



Oppn unity defeated Centre's conspiracy: Priyanka on Women's quota Bill

NATION | NEWS

Ships report attacks after Iran closes Strait of Hormuz, as Trump says US 'won't be blackmailed'

WORLD | NEWS



Bhagyashri Borse is once again taking over the internet, thanks to the latest song from Lenin.

CINEMA | PAGE



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

17-04-2026
Total pilgrims: 60,049
Tonsures: 23,842
Hundi kanakulu: 3.57 CR
Waiting Compartments: 11

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

WEATHER

38 °C | °F

Precipitation: 15%
Humidity: 34%
Wind: 10 km/h

GOLD RATE

24K ₹ 1,57,420/-

Iranian gunboats fire on tanker in Strait of Hormuz

London (TSIT) - The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Centre said on Saturday that a tanker came under fire from two gunboats of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The UKMTO published a warning on their website saying, "Master UKMTO has received a report of an incident 20NM northeast of OMAN. The Master of a Tanker reports being approached by 2 IRGC gun boats, no VHF challenge that then fired upon the tanker. Tanker and crew are reported safe. Authorities are investigating. Iran announced on Saturday that the control of the Strait has "reverted to its previous state" amid the continuing US naval blockade of Iranian ports.

PM Modi to chair CCS meeting amid West Asia tensions

New Delhi, Apr 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in New Delhi on Saturday amid ongoing tensions in West Asia, according to official sources. The meeting is expected to review the steps taken by various ministries to safeguard India's interests as the situation in the region continues to evolve. This will be the third CCS meeting chaired by the Prime Minister since March focusing on developments in West Asia. In earlier meetings, PM Modi had directed ministries and departments to ensure the availability of essential supplies for the public and to take measures to protect key economic and strategic sectors. He had reviewed actions related to energy, agriculture, fertilisers, aviation, shipping and logistics, along with measures to maintain stability in supply chains. The Prime Minister had also been briefed on the steady supply of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and petroleum products, as well as fertiliser availability for upcoming agricultural seasons. Emphasising the need to curb misinformation, PM Modi had instructed that accurate and timely information be shared with the public to prevent rumours. The government has also constituted an inter-ministerial group chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to monitor the West Asia situation. The group, which includes Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, has been holding regular meetings to assess developments and recommend necessary measures.

CM Stalin slams BJP led Union government, thanks INDIA bloc leaders



CHENNAI (TSIT): Chief Minister and DMK President MK Stalin on Saturday flayed the BJP-led government at the Centre and accused it of having tried to divide the people as North and South, weaken and defeat them, redraw India's political map for their own gains but INDIA stood together and defeated their designs.

In a social media post, Stalin hailing the INDIA bloc leaders for unitedly defeating the Constitutional (131st Amendment) Bill, which sought to redistribute Lok Sabha seats on the basis of 2011 census to expedite the implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill providing 33% quota in Legislatures.

The blows the BJP would be facing in the coming days must be far more decisive, Stalin said and stressed the importance of con-

tinuing to stand united as one Opposition in this regard as this was only the beginning. "A big thanks to the leaders of INDIA," the CM wrote on X handle. "I thank my brother, Rahul Gandhi, for voicing our concerns against the delimitation bill that the BJP tried to rush through without consultation or consensus."

Stalin said, "I thank Sonia Gandhi, Kharge, Pinarayi Vijayan, D Raja, Revanth Reddy, Siddaramaiah, Mamata, Akhilesh Yadav and all Opposition leaders. They (BJP) tried to divide us as North and South, to weaken and defeat us, and to redraw India's political map for their own gain. But INDIA stood together and defeated their design. This is only the beginning. The blows the BJP will face in the coming days must be far more decisive.

Blocking Women's Reservation Bill a 'Black Day' for Democracy: CM Naidu

Visakhapatnam (TSIT)

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday termed the blocking of the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament as a "black day" in Indian democracy, accusing opposition parties led by the Congress of betraying women across the nation.

Naidu was speaking at a protest rally organised by a NDA allies—TDP, BJP, and Jana Sena—in Nidadavole. Holding placards and raising slogans, leaders demanded that opposition parties apologise for obstructing the bill. Naidu alleged that women were being treated merely as a vote bank while being denied rightful political representation.

Referring to assurances by Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Shah, Naidu said southern and smaller states would not face injustice, and promised a 50 per cent increase in seats, including in Andhra Pradesh. He announced the protest would

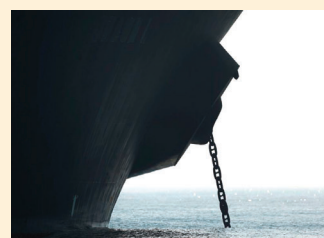


■ Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu termed the blocking of the Women's Reservation Bill a "black day," accusing Indian National Congress-led opposition of betraying women and denying them rightful political representation.
■ NDA allies, including Telugu Desam Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, and Jana Sena Party, staged protests, with Naidu vowing to intensify the protest and take it to every household while demanding an apology from opposition parties.

be intensified and taken to every household, with further discussions planned

alongside Pawan Kalyan. Recalling the TDP's 2017 Assembly resolution supporting women's reservation, Naidu accused opposition parties of stalling the bill with baseless concerns over regional imbalances. "Women constitute half the population. Blocking this bill is an unforgivable act and an insult to women's dignity," he said. BJP State president PVN Madhav and Jana Sena Minister Kandula Durgesh also participated.

Govt rolls out Rs 12,980-crore insurance cover for Indian ships amid global risks



New Delhi (TSIT)

The government on Saturday approved a Rs 12,980-crore sovereign-backed insurance cover for Indian vessels, creating a domestic pool to ensure uninterrupted protection against maritime risks and secure India's shipping lifelines.

The scheme - 'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI Pool) - will provide insurance cover to Indian-flagged ships and cargo

moving to and from Indian ports, even while passing through high-risk and conflict-prone regions.

Approved at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the initiative comes amid rising global tensions that have driven up insurance costs and created uncertainty over the availability of cover from foreign insurers.

At present, Indian shipping depends heavily on overseas players such as the International Group of Protection and Indemnity Clubs for Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance, which covers liabilities like oil spills, cargo damage, crew injury, collision and wreck removal. Officials said such dependence leaves Indian trade exposed, particularly during geopolitical crises when global insurers may pull back or impose restrictions.

Iranian Ambassador summoned after IRGC gunboats fire at Indian vessels transiting Hormuz

New Delhi (TSIT):

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Saturday summoned Iran's Ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali over the shooting incident involving Indian vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

India is believed to have lodged a strong protest with Tehran over the incident as the Indian-flagged vessels - one of which is believed to be a Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) - came under fire from gunboats of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) even though the tanker and crew are reported to be safe.

Earlier, the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO)



Centre confirmed that a tanker came under fire from IRGC gunboats. The UKMTO published a warning on their website saying, "Master UKMTO has received a report of an incident 20NM northeast of Oman. The Master of a Tanker reports being approached by 2 IRGC gun boats, no VHF challenge that then fired upon the tanker. Tanker and crew are reported safe. Authorities are investigating." Another UKMTO

"A report of a Container Ship being hit by an unknown projectile which caused damage to some of the containers, no fires or environment impact reported. Authorities are investigating. Vessels are advised to report suspicious activity to UKMTO," it stated.

warning Saturday evening, India time, stated that the organisation has received a report of an incident 25NM northeast of Oman.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters' spokesman was quoted as saying by the country's semi-official Tasnim news agency that the Strait of Hormuz is under "strict control" of the Iranian Armed Forces and will remain in its previous operational state. The

spokesperson further stated that under the pretext of a blockade, the United States continued acts of "sea robbery" and "piracy" with repeated breaches of commitments and a history of misconduct due to which "control over the Strait of Hormuz has been returned to its previous state, and this strategic waterway is under strict management and control by the Armed Forces".

He also mentioned that the situation will remain tightly controlled and unchanged from its previous status until the restrictions on the free movement of vessels from Iran to their destination and from elsewhere to Iran are removed by the United States.

CM Revanth slams BJP over women's bill defeat, seeks all-party talks on delimitation

New Delhi (TSIT)

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Saturday launched a scathing attack on the BJP over the defeat of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha, accusing the Union government of conspiring to weaken reservations through a Constitutional amendment.

Addressing a press conference in Delhi, the Chief Minister alleged that the BJP's "Char Sau Paar" slogan during the 2024 general elections was aimed at securing enough numbers to amend the Constitution and dilute quota protections for all sections.

Revanth Reddy challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP to prove their sincerity on women's reservation by bringing a fresh Bill immediately and implementing 33 per cent reservation in the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. He said the proposed law should reserve one-third of the existing 543 Lok Sabha seats and one-third of seats in all State Legislative Assemblies for women.

The Chief Minister said the



INDIA alliance would fully support such a Bill if it is introduced in Parliament without delay.

He maintained that the Women's Reservation Bill passed in 2023 could be implemented with minor modifications and asserted that the Centre has no excuse to delay the process, as the Election Commission already possesses 2011 Census data and other required information.

Revanth Reddy said delimitation carried out in 2009 and existing statistical data were sufficient to operationalise women's reservation by August 15, 2026. He said this would allow the reservation policy to be put into effect in the 2027 Uttar Pradesh elections.

HIGHLIGHT POINT:

■ Revanth Reddy demanded immediate implementation of 33% women's reservation and warned against delimitation models that could disadvantage southern states, while seeking wider consultations and opposition unity on the issue.

He also announced his readiness to initiate consultations with the Chief Ministers of southern states — M.K. Stalin, Siddaramaiah, Pinarayi Vijayan, N. Chandrababu Naidu, and Puducherry Chief Minister N. Rangasamy — to build support for the women's quota legislation.

Thanking opposition leaders for ensuring the defeat of what he described as "black

bills," the Chief Minister said the Congress and other opposition parties had once again prevented the BJP from using the Women's Reservation Bill, delimitation and expansion of constituencies as tools to alter the Constitution and abolish reservations.

He alleged that the BJP's failure to pass the Bills exposed its lack of sincerity and blamed Prime Minister Modi's "arrogance" for the setback in Parliament. On the issue of delimitation, Revanth Reddy reiterated his opposition to any pro-rata model that would politically disadvantage southern, northeastern and smaller states.

Noble effort 'derailed,' DMK, Cong made it target of hatred: PM Modi on women's reservation bill

COIMBATORE (TSIT)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said his government's women's reservation bill was a noble effort that got 'derailed' due to the DMK and Congress which made it a "target of hatred and petty politics." Especially targeting the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu and the Congress over the amendment bill being defeated in the Lok Sabha on Friday, the PM asked, "Why does it trouble DMK, Congress to see ordinary women rise." He said he had personally appealed to the opposition parties to support the bill and even offered to give them credit as "I only wanted sisters from ordinary families to come to parliament, assemblies in good numbers."

"But unfortunately, this noble effort was derailed. DMK, Congress and their allies made it a target of hatred and petty politics," he charged.

Had this bill been passed, many Tamil women from ordinary families would have become MPs and MLAs. Based on 2011 census, Tamil Nadu was going to get so many more seats in Lok



MODI ACCUSED OPPOSITION PARTIES OF DENYING WOMEN GREATER POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND VOWED THAT THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY-LED NDA WOULD CONTINUE ITS FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.

Sabha, "but clearly the DMK didn't want this to happen," he said, addressing a poll rally here. Anyhow, the DMK's actions are now very clearly exposed. By wearing black clothes, DMK cannot cover up their wrong intention. "I want to tell the DMK, that people know your black deeds, you cannot escape your black deeds any longer.

9,000 Punjabis among 30,000 face deportation risk in Canada

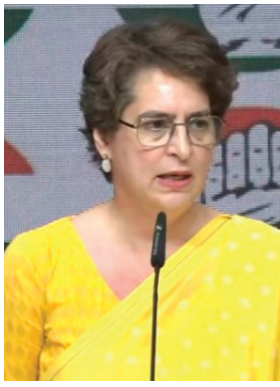
Chandigarh (TSIT) Nearly 9,000 Punjabi international students and asylum claimants are among 30,000 migrants in Canada who have received notices putting them at risk of deportation following the enactment of the new immigration law, Bill C-12. The Bill called the 'Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act', which received



royal assent on March 26, has tightened asylum rules, making claims filed more than one year after entering Canada generally ineligible for a full hearing at the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). The provision applies retroactively to those who entered after June 24, 2020. According to CBC News, the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has started issuing procedural fairness notices to around 30,000 asylum seekers.

Oppn unity defeated Centre's conspiracy: Priyanka on Women's quota Bill

New Delhi, April 18 : Congress General Secretary and Wayanad MP, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Saturday said that through the "unity" of the Opposition, the Centre's "conspiracy" to allegedly alter the federal structure and weaken democracy was "defeated".



She made these remarks during a press conference following the defeat of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, in the Lok Sabha a day earlier. The Bill, which aimed to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament, failed to secure the required two-thirds majority, triggering a sharp political confrontation between the ruling NDA and the Opposition INDIA bloc.

The proposed legislation, which also sought to expand the strength of the House, could not obtain the constitutionally mandated two-thirds majority despite a day-long debate. The Bill secured 278 votes in favour and 211 against, falling short of the required

threshold for passage. Addressing a press conference at the All India Congress Committee office in New Delhi, Priyanka Gandhi said, "What happened yesterday was a huge victory for democracy. The government's conspiracy to alter the federal structure and weaken democracy was defeated and halted. This was a victory for the Constitution, for the country, and for the unity of the Opposition. It was clearly visible on the faces of the ruling party leaders."

Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, she said, "Both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister several times said that if we did not support the Bill, then we would never be able to win and come to power. This made it clear what their intention was."

The Congress leader said that the Opposition was "shocked" that this Special Session was called amid the ongoing Assembly elections. "I think it's a conspiracy that somehow they need to stay in power. So, this was a plan to stay in power permanently using women," she said.

"They thought that if it was passed, they'd win. If it's not passed, they'll become the 'messiah' of women by calling other parties anti-women. Being a woman, I know that becoming a 'messiah' of women isn't easy," the Wayanad MP added.

