Iranian frozen assets held in Qatar and other foreign banks, welcoming the purported move as a sign of "seriousness" in reaching a deal. The source said it was one of Iran's demands "in messages conveyed to the US side" and that Tehran had received a US agreement to release the assets. A second Iranian source put a figure on it, saying the US had agreed to release \$6 billion of frozen funds held in Qatar. ALSO READ: Islamabad Hosts US-Iran Talks: Where, When And What To Expect — Check Key Leaders Attending Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf had publicly warned as recently as Friday that talks could not begin unless Washington releases the blocked funds and Israel halted its strikes in Lebanon. Ghalibaf said the two measures had been



"mutually agreed upon between the parties" but had "yet to be implemented." The frozen assets question has a long and tangled history. The most recent significant transfer came in September 2023, when around \$6 billion in Iranian oil revenues frozen in South Korean banks since 2019 were moved to restricted accounts in Qatar under a US sanctions waiver, tied to a prisoner exchange. Iran could access the funds only for humanitarian purchases, food, medicine, under strict US oversight. Those funds were subsequently blocked again after the Hamas-led attacks of October 7, 2023, due to Iran's links to the

group. The exact total value of Iran's frozen assets abroad is unclear, but several estimates place the figure above \$100 billion. Before the war, Iran was already in acute economic distress, with year-on-year inflation running at over 68 percent, the highest since World War II, making the release of frozen funds a central demand in any settlement. The final agreement being negotiated is expected to include Iranian commitments not to pursue nuclear weapons in exchange for sanctions relief and the return of frozen assets, Reuters reported. Iran's broader 10-point proposal, which forms the basis of the current negotiations,

includes lifting all sanctions, the release of frozen assets abroad, and full payment of Iran's war-related damages. Washington has not publicly confirmed the scope of any asset release. US President Donald Trump confirmed on Saturday that peace talks between the United States and Iran had officially begun in Islamabad. However, Trump called Iran a 'failing nation' and expressing deep uncertainty about the outcome of the negotiations. In a phone call with Trump, White House Correspondent Kellie Meyer asked Trump about his Truth Social post touting US oil and gas supplies, Trump said the movement of tankers toward

American shores was not a consequence of Iran keeping the Strait of Hormuz shut. "Take a look out of the great seas of our world — many of them heading to the United States to load up with oil, we have plenty of it," he said. The Strait, he added, would reopen "in the not too distant future." When asked whether Trump believed Iran was acting in good faith, he was non-committal. "I'll let you know that in a very short period of time, won't take long," he said. When pressed on how talks were going, Trump said he had "no idea." Asked if he was hopeful, the president shrugged off the question in characteristic fashion: "Whatever, otherwise we'll reset. We're ready to go." Meanwhile, Trump earlier stated that a large empty oil tankers were on their way to the United States to load up with American oil and gas. "Massive numbers of completely empty oil tankers, some of the largest anywhere in the World, are heading, right now, to the United States to load up with the best and 'sweetest' oil (and gas) anywhere in the World," Trump wrote. "We have more oil than the next two largest oil economies combined — and higher quality."

## RBL BANK CALLS FOR SHAREHOLDER VOTE ON EMIRATES NBD DEAL

RBL Bank Ltd. on Saturday said that it has called an extraordinary general meeting on May 4 to seek shareholder approval for changes linked to Emirates NBD Bank's planned investment, including revised board nomination rights and amendments to the bank's articles of association. The move advances the Dubai lender's proposed acquisition of a controlling stake in the private sector bank. The key pricing detail remains unchanged. Emirates NBD is set to subscribe to new RBL Bank shares at Rs 280 per equity share under the preferential allotment announced earlier. The proposed issue covers up to 95.91 crore fully paid-up equity shares, or a lower number equal to 60% of the post-issue equity capital, subject to adjustments under the investment agreement. The bank said its board approved an amendment agreement on April 11 to align the original October 2025 investment pact with conditions set out in the Reserve Bank of India's approval. The central bank had cleared Emirates NBD to acquire up to 74% of RBL Bank's paid-up share capital through a letter dated April



1. The transaction is set to become one of the most significant foreign investments in an Indian private lender and would give Emirates NBD management control of RBL Bank once completed. India permits foreign investment of up to 74% in private banks, though larger holdings by a single foreign institution require regulatory approval. NDTV Profit had reported on April 2 that the RBI had approved the proposed acquisition of majority shareholding in RBL Bank by Emirates NBD, following earlier clearance from the Competition Commission of India. The deal is expected to close in the first quarter of FY27,

subject to remaining approvals and customary conditions. Deal Terms Under the deal structure, if Emirates NBD holds more than 50% of the bank, it can nominate all non-independent directors, including executive directors, subject to applicable law. That right reduces as shareholding falls. If its stake is 50% or below but at least 30%, it may nominate up to three non-executive directors. Below that, the number falls further based on ownership thresholds. RBL Bank also said shareholders will vote on approval for fixed remuneration payable to Chandan Sinha as non-executive part-time chairman.

## TCS SALARY HIKE: Double-Digit Increment For Employees On Cards?

Tata Consultancy Services said top performers will receive double-digit salary hikes as the company rolls out annual increments across eligible employees from April 1. The move stands out at a time when pay growth, hiring demand and job confidence remain under close watch across the IT sector. TCS announced the revision alongside its March quarter earnings, linking the decision to continued deal momentum and confidence in business demand. The pay action also sends a signal on retention as companies compete for skilled workers in AI, cloud and digital roles. Pay Reset The company said increments will apply across grades for eligible employees, with stronger rewards for high performers. "We have announced annual increments to all eligible employ-



The move stands out at a time when pay growth, hiring demand and job confidence remain under close watch across the IT sector. TCS announced the revision alongside its March quarter earnings

est indicators employees track to judge company confidence and career prospects. Differentiated pay can help TCS retain high-performing talent while rewarding employees with skills in growth areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and data. The announcement comes after the company said it continues to invest in a future-ready workforce with experienced hires and campus recruits. Street

Watch Investors will now watch whether wage hikes pressure margins in coming quarters or are offset by stronger growth and productivity gains. Management said it remains focused on balancing growth with profitability, even as it continues investing under its build-partner-acquire strategy. Attention may also turn to whether other large IT firms announce similar pay moves during the earnings season.

