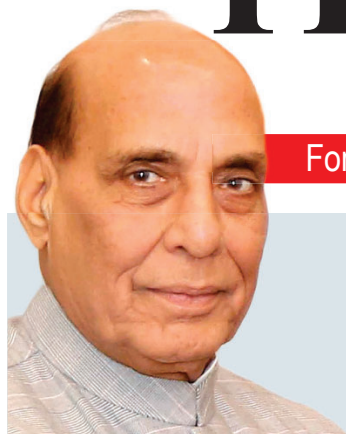


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**Rajnath Singh urges unified SCO stand against terror, cautions against double standards**

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**Suspect charged with attempted assassi-nation of Trump at Washington dinner**

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**Pooja Hegde, who is gearing up for her much-awaited film Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai...**

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SCAN FOR E-PAPER



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## KERALA WEATHER TODAY

**IMD issues yellow alert, thunderstorms & heatwave to hit multiple districts**



**Kerala (TSIT)** Light to moderate rain across Kerala on Tuesday brought relief from intense summer heat, but the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned that thunderstorms, strong winds, and high temperatures will continue to affect several parts of the state.

In its latest Kerala weather update, the IMD said thunderstorms with moderate rainfall and gusty winds reaching up to 50 kmph are likely in isolated areas of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Ernakulam, and Thrissur districts. These areas have been placed under an orange

alert for the next few hours. A yellow alert has been issued for Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasaragod districts, where light rainfall accompanied by winds of up to 40 kmph is expected. Residents have been advised to remain cautious due to the possibility of lightning and sudden weather changes.

According to the IMD's five-day Kerala rain forecast, all 14 districts are likely to receive light to moderate rainfall in the coming days, with isolated heavy rainfall in select regions. Kannur and Kasaragod are

expected to see heavier showers on April 30, followed by Pathanamthitta, Idukki, and Wayanad on May 1. On May 2, Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam districts may receive moderate to heavy rainfall. Despite the rain activity, a heatwave-like situation continues across parts of Kerala. The IMD has issued a yellow alert for high temperatures, with Palakkad likely to record maximum temperatures of up to 40°C.

Kollam and Kozhikode may see temperatures around 38°C, while several districts including Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kannur, and Kasaragod are expected to experience highs near 37°C. Thiruvananthapuram is likely to record around 36°C.

Meteorologists noted that temperatures remain 3-4°C above normal, and combined with high humidity, this is expected to result in hot and uncomfortable conditions, especially in non-hilly areas. The mix of rainfall and heat is typical of Kerala's pre-monsoon weather pattern, often marked by sudden showers followed by humid conditions.

## Trump not satisfied with Iran's new peace proposal

Washington (TSIT)

US President Donald Trump is not satisfied with Iran's latest peace proposal, which seeks to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end the US naval blockade of Iran's ports, while leaving its nuclear program for later negotiations, US media reported, citing several White House officials.

The president discussed Iran's proposal with his top national security officials at a meeting in the White House Situation Room on Monday afternoon, said the reports. One of the people attending the meeting said Trump was not likely to accept the proposal.

Iran's proposal, which was delivered to the United States over the last few days, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting CNN. A US official told The New York Times that accepting the proposal could appear to deny Trump a victory since the president has repeatedly insisted that Iran cannot have nuclear weapons. In an interview with Fox News on Monday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Iran's new proposal "is better than what we thought they were going to submit," but stressed any deal must bar Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon.



**PM Modi inaugurates 6 cricket academies in Northeast**

New Delhi (TSIT)

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated six modern indoor cricket academies across North-East India. This initiative aims to improve the game's infrastructure and harness the region's sporting potential.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) developed these facilities, which were unveiled virtually during a state event in Gangtok. The academies are located in Rangpo (Sikkim), Doimukh (Arunachal Pradesh), Imphal (Manipur), Madankurkhang (Meghalaya), Aizawl (Mizoram), and Dimapur (Nagaland). They create a high-performance cricket network throughout the North-East.

The inauguration ceremony included Jay Shah and BCCI office-bearers, while regional



administrators joined online. Shah conceived the project during his time as BCCI Secretary, and the foundation stone was laid in May 2024. These academies are designed as high-performance centres.

They include indoor practice pitches, high-tech gyms, temperature-controlled swimming pools, as well as dedicated training and administrative spaces. The facilities allow for year-round training and reduce the need for players to travel outside the region, particularly during the lengthy monsoon season.