Citing incidents such as the Unnao rape, the Hathras rape and murder case, issues faced by

Olympic athletes, and developments in Manipur, Priyanka Gandhi questioned, "No one supported those women. And today, you are standing in the Parliament and saying that you want to become a 'messiah' of women?"

"This was not about the Women's Reservation Bill but delimitation... Everyone saw how they (the government) can be defeated when the Opposition unites," she said. Describing the day as a "Black Day" for the Centre, she said it was because "they've felt a shock for the first time, which they deserved".

"The problems and struggles of women are growing. Women are not fools; they see everything. The PR and media won't work anymore. If you want to do something substantial, bring back the Bill that was passed unanimously in 2023, which was supported by all parties. You can make a few small amendments to it if you want; do it and implement it now," she said.

Govt's true intent is to alter constitutional framework, seize executive power: Kharge on women's quota, delimitation

New Delhi, April 18 : Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday alleged that the government's true intent is to alter the constitutional framework and concentrate executive power in its hands. He stated that the Congress in 2023, supported the Women's Reservation Bill and ensured its passage but now the Centre is linking the Bill with delimitation, which was unacceptable to the Opposition.

Mallikarjun Kharge took to social media 'X' and said, "The Congress Party has always been in favour of women's reservation. In 2023, we supported the Women's Reservation Bill and ensured its passage. However, the Modi government has now introduced another amendment — under the guise of women's reservation — by incorporating a provision for delimitation."

He further alleged that by linking the Bill with



delimitation, the Modi government is attempting to consolidate its power.

"In doing so, the government has conflated the legislation regarding women's reservation with that of delimitation. By introducing a Bill linked to delimitation, the Modi government seeks to consolidate its power," he said.

Kharge also asserted that women's reservation should be implemented within the existing framework of 543 Lok Sabha seats. "Our contention to

the government was that if women's reservation is to be implemented, it should be done within the existing framework of 543 Lok Sabha seats. Subsequently — once the census and delimitation exercises are completed — the government could expand it for the next election; however, they are unwilling to do so," he said.

Reiterating his criticism, he added, "In reality, the Modi government's true intent is to alter the constitutional framework

and seize executive power for itself."

Meanwhile, both Houses of Parliament, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, were adjourned after the Bill to amend the Women's Reservation framework failed to clear a key hurdle, as the Centre could not secure the required majority in the Lok Sabha. The government needed a two-thirds majority to pass the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, but fell short. The proposed legislation saw 298 MPs voting in its favour and 230 against. The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026, was introduced with the stated aim of enabling women's reservation and facilitating delimitation. Following its defeat, the Centre decided not to proceed with voting on delimitation and the expansion of Lok Sabha seats, stating that the proposals were interlinked.

GOOD HABITS BUILD A STRONG LIVER – WORLD LIVER DAY APRIL 19



Secunderabad (TSIT) Dr. K. N. Chandan Kumar, Director – Hepatology & Liver Transplant Physician, KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad. The liver is one of the most vital organs in the human body. In recent times, liver failure is increasingly being seen across all age groups due to changing lifestyles and unhealthy dietary habits. As

India is gradually becoming a hub for NAFLD and metabolic liver disorders, this year's theme, "Good Habits, Strong Liver," reminds us that our health is shaped by daily choices. Nearly one in three urban Indians is affected by fatty liver disease. Warning signs of liver damage include fatigue, weakness, loss of appetite, nausea, jaundice, and abdominal swelling. Dr. Chandan Kumar shares five key principles for a healthy liver: eat whole foods with fiber and lean proteins while reducing processed foods and excess sugars; exercise daily for at least 30 minutes; avoid or limit alcohol to no more than 10 units per week; get regular check-ups as liver diseases often show no early symptoms; and reduce abdominal fat while building muscle strength to lower the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Small changes, practiced consistently, are the foundation of a strong liver.

SILENT LIVER CRISIS: 1 IN 3 AT RISK, WARN EXPERTS



Hyderabad: Ahead of World Liver Day, Medicover Hospitals has raised concern over a growing "silent" liver disease crisis in India. Dr. Pavan Addala said nearly one in three Indians may have fatty liver disease, many without diagnosis. Alarming, cases are rising among people

in their 20s and 30s with advanced liver damage. He highlighted that Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease is now the leading cause, driven by sedentary lifestyles, junk food, obesity, diabetes, and stress. In high-risk groups, prevalence can exceed 50%. Experts warned that liver disease often shows no symptoms until severe stages, potentially leading to cirrhosis, liver failure, or cancer. However, over 70% of cases are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices. Doctors advised maintaining a balanced diet, regular exercise, avoiding alcohol, and undergoing periodic health screenings. While liver transplantation remains an option in advanced cases, prevention is key.

RECORD TUNNELLING ACHIEVEMENTS FOR EAST COAST RAILWAY IN THE EASTERN GHATS REGION



The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : East Coast Railway has created a rare record in the development of key infrastructure in the Eastern Ghats mountain range. During the financial year 2025-26, it successfully completed five major tunnels under challenging geological conditions, marking the most productive year in its history. Recently, on April 14, 2026, Tunnel No. 30 (1,043 meters) in the Sikarapai-Keutguda section achieved a successful breakthrough. This tunnel was constructed with a 5-degree curvature, and excavation carried out from both ends achieved 100 per cent precise alignment, standing as a testament to engineering excellence.

Similarly, significant progress has been recorded in the strategically important Khurda Road-Balangir railway line project. In this project, Tunnel T-4 (4,185

meters) and Tunnel T-2 (1,775 meters) have been successfully completed, resulting in nearly 6 kilometers of tunneling work being finished. Additionally, T-5 and T-6 (each 250 meters) were completed in July 2025, while T-7 (1,975 meters) was completed in November 2025. Overall, during this financial year, breakthroughs were achieved in 7,051 meters of tunnels, while 2,475 meters of tunnels have been fully completed with lining. Progress is also continuing in the doubling projects between Koraput-Rayagada and Koraput-Singapur Road.

These tunneling achievements will not only improve railway connectivity between the coastal and western regions of Odisha, but also enhance the capacity for freight and passenger transportation. Furthermore, they will play a crucial role in extending modern railway services to remote and tribal areas.

CBIT Organizes Expert Lecture on Future Learners and Evolving Teaching Practices

Hyderabad (TSIT): The Industrial and International Collaborations Cell of Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology (CBIT) organized an expert talk on "Future Learners & Teaching Imperative," delivered by Prof. M. M. Ananth, Founder of AcadNet and Founding Vice Chancellor of Adani University. In his address, Prof. Ananth emphasized the need to "teach for persona, not just for technical skills," urging educators to focus on nurturing adaptability, critical thinking, and lifelong learning abilities among students. He elaborated on the transition from pedagogy to andragogy and heutagogy, highlighting the growing importance of self-directed and self-



determined learning. Prof. Ananth further encouraged educators to rethink the role of Artificial Intelligence in education, advocating its use as a tool to enhance learning outcomes rather than perceiving it as a challenge. He stressed the importance of evaluating meaningful learning indicators such as creativity, problem-solving ability, and real-world application of knowledge. The session was graced by Sri P.V.R. Ravinder Reddy, Vice Principal-CBIT, and Dr. V. Barla, Advisor of the IIC. The organizers expressed gratitude to the institute management and to Prof. C.V. Narasimhulu, Principal, CBIT, for their support.

Rising Liver Disease Cases Resulting in a Health Crisis in India



Hyderabad (TSIT) Experts have called for urgent action to tackle the rising threat of liver diseases, which often strike without symptoms. On the eve of World Liver Day (April 19), observed with the theme "Solid Habits – Safe Liver," doctors at Kamineni Hospitals, LB Nagar, emphasised preventive care and lifestyle changes.

Dr. A.V. Krishna Chaitanya, Senior Consultant and Liver Transplant Specialist, noted that while liver failure can lead to fluid accumulation, internal bleeding, or cancer, modern treatments including transplantation yield high success rates when performed timely.

Dr. V.R. Sumanth Kumar revealed that

Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD) affects nearly one-third of the global population. In India, about 38.9% of adults are affected, with 2 to 2.6 lakh annual deaths due to liver failure. He stressed that the condition is largely preventable through proper lifestyle changes.

To commemorate World Liver Day, Kamineni Hospitals launched an exclusive 'Liver Check-up Package' (originally Rs.7,830, now Rs.2,999 until April 30). The package includes Hepatitis screening, HbA1c, Liver Function Test, thyroid profile, ultrasound, and consultations with a gastroenterologist and dietitian. Individuals aged 18-30 are encouraged to avail the offer. For details, contact 70362 70362.

One in Three Urban Indians May Have Fatty Liver... Warning Signs as Early as 30: CARE Hospitals Alerts

SILENT LIVER DAMAGE ON THE RISE; IT, CORPORATE PROFESSIONALS AT HIGHER RISK CHILDHOOD OBESITY EMERGING AS AN EARLY RED FLAG FOR FUTURE LIVER DISEASE LIVER TESTS ALONE NOT ENOUGH; DOCTORS STRESS FULL SCREENING, FIBROSCAN FOR EARLY DETECTION



Hyderabad, 18th April, 2026: A silent health concern is rapidly emerging in urban India. Nearly one in three urban Indians may have fatty liver disease, often without noticeable symptoms. On the occasion of World Liver Day 2026, themed "Solid Habits, Strong Liver," doctors at CARE Hospitals caution that what was once seen largely in older adults is now increasingly being diagnosed among individuals in the 30-50 age group. One-third of school children are obese, which is emerging as an early driver of fatty liver disease.

"This is not just a medical issue, but a reflection of changing lifestyles. Long hours of sitting, irregular eating habits, fast food consumption, rising stress, and lack of physical activity are impacting liver health. We are seeing higher incidence particularly among IT and corporate professionals, with greater risk in those with

diabetes, obesity, and hypertension," said Dr. Ramsagar Vidya Sagar, Senior Gastroenterologist at CARE Hospitals.

The bigger concern is the "silent" nature of liver disease. Early stages usually show no symptoms, and damage is often detected incidentally during routine tests. Many patients present late, when the disease has already progressed to cirrhosis or liver failure, making treatment more complex and outcomes uncertain.

"Liver problems are often silent and may not show symptoms until they reach an advanced stage. A simple liver function test alone is not enough to diagnose most liver conditions. People should

undergo a comprehensive evaluation, including blood tests, ultrasound, and in some cases, a FibroScan to assess fat accumulation and liver stiffness. Early detection allows timely intervention and significantly improves outcomes," said Dr. Sonal Asthana, Senior Consultant - HPB & Liver Transplant at CARE Hospitals.

In response to this growing burden, CARE Hospitals has adopted a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach, integrating gastroenterology, hepatology, critical care, and transplant services to ensure early detection and timely treatment. Doctors emphasise that early identification, appropriate treatment, and lifestyle changes are critical in

managing liver disease effectively.

"Annual liver screening is recommended for individuals above 30 years of age, particularly those with diabetes or sedentary lifestyles. Symptoms such as fatigue, loss of appetite, unexplained weight gain, and abdominal fat should not be ignored. Self-medication and excessive use of supplements must be avoided. Obese individuals, in particular, require regular screening, as they remain at significantly higher risk of developing fatty liver disease," said, Dr. Kumara Swamy, Senior Consultant - Liver Transplant & HPB Surgery.

Doctors say that simple lifestyle changes can go a long way in protecting liver health. Eating balanced meals, choosing low-fat diets, engaging in at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity, avoiding unnecessary medications, and limiting alcohol intake can significantly reduce the burden on the liver. For those in desk jobs, taking short breaks and staying active during the day can also help in the long run.

On the occasion of World Liver Day, CARE Hospitals delivers a clear message to the public: "Liver disease may be silent—but ignoring it can be life-threatening. Early screening is the best protection."

GITAM Congratulates Ahmed Minhajuddin on Ph.D. Achievement

Hyderabad (TSIT) GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, has congratulated Dr. Ahmed Minhajuddin on earning his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering. His research, titled "A Study on Sustainable Concrete Incorporating Agro-Industrial Waste as Partial Replacements of Cement and Fine Aggregate," offers a meaningful contribution to sustainable construction practices.

Conducted under the guidance of Dr. Arijit Saha, Associate Professor, the study addresses the pressing challenge of industrial waste management by exploring the use of untreated sugarcane bagasse ash (Ut-SCBA) and waste granite powder (WGP) in concrete. The research evaluates their effectiveness as partial replacements for cement and fine aggregate in M25 grade concrete through comprehensive mechanical, durability, and microstructural analyses.

The findings identify



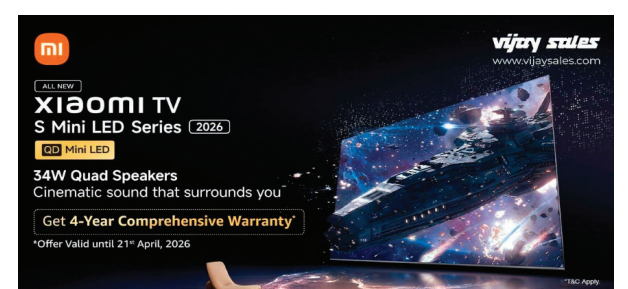
an optimal mix of 15% Ut-SCBA and 30% WGP, demonstrating improved strength, durability, and environmental performance. The study highlights a viable, eco-friendly alternative that reduces landfill burden and conserves natural resources. The GITAM leadership, faculty, and students extend their heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Ahmed Minhajuddin on this notable academic achievement.

Vijay Sales opens pre-orders for Xiaomi Mini LED TVs

New Delhi (TSIT): Vijay Sales has announced pre-orders for the new Xiaomi TV S Mini LED Series across its stores and online platform. Customers can pre-book the TVs with an initial payment of Rs.2,000 until April 21. Vijay Sales is the exclusive retail partner for Xiaomi to launch this series in India. A special four-year warranty is being offered for pre-booked units, higher than the standard coverage. The new TV range features Mini LED technology with enhanced brightness, improved contrast, and better colour accuracy. It comes in

three sizes—55-inch, 65-inch, and 75-inch—catering to different consumer needs.