Watch Investors will now watch whether wage hikes pressure margins in coming quarters or are offset by stronger growth and productivity gains. Management said it remains focused on balancing growth with profitability, even as it continues investing under its build-partner-acquire strategy. Attention may also turn to whether other large IT firms announce similar pay moves during the earnings season.

## Soch Expands Footprint in Vizag with Second Store and a Seasonal Edit

Vizag, Andhra Pradesh April, 2026: Soch, India's leading occasion and evening wear brand, proudly announces the opening of its second store in Vizag, marking its eleventh store in Andhra Pradesh. Known for its scenic charm and deeply rooted cultural traditions, Vizag continues to emerge as a promising market for evening occasion wear, making it a strategic choice for Soch's expansion. Spanning over 1,400 square feet, the new store is thoughtfully designed to deliver an elevated shopping experience. Reflecting the brand's commitment to elegant contemporary design, the space houses an extensive selection of suit sets, sarees, kurtas, lehengas, dresses, kaftans, and fusion wear, catering to a wide spectrum of occasions and personal styles. The store launch coincides with the launch of Soch's Spring Summer collection, bringing focus to seasonal dressing. This collection is a celebration of lightness and versatility, featuring breathable fabrics, fluid silhou-



ettes, and a vibrant yet balanced colour palette. Designed with the modern woman in mind, the collection seamlessly blends style with comfort, an essential consideration for coastal climates like Vizag. From everyday elegance to occasion-ready ensembles, the brand offers a fresh perspective on ethnic wear, making it both functional and fashion-forward. Each piece is crafted to adapt effortlessly to the evolving wardrobe needs of today's consumer, while retaining

the essence of traditional artistry. With this launch, Soch continues to strengthen its footprint in South India, reinforcing its position as a preferred destination for women seeking ethnic wear that perfectly blends tradition with contemporary styles. Soch has been a leading force in the Indian ethnic wear market for over 20 successful years. With over 175 exclusive stores across 65+ cities, Soch ensures its collections are accessible to a wide customer base. Its strong

online presence further enhances convenience, with customers able to shop seamlessly through its website, soch.com, as well as leading marketplaces such as Amazon, Myntra, and Ajoio. To stay abreast of the latest offers and receive timely updates, follow SochStories on Instagram, Soch is also present on Facebook, YouTube, and Pinterest. For further information and a comprehensive shopping experience, visit our official website soch.com.

## ACCOUNTABILITY BY DESIGN: REGULATORY CHALLENGES IN INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS

The panel on "Accountability by Design: Shaping AI Regulations, Platforms, and Critical Digital Infrastructure" at the recent 7th Digital Citizen Summit (DCS) 2025, hosted by Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) in partnership with Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP), highlighted that accountability must be built into artificial intelligence (AI) systems from the earliest stages of design. As AI becomes central to India's critical infrastructure, discussions across sectors point to the same conclusion, ie, responsibility cannot be retrofitted. From automobiles to algorithms, the conversation repeatedly drew on the automobile sector, which gradually built a shared framework of responsibility, manufacturers meeting safety norms, owners ensuring vehicles, drivers following licensed rules, governments designing road systems and even pedestrians playing their part. This evolution showed



how accountability works only when it is structurally designed into the system. Speakers also cautioned that automobile design often prioritised user convenience over broader societal interests, offering a lesson for AI. This is why privacy by design and privacy by default must be foundational. The discussion highlighted how choices made at the model-design stage, such as adopting open-weighted or closed-weighted systems, directly shape transparency, customisation and oversight. These early deci-

sions ultimately determine how responsibility is tracked and enforced throughout an AI system's life cycle. AI introduces risks that do not align neatly with traditional data categories. Beyond data at rest and in transit, AI involves "data during computation," which requires new forms of protection. Privacy-enhancing technologies, such as federated learning, differential privacy, homomorphic encryption and secure multi-party computation, were highlighted as tools that integrate privacy into system operation.

## NMIMS Collaborates with Salesforce to Transform Student Admissions and Engagement

Hyderabad, April 11th, 2026: Salesforce, the world's #1 AI CRM, announced a collaboration with SVKM's NMIMS (Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies), one of India's most respected and longstanding institutions of higher education, to digitally transform how it engages with prospective students and manages admissions at scale. NMIMS is building a unified, AI-powered platform to eliminate data silos, streamline admissions workflows, and deliver personalised student experiences as it expands its multi-campus and digital footprint. By bringing together previously fragmented systems, the university aims to improve operational efficiency, gain real-time visibility into admissions performance, and set the foundation for a scalable, student-centric ecosystem. Building a Connected Digital Foundation NMIMS has deployed Agentforce Education and Agentforce Marketing solutions, inte-



grated with MuleSoft, to transform its lead-to-admission process. The platform enables end-to-end lead management through automated capture, nurturing, and tracking of prospective students across digital channels, along with AI-driven personalised engagement tailored to individual interests and behaviours. It also streamlines admissions through unified application processing, document management, and onboarding workflows, while ensuring real-time data integration across systems for improved



decision-making and operational visibility. Together, this creates a more efficient, data-driven admissions engine that enhances conversion, improves responsiveness, and delivers a more integrated and personalised experience for prospective students at scale. In phase one, NMIMS has completed the NMAT-based (NMIMS Management Aptitude Test) admissions workflow, establishing a strong digital foundation for future expansion. Shri Amrishbhai Patel, Chancellor, SVKM's



NMIMS Deemed-to-be University, said, "As NMIMS strengthens its presence across campuses, it is essential that we build systems that reflect our long-term vision for excellence. Our collaboration with Salesforce marks a pivotal step in creating a unified, intelligent foundation that enhances transparency, personalisation, and operational strength across the admissions and marketing ecosystem. This transformation goes beyond technology; it represents our commitment to shaping a

student-centric future where every interaction is seamless, responsive, and guided by data-driven insight. By investing in this integrated digital architecture, NMIMS is positioning itself to meet the evolving expectations of learners and to lead the way in redefining higher education in India." Arundhati Bhattacharya, President and CEO at Salesforce - South Asia, said, "India's leading universities are reimagining engagement in the digital era—moving beyond isolated systems to build intelligent, connected platforms that put students at the centre. NMIMS exemplifies this transformation. By unifying data, automating workflows, and harnessing AI to personalise at scale, they're setting a new standard for student experience. We're proud to support NMIMS as they build a platform that will drive growth, innovation, and educational excellence for years to come."