**HARKARA VENUGOPAL MEETS CONGRESS PRESIDENT KHARGE DISCUSSES SSA NANDED**



Hyderabad TSIT:

Harkara Venugopal Rao, Advisor to the Government of Telangana and Chairman for Protocol & Coordination, on Tuesday called on AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence in New Delhi. During the meeting, he paid his respects to the senior leader and held discussions on the ongoing Sanghathan Srijan Abhiyan (SSA) activities in Nanded, Maharashtra. The interaction focused on organizational strengthening and coordination efforts under the campaign. Venugopal Rao briefed the Congress President on the progress of SSA initiatives and ongoing outreach programmes, highlighting efforts to reinforce the party structure at the grassroots level.

## India to become trusted electronics supply partner: Vaishnaw



Visakhapatnam (TSIT)

India is poised to emerge as major trusted value chain and supply chain partner to the world in electronic manufacturing, driven by strong policy support and visionary leadership, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Tuesday.

Vaishnaw highlighted that India has already emerged as a leader in IT services and is now rapidly advancing in electronics manufacturing. He noted that India has made significant strides in mobile manufacturing, with mobile phones becoming one of the country's top export items. Nearly 50 per cent of domestic electronic demand is now being met through local

production. Under the Semiconductor Mission, commercial production has already begun in India.

The Minister emphasised that India is becoming a trusted partner in semiconductor and electronics production and called upon global technology companies, including Google, to manufacture their servers, GPUs and chips within the country.

Addressing the gathering after the ground-breaking ceremony of Google Cloud India AI Hub in Visakhapatnam in the presence of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, senior officials and industry leaders, Vaishnaw lauded the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasising the need for

the country to emerge as a global hub in key technology sectors such as Semiconductors, Quantum, Space, and Artificial intelligence.

The project, with an estimated investment of \$15 billion, is being developed in partnership with Adani ConneX and Airtel Nxta, and will include a 1 GW hyperscale AI data centre in Visakhapatnam. The state government has allocated around 600 acres of land in Turluvada, Rambilli and Adavivaram areas for the project. Describing the project as transformative, the Minister said that Visakhapatnam will evolve into AI Patnam (AI City), driven by cutting-edge infrastructure and global investments.

## India urges restoration of safe maritime passage via Hormuz, condemns attacks on shipping at UN

New York, April 28 (UNI): At a UN Security Council open debate, India on Monday called for the immediate restoration of safe and unimpeded maritime passage through the Strait of Hormuz, warning that recent attacks on commercial shipping in the vital waterway threaten global peace, energy security, and economic stability. Delivering India's statement at the UN Security Council's high-level open debate on "The Safety and Protection of Waterways in the Maritime Domain" under the agenda of maintaining international peace and security, Indian representative Yojna Patel underscored that safeguarding critical maritime routes is vital for global trade and stability.

Calling for renewed international cooperation to protect waterways, Ambassador Yojna Patel said such incidents are "unacceptable" and have already resulted in the loss of Indian seafarers' lives, underscoring the human cost of rising maritime insecurity.

Yojna Patel stressed that critical sea lanes like the Strait of Hormuz carry a substantial share of global energy supplies and trade, and any disruption has far-reaching consequences for international stability.

"Any threat to critical waterways has far-reaching implications for international peace and security, given that the bulk of global energy supplies and trade flows through these routes," Patel said. She emphasised that freedom of navigation and



lawful commerce through vital chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz must be fully respected in accordance with international law, urging the immediate restoration of safe and unimpeded maritime passage. India has reaffirmed its commitment to a free, open and rules-based maritime order, strongly backing adherence to international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as the cornerstone for ensuring freedom of navigation and secure global trade.

India reiterated that maritime security remains central to global economic prosperity and stability. As one of the world's largest suppliers of seafarers, accounting for nearly 13 per cent of the global workforce, India expressed deep concern over the safety and welfare of seafarers. "Any disruption or obstruction of

vital waterways directly impacts global trade, energy flows and humanitarian supply chains," Patel said, adding that ensuring secure and open seas is essential for long-term global peace and inclusive growth. Highlighting India's proactive role, the envoy recalled that New Delhi had convened the first-ever UN Security Council open debate on maritime security in August 2021, laying the groundwork for a more coordinated global approach to maritime challenges.

India outlined key priorities to address the current crisis, including ensuring navigational safety, maintaining supply chains, especially humanitarian ones, enhancing maritime situational awareness, and strengthening communication mechanisms for seafarers.

As part of its response, India's Directorate General of Shipping has operationalised a 24/7 helpline for seafarers of all nationalities, which has already handled thousands of distress calls and communications.

Further, India called on member states to increase coordination with the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), a New Delhi-based hub that facilitates real-time maritime information sharing. With liaison officers from 36 countries and links to international frameworks such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct, the centre plays a critical role in ensuring maritime domain awareness and supporting safe navigation.