Key highlights include 4K Ultra HD resolution, Dolby Vision, HDR10+, and Dolby Atmos sound system, along with advanced gaming features like 120Hz refresh rate and Auto Low Latency Mode. Introductory prices start at Rs.48,999, with bank cashback offers of up to Rs.10,000 available on select cards. The company said the initiative aims to provide customers early access to the latest technology through its omni-channel network.



Vijay alleges curbs on TVK campaign, says voters will 'limit' DMK in TN polls

Chennai, April 18 : Actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay on Saturday accused the ruling DMK of misusing official machinery to obstruct the campaign activities of his party, the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), as the Tamil Nadu Assembly election campaign intensifies. In a strongly worded statement, Vijay alleged that permissions for public meetings and outreach programmes were being deliberately delayed, restricted, or cancelled at the last minute, affecting not only his own schedule but also that of TVK candidates across Assembly constituencies.



He described such tactics as attempts to weaken the party's growing momentum on the ground. The remarks come amid reports that a scheduled

campaign event in Cuddalore had to be cancelled, while a proposed door-to-door outreach programme in Perambur was also called off due to lack of approvals.

The TVK Chief claimed these incidents reflected a broader pattern aimed at curbing the party's visibility among voters. "Efforts to divert public attention during elections are not new, but people must remain vigilant," Vijay said, urging the people to carefully assess the political developments unfolding in the state. Launching a sharp attack on the DMK government, the TVK Chief accused it of indulg-

ing in "unchecked misuse and corruption", while making "limitless false promises" to mislead the public.

In a pointed remark, Vijay said the ruling DMK had turned into a "limited company", adding that voters would "limit them and send them home" in the upcoming state election. The TVK Chief also alleged that sections of the media were spreading confusion among the public by publishing "fabricated reports" regarding approvals for his party's campaign programmes. He said such narratives were designed to undermine the credibility and reach of TVK.

TN's power demand peaks at 20,974 MW on April 16

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu recorded its highest-ever power demand at 20,974 MW on April 16, with daily energy consumption also touching a new all-time high of 460 MU, as soaring temperatures across the State pushed electricity usage sharply higher. The new peak demand surpasses the previous record of 20,830 MW set on May 2, 2024. Similarly, the latest consumption figure exceeds the earlier high of 454.320 MU recorded on April 30, 2024.

The spike comes amid intensifying summer conditions. Maximum temperatures across TN have been above normal by 2-3°C in several regions, with Karur Paramathi recording a high of 41.2°C. Many interior districts, including Erode and Madurai, have reported temperatures around 40°C pointing to widespread heat stress. The impact of rising temperatures is evident in the demand pattern. Peak load crossed 20,000 MW on seven occasions between April 8 and 16, indi-



cating sustained high consumption over several days. Solar power generation helped meet part of the daytime load, with peak output ranging between 5,401 MW and 8,011 MW during the period. However, high temperatures extending into the evenings have continued to drive overall demand, limiting the moderating impact of solar energy. Compared to April 2025, the increase this year is significant. Last April, peak demand crossed 20,000 MW only once, reaching 20,148 MW, with an average peak of 18,355 MW.

CPM ACCUSES BJP OF SHEDDING CROCODILE TEARS OVER WOMEN'S RESERVATION

CHENNAI: CPM state secretary P Shanmugam on Saturday criticised BJP, alleging that its leaders were falsely blaming Opposition parties for stalling women's reservation. In a statement, Shanmugam said the Prime Minister and Union Ministers were "lamenting" that Opposition parties had obstructed the implementation of legal reservation for women. He alleged that BJP and RSS had shown little concern for women and that their claims amounted to "crocodile tears", which, he said, women across the country had clearly understood. He questioned whether BJP was genuinely committed to women's reservation, asking if the party was prepared to implement 33 per cent reservation within the existing 543 Lok Sabha seats. He further alleged that BJP was adept at diverting public attention, adding that people were aware of such tactics.



EPS accuses DMK of costing TN additional MP seats, failing women's cause



CHENNAI: AIADMK general secretary and Leader of Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami on Saturday alleged that the DMK government had deprived Tamil Nadu of an opportunity to increase its

political representation in Parliament by opposing the delimitation proposal. DMK costs additional MP seats for TN, fails women's cause: EPS. In a statement posted on X, he said Tamil Nadu

had lost its "rightful share" of 20 additional Lok Sabha seats, which could have enhanced its political influence. He claimed that the opportunity, backed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, would have resulted in a 50 per cent increase in seats for the State.

Accusing Chief Minister M K Stalin of failing to grasp the implications, he said the DMK had "blindly opposed" the move. He argued that if delimitation had been carried out based on the 2011 Census, Tamil Nadu would have lost nine seats, but due to the State government's opposition, the exercise would now be based on the 2026 Census, potentially leading to a greater loss.

Kanimozhi slams AIADMK for backing delimitation Bill, calls move anti-Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI: DMK parliamentary party leader and MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi on Saturday criticised AIADMK for supporting the delimitation Bill brought by BJP, alleging that the party had acted against the interests of Tamil Nadu and southern States. Speaking to reporters at Chennai airport after arriving from Delhi at around 1.30 am by an Air India flight, Kanimozhi said the reported failure of the delimitation Bill in Parliament was a matter of great relief for Tamil Nadu and the people of southern States.

She said Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had written to Chief Ministers of southern States opposing delimitation and had also con-



vened a meeting in Chennai on the issue, while continuing to raise concerns at various forums.

Kanimozhi alleged that introducing the delimita-

tion Bill along with the 33 per cent women's reservation Bill was a strategy by BJP against women. She said Opposition parties had united and collectively opposed the move, lead-

ing to the Bill being defeated. Though she said the issue was not an electoral plank, Kanimozhi maintained that AIADMK's support to the Bill had exposed those acting against Tamil Nadu and southern States.

She further said BJP had done injustice to women by linking reservation to delimitation. The DMK's position was that 33 per cent reservation for women should be implemented based on the existing number of constituencies, she said. Stating that insisting on delimitation before providing reservation amounted to belittling women, Kanimozhi reiterated that combining the two Bills reflected injustice towards women.

New Research Debunks Common Belief That High Lactate Levels Are Bad

Research challenges the common belief among athletes and physicians that high lactate levels are harmful. As a student competing in track and field at his Parlier high school, Robert Leija was obsessed with how to improve his performance and, in particular, prevent the buildup of lactic acid in his muscles during training. Like many athletes, he blamed it for the performance fatigue and muscle soreness he experienced after intense workouts.



But as a kinesiology student at Fresno State, he was handed an out-of-print textbook that told him he had it all wrong. Lactate wasn't a danger sign that athletes had depleted their body's supply of oxygen, but likely a normal product of the metabolic activity required to fuel the muscles during sustained exercise. Now, as a graduate student in the University of California, Berkeley, laboratory of the scientist who wrote that textbook, George Brooks, his research is providing a much clearer picture of lactate's role in the body, further refuting the notion that lactate is a sign of oxygen deprivation in the muscles. In a paper published in February in the journal Nature Metabolism, Leija, Brooks, and their colleagues showed conclusively that lactate is produced normally in humans after ingestion of carbohydrates. Lactate rapidly enters the bloodstream, even before glucose shows up. Far from being a toxic byproduct to be eliminated during hard exercise, dietary glucose is converted so rapidly to lactate that it pre-emptively enters the bloodstream with glucose as the two main carbon-energy carriers in the body. Healthy Woman Undergoing Glucose Challenge

A volunteer is monitored after being given a large dose of glucose to determine how well people switch from fat to

carbohydrate metabolism as they age. In the tests at UC Berkeley, subjects had their blood monitored for labeled lactate and glucose, underwent periodic blood sampling, and had their breath monitored for oxygen and carbon dioxide. Credit: Robert Leija, UC Berkeley

The results show that the rapid conversion of glucose to lactate, starting initially in the intestines, is a way for the body to deal with a sudden dose of carbohydrates. Lactate, working with insulin, buffers the appearance of dietary glucose in the blood. "Instead of a big glucose surge, we have a lactate and glucose surge after eating," said Brooks, a UC Berkeley professor of integrative biology. "And the more of it that is converted into lactate from glucose, the better it is to manage glucose. Lactate is a carbohydrate buffer." Brooks and his colleagues had earlier shown this to be true during intense exercise. The new study confirms that lactate plays the same role during normal non-exercise activity and resting. "It's evidence to show that lactate shouldn't be associated with anaerobic metabolism — that is oxygen-limited metabolism. It's just a normal response to consuming carbohydrates or to exercise," Leija said. "In exercise, lactate is utilized as the dominant fuel source. That's why your blood lactate increases

as carbohydrates being burned.

In order to calculate the amount of lactate that entered the blood compared to glucose, they infused lactate and glucose tracers — lactate labeled with a stable, non-radioactive isotope, carbon-13, and glucose labeled with deuterium — for 90 minutes beforehand to bring the levels of labeled lactate and glucose in the blood to between 1% and 2%. The dilution of the labeled lactate and glucose by incoming, unlabeled dietary glucose allowed them to establish the kinetics, that is, the appearance, disappearance, and clearance of blood lactate and glucose. Most such experiments measure static venous blood concentration, which provides little information about glucose and lactate kinetics. Sampling of arterialized blood was also key to the success of the study, Leija said. That allowed the researchers to see what happened in the gut. Typically, a forearm vein is used to sample blood 30 minutes after a glucose challenge, but that sampling yields muddled results. The researchers found that the volunteers began converting the dietary glucose into lactate before it even left the intestines. Levels of lactate began rising in arterial blood a mere five minutes after the meal, while glucose, often touted as the energy currency of the body, only showed up in the bloodstream 15 to 30 minutes after glucose ingestion. "The first carbohydrate after a glucose meal gets into the blood as lactate because that's what intestinal cells do and because most of the glucose is captured by the liver before it is released into the blood for the muscles, where glucose is going to be converted to lactate," Brooks said. "We could see that because of lactate clearance and oxidation and because carbon-13 from the lactate tracer appeared in blood glucose. This shows that lactate is just a major energy highway for distributing carbohydrate — carbon energy flux."

Scientists Discover Unique Building Block of Human Vision

Research shows that infants primarily see high-contrast, simple patterns, forming an essential visual foundation for later development and influencing both human vision and AI training. What do infants see? What do they look at? The answers to these questions are very different for the youngest babies than they are for older infants, children, and adults. Characterized by a few high-contrast edges in simple patterns, these early scenes also contain the very materials needed to build a strong foundation for human vision.

That is the finding of a new study which was recently published in Science Advances by IU researchers Erin Anderson, Rowan Candy, Jason Gold, and Linda Smith. "The starting assumption for everybody who thinks about the role of experience in visual development has always been that at the scale of everyday experience, visual input is pretty much the same for everyone," explains principal investigator Linda Smith, a professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. "Yet, this study says, no, visual input changes with development. It's not the same for everybody. The daily life input for very young infants appears to be unique to that age." Prior studies in the laboratory and clinic had shown that young infants prefer to look at simple, high-contrast scenes of big black stripes and checkerboards. The current study is the first to ask to what extent these preferences make up their daily life input. "To see what young babies see and look at," says Anderson, a former postdoctoral researcher in Smith's Cognitive Development Lab, she and her colleagues put head cameras on infants to wear in the home during daily life activities.

"You can buy 'baby flash cards' for newborns that show these simple, high-contrast images," she explains. "What the head-camera videos show, what this work shows, is that young infants find these types of images all

around them in their daily life, just by looking at things like lights and ceiling corners." "What we found is a very special, early 'diet' for visual development," adds Smith. "As with food, young infants do not start with rich, complex meals or pizza, but rather with simple, developmentally specific nourishment." Previous work has recognized the critical nature of this early period to the future development of human vision. For example, infants born with visual

abnormalities such as cataracts or those in orphanages with limited visual experiences have been shown to have lifelong visual deficiencies. The current study offers some preliminary data for addressing these deficiencies. It also has important implications for the makings of AI visual systems, which likewise acquire stronger visual skills when training begins with the same simple, high-contrast visual content. "The massive scale of daily-life input" To identify the proper-

ties of visual input in infants at approximately three to 13 months old, the researchers placed head-mounted video cameras on 10 infants and 10 of their adult caregivers, collecting and analyzing 70 hours of visual documentation of at-home daily life. Clear differences emerge between the contents of the infants and adults' images with a higher concentration of simple patterns and high-contrast edges within the views of infants than in those of adults.

NORTHERN ARC

HEAD OFF: 10TH FLOOR - PHASE 1, IIT-MADRAS RESEARCH PARK, KANAGAM VILLAGE, TARAMANI, CHENNAI 600113

ANNEXURE-V

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE - (Under proviso to Rule 8(6))

SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS CHARGED TO THE BANK UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.

The undersigned as Authorized Officer of Northern Arc Capital Ltd has taken over possession of the following properties u/s 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act. Public at large is informed that e-Auction of the charged properties/under SARFAESI Act in the below mentioned cases for realisation of NORTHERN ARC's dues will be held on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and on the terms and conditions specified hereunder.