# US-Iran peace talks begin in Islamabad through Pakistani mediators

According to the United Nations, around a third of the world's fertilisers - such as urea, potash, ammonia and phosphates - normally pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Data from the World Trade Organization, shows that, since the conflict began, out-bound shipments of fertiliser-related products through the waterway have collapsed. We're hearing that indirect talks between the US and Iran have started through Pakistani mediators. Even if indirect, this is a significant moment for Pakistan, and was hard to imagine in these six weeks of war, given how far apart the two sides stand on key issues and the deep mistrust. If this leads to face-to-face talks that would be a tangible and historic result for Pakistan as a mediator. What we're watching for is whether by the end of this process, these talks deliver an extended ceasefire, any form of agreement, or even a promise to keep talking. US



President Donald Trump says Iran is "LOSING BIG" in the conflict as talks in Islamabad kick off. In a lengthy Truth Social post, Trump claims members of the media "love saying that Iran is 'winning' when, in fact, everyone knows that they are LOSING and LOSING BIG". He then goes on to repeat assertions his administration has made during the conflict: "Their Navy is gone,

their Air Force is gone, their Anti Aircraft apparatus is nonexistent, Radar is dead, their Missile and Drone Factories have been largely obliterated along with the Missiles and Drones themselves and, most importantly, their longtime 'Leaders' are no longer with us, praise be to Allah!" After referring to Iran laying sea mines, he goes on to say the US is now starting "clearing out the Strait of

Hormuz as a favor to Countries all over the World". Sources have told the BBC that talks have now started between the US and Iran - but for the moment are still indirect through Pakistani mediators. We were taken through multiple checkpoints and escorted by armed police into the centre of Islamabad's diplomatic area: the red zone. The convention centre is surrounded by billboards embla-

zoned with the US, Iranian and Pakistan flags and the words "Islamabad talks", the centre full of journalists who have travelled from around the world to cover them. Large screens fill the centre's auditorium broadcasting television stations from around the world covering the news from Islamabad. Rarely has Pakistan found itself at the heart of such significant international diplomacy. Across the road is the Serena Hotel where American Vice President JD Vance arrived shortly afternoon after visiting the US embassy. It is here, along with special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, that he met with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and the interior minister, Mohsin Naqvi. Sharif is said to have expressed his hope that these talks would serve as a stepping stone towards durable peace in the region. The Iranians also met the prime minister, although no

images of their meeting have been shared. Iran's network of regional allies and proxies - Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, Hamas in Gaza and an assortment of militias in Iraq - has given Tehran regional clout, allowing Iran to exercise what is often called "forward defence" in its long-running disputes with Israel and the United States. Since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, the network Iran calls the "Axis of Resistance" has been under constant attack. One part of it, the regime of the former Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, no longer exists. But Israel sees what it calls the "Axis of Evil" as representing an existential threat, which needs to be fully eradicated. At a time when the Iranian economy is buckling, many Iranians would also like to see their government spending less on foreign adventurism and more on making their lives easier.

## FINAL PUSH FOR VOTES AS CHALLENGER TO HUNGARY'S ORBÁN SENSES VICTORY



On the eve of Hungary's bitterly fought and highly significant election, the two main rivals are taking their campaigns to the wire, as Péter Magyar attempts to end 16 years of continuous rule by Viktor Orbán's party Fidesz. "We're at the gates of a two-thirds majority victory," he told cheering supporters, before mingling for selfies. "Let's gear up and push for the last 100 metres!" His final campaign stop will be in the second city, Debrecen, in the north-east, while Orbán, who trails in most of the polls, will address a rally in Budapest. But perhaps the biggest rally of all came on Friday

night, when tens of thousands of Hungarians crammed the capital's Heroes' Square and surrounding streets for an anti-Fidesz concert. "I feel it in my bones something's going to change," said first-time voter Fanni, who came with her mother from a village two hours' drive away in the south. "I don't believe I'd vote for [Magyar] in an ideal situation, but this is our only chance." Orbán's biggest threat is that he is facing a cross-section of public anger, and it has been largely channelled into one single opposition movement, led by a former Fidesz insider who rebelled.

## Artemis II mission was a triumph. Now comes the hard part



Nasa's Artemis II mission has successfully sent four astronauts sweeping around the far side of the Moon and landed them safely back home. The Orion spacecraft performed admirably and the images the astronauts captured have delighted a whole new generation about the possibilities of space travel. But does this mean that the children enthralled by the mission will be able to live and work on the Moon in their lifetimes? Perhaps even go to Mars, as the Artemis programme promises? It seems churlish to say, but looping the Moon was relatively easy. The really hard part lies ahead, so the answer is "maybe, maybe not". When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to land on the Moon in July 1969, many assumed it was only the beginning and that people would soon be living and working in space. That didn't happen because the Apollo programme was born not from a love of exploration, but from the Cold War, to demonstrate US superiority over the Soviet Union. That feat was achieved by Armstrong's

"one small step" off his lunar lander - job done. Just a few years after he planted the American flag on the lunar surface, the TV audience figures for subsequent missions plummeted and future Apollo missions were scrapped. This time, Nasa's stated ambition is different. Administrator Jared Isaacman has set out plans for one crewed lunar landing per year, beginning in 2028, with the fifth Artemis mission - planned for later that same year - marking the start of what the agency calls its Moon base. It sounds like science fiction, but here are the words of a serious space player dealing in science fact: "The Moon economy will develop," Josef Aschbacher, Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA), tells me. "It will take time to set up the various elements, but it will develop." But as the commander of Apollo 13 famously said when his spacecraft malfunctioned on the way to the Moon: "Houston, we've had a problem..." The lander problem To get boots on the lunar surface, Nasa needs a lander.