## CV ANAND APPOINTED NEW DGP OF TELANGANA

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

The Government of Telangana has appointed senior IPS officer C.V. Anand as the Director General of Police (Head of Police Force), marking a key leadership change in the State police administration. A 1991-batch IPS officer, Anand has been transferred from his position as Special Chief Secretary to Government, Home Department, and will assume charge as the State's top police official.

The appointment was formalised through a Government Order issued by the General Administration (Special B) Department, following due process of empanelment conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in accordance with established



guidelines. C.V. Anand will hold the post in the apex scale, drawing a fixed pay of Rs.2,25,000.

The orders were issued in the name of the Governor of Telangana and authenticated by Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao.

## Shivakumar set to become CM by May 15: K'taka Congress MLA

Bengaluru (TSIT):

As the leadership tussle in Karnataka has come to the forefront following the conclusion of voting in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Assam,



Congress MLA Iqbal Hussain on Tuesday said in Ramanagara that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar would "surely" become the Chief Minister by May 15. Notably, Shivakumar

celebrates his 64th birthday on that day.

Speaking to reporters, Hussain, a staunch supporter of Shivakumar, said that he had earlier made statements on two occasions about

Shivakumar becoming the Chief Minister and had given two or three dates. He now announced a final date, May 15, and stated that Shivakumar would become the Chief Minister on that day.

## US-Iran confrontation becoming more and more akin to Cold War

Washington/Tehran, Apr 28 (UNI) The confrontation between the US and Iran is turning increasingly into a prolonged, uneasy standoff - one defined less by open warfare, and more by economic pressure, naval manoeuvres, and intermittent diplomatic signals, likening itself closely to a Cold War.

Furthermore, there is growing concern that the situation could evolve into a "no war, no deal" situation, with the on-ground scenario indicating that US forces may be



forced to remain in bulk in the region for the foreseeable future, while the Strait of Hormuz would continue to stay largely restricted, and the naval blockade would continue as both sides wait for the

other to blink, reports Axios. For President Donald Trump, the stakes are not just strategic but political, as his ratings are hitting all time lows, all the while midterm elections are looming, a

drawn-out crisis risks keeping the price rise at all-time highs, with no resolution in sight. Inside the administration, there is no single line. Advisors describe a president weighing two paths - escalate with further military action, or double down on economic pressure in the hope it forces Iran back to the table on US terms. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has publicly backed the latter, arguing that sanctions and the blockade are already biting and could be intensified further.

# Special Trains Needed for Agri & Aqua Transport

## SET UP EAST-WEST FREIGHT CORRIDOR: CM NAIDU



**THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES VISAKHAPATNAM :** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasized that robust railway connectivity is essential to transform the state into a major logistics hub. He urged the Railway Ministry to introduce dedicated container reefer trains to transport agricultural, horticultural, and aqua products efficiently without compromising quality. The Chief Minister, along with Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, visit-

ed the temporary office of the South Coastal Railway Zone in Visakhapatnam. A high-level review meeting was held with senior officials of South Central, East Coast, and South Coastal Railway zones to assess the progress of railway projects and operational plans of the new zone. Officials made detailed presentations on ongoing and proposed works. Naidu requested the issuance of a Gazette notification to operationalize the South Coastal Railway Zone from June 1, 2026.

Responding positively, the Union Minister assured that the notification would be issued soon. To strengthen the efficiency of the new zone, the Chief Minister proposed the merger of key railway sections such as Araku-Kothavalasa and Kurnool-Dhone. He noted that low rail route density in the state is hindering industrial growth and logistics expansion. He also stressed the need to develop new railway lines in the Rayalaseema region and enhance connectivity to major and upcoming ports such as Mulapeta,

Machilipatnam, and Ramayapatnam. Linking these ports with hinterland regions across states like Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka would significantly boost cargo movement, he said. The Chief Minister further highlighted the importance of developing cold chain infrastructure and dedicated freight corridors to support agri and aqua exports. Establishing an East-West Rail Freight Corridor would reduce transit time and logistics costs, thereby improving competitiveness.

### FOCUS ON PORT CONNECTIVITY:

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav stated that enhancing rail connectivity to ports in Andhra Pradesh would be given top priority. He briefed the Chief Minister on ongoing railway projects, proposed new lines, doubling works, and electrification initiatives in the state. Senior railway officials, State Transport Department Special Chief Secretary M.T. Krishnababu, Minister Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy, MP Bharat, and several MLAs attended the review meeting.