Name Of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Outstanding Dues for Recovery of which Property/ies is/are being Sold	Description of The Property
Mr. HARIKRISHANA KANNIYAPPAN Mrs. VARALAKSHMI HARIKRISHANA M/S. SEI KALIGAMBAL WOOD WORKS	Rs. INR 25,46,260.71/- as on 07 th May 2024 and interest thereon w.e.f. as on plus other charges	IN KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT, KANCHIPURAM TALUKA KANCHIPURAM REGISTRATION DISTRICT, KANCHIPURAM JOINT-II SUB-REGISTRAR OFFICE, NO.13, VADHYOOR SITROOR VILLAGE, UNDER PATTANA, 164 IN PUNJAI S.NO.13/1A2A OF FULL EXTENT MEASURING 396540. FT. AND IN WHICH ONE PART OF PROPERTY SOLD OUT AND REMAINING PROPERTY IS HAVING IN THE UPSIDE 1982 SQ.FT. AND IN WHICH CONSTRUCTED A RRC ROOF HOUSE BUILDING WITH ALL ACCESSORIES ETC

DETAILS OF SALE ARE AS BELOW:-

Reserve Price	Last Date For Submission Of Bid And EMD (10% Of The Reserve Price)	Bid Increment Amount	Date And Time Of E-Auction Sale
Rs. 20,06,451/- (Rupees-Twenty Lakh Six Thousand Four Hundred Fifty One Only)	3 rd May 2026 Rs. 2,00,645/- (Rupees Two Lakh Six Hundred Forty Five Only)	Rs. 25,000/-	4 th May 2026

DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION OF THE PROPERTY: 25th April 2026 11:00 am to 5:00 pm and upon request on call to the Authorised officer Mr. Sunil Verma 9987030148.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE E-AUCTION ARE AS UNDER:

- E-Auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and will be conducted "Online". The auction will be conducted through Northern Arc Capital Limited's approved service provider M/s E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. Auction Tiger Ahmedabad (Contact Person - Mr. Ram Sharma Cell no. 800002397 Email ramprasad@auctiontiger.net & (Contact Person - Mr. Sunil Verma Cell 9987030148 Email sunil.verma@northernarc.com, and Sameer Suke Cell 91529 10835 Email Sameer.suke@northernarc.com) at the web portal (<http://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net>). E-Auction Tender Document containing online e-auction bid form is available in websites.
- The intending purchasers/bidders are required to deposit EMD amount either through NEFT/RTGS in the Account No. 65252037994, Northern Arc Capital Limited, State Bank of India & IFSC Code: SBIN0009930 or by way of demand draft drawn in favour of Northern Arc Capital Limited, drawn on any Nationalized or Scheduled Bank.
- Bidders shall hold a valid email ID (e-mail ID is absolutely necessary for the intending bidder as all the relevant information and allotment of ID & password may be conveyed through email).
- The intending bidder should submit the evidence for EMD deposit like UTR number along with Request Letter for participation in the E-auction, self-attested copies of (i) Proof of Identification (KYC) viz. Voter ID Card/ Driving License/ Passport etc., (ii) Current Address-Proof for communication, (iii) PAN card of the bidder, (iv) valid e-mail ID, (v) contact number (Mobile/Landline) of the bidder etc. To Northern Arc Capital Limited by Date 3rd May, 2026 Time 01:00PM to 02:00PM time. Scanned copies of the original of these documents can also be submitted to the e-mail id of Northern Arc Capital Limited.
- Names of the Eligible Bidders will be identified by the Northern Arc Capital Limited to participate in online e-auction on the portal, <http://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net> (Auction Tiger) will provide User ID & Password after due verification of PAN of the Eligible Bidders.
- It shall be the responsibility of the interested bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the property before submission of the bid.
- The e-Auction/bidding of above properties will be conducted exactly on the scheduled Date & Time. The bidder shall improve their offer in multiple of the amount mentioned under the column "Bid Increment Amount" against the property. In case bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the e-Auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes. The bidder who submits the highest bid amount (not below the Reserve Price) on closure of e-Auction process shall be declared as Successful Bidder and a communication to that effect will be issued through electronic mode which shall be subject to approval by Northern Arc Capital Limited/Secured Creditor.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of the successful bidder shall be retained towards part sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidders shall be refunded.
- The Sale confirmation/Sale Certificate will be issued in the name of the purchaser(s) / applicant(s) only and will not be issued in any other name(s).

Date: 18th April 2026
Place: Kanchipuram

For, Northern Arc Capital Ltd
Authorised Officer

EDITORIAL

Seats In South And West That Hold Key To Tamil Nadu

In an earlier opinion piece on the Tamil Nadu elections, I had stated that this election is not a big wave election, but one that's being fought on a seat-by-seat basis. In any general election, there are tough contests and then there are defining battles. The first is about candidates; the second will reveal a battle that's bigger—one that could reflect a decisive trend that will determine the overall result. From our extensive travel across the state, below are the defining contests and why. This is not about high-profile candidates; this piece is about the key contest seats in the western and southern districts. In the next piece, I will list out Central (Delta districts), north Tamil Nadu, and Chennai city seats to watch out for.

Western Region

The AIADMK alliance swept this region in 2021, winning 46 out of 61 seats here. It swept Salem with 10 of 11 seats, won all 10 in Coimbatore, six of eight in Tiruppur, five of eight in Erode, and all five in Dharmapuri. In Namakkal, it won only two of six, and in the hilly Nilgiris, it lost all three. "The reason this is important is because Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, and Dharmapuri are the districts where the DMK must make gains this time to offset losses elsewhere. The DMK had a full sweep in Chennai and peaked in the north and central districts and the south in 2021. If it faces losses after five years in power in these regions, the only space for gains, arguably, is in the west.

Coimbatore South

This seat will show if the DMK's most powerful face in the region—the one known for his organizational might and the one facing ED cases, former minister Senthil Balaji—can rewrite the DMK's Coimbatore calculus. In fact, across this region, the candidates have been selected by Senthil Balaji, who has vacated his traditional Karur seat to contest from here and prove a point.

The BJP's Vanathi Srinivasan (AIADMK alliance) beat MNM Chief and actor Kamal Haasan (DMK alliance) by less than 2,000 votes in 2021. She has shifted to Coimbatore North and Senthil Balaji is facing off with AIADMK strongman Amman K Arjunan, who won Coimbatore North in 2021 and is now contesting from here.

Results here will test whether the AIADMK can hold on to its bastion. Vijay's TVK and Seeman's NTK are also factors here, and the impact they will have on a classic AIADMK vs DMK battle is being closely watched.

Gobichettipalayam (Erode district)

Eight-time AIADMK MLA from this seat and now one of the TVK's biggest faces, KA Sengottayan, will show whether the loyalty to "Two Leaves", which is deep and emotional, can shift to the TVK's whistle on voting day. The AIADMK has fielded a young VB Prabhu to take on Sengottayan. In 2021, the DMK had lost by over 25,000 votes, but if the AIADMK vote gets split, it could throw open an opportunity for the DMK.

In the big picture, this seat will show how strong the 'Two Leaves' vote is in seats where former AIADMK leaders have shifted to the TVK. It's also a crucial test for the TVK on whether it can win seats. The possible tacit grassroots understandings between the DMK and AIADMK to keep the TVK at bay would also be crucial to watch out for here.

Tiruchengode (Namakkal District)

The TVK's general secretary and former IRS officer, one known as a crucial strategist in the party, KG Arun Raj, is facing off with the sub-regional, caste-based Kongu Makkal Desiya Katchi's incumbent MLA ER Easwaran (part of the DMK alliance) and AIADMK's R Chandrashekar.

A scripted battle for sympathy

(Hisar incident and the new theatre of politics)

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

What unfolded on the streets of Hisar wasn't just a simple confrontation; it was a vivid reflection of the complexities of our times' politics, where emotions, power, police behavior, and public opinion are all entangled. The dispute between the former Deputy Chief Minister and a police inspector is no longer merely a matter of law and order, but has transformed into a major political debate. The way this entire incident is being presented on social media and public platforms indicates that in today's politics, the events themselves are not as important as their presentation. The question is no longer what happened, but what is being shown and what sentiment is being generated. In today's times, sympathy has become the most powerful political asset. Emotions often have a greater impact than statistics in electoral mathematics. This is why small incidents are often hyped to symbolize a larger injustice or conflict. This incident in Hisar appears to be moving in this direction, attempting to frame a conflict as a "victim versus the system" narrative. People are drawing their own conclusions based on video clips—sometimes the inspector's behavior appears aggressive, while others see the political parties' reaction as agitated. But assessing the full truth based on these fragmented images is not only difficult but also dangerous, as incomplete information often leads to misconceptions. It's important to understand that every political event has a "post-event life"—that is, how it is exploited after the event. Sometimes events occur spontaneously, but the narrative that is crafted after them is entirely strategic. The Hisar incident raises the same question: whether it was merely a random confrontation or is being exploited for a larger political purpose. Looking at past political events, it's clear that cultivating a "victim" image has become a common strategy for leaders after losing power. Those who stood with power until yesterday now stand against it, seeking to gain



public sympathy.

This is not a new political formula, but a tried-and-true strategy. However, the role of the police cannot be ignored in this entire debate. If the behavior depicted in the video is true, it certainly raises serious questions about police conduct. The police's job is to enforce the law, not to display their personal or institutional power. When police behavior appears aggressive or biased, it deepens existing distrust among the public. However, it is equally important that no public representative or political activist be considered above the law. Inappropriate behavior by a leader or their supporters should be viewed with equal seriousness. This is where the entire issue transcends the boundaries of "politician versus inspector" and turns into a battle of "system versus truth." The biggest danger in this battle is that truth gets lost somewhere and emotions take over. In this age of social media, everyone considers themselves an analyst, and every video clip becomes "evidence." But it's easy to forget that every video has a context, a background, which is often not captured

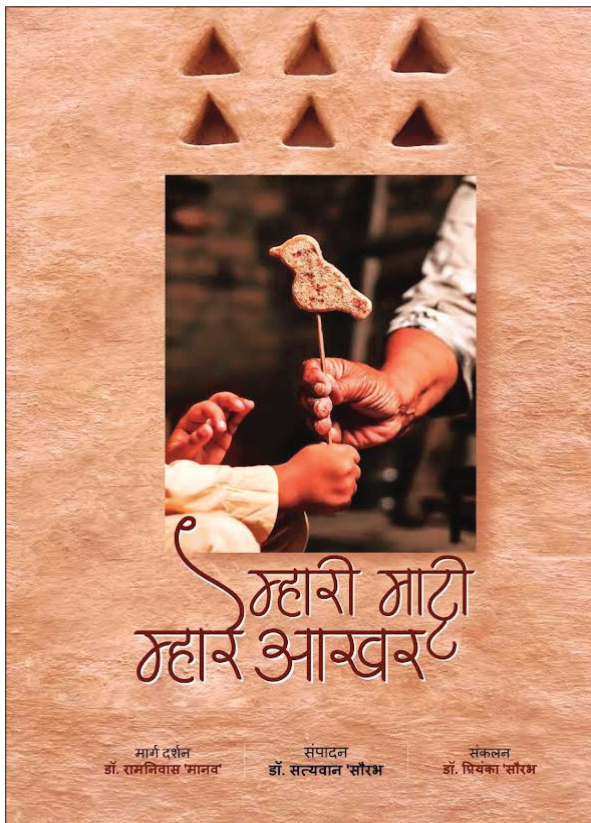
on camera. Today's society is increasingly moving toward "instant judgment," where decisions are made based not on facts but on emotions. People already harbor a certain anger toward the police, which is often justified. But if that anger is channeled into supporting a political figure, it transforms into sympathy. This transformation is subtle, but its impact is profound. This is why every controversy is transformed into a "narrative battle," where the real issue is left behind and emotional appeals take center stage. The most important aspect of this entire episode is what happens next. The response of the government and administration will determine what the case truly was. If no action is taken against the police officer, it will strengthen suspicions that something is being suppressed. And if action is taken, it remains to be seen whether it represents genuine accountability or mere lip service. The history of investigative committees and administrative action in our country has often eroded public trust. Often, investigations become mere time-buying measures, and ultimate-

ly, the case is shelved. Therefore, it is not enough to view this incident solely as a personal dispute. It is part of a broader political and social context, where every incident is seen as an opportunity—either to strengthen one's own position or to weaken the opponent. Therefore, the public has the greatest responsibility to view this entire incident with understanding and consider all aspects before reaching any conclusions. Today, we need neither blind support nor blind opposition. We must understand that the greatest strength in a democracy is public awareness. If we blindly view every incident through the lens of "hero versus villain," we ourselves become part of the game played by politics for its own benefit. This incident in Hisar is both a warning and an opportunity—a warning that we should not get carried away by emotions and move away from the truth, and an opportunity to use our understanding and discretion to correctly evaluate such incidents. Ultimately, it's important to remember that the most dangerous thing in a democracy isn't just lies, but the silence that unquestioningly accepts them.

A new milestone in Haryanvi short story: 'My soil, my letters'

— Dr. Vijay Garg

For the first time, "Mhari Matti, Mhare Akhar" brings together 33 Haryanvi short story writers from India and abroad. This unique collection of 99 short stories offers a vivid glimpse of Haryana's soil, folk culture, and human sensibilities. This work is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Manumukt 'Manav', IPS, a youth inspiration. Published in 2026 under the guidance of Dr. Ramniwas 'Manav', compiled by Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, edited by Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, and with a cover designed by Surendra Bansal, this 121-page work is priced at ₹275. It is a must-have for lovers of Haryanvi literature. The true strength of every language lies in its soil, and from that very soil its letters are born. "Mhari Matti, Mhare Akhar" is a collection of short stories that captures this sweet fragrance, not only bringing to the fore the vibrant Haryanvi dialect but also strengthening the influential literary genre that has become the most relevant in today's fast-paced life—the short story. This collection, edited by Dr. Satyavan Saurabh and compiled by Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, includes a total of 99 short stories by 33 short story writers. This number is not just a statistic, but an indication of the emerging form of the Haryanvi short story. For a long time, Haryanvi literature was largely limited to folk songs, raginis, and storytelling, but this collection shows that this dialect is now making its strong presence felt in modern literary genres as well. The defining characteristic of a short story is its brevity, but reading this collection, one feels that the words are few, yet the impact is profound. Each work is centered on a single event, emotion, or social situation, instantly engaging the reader. These stories are not only read, but also felt—and this is the



greatest success of this collection. The book's greatest strength lies in its diverse subject matter. It explores life's many shades—the sweetness of relationships, the harsh realities of society, the simplicity of rural life, and the complexities of changing times. "Tadakai Ki Maa" reflects the sensitivity of motherhood, "Izzat Ki Paribhasa" questions social norms, "Bahu Bihar Ki" exposes social prejudices, while works like "Mati Ki Sondh" and "Ghunghat Aur Ghadi" offer a vivid portrait of Haryana's connection to its cultural roots. The simplicity and straightforward nature of the Haryanvi language make these short stories even more impressive. There's no artificiality or pretense in the language, but rather a natural flow that reaches directly to the reader. This collection reinforces the belief that the depth of literature lies not in the complexity of language, but in its sensitivity.