## California governor candidate Eric Swalwell denies sexual assault allegations

Democratic Congressman Eric Swalwell, one of the leading candidates in the race to be California's next governor, has denied allegations of sexual misconduct from former staff. "These allegations are false and come on the eve of an election against the frontrunner for governor," he said in a statement after multiple women made allegations ranging from sexual harassment to rape. His opponents - and several supporters, including House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries - have called on him to leave the race. Democrats will pick their candidate in a primary on 2 June. The winner, expected to become the next governor in the heavily Democratic state, will go on



to the 3 November general election. The first allegation against Swalwell emerged publicly on Friday in the San Francisco Chronicle. A former staff member told the newspaper that, shortly after being hired to work in his district office in Castro Valley, Swalwell began making inappropriate comments, including soliciting her for sex and sending her sexual messages.

## Artemis crew home safely after completing historic mission to the Moon

The four astronauts who flew in Nasa's Artemis II mission around the Moon have splashed down safely in the Pacific Ocean after a flawless return. The crew are now safely aboard a waiting ship and recovering from a nine-day voyage that took them further from Earth than any humans in history. Their Orion spacecraft was travelling at more than 24,000mph (38,600km/h) when it hit the Earth's upper atmosphere and its heatshield was subjected to temperatures half as hot as found on the surface of the Sun. Their safe return clears the way for the next stage of the Artemis programme, which aims to land humans on the lunar surface and eventually build a permanent base



on the Moon. The extreme heat meant the capsule, which the astronauts named Integrity, lost contact with mission control in Houston for six minutes during the descent. There were cheers when Commander Reid Wiseman's voice was heard

saying: "Houston, Integrity here. We hear you loud and clear." The mission's moment of maximum jeopardy had passed, and soon the spacecraft's red-and-white parachutes opened and sent the capsule sailing majestically through the sky. "Good main chutes!"

the Nasa commentary enthused repeatedly, until the capsule hit the ocean for a perfect splashdown. "A perfect bull's eye splashdown for Integrity and its four astronauts," Nasa commentator Rob Navias said moments after the landing. The astronauts - Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, mission specialist Christina Koch and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen - were carefully extracted from the capsule and taken by helicopter to the USS John P Murtha, where they will undergo medical evaluations. Nasa said they would be flown to Houston to be reunited with their families on Saturday. As they waited on the ship's deck they could be seen smiling and chatting while posing for photos.

## 'YOU ARE MY GOD', JAPAN'S PM TELLS BRITISH ROCK BAND DEEP PURPLE

The British rock band Deep Purple met a long-time super fan in Tokyo on Friday - who just happened to be the Japanese prime minister. "You are my god," Sanae Takaichi, a hard rock enthusiast, told the band's drummer Ian Paice, beaming as she handed him a pair of signed Japanese-made drumsticks. An avid drummer herself, Takaichi played in a Deep Purple tribute band as a girl after becoming a fan in primary school. "These days, when I fight with my husband I drum to Burn and cast a curse on him," the 65-year-old conservative leader told the musicians at her office in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, on



Friday. The band met Japan's first female prime minister as they returned to tour across the country where they recorded the 1972 live album Made in Japan - considered to be one of the greatest rock albums ever recorded. "I can't believe Deep Purple are here,"

Takaichi said, smiling as she greeted the musicians. "I have the deepest respect for the way you continue to make rock history while embracing new challenges and creating captivating music to this day," she said through an interpreter. The prime minister said she

hoped the tour would "thrill and excite fans all over Japan" and promote cultural exchange between the UK and Japan. The band wrote in a post on Instagram: "A lifelong fan of hard rock and heavy metal, Takaichi has often named Deep Purple as one of her favourite bands. "She even told the group she bought their Machine Head album back in grade school." Formed in England in 1968, Deep Purple became known as one of the "unholy trinity" of British heavy metal bands, alongside Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. Perhaps their most renowned hit - Smoke on the Water - came on their 1971 album Machine Head.

## Djibouti's president wins unprecedented sixth term with 97.8% of vote



Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh has won an election with 97.8% of the vote, keeping him at the helm of the strategically-placed Horn of Africa nation for a sixth term, preliminary official results show. The 78-year-old's sole challenger Mohamed Farah Samatar got 2.19% of the vote, in a poll boycotted by most of the opposition. In power for 27 years, Guelleh had promised to step down, but ran for re-election after the constitution was amended in November to remove the upper age limit of 75 for presidential candidates. Guelleh's campaign focused on the fact that he had maintained stability in Djibouti at a time when other regional states, and the Middle East, had been hit by conflict. Lying on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Djibouti serves as a gateway to the Suez Canal, one of the world's busiest shipping routes. The US, China, France, Italy and Japan have military bases in the country. Guelleh is only Djibouti's

second president since it gained its independence from France in 1977. The leaders of the main opposition parties - including Dahir Ahmed Farah - have boycotted elections since 2016, saying there was no free political activity. Guelleh celebrated his victory at his home, saying it was a victory for the entire nation. Officials said that more than 80% of registered voters cast their ballots in Friday's election. Samatar, who was the flag-bearer of a small party with no parliamentary seats, has not yet commented. The results were released by the interior ministry but still need to be validated by judges on the constitutional council before Guelleh can be sworn in for another five-year term. He won the 2021 election by a similar margin. In 2010, Djibouti's parliament scrapped term limits, and shortened presidential mandates from six to five years. It also set 75 as the age limit for candidates, before changing the constitution in November so that Guelleh could run for office again.