# Nagaland CM Visits Indian Navy Platforms at Eastern Naval Command



**THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES, Visakhapatnam :** Neiphiu Rio, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Nagaland, visited frontline platforms of the Indian Navy at the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) on April 27. During the visit, the Chief Minister toured a naval warship and a submarine and was received by senior naval officers. He was briefed on the roles, missions, and operational capabilities of both surface and sub-surface platforms, highlighting their strategic importance in safeguarding

India's maritime interests. The visit included guided walkthroughs onboard the platforms, providing a closer look at advanced systems and operational preparedness. Shri Neiphiu Rio interacted with officers and crew, appreciating their professionalism, dedication, and commitment to national security. He lauded the Indian Navy for maintaining high standards of operational readiness and acknowledged its pivotal role in ensuring maritime security and protecting the nation's interests.

# Grand Welcome to CM and Union Ministers in Visakhapatnam

**The South India Times, Visakhapatnam:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Union Ministers received a grand welcome during their visit to the city on Tuesday. The leaders arrived at the South Central Railway office at "The Deck" in VMRDA for a review meeting related to the Railway Zone. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjaraapu Ram Mohan Naidu were warmly received by M. Nagalakshmi, Director of Swachh Andhra Pradesh Mission Corporation. Subsequently, the Chief Minister and Union Ministers participated in a key review meeting focusing on the development of the Visakhapatnam railway network, enhancement of rail connectivity in North Andhra, and expansion of infrastructure. Senior officials, public representatives, and other leaders also attended the meeting. Discussions primarily emphasized accelerating regional development through improved railway infrastructure and connectivity in the region.



# The Marketplace at the School Gate, Education Shrinking Within



PROF. RK JAIN "ARJEE"

The debate over NCERT textbooks in private schools is no longer a routine academic issue; it now reflects the deeper character of India's education system. When laws offer clear direction but institutions ignore them for financial gain, it signals not just negligence but ethical decline. The notice issued in April 2026 by the National Human Rights Commission to the Centre, CBSE, and states highlights this contradiction. It raises a critical question: is the Right to Education Act being meaningfully implemented, or has it become merely symbolic? The situation shows that the principle of equality in education is under growing strain.

Section 29 of the Right to Education Act, 2009 clearly mandates that curriculum and textbooks for classes 1 to 8 be determined by NCERT or SCERT. These institutions ensure that learning material is balanced, reliable, and affordable. However, many private schools prescribe expensive books from private

publishers, weakening this objective. When parents are forced to spend large sums on textbooks, education begins to resemble a commercial enterprise rather than a fundamental right.

This trend is not accidental but part of a structured system. In several cases, schools and publishers form alliances where profit takes priority over education. Parents are compelled to purchase costly books under claims of "better quality" or "enhanced learning," though such claims are rarely verified. As a result, parents face financial pressure and often feel powerless. This practice erodes the ethical foundation of education and raises concerns about institutional credibility.

A key consequence is the widening educational divide. Government school students study from standardized, affordable books, while private school students rely on costly and different materials, creating unequal learning foundations. Over time, this gap widens opportunities. For middle- and lower-income families, already burdened by rising costs, expensive textbooks add further strain. This deepens economic inequality and reinforces social divisions.

In this context, the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission is timely and necessary. It emphasizes viewing edu-

cation as a fundamental human right. The increasing burden of heavy school bags due to multiple books also harms children's health, contradicting the National School Bag Policy 2020. Continued inaction by authorities would reflect not only administrative weakness but also neglect of constitutional responsibilities.

The argument of academic autonomy is often used to justify such practices, but it is valid only within legal limits. When the law clearly defines textbook authority, ignoring it is not independence but indiscipline. NCERT books, prepared by experts within a national framework, ensure credibility and uniformity. In contrast, private publications often emphasize presentation over authenticity. Promoting commercial interests under the guise of autonomy undermines education's core purpose.

The time has come for decisive action. Central and state governments must establish a transparent and accountable monitoring system that works effectively on the ground. Regular audits of private school booklists should be conducted, and strict penalties—including fines or cancellation of recognition—must be imposed for violations. Parents must also be informed and empowered to resist unnecessary financial burdens.

# VP Radhakrishnan offers prayers at Tirumala temple



Tirupati, April 28 : Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan on Tuesday offered prayers at Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple atop Tirumala near here. He was accorded a warm welcome by Andhra Pradesh Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, along with Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Chairman B.R. Naidu, Executive Officer Muddada Ravichandra and other TTD officials.



Thirumanjanam was performed grandly at the Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple, Tiruchanoor on Tuesday. The rituals began with Suprabhatam, followed by Sahasranamarchana and temple purification. From 6 am to 9 am, the temple premises, walls, ceiling and puja materials were cleansed. Later, a sacred mixture of aromatic substances was sprinkled throughout the temple.