However, there is one aspect of this book that draws attention—the lack of linguistic uniformity. Since it includes works by many authors, different forms of Haryanvi emerge. In some places, the language is pure folk, while in others, the influence of Hindi is clearly visible. This diversity, on the one hand, makes the collection comprehensive, but on the other, it also lacks a uniform linguistic flow. Nevertheless, this should be seen as a natural condition of the evolving form of Haryanvi rather than a shortcoming. Many of the works in this collection sharply attack social anomalies. Short stories like "Dogla," "Kagzi Samaj Seva," "Leader," and "Crowd and Leader" satirize the hypocrisy, pretense, and hollow leadership prevalent in society. Works like "Daughter's Honor," "Lioness Mother," and "Women's Rights" effectively present women's struggles, self-

respect, and changing social roles. The hallmark of these stories is their straightforward portrayal of reality without unnecessary sentimentality. An important aspect of this book is that it features both new and experienced writers. This not only maintains literary balance but also provides new writers with an opportunity to express themselves. This effort is also important because the emergence of new talent is essential for the development of any language. Dr. Ramniwas 'Manav's' preface provides an ideological foundation for this collection. The clarity with which he presents the current state of the Haryanvi short story, its challenges, and its potential, makes the reader realize the seriousness of this genre. Meanwhile, Surendra Bansal's "Creative Enterprise Nai Sadhuwad" commends this effort and establishes it as a positive literary initiative. Overall, "Mhari Matti, Mhare Akhar" is not just a short story collection, but an important document for Haryanvi literature. It attempts to fill a void where very little work has been done so far. This collection not only highlights current writing but also points to future possibilities. Ultimately, it can be said that this book fully achieves its objective. It not only entertains readers but also inspires them to think, understand, and view their society from a new perspective. This is an invaluable work for lovers of the Haryanvi language, as well as for all those interested in the literature of Indian folk languages. "Mhari Matti, Mhare Akhar" is indeed a remarkable literary effort that powerfully presents the fragrance of its soil and the power of its letters—which has the potential to give a new identity and a new direction to the Haryanvi short story.

When plates are thrown away full and stomachs go to sleep empty

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

The world faces a paradox: massive amounts of food are being wasted, while millions struggle with hunger. This is not just an irony, but a reflection of the profound flaws in our current food system. While production continues to rise, there are significant disparities in distribution, storage, and consumption, preventing food from reaching those in need. This is why food waste and hunger coexist globally. The situation in India provides a striking example of this global landscape. Despite the country's abundant food production, hunger and malnutrition persist. While some improvement has been recorded in recent years, this improvement is too limited to be considered satisfactory. A large number of people still lack adequate nutrition, and the incidence of child malnutrition is a cause for concern. This situation clearly demonstrates that the problem lies not in a lack of production, but in the inefficiency of resource management and distribution. The problem of food waste is not only economic, but also social and environmental. When food is wasted, the water, energy, and labor used in its production are also wasted. Furthermore, the gases emitted from rotting food harm the environment. Thus, food waste also contributes to climate change. It is a vicious cycle that involves both resource wastage and environmental damage. The roots of this problem extend from production to consumption. Large quantities of crops are lost at the farm level, often due to a lack of proper storage facilities, transportation delays, and natural disasters. Fruits and vegetables, which are perishable, are particularly hard hit.



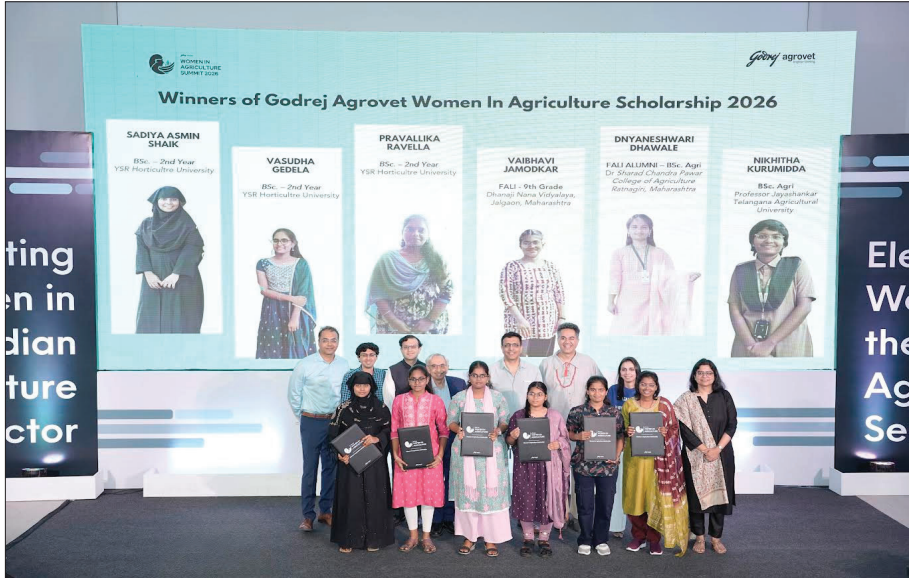
Farmers lack adequate cold storage facilities, forcing them to either sell their produce early or let it spoil. This not only causes economic losses for farmers but also impacts food supplies. Supply chain weaknesses exacerbate this problem. There are numerous stages between production and consumption, with potential for loss at each stage. Inadequate transportation, storage, and distribution systems result in large quantities of food being lost before reaching markets. Oversupply in markets also leads to food being discarded because there are no proper storage or transportation systems. The situation is no less worrying at the consumer level. Food wastage is common in homes, hotels, and events. People often buy more food than they need and then fail to use it all. Excessive vigilance regarding expiration dates also often leads to unnecessary waste. This problem is even more pronounced at weddings and other social events, where, in the name of prestige, far more food is prepared than necessary, a large portion of which ultimately ends up in the trash. Policy and institutional defi-

ciencies also play a significant role in this entire scenario. Most government policies focus on increasing production, while waste management receives relatively little attention. Investment in cold chain and storage infrastructure is inadequate, and the existing schemes have limited impact. Furthermore, no strict regulations or punitive provisions have been widely implemented to reduce food waste. This situation demonstrates the need to approach the problem holistically. To address this challenge, a comprehensive and coordinated effort is required. First, infrastructure improvements are essential. Cold storage and modern warehousing facilities must be expanded to ensure the safe storage of perishable goods. Special attention is needed in rural areas, where such facilities are most lacking. Additionally, transportation and logistics systems must be strengthened to ensure timely and safe delivery of food to markets. The use of technology can also play a crucial role in this direction. Digital platforms and data-driven systems can better predict

demand and supply, preventing unnecessary production and wastage. Furthermore, modern technologies can be used to convert food waste into energy or compost, thereby reducing environmental impact. Policy reforms are also crucial. The government should enact laws and policies that encourage the reduction of food waste and curb unnecessary waste. Mandatory provisions can be made for hotels, restaurants, and large events to distribute leftover food to those in need. Furthermore, farmers must be protected against crop losses to ensure they remain financially secure. Community and educational initiatives can also play an important role in this direction. There is a need to raise awareness among people so that they understand the importance of food and avoid wasting it. This topic can be included in the curriculum in schools and colleges, thus making the new generation more responsible. Furthermore, initiatives to distribute surplus food to those in need through social organizations and voluntary organizations should be encouraged.

Godrej Agrovet Launches Disha Programme to Strengthen Industry-Ready Women Talent

April 2026: Godrej Agrovet Limited (Godrej Agrovet), a diversified R&D-focused food and agri-business conglomerate, today announced the launch of Disha, a Women's Career Accelerator Programme, at the third edition of its Women in Agriculture Summit, reaffirming the company's commitment to building an inclusive and future-ready agri talent ecosystem. India's agricultural sector is undergoing a significant transformation with productivity, sustainability, and rural income growth emerging as national priorities. However, a persistent structural gap continues to limit the sector's potential - the underrepresentation of women in formal agribusiness roles. While women contribute 60-80% of agricultural labour force and constitute 30-50% of students across agricultural education, they account for only 6-10% representation in agri companies and under 13% in leadership roles. The challenge, therefore, is not participation, but transition. Speaking on the launch, Sunil Kataria, MD & CEO, Godrej Agrovet said, "India's agri and allied sectors is at a pivotal point, with ambitions to drive sustainable growth, productivity



and rural prosperity. Nurturing industry ready talent will be central to this potential. Through Disha, we are strengthening the pipeline of skilled women professionals, well prepared to take on meaningful roles and support a sector on which nearly 50 percent of our country's population depends." The Disha Programme, a CSR initiative by Godrej Agrovet, is a focused career-accelerator designed to strengthen employability among women pursuing B.Sc. Agriculture and allied disciplines. Conceptualized as a campus-to-corporate finish-

ing school, the programme equips women graduates with industry-relevant skills across sales, communication, professional readiness and confidence building, enabling a smoother transition from education to formal agri careers. Disha is being implemented in partnership with IMIB Foundation and Ikka Learning Foundation. "Since its pilot phase across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka, Disha has engaged over 276 women students, with several participants progressing into industry roles at various organisations including

Hindustan Coca-Cola, GRB Dairy Foods, Jubilant Foodworks and more." Commenting on the Disha programme, Pakzan Dastoor, Head - Sustainability & CSR, Godrej Industries Group, added, "At Godrej Industries Group, inclusion is central to how we build and grow. Disha is a reflection of this commitment - enabling women to transition into formal agri-industry and access meaningful employment opportunities. This pilot underscores the power of partnerships, and we are proud to see over 33% women already placed

across agri-industry roles, with many more to follow." The company has been taking a deliberate, integrated approach to strengthening women participation across its own value chain. Over the past two years, women's representation within the company has increased from 8 percent to 15 percent, reflecting a shift from intent to measurable outcomes. "Building a strong and inclusive workforce requires sustained investment across the talent lifecycle. At Godrej Agrovet, we enable women from early-career entry through to leadership progression. Initiatives like Disha alongside our broader hiring and development programmes, reflect our commitment to creating a meaningful career pathway and building a resilient, future-ready workforce," said Mallika Mutreja, CHRO, Godrej Agrovet. The launch of Disha also advances Godrej Agrovet's broader commitment to nurture 1 lakh women across the agri-sector for improved employment opportunities and economic upliftment. To date, the company has reached 63.3k women through skilling, scholarships, early-career programmes, and leadership initiatives.

DA HIKE: Cabinet Approves 2% Dearness Allowance Hike For Government Employees And Pensioners



The Cabinet on Saturday approved a 2% hike in Dearness Allowance (DA) for central government employees, providing an increase in take-home pay amid rising living costs, sources told NDTV. The decision comes at a time when pressure is mounting from employee unions for a comprehensive revamp of pay structures under the proposed 8th Pay Commission. In a memorandum submitted to the government, the National Council-Joint Consultative Machinery (NC-JCM) has called for a substantial upward revision in salaries, seeking a fitment factor of 3.83. If the

demand is accepted, the minimum basic pay could rise sharply from the current Rs 18,000 to about Rs 69,000, representing a major overhaul of the existing pay framework. Earlier, The Confederation of Central Government Employees & Workers (CCGEW) had written a letter addressed to the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman expressing concern over the delay in announcing the next DA hike. The organisation pointed out that while the government had last revised DA in October 2025, effective from July 2025, employees have been waiting for the subsequent

revision since January 2026. Their main demand is that the government should immediately announce the pending DA/DR hike effective from Jan. 1, 2026, for both central government employees and pensioners. Because the DA revision is pending, pensioners are also not getting the Dearness Relief (DR), which is linked to DA. The government usually revises the DA twice a year to adjust salaries and pensions for inflation. Since the 7th Pay Commission started on January 1, 2016, such delays in announcements have not happened for this long before.

What is Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool? Key Features, Benefits Explained

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Saturday approved the creation of the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI Pool), a domestic maritime insurance mechanism backed by a sovereign guarantee of Rs 12,980 crore. The move is aimed at ensuring uninterrupted and affordable maritime insurance coverage for Indian trade amid rising geopolitical tensions, sanctions risks and global shipping disruptions. According to an official statement issued by the Press Information Bureau, the BMI Pool will provide insurance support to vessels carrying cargo to and from India, including ships transiting through volatile maritime routes. The government said the decision comes against the backdrop of heightened global uncertainty, which has driven up insurance premiums and increased the risk of coverage disruptions for ships and cargo. "Accordingly, there was a need for a domestic maritime risk covering pool to maintain sov-



ereignty and continuity of trade in face of withdrawal of coverage due to sanctions or due to geopolitical tensions," the government said. The proposed pool will cover a broad range of maritime risks, including hull and machinery, cargo, protection and indemnity (P&I), and war risk insurance. The BMI Pool will cater to: Indian-flagged vessels Indian-controlled vessels Ships carrying cargo to or from India The government said the insurance policies will be issued by

member insurers using the pool's combined underwriting capacity, estimated at around Rs 950 crore. India currently relies heavily on international insurers, especially the International Group of Protection and Indemnity Clubs, for P&I coverage. Such insurance typically covers third-party liabilities, including oil pollution, wreck removal, cargo damage, crew injury and collision liabilities. The government said the new pool would help India develop domestic expertise in

marine underwriting, claims management and legal processes while also reducing dependence on foreign insurers. "The rationale for providing a sovereign guarantee to the proposed domestic insurance entity is rooted in the objectives of strengthening self-reliance, sanctions resilience and ensuring greater sovereign control," the government said. The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool will initially operate for 10 years, with the option to extend it up to 15 years. Among the key expected benefits are: Continuity of insurance coverage during global crises Lower dependence on foreign insurers Reduced foreign exchange outgo on insurance premiums Greater ability to secure reciprocal coverage arrangements with non-IG insurance clubs The move comes as shipping routes across West Asia remain vulnerable to conflict-related disruptions, leading insurers to approve coverage on a case-by-case basis and significantly raise premium costs.