Trump administration unveils 250-foot 'Triumphal Arch' design

## Chimpanzees in Uganda locked in vicious 'civil war', say researchers

The world's largest known group of wild chimpanzees has split and been locked in a vicious "civil war" for the last eight years, according to researchers. It is not clear exactly why the once close-knit community of Ngorongoro chimpanzees at Uganda's Kibale National Park are at loggerheads, but since 2018 the scientists have recorded 24 killings, including 17 infants. "These were chimps that would hold hands," lead author Aaron Sandel said. "Now they're trying to kill each other." The study, published in the journal Science, says the intensity and duration of

the violence may inform how early human conflict developed. Sandel, an anthropologist from the University of Texas in the US, and co-director of the Ngorongoro Chimpanzee Project, says chimpanzees are "very territorial", and have "hostile interactions with those from other groups". "[It's] like a fear of strangers," he told the Science podcast. But over several decades, Sandel said the nearly 200 Ngorongoro chimpanzees had lived in harmony. There were divided into two sets - known to researchers as Western and Central - but they had existed overall as a cohesive group.



## IPL 2026:

## Iyer's unbeaten 69 guides Punjab Kings to 6-wkt win over SRH

New Chandigarh (TSIT): Captain Shreyas Iyer remained unbeaten at 69 while Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh scored quick half-centuries as Punjab Kings (PBKS) chased down the target of 220 runs in just 18.5 overs against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the 17th match of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the PCA New International Cricket Stadium in New Chandigarh on Saturday.

With this win, PBKS remain unbeaten this season. They now have seven points from four matches, with one game against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) abandoned due to rain. Chasing a big total, the Punjab Kings got off to a flying start. Openers Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh continued their good form and attacked the SRH bowlers right from the start. Priyansh took the lead early, playing aggressive shots all around the ground.

He scored 21 runs in the final over of the Power-play off Harshal Patel and reached his fifty in just 16 balls with back-to-back boundaries. This became the

second-fastest fifty for Punjab Kings, just behind KL Rahul's 14-ball half-century in 2018. Prabhsimran also played his part well, and PBKS reached 93/0 at the end of the Power-play.

SRH finally got a breakthrough in the seventh over when Shivang Kumar dismissed Priyansh Arya, who scored 57 off just 20 balls with five fours and five sixes. Shivang struck again in his next over, removing Prabhsimran Singh after he completed his fifty in 24 balls. He scored 51 runs, hitting four fours and four sixes. Despite these wickets, PBKS are in a strong position at 124/2 after 10 overs.

Shivang continued his good spell and picked up another wicket, dismissing Cooper Connolly with a wide delivery outside off stump. Captain Shreyas Iyer steadied the innings along with impact substitute Nehal Wadhwa. The pair rotates the strike well and punishes loose deliveries to keep the pressure on SRH.

Iyer then shifted gears after the 13th over and reached his fifty in 24 balls with a six off Eshan Malinga in the 16th over. He stayed unbeaten on 69, while Shashank Singh supported him with an unbeaten 16, as PBKS chased down the target with seven balls to spare and six wickets in hand.

For SRH, Shivang Kumar was the standout bowler, finishing with figures of 3/33 in four overs. Harsh Dubey chips in with one wicket.

Earlier in the match, Sunrisers Hyderabad

made a strong start after being put in to bat, with openers Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head attacking from the very beginning. Abhishek led the charge, scoring 20 runs in one over off Arshdeep Singh and reaching his fifty in just 18 balls with two consecutive sixes. Head also played aggressively, hitting three boundaries in an over, as SRH raced to 105/0 at the end of the powerplay.

Punjab Kings made a comeback in the ninth over when Shashank Singh dismissed Head for 38, ending the 120-run opening partnership. Just two balls later, Abhishek was also dismissed for a brilliant 78 off 28 balls, which included five fours and eight sixes.

After the quick wickets, Ishan Kishan and Heinrich Klaasen stabilised the innings by rotating the strike. However, Arshdeep Singh broke their partnership by dismissing Kishan for 27. SRH lost further momentum as Aniket Verma was run out due to a mix-up, and Salil Arora managed only 9 runs.

## Brief Scores:

Sunrisers Hyderabad 219/6 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 74, Heinrich Klaasen 39, Travis Head 38; Shashank Singh 2-20, Arshdeep Singh 2-50) lost to Punjab Kings 223/4 in 18.5 overs (Shreyas Iyer 69\*, Priyansh Arya 57, Prabhsimran Singh 51; Shivang Kumar 3-33, Harsh Dubey 1-38) by 6 wickets.

## IPL 2026:

## Samson's hundred and Mhatre's fifty guide CSK to 212/2 against DC



CHENNAI: Sanju Samson shed his indifferent start to IPL 2026 season with a blazing hundred and Ayush Mhatre offered another glimpse into the future with a fluent half-century as Chennai Super Kings posted a competitive 212 for two against Delhi Capitals here on Saturday. His unbeaten 115 off 56 balls (15x4, 4x6) was the cornerstone of Chennai's one of better outings with

the bat in this IPL. After being asked to bat first, the CSK man brought up his first substantial knock in a Yellow jersey, and was involved in an excellent stand with Mhatre for the second wicket - 113 runs in a little over 11 overs.

It was Samson's fourth IPL hundred, the first for CSK and the first in IPL 2026.

A big score from Samson

was essential for himself and CSK to restore the belief of 'Abu-den' faithfuls in their team, and he did that on the night with a brilliant innings in front of home fans.

It was the typical Samson innings. The Kerala batter had looked unsure of his feet and field placings in earlier matches this season, but on this instance a familiar Samson returned.