# PhD Admissions Open at GITAM Deemed to be University

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam: GITAM Deemed to be University has announced admissions for its full-time PhD programmes across its campuses in Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, and Karnataka. The university will conduct an online entrance examination for eligible candidates, according to U.A. Ramgopal, Director of the Research and Development Department. Interested candidates can apply online through the official GITAM website on or before May 11. The online entrance test for Engineering, Humanities, Pharmacy, Architecture, Social Sciences, and Law disciplines will be held on

May 23. For candidates applying to Science and Management streams, personal interviews will be conducted on May 30. The results of the entrance examinations will also be announced on May 30. The PhD classes are scheduled to commence from August 24. The university will offer GITAM fellowships to meritorious candidates. Additionally, professionals working in research organizations and industries recognized by GITAM are eligible to apply under the Extramural category. For further details, candidates are advised to visit the Research section on the official website or contact via email at phdsupport@gitam.edu.

# Comprehensive plan for Indira Mahila Dairy



Khammam (TSIT): District Collector TS Divakar has directed officials to implement a comprehensive plan to ensure the success of the Indira Mahila Dairy project in the district. He reviewed the programme on Tuesday at the Collectorate along with Additional Collector P. Srija and officials from various departments. The Collector suggested adopting the Vijay Dairy model and following a systematic approach in implementing the project. He also proposed involving representatives of Vijay Dairy in the governing structure to enhance efficiency and provide better support to women self-help groups. At present, Vijay Dairy collects around 6,000 litres of milk per day in the district.

# Andhra University Engages with JETRO for Global Collaboration

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam: Andhra University has taken a significant step towards international academic collaboration as a high-level delegation from the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) vis-

joint research initiatives, faculty exchange programs, and student mobility. JETRO representatives also highlighted opportunities for faculty members from Andhra University to visit Toyama Prefecture, paving the way

Japanese students for higher education at AU, with the possibility of offering fee waivers. Additionally, plans to introduce Japanese language courses in both online and offline formats were discussed to strength-



ened the campus on Tuesday. The visit focused on exploring opportunities for student recruitment into leading Japanese companies and strengthening institutional partnerships. During the discussions, both sides emphasized building robust collaborations in key areas such as

for deeper academic engagement with Japanese institutions. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Raja Sekhar underscored the importance of organizing a joint international conference to enhance academic exchange. He also expressed the university's willingness to welcome

en cultural and academic ties. The initiative reflects Andhra University's commitment to expanding its global footprint and fostering meaningful partnerships with Japan, aiming at mutual academic enrichment and enhanced career opportunities for students.

# MobiKwik Group secures RBI approval for NBFC application

Hyderabad, April 28, 2026: One MobiKwik Systems Ltd. (MobiKwik) (NSE: MOBIKWIK / BSE: 544305), today announced that the Group's application for a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) license has been approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), marking a significant milestone in the Group's journey to deepen its financial services offerings.

The NBFC license will enable the launch of a new lending division - MobiKwik Financial Services Private Limited (MFSP), a wholly owned subsidiary, which will help expand its regulated lending capabilities, design innovative credit products, and serve a broader base of consumers and merchants with greater efficiency and control. This development aligns with the Group's long-term vision of building a full-stack fintech platform that delivers accessible, responsible, and tech-led financial products.

The NBFC will build on the Group's inherent strengths of having a 186 Mn+ customer base, a trusted brand name, as well as strong tech infrastructure, risk underwriting and collection capabilities. MFSP, the group's in-house NBFC is envisaged to enable launch of new credit products with faster go-to-market (GTM) offering both secured and unsecured to consumers and MSMEs in underserved geographies. The NBFC's operations

will commence upon receipt of Certificate of Registration (COR) from RBI on the fulfilment of certain conditions.

Commenting on the development, Upasana Taku, Executive Director, Co-founder & CFO, MobiKwik said "The NBFC application approval is a pivotal step in MobiKwik Group's evolution into a scaled financial services platform. We are especially happy that the application has been approved in under four months, which is an endorsement of the credibility of the Group, and are grateful to the RBI for reposing its faith in us.

This gives us the regulatory framework to deepen our credit offerings while maintaining strong governance and risk discipline. We will continue to responsibly serve the credit needs of Bharat and build products that genuinely improve financial inclusion"

The NBFC framework will allow MobiKwik to leverage its technology capability, AI-ML models and large user base to deliver personalized financial products catering to the diverse needs of the consumers. While the core focus will remain on Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, the services

will be offered across the nation, leveraging India's diverse geographical potential. This strategy emphasizes financial inclusion in under-penetrated regions, thereby improving access to credit and driving greater mobilization of financial services.

One MobiKwik Systems Ltd. (MobiKwik) is India's largest digital wallet that offers a wide range of payments and financial products to both consumers and merchants. The Company, founded by Bipin Preet Singh and Upasana Taku in 2009, today offers various payment products such as MobiKwik Wallet, UPI, Pocket UPI, and Zaakpay (payment gateway), serving 186.6 Mn+ registered users and 4.79 Mn+ merchants. The Company has expanded into the distribution of financial products ranging from credit (ZIP EMI, MCA) and savings & investment products (Fixed Deposits, Mutual Funds, Digital Gold, Lens.AI) on its platform.