INDIA'S FIRST BIG C - VIVO PREMIUM EXPERIENCE ZONE

Hyderabad, AP & Telangana's No.1 mobile retail chain, Big C, has grandly launched India's first Vivo Premium Experience Zone at Ameerpet. This special store is designed to offer customers a unique and immersive experience with Vivo smartphones. Customers can explore Vivo's latest smartphones featuring cutting-edge design, powerful performance, and stunning camera capabilities. At this experience zone, customers can personally try out Vivo devices, understand their features in detail, and make better purchase decisions. Along with this, Big C is offering exciting deals and special surprises for customers. The Vivo Premium Experience Zone at Big C Ameerpet is set to provide a completely new shopping experience. With cutting-edge innovation, stylish design, and strong performance, Vivo and Big C together promise an unforgettable celebration



for customers. On this occasion, Big C has announced several attractive offers. Customers can get up to 10,000 instant cashback and assured gifts. Additionally, discounts of up to 25% on air conditioners are available. Easy EMI options starting from 1,999 are also offered. Big C invites everyone to visit the store and enjoy a cool and happy shopping experience. Big C representatives stated that they are happy to bring such a premium experience to customers and expressed gratitude to their partners and team. On this occasion, Big C Executive Director Mr. Y. Swapna Kumar, along with Vivo representatives Mr. Athish Bhargava (General Manager, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana), Mr. Aswani Bhaskar (Chief Sales Officer, Vivo India), and Mr. Rupesh Sharma (Chief Retail Officer, Vivo India) participated.

CEO Re-Appointment In Due Course, Ex-Chairman's Resignation Under Legal Review: HDFC Bank

HDFC Bank's top management announced on Saturday, April 18, in a post earnings concall that the re-appointment for a new chief executive officer will happen in 'due course' Former Chairman Atanu Chakraborty's resignation is under legal review, they added. NRC fully ceased of the re-appointment issue. HDFC Bank's remuneration and remuneration committee (NEC) is fully seized with the matter of re-appointment of MD, CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan and will take a final call in this regard in due-course, the bank's deputy MD Kaizad Bharucha said in response to a query by NDTV Profit. Jagdishan's current tenure as bank chief ends in October 2026. Jagdishan, meanwhile, also said that the bank's board is rooting for interim chairman Keki Mistry

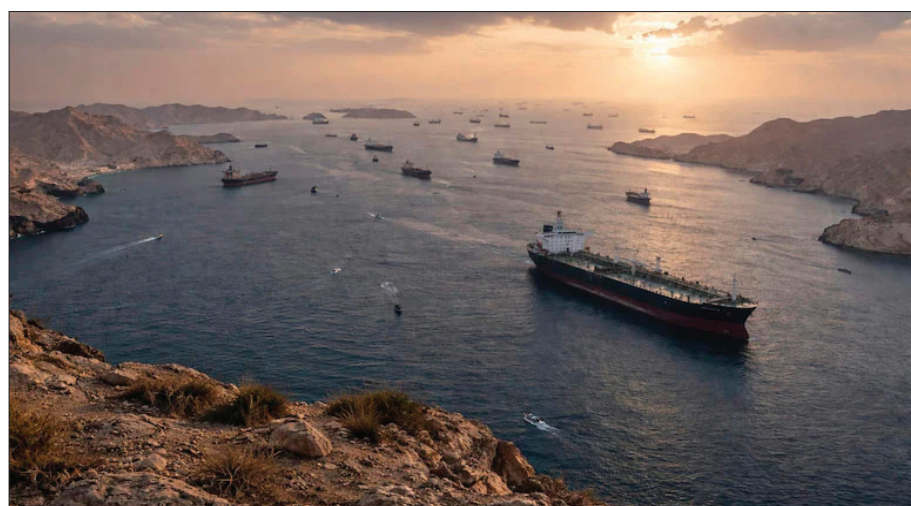


to take over as full time chairman, following former chairman Atanu Chakraborty's abrupt resignation last month. The bank's externally appointed firm is assessing the resignation letter filed by Chakraborty and will release the summary of report in due course,

Jagdishan said. Regarding the allegations of mid-selling of AT-1 bonds by the bank's Dubai branch, Jagdishan said the bank did not sell such bonds to retail customers and that the investors were aware of the risks associated with the high yielding paper.

Indian-Flagged Tanker Targeted In Hormuz; MEA Conveys 'Deep Concern' To Iranian Envoy

Two Indian-flagged vessels were forced to turn back from the Strait of Hormuz after Iranian gunboats opened fire near the key shipping route northeast of Oman. The incident took place after Iran declared the Strait of Hormuz closed and announced that control of the vital waterway had reverted to its previous state amid the continuing US naval blockade of Iranian ports. According to sources in the Directorate General of Shipping, there has been no Reuters reported that more than a dozen tankers, including three sanctioned vessels, transited through the Strait of Hormuz after the 50-day blockade was lifted on Friday, shipping data showed. Meanwhile, the US military said it has forced 23 ships to turn back near the Strait of Hormuz since imposing a naval blockade on Iranian ports. In a post on X, US Central Command said American forces continue to enforce the block-



ade "against ships entering or exiting Iranian ports and coastal areas". The blockade, ordered by President Donald Trump, began on April 13 as part of Washington's efforts to pressure Iran into reopening the Strait of Hormuz, damage to either vessel and no injuries have been reported among crew members. "As of now, no damage or injuries to crew on Indian-flagged vessels,"

sources said. "Safety of seafarers and ships is the priority," DG Shipping sources told. Following the incident, New Delhi summoned the Iranian ambassador. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi was called in by the Ministry of External Affairs for a meeting with Foreign Secretary this evening. During the meet-

ing, Foreign Secretary conveyed India's deep concern at the shooting incident earlier today involving two Indian-flagged ships in the Strait of Hormuz. "He noted the importance that India attached to the safety of merchant shipping and mariners and recalled that Iran had earlier facilitated the safe passage of several ships bound for India. Reiterating his concern at this serious incident of fir-

ing on merchant ships, Foreign Secretary urged the Ambassador to convey India's views to the authorities in Iran and resume at the earliest the process of facilitating India-bound ships across the Strait. The Ambassador of Iran undertook to convey these views to the Iranian authorities." Sources said the two Indian vessels came under fire from Iranian gunboats while transiting through the strategically important shipping lane. Both vessels were forced to change course and turn back. One of the two ships involved in the incident is a very large crude carrier (VLCC), a class of tanker designed for transporting massive quantities of crude oil over long distances. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical oil transit chokepoints, with a significant share of global crude shipments passing through the narrow waterway every day.

Ships report attacks after Iran closes Strait of Hormuz, as Trump says US 'won't be blackmailed'

Hezbollah has denied involvement in the incident that left a French peacekeeper dead and three others wounded in southern Lebanon this morning. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) said earlier that an initial assessment "indicates the fire came from non-state actors (allegedly Hezbollah)". It says it has launched an investigation. French President Emmanuel Macron has also said that the available information suggests Hezbollah is responsible. Hezbollah, the militant group backed by Iran, says it is "surprised" that others have "rushed to make arbitrary accusations", adding that it affirms "the necessity of coordination between the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL in its movements, especially under these sensitive conditions". The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) says it has set up a "yellow line" security perimeter in southern Lebanon. It's the first time

the IDF has spoken of a demarcation in this way since the ceasefire with Hezbollah began on Thursday night, when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a 10km (6.2-mile) deep "security zone" would be established. A similar line was set up by the IDF in Gaza after a ceasefire deal there last year, to separate its forces from territory held by Hamas. In a statement today, the IDF said it had struck "terrorists [who] violated the ceasefire understandings by approaching from north of the Yellow Line toward IDF soldiers". There's no word yet on who may have been injured or killed in this attack the Israelis carried out. It said its soldiers are allowed to take action against threats, even during the ceasefire. There's been no immediate response from Hezbollah or the Lebanese government, which agreed to the 10-day truce with Israel. In Gaza, Israeli troops have opened



fire dozens of times at Palestinians they say were trying to cross the "Yellow Line". Earlier this year, the Associated Press reported that 77 people had been killed by Israeli gunfire in the three months since the ceasefire began. The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) says a cruise ship located three nautical miles east of Oman has reported seeing "a splash in close proximity". This comes after reports of

attacks on a tanker and a container ship announced in the past two hours off the coast of Oman. Now, let's bring you some comments from Donald Trump in the Oval Office. He spoke briefly about Iran before taking questions from reporters at his executive order signing. He says there are "very good conversations going on" with Iran, and describes Iran as acting "a little cute as they have for 47 years". Trump says Iranian

leaders want to close the Strait of Hormuz, but the US won't let them "blackmail us". The US is taking a tough stand, he adds. The president says there will be "some information by the end of the day" on Iran, but he did not take any direct questions about the conflict before the session ended. Some more now from Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). In a statement on social media, it says that "as long as the enemy intends to disrupt the passage of vessels and apply its naval blockade, Iran will view that as a violation of the ceasefire and prevent the conditional and limited reopening of the Strait of Hormuz". On negotiations to bring about an end to the war, the SNSC says that new proposals have been put forward by the US, which Tehran is "currently reviewing and has not yet responded to". Iran's Supreme National Security Council, the country's top security body, has said on state TV

that Tehran is "determined to enforce monitoring and control over transit through the Strait of Hormuz until the definitive end of the war and the establishment of lasting peace in the region". The statement says this will be done by collecting full information from vessels passing through, issuing transit certificates, and requiring payment of service fees for "security, safety, and environmental protection services". As the Strait of Hormuz started reopening, some vessels were forced to change their route. Two Indian-flagged vessels, the cargo ship JAG ARNAV and the oil tanker SANMAR HERALD, both received orders to change their travel routes as they were denied access to the Strait of Hormuz by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officials. Tracking data from MarineTraffic shows the vessels slowing down and making a U-turn after passing Larak Island along the agreed route.

DR Congo accepts first set of deportees from the US



Fifteen people deported from the US, who are reportedly from South America, have arrived in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is the first group of an unknown number of people that the US has expelled which the DR Congo had agreed to take in. The government in Kinshasa has stressed that their stay in the country is only temporary and that Washington is funding "their reception, support and care". The US has already sent deportees to several other African countries, including Ghana, South Sudan and Eswatini, as part of the crackdown on immigration. Earlier this month, when details of the deportation deal first emerged, the Congolese government said

the decision to receive what are known as third-country migrants - that is those who come from neither the sending nor receiving nation - aligns with its commitment to human dignity, to protecting the rights of migrants and international solidarity. The Congolese authorities also said that the scheme was not a "permanent relocation mechanism or an outsourcing of migration policies". The US State Department said that while it did not comment on "diplomatic communications with other governments" the administration remained "unwavering" in its "commitment to end illegal and mass immigration and bolster America's border security".

FRENCH PEACEKEEPER KILLED IN SOUTHERN LEBANON



A French peacekeeper has been killed and three others wounded after a UN patrol came under fire in southern Lebanon, in what officials described as a deliberate attack. The soldier was serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil), which confirmed that one peacekeeper had died and three others were injured, two of them seriously, when their patrol came under small-arms fire. French President Emmanuel Macron blamed the attack on Hezbollah. The Iran-backed armed group denied "any connection" to the incident. It comes amid heightened tensions in southern Lebanon, where peacekeepers have faced growing risks since renewed fighting between Hezbollah and Israel erupted on 2 March. A 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon came into effect on 16 April. The US, which announced the deal, urged Hezbollah to abide by its terms. "Everything suggests that responsibility for this attack lies with Hezbollah," Macron said. "France demands that the Lebanese authorities immediately arrest the perpetrators and take their responsibilities alongside

Unifil." France's Armed Forces Minister Catherine Vautrin said the peacekeeper had been part of a mission to reopen access to a Unifil position that had been cut off by the recent fighting when it had been "ambushed by an armed group at very close range". Vautrin added that he was "hit immediately by a direct shot from a small arms weapon" and was pulled away by fellow soldiers, who were unable to revive him. Unifil said the patrol had been clearing explosive ordnance along a road in the village of Ghanduriyah to reconnect isolated positions. It said the team came under fire from what it described as non-state actors and condemned the attack as "deliberate". The Lebanese Armed Forces said the incident followed exchanges of fire with armed individuals, adding that it was co-ordinating closely with Unifil during what it described as a sensitive phase in southern Lebanon. Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun condemned the attack and told Macron during a phone call that those responsible would be brought to justice. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has also ordered an investigation.

THREE SENTENCED FOR 'MAN IN BEAR SUIT' INSURANCE SCAM



Three men have been sentenced in California for an insurance scam using someone in a bear costume to stage fake attacks on luxury cars. Viral video handed to insurers as evidence seemed to show a bear in a 2010 Rolls-Royce Ghost in Lake Arrowhead on 28 January 2024. Similar claims were filed on the same date and location for two high-end Mercedes

models. But biologists at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reviewed the footage and determined it showed a human in a bear suit. The state insurance department launched "Operation Bear Claw", executing a search warrant and finding a bear outfit in the suspects' home. The fraud involved \$141,839 (£105,000) in insurance payments.

MADONNA JOINS SABRINA CARPENTER TO SURPRISE COACHELLA

Madonna surprised fans at Coachella making a guest appearance during Sabrina Carpenter's Friday night headline set. The Queen of Pop joined Carpenter on stage for a duet of Vogue, Like a Prayer and a song seemingly from Madonna's new album. The performance followed days of speculation that Madonna would appear at the festival in the Colorado desert in California. On Wednesday, Madonna officially confirmed the release of Confessions II - a sequel to her 2005 Confessions On A Dance Floor. After Carpenter finished a rendition of Juno, Madonna emerged while the intro of Vogue played out and dancers struck a pose. With matching blonde hair and lace corsets, the pair



sang the 1990 house hit, before strutting across the stage to perform a new song. "Thank you so much for inviting me on your show," the Hung Up singer said. "No thanks needed, Madonna," Carpenter replied. "You can have whatever you want." Speaking to the crowd, Madonna said: "Twenty years ago today, I performed at Coachella - I was in the

dance tent and it was the first time I performed Confessions On A Dance Floor: Part I in America and that was such a thrill for me." "So you can imagine what a thrill it is for me to be back 20 years later... so it's a like a full circle moment you know - very meaningful for me," she added, before discussing astrology with the crowd. The 5ft 4in star then pointed

out it was the first time she has performed with someone shorter than her. "Thank you for giving me that experience," Madonna joked. The pair then joined forces for a duet of Like A Prayer. Madonna first appeared at Coachella in 2006, popping up at the Sahara Tent instead of the main stage to perform Confessions On A Dance Floor. She later returned to desert, making a guest appearance during Drake's 2015 set and had a viral moment when she kissed the rapper. The collaboration came in Carpenter's second week headlining the festival. Last week she was joined on stage by comedian Will Ferrell. Saturday will see Justin Bieber headline for a second time, with Colombian pop star Karol G on Sunday.