## Babar Azam Gets Hit By Nasty Bouncer From Ubaid Shah In Pakistan Super League, Sits Down On Ground

Babar Azam is currently in action in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Once Pakistan's all-format captain, Babar Azam has seen his stocks decline in recent times and is now on something of a comeback trail, particularly in T20 cricket. Recently, the star batter etched his name into the record books by becoming the fastest player to reach 12,000 runs in T20 cricket. He achieved this milestone during his 351st match in Karachi, playing for Peshawar Zalmi in the ongoing PSL against the Karachi Kings. Babar reached the landmark in just 338 innings. Currently captaining Peshawar Zalmi, Babar was struck by a nasty bounce from Lahore Qalandars' Ubaid Shah. The delivery hit him on



the neck, forcing him to sit down on the ground immediately. Azam has established himself as one of the tournament's most consistent batters, with over 100 matches played, multiple 50-plus scores, and two centuries. He surpassed the previous record

held by former West Indies legend Chris Gayle, who had reached the mark in 343 innings and remains the highest run-scorer in T20s. India's star batter Virat Kohli sits third on the list, having taken 360 innings to achieve the feat. Babar needed just 13 runs dur-

ing the PSL clash between Peshawar Zalmi and the Karachi Kings to enter the 12,000-run club in T20 cricket, and he reached the milestone in the fourth over of Zalmi's innings. With this achievement, Babar became only the second Pakistani batter to cross the 12,000-run mark in T20s. The record for the most T20 runs by a Pakistani player is still held by veteran batter Shoaib Malik. Babar opened the innings for Peshawar Zalmi and remained unbeaten on 87 off 51 deliveries. He struck 10 fours and two sixes during his fluent knock and stitched a commanding 191-run partnership for the second wicket with Kusal Mendis, guiding Zalmi to an imposing total of 246/3 in their allotted 20 overs.

## 'More Bollywood Movie Than Actual Cricket': PSL Overseas Star Drops 'IPL' Bombshell

South Africa cricket team batter Rilee Rossouw, who is currently playing for Pakistan Super League (PSL) side Quetta Gladiators, made a stunning remark on the Indian Premier League (IPL). In a video that has surfaced on social media, he claimed that the PSL was more competitive than the IPL and added that the IPL is a long tournament with a lot of backing from Bollywood. As a result, he said that the tournament becomes "more of a movie" than "actual cricket." "The IPL is a very long tournament, and the PSL is a much more compact tournament where the competition is a lot more fierce. The IPL obviously has the whole Bollywood backing it,



so it's a lot more of a movie than actual cricket," he said. Earlier, the Pakistan Cricket Board's policy of allowing its employees to work with franchises in the Pakistan Super League has come under scrutiny after former captain Misbah ul Haq con-

firming he was involved with Peshawar Zalmi as consultant. The PCB at the start of the PSL had stopped Sarfaraz Ahmed and Wahab Riaz from working with the Quetta Gladiators franchise. The board said under its policy former players who were

not allowed to work in the PSL in any capacity as it was a conflict of interest. But Misbah defended his involvement with Peshawar Zalmi despite being a paid national selector and batting consultant with the PCB. "I had signed a contract with Zalmi before I became national selector and I only work for them as consultant on given days in a season," Misbah told the media wearing the Peshawar Zalmi kit. Asked how he got permission from the PCB to work in the PSL when Sarfaraz who was with him on the selection committee and Wahab were stopped from working with Quetta Gladiators, Misbah said his case was different and the PCB can best explain this.

## R Ashwin Coins Brand New Term To Describe Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's Huge Knock Against RCB

Former Indian cricket team spinner R Ashwin was left stunned by Rajasthan Royals young sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's explosive batting against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL 2026 on Friday. It was a stunning knock from the 15-year-old as he slammed 78 off just 26 deliveries to guide his team to a comfortable victory. He took on the likes of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood but was able to play his natural game during a competitive run chase. Such was the prowess shown by the youngster that Ashwin went on to coin a new term - 'Vaiball' - in order to describe the young batter's performance. "This is insane! This is Vaiball Suryavanshi. Let's vibe with this fella," Ashwin posted on X (formerly Twitter). Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan also took to social media to praise the young sensation. "Does Vaibhav Suryavanshi target big bowlers purposely? I like to think so," he wrote. Virat Kohli had a special message for teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi after the latter's breathtaking knock against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on Friday night. Virat signed Vaibhav's cap post match



writing, "Dear Vaibhav, well done". The moment came after Sooryavanshi delivered an incredible performance, scoring 78 runs off just 26 balls to lead Rajasthan Royals to a comfortable six-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bengaluru. In their chase of 203 runs, the 15-year-old kept the pressure off RR, attacking RCB's bowlers with impressive skill. Kohli, who witnessed the action firsthand, took a moment after the game to encourage the young player.

## RODRIGUEZ TARGETS UFC RETURN AFTER MONTHS IN PRISON

Daniel Rodriguez is targeting a return to UFC and says he will show the "monster that prison created" after eight months in a Mexican jail. The 39-year-old American posted a video on Instagram, external on Thursday with the caption "ready for my return to the UFC octagon" after saying he has been released from prison in Tijuana. The video appears to show footage of Rodriguez training with a punch bag and sparring in front of a line of prison cells. The details of Rodriguez's arrest have not been disclosed and BBC Sport has asked Mexican legal authorities and the UFC for comment. "Eight months in a cage in Tijuana, Mexico never



killed my spirit. I did everything possible to stay on point and ready for my return to the UFC octagon," said Rodriguez. "Expect a hungrier, more focused version of myself. They tried to take it all away, now it's time for me to come back and show you all the monster that prison created." "Thank you to my legal and man-

agement team, family and real friends to help me be a free man." Rodriguez - who is 14th in the UFC's welterweight rankings - has not fought since July last year, when he beat American Kevin Holland by unanimous decision. He made his debut in the UFC in 2020 and has won 10 of his 14 fights in the promotion.

## 'Generational Talent': PV Sindhu Praises Ayush Shetty After Badminton Asia Championships Final Entry



Following shuttler Ayush Shetty's qualification to the final of the Badminton Asia Championships, India's two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu hailed him as a "generational talent" and went on to rank him among the best youngsters she has come across. Shetty produced one of the biggest performances of his career, defeating World No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn to storm into the final of the Badminton Asia Championships in Ningbo on Saturday. In a high-intensity semifinal clash, Shetty showed remarkable resilience after losing the opening game. He bounced back strongly to register a 10-21, 21-19, 21-17 win, turning the match around with sharp attacking play and control in the longer rallies. Taking to X, she wrote, "I have consistently maintained that he is a generational talent. In terms

of pure natural ability, he stands right up there with the very best young players I have come across. There is a prodigious level of talent in him, and it is something you immediately recognise when you see him on court. He has been training in my training group for the past three weeks along with coach Irwan, and this period has only reinforced my belief in his potential." Sindhu went on to say that he has a "strong presence on the court" and that his height gives him an "excellent reach". The legendary shuttler also pointed out his "very deep, heavy smash" that can put pressure on his opponents. "Physically, he has a strong presence on court. His height gives him excellent reach, and he already possesses a very deep, heavy smash that can put opponents under serious pressure.