According to the RedSeer Report, as of Fiscal 2023, MobiKwik had the fourth-highest user base in India in terms of total registered users on the platform. MobiKwik was termed as one of the leading digital financial product and services platforms in India by registered users. MobiKwik is the largest digital wallet in India with a 18% market share of the PPI wallet gross transaction value (GTV) as of December 2025.

**S.E. SUDHEENDRA, CHAIRMAN OF THE KARNATAKA STATE BIOENERGY DEVELOPMENT BOARD HELD DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOENERGY WITH OMAR ABDULLAH**

Bengaluru : S.E. Sudheendra, Chairman of the Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board and Vice President of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, met the Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, and held detailed discussions on the development of bioenergy, a topic currently being widely discussed at State, National, and international levels.



and the steps taken under his leadership as Chairman of the board to formulate and implement a new bioenergy policy.

On this occasion, S.E. Sudheendra highlighted that under the leadership of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the state government is encouraging the formulation of action plans with priority given to the production of new and renewable energy, particularly bioenergy.

He stated that the proposed new State bioenergy policy would create a favourable environment to attract investors for the production of biomass-based bioenergy such as bio-briquettes, bio-pellets, biodiesel, compressed biogas, and green hydrogen. The Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir expressed keen interest in Karnataka's bioenergy initiatives and informed that his government has also prepared a draft of a new bioenergy policy on similar lines. Both leaders discussed that the objectives of the bioenergy policies of

the two States are similar, focusing on the advancement and commercialization of the bioenergy sector, along with incentives, concessions, and opportunities to encourage investments.

It was proposed that both States work jointly in the bioenergy sector in the future. The Chief Minister invited the Karnataka delegation to visit Jammu & Kashmir and engage in knowledge exchange with the Jammu & Kashmir Energy Development Agency, which serves as the nodal agency for bioenergy development in the State. The Chairman expressed his gratitude for the invitation and stated that the Board would take steps in this direction.

**STATE-RUN ENTERPRISE REGISTERS 507 CRORE PROFIT KSDL POSTS RECORD TURNOVER OF 2,016 CRORE**

Bengaluru: Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL), a premier state-owned enterprise, has, for the first time, recorded a turnover of 2,016 crore in the financial year 2025-26, along with a profit of 507 crore. Making the announcement on Tuesday, Large and Medium Industries Minister M. B. Patil described this as a historic milestone among public sector enterprises.

He was presiding over a felicitation ceremony titled "Mysuru Sandal's Pinnacle of Achievement", organised at a private hotel in the city to celebrate this accomplishment. The event included honouring staff and officials, release of a commemorative volume, and a felicitation programme.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that while it took the organisation 105 years to reach a turnover of 1,000 crore, it doubled this figure to 2,000 crore in just four years. From a turnover of 1,375 crore in 2022-23, the company has grown to 2,016 crore over the past three years since the present government assumed office—an increase of 641 crore



in a short span, he noted.

Earlier, the organisation had 34 products. Over the past three years, 57 new products have been introduced in line with market trends, taking the total to 94. Notably, this has been achieved without any new recruitment or machinery purchases. Despite having a production capacity of 26,000 metric tonnes, efficient operations enabled production of 47,494 metric tonnes in 2025-26.

Out of the 507 crore profit, 157 crore will be paid as dividend to the government, and 5 crore will be contributed to the Chief

Minister's Relief Fund. This marks an increase of 22 crore in dividend compared to the 135 crore paid last year, he explained.

In 2025-26, the company recorded 420 crore through modern trade channels and 120 crore through e-commerce. The organisation has set a target of achieving a turnover of 3,000 crore by 2028 and 5,000 crore by 2030. To support this growth, a new manufacturing unit will be established on 50 acres in Vijayapura, for which 229 crore has been sanctioned, Patil added. Encouragement for Farmers Sandalwood oil, the key raw

material for the iconic Mysuru Sandal Soap, remains central to the company's operations. To ensure a steady supply, KSDL has launched the 'Grow More Sandalwood' initiative in partnership with farmers. Under this programme, sandalwood plantations will be developed over 10,000 acres in 10 years. Farmers will receive an incentive of 500 per sapling over a period of three years.

Additionally, sandalwood research chairs will be established at GKVK, Bengaluru, and the Agricultural University, Vijayapura, Patil said.