ORBÁN'S ERA WAS OVER IN A FLASH AND HUNGARY'S NEXT PM IS A MAN IN A HURRY

Péter Magyar and his victorious Tisza party have wasted no time preparing for the transfer of power in Hungary after their dramatic landslide defeat of Viktor Orbán last Sunday. They won 52% of the vote to put an end to his party's 16 years of continuous rule, which translates into 141 seats in the 199-seat National Assembly. Orbán's Fidesz have slumped from 135 to 52 seats. The count will be finalised on Saturday - including recounts in closely tied constituencies, and votes cast abroad. Magyar has won a pledge from President Tamás Sulyok to bring forward the formation of the new parliament to the week beginning 4 May. Parliament



can then elect the new government. He also gave combative interviews to public service TV and radio, which have largely ignored or attacked him for the past two years. He has promised to pass laws to suspend their news programmes, until impartial editors can be

appointed. All this will take time. Armed with a so-called super-majority of more than two-thirds of seats in parliament, he also plans retroactively to limit the number of terms a prime minister can serve to two. Viktor Orbán has already served five. If that goes through, Magyar

could slam the door on Orbán's return. It was not until late on Thursday that Orbán finally broke his silence after Sunday's defeat, in an interview on the Patrióta YouTube channel. "This is the end of an era," said Hungary's beaten leader. "We must bear this defeat with dignity." He spoke of feeling "pain and emptiness" about the defeat, taking full personal responsibility for what happened. But he offered no analysis of the main mistakes of his campaign, other than the failure to finish the Russian-designed Paks 2 nuclear power station, which is running six years behind schedule.

Millions listen to Ethiopian star's song taking swipe at government



In a country where criticising the authorities has often landed people in trouble, the latest song from Ethiopia's biggest musician - which appears to condemn the government - is attracting attention. Teddy Afro's track Das Tal, meaning "put up the tent" in English, has been viewed more than seven million times on YouTube since its release on Thursday. Referencing a traditional mourning tent, Teddy Afro - whose real name is Tewodros Kassahun - sings that he is grieving a country he says has been lost. The build-up to the song's release had already drawn controversy after a preview event for journalists in the capital Addis Ababa failed to go ahead, for reasons which are unclear. "The spirit of being Ethiopian is now pushed away," the 49-year-old laments on Das Tal. "Now I understand the sorrow and pain. Where can someone go to mourn, where do you cry? In the place that raised me, in the village where I grew up, I have become a stranger, like someone with no country." The star has been a thorn in the side of previous governments. Two decades ago he was imprisoned for 16 months for being involved in a hit-and-run, and said the

charges were politically motivated. His last album, 2017's Ethiopia, enjoyed significant sales in the country and topped the Billboard World Albums chart for weeks. It dwelt on historical themes and called for unity among Ethiopians. But its official release in the country was blocked by the authorities. There were huge anti-government protests at the time over the marginalisation of the country's largest ethnic group, Oromos, which eventually saw the downfall of the then-prime minister. "All of my music is based on love," Teddy Afro told the BBC in 2017. "Like Martin Luther King said: 'Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.' And for us to come out of the situation we are in, I believe the only choice we have is love." Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who is Oromo himself, came to power in the wake of the protests and promised a new age of unity in the country, which comprises many ethnic groups. Teddy Afro initially embraced that promise, but has since been disillusioned by widespread violence and the government's actions - not least the two-year civil war in the north, which led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

FRENCH FILM STAR NATHALIE BAYE DIES AGED 77, MEDIA REPORT

One of France's most celebrated film stars, Nathalie Baye, has died aged 77, French media report. President Emmanuel Macron said the much-loved stalwart of French cinema had been "an actress with whom we loved, dreamed and grew up". A four-time acting winner at the Césars - France's equivalent of the Oscars - Baye starred in some 80 films in her lifetime after breakout roles in the early 1970s. Her family told the French news agency AFP she had died at her home in Paris on Friday evening from a form of dementia. Born into a bohemian family of artists in Normandy in 1948, she began her career as a dancer before turning to acting. Baye got her break in François Truffaut's

1973 comedy La Nuit Américaine, titled Day for Night in English - when she was fresh out of drama school, Le Monde reported. She went on to become one of France's most decorated actresses over a career spanning five decades. She won her first César in 1981 for her supporting role in Jean-Luc Godard's dark comedy Sauve qui peut (la vie), or Every Man for Himself. She was again named best supporting actress in 1982 and best actress the following year for Une Étrange Affaire (Strange Affair) and La Balance. Baye was named best actress at the 1999 Venice Film Festival for Une Liaison Pornographique, titled An Affair of Love in English. Later in her career she



appeared in high-profile international projects, such as Steven Spielberg's 2002 film Catch Me if You Can, in which she played Leonardo DiCaprio's mother. More

recently, she played a parody of herself in the acclaimed series Call My Agent! alongside her daughter, actress Laura Smet, and a French aristocrat in the second Downton

Abbey film. Baye had Smet with rock artist Johnny Hallyday, nicknamed the French Elvis, with whom she had had a five-year relationship. In 2017, Hallyday's death sparked national mourning. Baye's final on-screen role came in the 2023 Franco-Lebanese drama La nuit du verre deau (Mother Valley). Away from acting, French media reported that Baye publicly supported action to tackle climate change and reform French assisted dying legislation. Among those paying tribute was one of Baye's earliest co-stars - Isabelle Adjani, who appeared alongside her in 1974's La Gifle (The Slap) and who called her an "actress of dazzling spontaneity" in a post on social media. Richard

Berry, who starred alongside her in La Balance in 1982, wrote on Instagram: "Nathalie, you take with you our laughter and the fond memories of our early days." Macron, meanwhile, wrote on X: "We loved Nathalie Baye so much. With her voice, her smile and her grace, she has been a constant presence in French cinema over the past few decades, from François Truffaut to Tonie Marshall. "She was an actress with whom we loved, dreamed and grew up. Our thoughts are with her family and loved ones." Culture Minister Catherine Pégard told AFP that Baye had "lit up a long chapter in the history of French cinema with her talent and radiant personality".



IPL 2026: Sunrisers Hyderabad Set 180-Run Target for Chennai Superkings

Abhishek Sharma stole the headlines with a sensational 15-ball half-century as Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) posted 194/9 in 20 overs against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in their IPL 2026 clash in Hyderabad on Sunday. Abhishek's 15-ball fifty was the joint-fastest of IPL 2026, matching Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Heinrich Klaasen also slammed a half-century, making 59 off 39. Jamie Overton and Anshul Kamboj scalped three wickets, while Mukesh Choudhary picked up two. < Sanju Samson off the mark with 6! Short from Praful Hinge, Samson swings hard with a pull. Deep fine-leg was interested for a second, but it goes just over his head for a maximum. We got to witness a typical Abhishek Sharma onslaught in the powerplay. CSK brought in Matt Short's off-spin to counter him, but it made no difference. Abhishek smashed him for 24 in one



over, reaching his fifty off just 15 balls - the joint-fastest of IPL 2026. Chennai Super Kings' tryst with appointing a new captain after MS Dhoni has not gone well. First, Ravindra Jadeja was tried, but Dhoni had to be brought back as skipper mid-season in IPL 2022. Then, Rituraj Gaikwad was named CSK captain in IPL 2024. The results so far have

not been encouraging. CSK missed out on a playoff spot in 2024 and finished last among 10 teams in 2025. In IPL 2026, CSK have lost three out of five matches and are placed among the bottom three teams. Ahead of IPL 2026, CSK brought in Sanju Samson. Ever since the India star was roped in, there has been a buzz about whether he is being primed to become

the CSK captain. Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin believes that Sanju Samson could one day take over the captaincy of the five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), while stressing that the wicket-keeper-batter should carve out his own identity rather than follow in anyone's foot-

steps. Speaking about CSK's leadership transition over the years, Ashwin said the shift had already begun during Ravindra Jadeja's brief stint as captain, even though it did not pan out as expected. He added that current skipper Rituraj Gaikwad has effectively been running the show alongside head coach Stephen Fleming in recent seasons. "I think the mantle has already been passed on. When Jadeja took over the captaincy a few years ago, I think that is when the mantle was likely to be passed on. It didn't quite work out, and then it's been Rituraj. I think Rituraj has been running the show for the last two to three years along with Fleming," Ashwin told ESPNcricinfo, as quoted by news agency IANS. The former CSK player went on to say that Samson could eventually lead the five-time IPL champions, though he refrained from predicting a timeline.

Brendon McCullum To Be Named KKR Head Coach? Kevin Pietersen Says "Bookmark This Tweet"

Kolkata Knight Riders' turbulent start to the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 campaign has taken a dramatic twist off the field, with former England captain Kevin Pietersen confidently predicting that Brendon McCullum will return as the franchise's head coach before next season. Pietersen made the bold prediction on X (formerly Twitter) and even asked fans to "Bookmark this tweet", setting social media abuzz, fuelling speculation about a possible shake-up in KKR's management structure. The two-time champions have endured a nightmare start to the ongoing season, failing to register a single win in their first six matches. Their only point came from a rain-washed fixture against the Punjab Kings, while their latest defeat to the Gujarat Titans highlighted the team's inability to compete against rivals. Captain Ajinkya Rahane and current head coach Abhishek Nayar are under mounting pressure, with many fans asking for the



duo to be sacked. In the aftermath of KKR's latest loss against Shubman Gill's side on Friday, Pietersen took to social media with a striking claim: "Baz McCullum will be the coach of KKR next season. Bookmark this tweet." This claim by him has been widely shared across social media platforms, with supporters and pundits debating whether the franchise will indeed turn to the former New Zealand skipper to revive the 3-time champions' fortunes. McCullum is no stranger to the purple and gold. He famously lit up the

inaugural IPL match in 2008 with a blistering 158 in the very first match of the competition, producing an innings that defined the league's fearless brand of cricket. Years later, he returned as KKR's head coach, bringing his aggressive "Bazball" philosophy to the franchise. Though his stint was mixed, his reputation as a transformative coach remains intact. With the Knight Riders languishing at the bottom of the table, questions are swirling about whether management will act swiftly or wait until the season's end.

Sanju Samson Will Lead Chennai Super Kings 'At Some Point': Ravichandran Ashwin's Massive Prediction

Chennai Super Kings' tryst with appointing a new captain after MS Dhoni has not gone well. First, Ravindra Jadeja was tried, but Dhoni had to be brought back as skipper mid-season in IPL 2022. Then, Rituraj Gaikwad was named CSK captain in IPL 2024. The results so far have not been encouraging. CSK missed out on a playoff spot in 2024 and finished last among 10 teams in 2025. In IPL 2026, CSK have lost three out of five matches and are placed among the bottom three teams. Ahead of IPL 2026, CSK brought in Sanju Samson. Ever since the India star was roped in, there has been a buzz about whether he is being primed to become the CSK captain. Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin believes that Sanju



Samson could one day take over the captaincy of the five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), while stressing that the wicket-keeper-batter should carve out his own identity rather than follow in anyone's foot-

steps. Speaking about CSK's leadership transition over the years, Ashwin said the shift had already begun during Ravindra Jadeja's brief stint as captain, even though it did not pan out as expected. He added that current skipper Rituraj Gaikwad has effectively been running the show alongside head coach Stephen

Fleming in recent seasons. "I think the mantle has already been passed on. When Jadeja took over the captaincy a few years ago, I think that is when the mantle was likely to be passed on. It didn't quite work out, and then it's been Rituraj. I think Rituraj has been running the show for the last two to three years along with Fleming," Ashwin told ESPNcricinfo, as quoted by news agency IANS. The former CSK player went on to say that Samson could eventually lead the five-time IPL champions, though he refrained from predicting a timeline. "The mantle being passed on - if you ask me, I mean, I'm no astrologer - but all I can tell you is I do see Sanju captaining CSK at some stage.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Attains Historic IPL 'Century', 1st Team In Tournament's History

Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on Saturday became the first IPL team to play 100 matches at one venue - their home, the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Talking about the match, a disciplined death-overs bowling masterclass by Delhi Capitals ensured Royal Challengers Bengaluru were restricted to a competitive but seemingly under-par 175/8 in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 encounter at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. Despite a blistering 63 off 38 balls from opener Phil Salt, laced with four boundaries and three sixes, RCB's innings stalled significant-



ly in the second half as DC's bowlers conceded only eight runs in the final two overs while picking up two wickets. In all, DC conceded only 29 runs in the last five overs, while picking four wickets, with Lungi Ngidi,

T. Natarajan, and Mukesh Kumar bowling sensational spells on a slow pitch. Pushed into batting first, RCB had a brisk start. Salt looked dangerous from the get-go by carving Aujib Nabi Dar for a boundary in

the very first over. Virat Kohli (19) joined the act with a signature aerial drive over mid-off against Mukesh Kumar, but his stay was cut short by Ngidi, as he mistimed a scrambled seam delivery to deep cover. Salt continued his onslaught to reach his second fifty of the season with a massive six over long-off against Kuldeep Yadav in the ninth over. But the introduction of spin turned the tide in DC's favour. Axar Patel had Devdutt Padikkal holding out to long-on, while Kuldeep Yadav delivered a body blow in the 11th over when he had Salt flat-batting to long-off, and Mukesh doubled it by having in-form Rajat Patidar edge behind to KL Rahul.