## Light &amp; lean Fury happy to be 'young fresh hunter' again

Tyson Fury says he took his undefeated record "for granted" as the British heavyweight appeared lean and sharp before Saturday's bout with Arslanbek Makhmudov at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. The 37-year-old - returning to the ring after two consecutive defeats to Oleksandr Usyk in 2024 - weighed in at 19st 2lb (122kg), three pounds heavier than his Russian opponent. Fury briefly retired after suffering the first losses of his career to Usyk in Saudi Arabia, but outlined his desire to become a three-time world champion.

"Whoever has the belts I want to get them back. I was undefeated for 17 years and took it for granted," he said at Friday's weigh-in in London. "I had two losses in a row and I'm not the hunted now but I'm the hunter. It feels great to be the young fresh hunter again. I want to make a statement, so I've come in nice and light and lean." Fury - who had the infamous 11-minute and 20-second stare down with Usyk before their second fight 16 months ago - shared just a short seven-second face-off with Makhmudov, before the 36-year-old left the stage. Fury was in the

same upbeat mood he has shown all week - making time for fans outside beforehand, laughing and joking with the media, and strolling out to Eminem's "Without Me" with the line "guess who's back?" blasting on the speakers. But the focus soon turned to the scales, with weight a talking point throughout the Morecambe fighter's career. He was a career-heaviest 20st 1lb (127kg) - although fully clothed - for his rematch with Usyk in December 2024, while during his hiatus from boxing between 2016 and 2018 he ballooned to around 28st

(178kg) amid personal struggles. Fury - who has spent his training camp in Pattaya, Thailand - weighed the same as he did for his last fight in the United Kingdom in December 2022 when he beat fellow Briton Derek Chisora. "It's a decent, comfortable, happy weight for Fury. A lot of people thought he'd come in heavier, but that's a good weight," said BBC Radio 5 Live boxing pundit Steve Bunce. "He looks like a man that has been training in the heat for an awful long time. He might have been 23 or 24 stone when he started training for this fight.



## Nikhil, Bharat Krishnamachari, Pixel Studio, Ravi Basrur's Most Ambitious Pan India Project Swayambhu Spectacular & Visually Stunning First Single Ra Ra Dhevara On April 16

Nikhil Siddhartha, who tasted nationwide success with Karthikeya 2, is now awaiting the release of his most ambitious venture yet- Swayambhu. The film, directed by Bharat Krishnamachari and backed by Bhuvan and Sreekar of Pixel Studios with Tagore Madhu presenting, is crafted as a grand-scale period action spectacle. Ravi Basrur provides the music, and the film's first single Ra Ra Devara will be released on April 16th. The makers made the announcement through this power-packed poster. It presents Nikhil in a ferocious warrior avatar, standing in a dense forest, poised to hurl a spear with intense focus. The announcement poster indicates how grand, spectacular and visually stunning the song is going to be. The teaser, released earlier, received an overwhelming response for its scale, visuals, and immersive world-building, setting strong expectations for the film. Nikhil has dedicated nearly two years on the project, undergoing extensive physical prep to embody the role authentically. The film features Samyuktha and Nabha Natesh playing the female leads. On the technical front, Swayambhu brings



together an elite team. The cinematography is by KK Senthil Kumar, music is by Ravi Basrur, and production design is by M Prabhakaran and

Raveendra. A release date announcement is expected soon, as the makers gear up to escalate the promotional storm.

## We said that Biker would be a Telugu film to be proud of. We kept that promise. Thank you to the family audience and youth who are supporting the film so wonderfully: Charming Star Sharva



Charming Star Sharva's latest bumper blockbuster Biker. Malavika Nair is the heroine in this film and Rajasekhar has played a powerful role. Directed by Abhilash Reddy and produced by the prestigious banner UV Creations, this film, which is India's first complete motocross drama, has received a tremendous response at its premiere. Released on April 3rd worldwide, it has received a bumper blockbuster success with a wonderful response from the audience and critics and is running

successfully. On this occasion, the makers organized a thank you meet. Speaking at the thank you meet, hero Sharva said.. Greetings to everyone. Especially thank you to the media friends. If I score a hit, you will feel like you scored a hit. Thank you for your love and admiration. Telugu audiences have never lost faith in me making good family films. I have been saying from the beginning that Biker will make Telugu cinema proud. That word is not wrong. We have made such a good family film. The film is doing amazingly with

word of mouth. The reason for that is the family audience and youth. Abhilash has told a good father and son story. This is a very emotional movie. Fathers and sons are like that in real life. Rajasekhar garu has always been a hero for us. I am very happy that he has made this film. Thank you to all our team. Our music director Ghibran has taken the film to another level. Also, our DOP and production design team have all done amazingly. If the racing scenes have come out so amazingly, it is the entire team effort. Technically, the film is at

the level of Hollywood and the reason for the praise is our teamwork. This is my best. Thank you UV Creations for delivering such a wonderful film. The four films we have done are super duper hits. I believe that God is behind me. He gave me two hits this year. Thank you to the audience. Love you all. Dr. Rajasekhar said..Hello everyone. The reason why this film became such a success and my character got a good name is because of Abhilash Reddy garu. He brought a good name to the entire team. I thank Sharva garu. I am very

happy that I am playing such a good character in the film he is playing as the hero. Also, Sharva garu and Malavika worked very hard for this film. They acted very wonderfully. Those who have not seen the film yet, go to the theater and watch it. Take your parents too. Enjoy it with your family. Thank you so much to everyone. Director Abhilash Reddy said..Hello everyone. Everyone in the industry has praised this film since the premieres. Everyone who has seen it is asking how it was made so wonderfully. Technically, the film has come out very well. The audience is enjoying it very much. Along with racing, they are also connecting emotionally in the film. They are connecting very well to the father and son, wife and husband emotions. Family audiences have been coming to theaters since the first day. On this occasion, I would like to thank all the family audiences. Even small children are watching the film with great interest. This is a very long-running film. This whole summer is a biker. Thank you to everyone who supported our film. Thank you to Sharva garu for believing in me. The emotion between Rajasekhar garu and Sharva garu was amazing. Thank you Rajasekhar garu for playing this character. Go to the theater and watch it. Everyone will definitely like the film."