He further noted that tenders worth 15 crore have been floated for the purchase of new machinery. Steps have also been taken to expand exports and strengthen the company's presence across India. Over the past three years, the organisation has procured 174 tonnes of sandalwood directly from farmers, making payments amounting to 6.08 crore, he added.

The organisation also owns vacant land parcels in Bengaluru, Dabaspet, Mysuru, and Shivamogga. A blueprint has been prepared for their optimal utilisation, which, if implemented, could create a sustainable source of revenue for the company, minister said.

**Bans Create Rebels: Teaching Teens to Navigate Social Media**

Bengaluru : Yasmine Claire, DP Psychology, LS, Self-Taught, ToK, Secondary Learning Support Head at Stonehill International School, Bangalore stated that, When Goldilocks ate the porridge of the baby bear, she declared it was just right. Consider this wisdom from a fairy tale. Governments across the world are trying to get things just right to make social media usage safe for children and young people. Australia's social media ban for people under 16 came into effect on 10th December 25. In a media statement he stated that, In the UK, the government is planning to run a trial social media ban on a volunteer sample of 300 teenagers. Closer home, Karnataka's draft policy developed by Karnataka State Mental Health Authority (KSMHA) in collaboration with the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-science (NIMHANS) on restricting



social media usage among teenagers has been completed. However, bans create rebels, as they rightly should. Restrictions create workarounds. So how can we work at achieving effective use of social media and help children and young people understand problematic content? Social Media Literacy and Parental involvement in their children's social media usage are the familiar answers. And Digital Literacy becoming a part of school curricula is a reasonable and implementable way forward. No argument here.

**Bike mechanics' mega convention on May 1 AWARENESS CREATED AMONG SLUM RESIDENTS TO MAINTAIN CLEANLINESS**



Bengaluru : Karnataka Two-Wheeler Workshop Owners and Technicians Association (KTWOTA) has organized a grand convention of All India Bike Mechanical Association at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on May 1 as part of the Labour Day celebrations, said the association's state president K.S. Prasanna Kumar Gowda.

More than 12,500 mechanics from different parts of the country are expected to participate, and the first 500 people who arrive at the Kings Court Palace, Gate No. 5 of Palace Grounds, will be provided with

free bike general service and oil change. In addition, a diverse exhibition of cutting-edge spare parts for two-wheelers has been arranged, he said.

Speaker U.T. Khader will inaugurate the convention, while Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, Labour Minister Santosh Lad and others will participate in the convention. This is one of the biggest conferences held in the country in the field of two-wheeler technicians.

**Allocate Rs 10 crore per Assembly constituency to solve drinking water crisis: Opposition Leader R. Ashok demands**

Bengaluru : While drought conditions are visible across the state, ministers are busy travelling to Delhi in pursuit of power. Opposition Leader R. Ashok demanded that the Congress government release Rs 10 crore as a grant for drinking water to every Assembly constituency.

Speaking at a press conference, he said Congress leaders are defying their party high command and rushing to Delhi. This proves that Siddaramaiah's leadership is worthless. In the Cabinet meeting held to decide on internal reservation, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar was absent. The fact that he held the meeting while he was in Delhi clearly shows that two factions have been created within Congress.

Drought is visible everywhere and the cry for water



is growing louder. Livestock are not getting water, and people have no drinking water. At such a critical time, if ministers go on trips to Delhi, it must be said that this is a "dead government" for the people, he remarked.

The government has not released even a single paisa for drinking water. Salaries of employees have been cut in Telangana and Himachal Pradesh. Karnataka too is showing signs of heading in

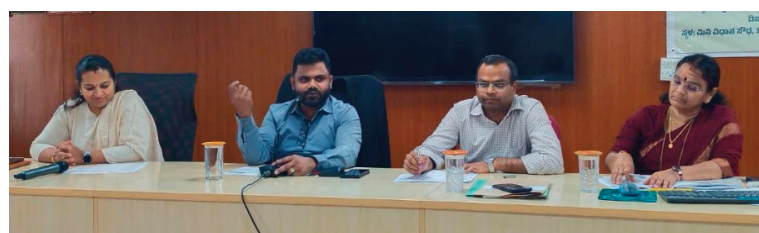
the same direction. The government should release Rs 10 crore per Assembly constituency exclusively for drinking water. This money should be used for rejuvenating borewells and supplying water through tankers. Goshalas (cattle shelters) should be constructed immediately and fodder supplied to livestock. According to the Meteorological Department's report, rainfall will be deficient this year. If the govern-

ment cannot do these things, then the ministers should just stay in Delhi. If they spend the remaining two years in Delhi, the state's development will be impossible, he said.