MENTAL STRESS LED TO ANTI-DOPING CHARGE - VONDROUSOVA

Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova says she was at "breaking point after months of physical and mental stress" when she refused a visit from a doping control officer to her home in December 2025. The Czech player has been charged with refusing a doping test by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) after denying the officer entry to conduct the test. Players are required to log their whereabouts for an allotted hour each day so that authorities can conduct anti-doping tests outside of competition. Should the 26-year-old be found guilty of the charge, she could be banned for up to four years. But Vondrousova says she feared for her safety when the officer called at her home and said they failed to follow "protocol". "The recent doping control incident happened because I reached a breaking point after months of physical and mental stress," Vondrousova wrote on Instagram. "When someone rang my door late at night without properly identifying themselves or following protocol - I reacted as a person who felt scared. "In that moment it was about feeling



safe, not about avoiding anything." The 2023 Wimbledon women's singles champion added that "experts confirmed" she had "suffered an acute stress reaction and generalised anxiety disorder". The ITIA said it was "aware of the player's comments" and, while it could "confirm that an investigation is under way and the player has been charged with refusing a test", it was "not able to comment any further on the specifics".

SCOTT POWERS TO IMPRESSIVE MEDLEY WIN IN LONDON

Double Olympic champion Duncan Scott won the men's 200m individual medley title in style as the Aquatics GB Swimming Championships continued in London. Scott, 28, has won silver medals in the event at the last two Olympics and showed he remains a class act, winning in a time of 1:56.08 to qualify for this summer's European Aquatics Championships in Paris. He saw off Evan Jones in second, while Max Litchfield took bronze. Scott said: "It was pretty good, I think. "In terms of my technique, my strokes and transitions between them felt pretty good, and I'm happy - that's a good place for me to be at this time of the season." The



Scottish swimmer won gold in the men's 4x200m freestyle relay at both Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024. Earlier on Friday evening Oliver Morgan won the 50m backstroke and Eva Okaro became champion in the women's 50m butterfly. Morgan set a new personal best of 24.36, and Okaro claimed her second title of the week with a PB of 25.95 to

break the sub-26-second mark for the first time. She said: "I'm really happy with that. The 50m is a bit of a fun one for me, but I really enjoyed that race. "I wanted to race the event to break up the meet a bit, but I'm also quite good at a splash and dash, so why not!" British titles are being awarded in 36 medal events across the meet in London this week.

"I HAVE DEBT": Chris Gayle Told Lalit Modi After Going Unsold In IPL. Then A Turnaround



Former Indian Premier League (IPL) chairman Lalit Modi claimed that he requested former Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) owner Vijay Mallya to include Chris Gayle in his team after the West Indies legend went unsold in the auction. Gayle, who played for Kolkata Knight Riders in 2009 and 2010, did not find any takers in the IPL 2011 auction. However, Lalit Modi said that he received a call from the West Indies international where he requested the then IPL chairman to find him a team as he had to pay off his debts. As a result, Lalit Modi approached Mallya, and he decided to take Gayle in place of the injured Dirk Nannes. "I had just left the IPL, come back

to London, and my good friend Chris Gayle wasn't picked up at the auction. I get a call from him that nobody's picked me up at the auction. I said, you didn't perform. IPL is all about performing. You played for the Kolkata Knight Riders, and it is my feeling that you didn't perform. You can perform, but you just got lazy. He said, I have a huge debt coming and I need to pay my bills. I made a few calls. Call one, two, three - everybody said no. "I went across the road to Vijay Mallya's house. I said, Vijay, give this bloke a try. He said, you know, I think Nannes has been injured or something. He said, I have an opening, but I'll pay him if he performs. I told Chris, go there and perform.

Hardik Pandya's Captaincy Receives Brutal Verdict After Mumbai Indians' Loss

Former Indian cricket team all-rounder Irfan Pathan delivered a brutal verdict on Hardik Pandya's captaincy following Mumbai Indians' loss against Punjab Kings in their IPL 2026 match on Friday. Quinton De Kock slammed a brilliant century for MI but dismal show from the bowlers meant that Prabhsimran Singh and Shreyas Iyer were able to guide PBKS to victory. It was MI's fourth loss in five matches this season and they are currently struggling at 9th in the IPL points table. It was a poor outing for Hardik as well after he scored just 14 runs and did not take a single wick-

et. Pathan said that Hardik's recent performances have been quite concerning before pointing out that he needs to manage situations in a better manner. "It is also about managing things in a better manner. Hardik's batting average since 2024 is in the early 20s. We expect better from him. He needs to do better in the powerplay in bowling too. Things became easier in this match as Allah Ghazanfar picked up wickets. But he is looking very worried when there is pressure," Pathan said on his YouTube channel. Pathan also took aim at the MI bowlers for their disappointing performances and pointed

out that they need to play a 'proper wicket-taker'. While the likes of Shardul Thakur and Deepak Chahar have struggled massively to keep runs in check, star pacer Jasprit Bumrah has not taken a single wicket in this year's competition. "Out of the five bowlers, Shardul Thakur and Hardik Pandya are all-rounders, and Deepak Chahar is not taking wickets. They are left with just two bowlers then. How will you take wickets with just two bowlers? They need to improve their bowling unit and play a proper wicket-taker," he added. Hardik Pandya did not mince his words after Mumbai Indians

crashed to their fourth successive defeat in IPL 2026, warning about taking a few "difficult calls" and reminded his misfiring teammates of the need to take "ownership" of the team's poor outings. In their latest debacle, the five-time champions lost to Punjab Kings by seven wickets and are now languishing ninth on the table with just two points. "To be very honest, I don't have much to say right now. I think we really need to go back on the drawing board and see where are we lacking. Is it individuals? Is it as a group? Is it planning? We'll just figure it out and see what we can do next," said Pandya.



Hero Vijay Deverakonda, director Shouryuv, and Vyra Entertainments banner come together for a prestigious film, set to be a huge global project with international technicians

Hero Vijay Deverakonda is taking a bold step toward bringing Indian cinema to a global stage. His upcoming massive global project with director Shouryuv, known for Hi Nanna, was officially announced today. What makes this film particularly notable is the involvement of international technicians. The prestigious project is being produced under the Vyra Entertainments banner, and its announcement poster has already generated high expectations.



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For this film, Alejandro Martinez, who has worked on Hollywood productions like House of the Dragon and Fallout, is handling cinematography. VFX supervisor Eric Durst, known for his work on films such as Gods of Egypt, Batman Forever, and Snowpiercer, is also part of the team. Suresh Selvarajan, who worked on Animal and Om Shanti Om, serves as the production designer. Music is composed by Hesham Abdul Wahab, known for delivering several hit soundtracks. Much like films such as Varanasi

and Raka, this Vijay Deverakonda-Shouryuv project is aiming to give Indian cinema a global appeal. The first-look poster released today is intriguing. It shows Vijay Deverakonda walking forward carrying four pet dogs, while seven individuals follow behind him holding various weapons. The caption on the poster,

"All the anger you see now was once love," adds to the curiosity. Set against a mythological universe backdrop, the film promises to present audiences with a completely new world.

Samantha's Bangaram Needs to Gear Up Big Time

Samantha Ruth Prabhu's upcoming film Bangaram is gearing up for release on May 15, but the promotional momentum appears to be underwhelming so far. The recently released song Thassadiya received a decent response, but it failed to create a strong buzz on social media, which is crucial in today's market. While the feedback has been positive in parts, the reach has remained limited, raising concerns about the film's visibility ahead of release. With competition increasing and audience attention spans shrinking, strong promotions have become essential to pull crowds into theatres. There is also a growing discussion around Samantha's current market pull in Telugu, with some trade circles feeling that her fan following isn't as strong as it once was because of the long gaps. This makes it even more important for the team to step up their promotional strategies in the coming days.



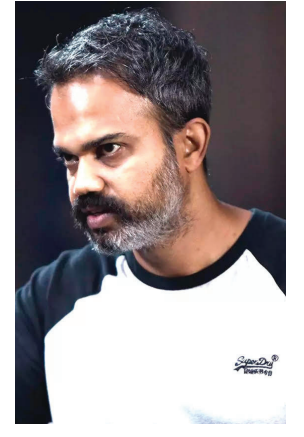
Well, as we already know, Samantha still has a strong goodwill among Telugu audiences, which can quickly turn attention in favour of her films when used effectively. Going forward, the team may need to explore more

aggressive and creative promotional strategies to build instant buzz, which has now become essential for a strong box office performance. Directed by Nandini Reddy, the film also fea-

tures Sreemukhi in a key role. With less than a month to go, Bangaram needs to ramp up its promotions to create the required hype and ensure a strong opening at the box office.

Prashanth Neel Presents- Mythri Movie Makers, Keerthan Nadagowda Horror Movie Titled 418

Popular production house Mythri Movie Makers and blockbuster director Prashanth Neel are collaborating with Youngsters to bring a new horror film to the audience. The film is directed by Keerthan Nadagowda and produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar and presented by Prashanth Neel, Surya Raj Veerabattini, Hanu Reddy, and Preethi Pagadala are playing the lead roles in this film. The makers have announced an interesting title for the film, Title 418. The title poster has increased curiosity about the story of the film. The film is set in a medical college in a haunted village. The film will give the audi-



ence a great cinematic experience with a never-before-seen story of science-mystery, science, and a secret that even superstitions cannot understand. Sri Vaishnava and Shashank Patil are playing key roles in this film.

BHAGYASHRI FEVER TAKES OVER THE INTERNET AGAIN



Bhagyashri Borse is once again taking over the internet, thanks to the latest song from Lenin. The track showcases her in a refreshing rural avatar, and her energetic dance moves combined with natural charm have quickly grabbed attention across social media. Interestingly, the buzz has gone beyond the original song. Many youngsters are now remixing and editing her dance steps with different tracks, making the visuals go viral in a big way. This unexpected trend has further amplified her reach and

popularity online. Bhagyashri seems to have found a strong connection with the youth, as her songs consistently generate traction and discussion upon release. Each new appearance is turning into a moment, helping her stay in the spotlight. The film, starring Akhil Akkineni in the lead, is slated for release on June 25. For Bhagyashri, this project holds significant importance, especially as she looks to bounce back after a string of unsuccessful films. A solid hit here could be a much-needed turning point in her career.



MEGASTAR CHIRANJEEVI LAUNCHES "THE BREAKING NEWS" FIRST LOOK



The first look and title announcement of the media-based thriller "The Breaking News" have been unveiled recently. Starring Murali Mohan, Ananya Nagalla and Vasudev in lead roles, the film is written and directed by Pavan Kadiyala. It is being produced by Hanumanth Reddy and Uma Gutur under the Open Sky Creations banner. The film's first look poster was officially launched on Friday by Megastar Chiranjeevi.

Speaking on the occasion, Chiranjeevi said, "I am eagerly looking forward to watching this film. I have never seen Murali Mohan garu in such an aggressive and intense role before." He also praised Ananya Nagalla's performance and appreciated director Pavan Kadiyala for presenting the film in a unique and engaging manner. According to the film team, "The Breaking News" is being made as a gripping thriller set against a media backdrop.

Can Akshay Kumar Pull Bhoot Bangla With Mixed Reception?

Can Akshay Kumar pull off a box office win with Bhoot Bangla despite mixed reception? That's the big question doing the rounds in trade circles. Right from day one, Bhoot Bangla opened to mixed reviews and equally divided audience talk. While some praised its horror-comedy elements, others felt it lacked consistency. Despite this, the film managed a good opening of around ₹25 crore on day one, which has given it a strong foundation. The weekend factor is now working in its favour. The film is

currently trending on BookMyShow, reportedly selling close to 20K tickets per hour, an encouraging sign that audience curiosity remains intact. Such trends often indicate that the film has not been rejected outright and still has room to grow. Historically, Hindi horror films have shown resilience at the box office, even with mixed word of mouth. The genre has a loyal audience base that often turns up for the theatrical experience, especially during weekends. Now, all eyes are on whether Akshay Kumar can capitalize on this momentum. If the film sustains through the weekend and holds reasonably well on weekdays, Bhoot

Bangla could still emerge as a decent performer despite its initial mixed response. Another user remarked, "I wish Bhoot Bangla came out 10 years ago. Unpopular opinion — watching Priyadarshan sir's style again feels nostalgic, but also a bit sad... that our childhood entertainer now feels stretched. Still, his humour? Bang on. #BhootBangla is horror + comedy. Story milegi, but don't go in expecting Bhool Bhulaiyaa level magic." A third comment read, "#AkshayKumar single-handedly saves this one. Director tries hard to create a good entertainer but weak script, uneven screenplay and bad VFX spoil the fun. #WamiqaGabbu is com-

pletely wasted, feels like she was included only for off-screen PR. #Tabu doesn't have much to do either. Supporting comic characters are just ok. First half is fairly entertaining, but film completely derailed in the 2nd half. Overall, #BhootBangla is AN AVERAGE OFFERING but still better than BB2, BB3." A fourth user stated, "Triple avatar @akshaykumar, @priyadarshandir's situational comedy, #RajpalYadav's unmatched physical comedy & Paresh Rawal's killer timing = Paisa vasool ?? From Mangalpur's cursed haveni to 'Vadhurusur' stealing brides, this 2h 45m ride has horror, laughs, emotions & surprises."

AFTER JANA NAYAGAN, JAILER 2 LANDS IN PIRACY FEAR?

The buzz around Jailer 2 has taken a fresh turn with reports suggesting that a key scene shot portion from the film may have been leaked online. While there is no official confirmation, the rumor has already created a mild stir in film circles. In recent times, big-budget films have been facing leak issues even before release. Earlier, a major film Jana Nayagan had portions leaked online, and reports even suggested the full film got circulated, leading to a massive loss for the makers. Now, Jailer 2 seems to have joined that list of high-profile projects dealing with similar challenges. Sources say the leaked content did not spread widely on social media as it was quickly taken down. The production house reportedly acted fast to control the situation and prevent further cir-

ulation of the footage. Sun Pictures is said to have a strong anti-piracy team in place, which was immediately alerted after the incident. The team is believed to be monitoring all possible digital platforms closely to avoid any further leaks. Jailer 2 is currently in the final stages of production, with post production work going on in full swing. The film is expected to hit screens later this year and already carries huge expectations following the success of the first part. Directed by Nelson Dilipkumar and starring Rajinikanth, Jailer became a massive blockbuster in 2023. The sequel is also expected to continue key characters played by Mohanlal and Shivarajkumar, while curiosity remains high about a major cameo role that is still kept under wraps.