## Harudu is a good commercial action entertainer. Must watch it in theaters on May 8th. Will definitely enjoy it: Hero Venkat at the trailer launch event

Kero Venkat, who entertained with blockbuster movies like Sri Seetha Ramula Kalyanam Choothamu Raradi, Annayya, Prema Kasam, and Siva Ramaraju, is making a comeback to movies. Venkat is making a mass commercial entertainer 'Harudu' under the banner of VR Entertainments. Raj Talluri is directing it. The already released glimpses have received a wonderful response. The movie will be released worldwide on May 8 as a summer special. On this occasion, the makers launched the trailer. Speaking at the trailer launch event, Hero Venkat said.. Greetings to everyone. In order to complete the film 'Harudu', I had to take on the responsibility of acting as well as produc-



tion. I request my media friends to take the film to the public. Very good actors have played key roles in this film. We are introducing a new artist named Srihari Paila as the villain. Director Raj Talluri has made the film wonderfully.

Every character in this film has importance. Mani Jinnah has provided excellent music. We shot a romantic song in Goa and that song was very good. It will be a hit even after its release. We also shot a Hyderabad mass song that

will entertain in theaters. There are good action episodes. We shot songs in Goa and Mumbai. We shot songs with a good budget and in good locations. Our DOP Anand was very supportive. The film came out very well. They showed me as an action hero. This is a good commercial entertainer. We are releasing it on May 8th. I wish all your support and blessings to be with us. Thank you." Director Raj Talluri said.. Greetings to everyone. This is a complete team work. Venkat garu has worked hard for this film. It is very difficult to match his energy. The five days of shooting in Mumbai were a very good experience. Hebbu played a key role in this film. Thank you to our direction team. I have faith in the story.

## Grand Pre-Release Event of "Kaalagamanam"; Movie Set for Grand Theatrical Release on the 17th of This Month

Kaalagamanam starring Raja Birudula, Lavanya Ramarao, and Chinababu in lead roles, is being produced under the PPR Films banner. Directed and produced by Sudhakar Burri, this love and youthful entertainer is all set for a grand theatrical release on the 17th of this month. The film's pre-release event was held in a grand manner on Friday evening in Hyderabad. Speaking at the event, music director Rajesh Raj Thelu said, "Our director Sudhakar Burri has beautifully 'Kaalagamanam'. I watched the film multiple times during post-production and really liked it. I believe the audience will also enjoy and make it a success." Actor Jabardasth Rajamouli said, "I played a good character in 'Kaalagamanam'. It is a fresh love story with a



unique touch. Along with entertainment, the film also carries a meaningful message. I request everyone to watch and support the film in theatres on the 17th." Guest music director Bole Shavali said, "No matter how talented someone is, opportunities are very important. Sudhakar Burri is giving chances to many

newcomers. His surname may be 'Burri,' but he is like a 'Marri' tree—just as many find shelter under a big tree, he is providing opportunities to many. I wish the film great success." Hero Raja Birudula said, "I thank all the guests who attended 'Kaalagamanam' pre-release event. The presence of so many guests itself shows the kind of success this film will achieve. I strongly believe the film will be a success, and we will meet you all again at the success meet. I am always grateful to our producer and director Sudhakar Burri for giving me this opportunity. I request media friends to support our film. It is a love story with a strong message and will entertain the youth. You will enjoy it in theatres." Heroine Lavanya Ramarao said, "Thank you to everyone who attended our pre-release event. We are all newcomers, and every opportunity we get is very valuable."

## Supriya Ganesh, Maitreya Ramakrishnan slam troll's colourist, 'kamwali bai' jibe

Actors Maitreya Ramakrishnan and Supriya Ganesh have hit back at a social media troll who described them and fellow Indian actors Charithra Chandran and Shabana Azeez as fitting a "kamwali bai (maid) phenotype." The troll had also called them "the most common faces used for Indian representation" in an X post, which drew strong reactions from the actors and many internet users. Supriya Ganesh, known for her role as Dr. Samira Mohan in The Pitt, called out the post as colourist, classist, and casteist. She stressed the need to stand against such negativity and support those who share her background.



## Hania Aamir's new Pakistani drama after Meri Zindagi Hai Tu

Pakistani drama Meri Zindagi Hai Tu is over and fans are already eagerly waiting to see what actress Hania Aamir has in store next. Amid growing excitement, details about her upcoming project have started doing the rounds online. Hania Aamir's upcoming Pakistani drama As per the latest buzz in Pakistani entertainment circles, Hania Aamir is set to reunite with renowned director Badar Mehmood for a new drama on Geo Television. Known for his strong storytelling and hit projects, Badar Mehmood's collaboration with Hania has always delivered memorable results, raising expectations

for this venture as well. While the storyline is being described as powerful and engaging, the male lead for the project is still under consideration, adding to the curiosity among fans. Hania and Badar Mehmood have previously worked together on successful dramas like Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum (2024) and Mujhe Pyaar Hua Tha (2022), both of which were well received by audiences. Badar Mehmood is also known for directing popular dramas such as Ishqiya, Cheekh, and Balaa, making him one of the most sought-after directors in the industry. An official announcement from the makers and Hania Aamir is still

awaited. However, if the ongoing buzz turns out to be true, this could be another major project in the making. Meri Zindagi Hai Tu's biggest strength was the chemistry of Hania Aamir and Bilal Abbas Khan. Both actors played their characters in such a way that the audience connected with them. In the love story of Kamyar and Aya, emotions, conflicts, and understanding were shown in a good way.

That is why this couple has a special place in people's hearts.