Statements by the Chief Minister and ministers are of no use. No funds have been released so far for any Assembly constituency. No orders have even been issued to the Finance Department in this regard. When officials are asked, they say no orders have been received, he complained. The government claims that potholes in Bengaluru have been closed. But if one goes and sees, the potholes are still visible. This government has shown how to make money even while filling potholes. Therefore, if a House Committee of Bengaluru MLAs is formed.

**Commissioner directs 100% completion of house-listing by May 15**

Bengaluru : Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Pommala Sunil Kumar, conducted a review meeting on the progress of National Census-2027 works at the Yelahanka Mini Vidhana Soudha. Addressing the meeting, the Commissioner directed that the first phase of house-listing be carried out with speed and responsibility, and that 100% completion of house enumeration must be achieved by May 15 without fail. He appreciated the officials who have achieved higher enumeration targets and encouraged them to continue their good performance.



in the socio-economic survey have already been paid, and the pending payments to remaining enumerators will be cleared shortly, he stated.

The Commissioner further informed that Dies-Non (no work, no pay) orders have already been issued against staff who were absent from census duties. He warned that if such absenteeism continues, similar action will be taken against more officials. He emphasized that accuracy of

data is critical in the census process and instructed officials to ensure that there is no overlap in house mapping. Any discrepancies in data must be corrected immediately, and all enumerators must clearly understand every column before entering information.

After reviewing the performance of enumerators and supervisors, the Commissioner expressed satisfaction that the census work is being carried out

diligently.

Enumerators who have already completed their assigned census blocks and taken up additional blocks have been paid their honorarium, with 7 such enumerators already receiving payment. The Commissioner stated that honorarium for other enumerators willing to take up additional blocks will be given priority and disbursed immediately. The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner (Revenue In-charge) Smt. Pallavi, Joint Commissioner Shri Mohammed Nayeem Momin, Special Officer (Census) Savithri Salagar, Deputy Commissioners of Zones 1 and 2, Revenue Officers, Assistant Revenue Officers, Charge Officers, Additional Charge Officers, and all concerned officials.

**Progress Review Meeting Conducted by West City Corporation Commissioner and Dasarahalli Assembly Constituency MLA**

Bengaluru (TSIT) : Commissioner of Bengaluru West City Corporation, Dr. Rajendra K.V. conducted the second progress review meeting in the presence of MLA of Dasarahalli Assembly Constituency, S. Muniraju regarding various civic issues related to wards coming under the Dasarahalli Assembly Constituency.



directives issued during the meeting:

- Directed officials to expedite and complete works under the Amrut Nagarothana scheme at the earliest.
- Instructed installation of borewells in necessary areas and ensured proper maintenance.
- Directed identification of locations under the Suraksha-75 scheme and implementation of signal

improvements.

- Instructed officials to ensure proper deployment and functioning of towing vehicles wherever necessary.
- Directed priority action for effective waste management.
- Instructed officials to ensure proper maintenance of street lighting.
- Directed improvement in maintenance of parks, drinking water facilities,

and public toilets.

- Ordered removal of unauthorized flex boards and banners.
- Directed organization of e-Khata mela (drive) near new apartment areas.
- Ordered clearance of unauthorized encroachments and shops on footpaths.
- Instructed precautionary measures for the monsoon season to prevent civic issues.
- Directed priority development of Chokkasandra Lake.
- Instructed proper execution of tree trimming works.
- Directed inspection of trade licenses and imposition of penalties for violations.

Ordered issuance of notices and penalties for mutton and chicken shops failing to maintain hygiene standards.

During the meeting, officials were instructed to discharge their duties sincerely and efficiently in the interest of the public.

Subsequently, the Commissioner and the Hon'ble MLA also conducted field inspections along with officials.

The meeting was attended by Joint Commissioner Aarti Anand, Deputy Commissioner (Admin) Sayid Afrin Banu, Chief Engineer Swayampurba, Deputy Commissioners, and heads of concerned departments.

**YOUTH KILLED BY LIGHTNING STRIKE WHILE PLAYING FOOTBALL IN KERALA**

Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 28: In a tragic incident, a 23-year-old youth lost his life after being struck by lightning while playing football with friends at Chengannur in Alappuzha district of Kerala on Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Asif Ashraf (23), a native of Mulakuzha. The incident occurred at Puthencavu, where he was engaged in a football match on a ground near a church. According to reports, sudden summer rain accompanied by strong winds and lightning hit the area during the game.

**NOTICE**

Locker Hired by **Remadevi P P and Omana P P** having address at - **Kunnel House Amalagiri P O Kottayam, Kerala, Pin-686001** with **Kottayam Branch of Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.** situated at **Ground floor, Teresa Plaza, Railway station Road, Kottayam, Kerala, Pin-686001** remains Un-operated **past 7 years.**

All the **2** letters sent to **Remadevi P P and Omana P P** calling upon them to operate the locker has return unreserved and they are not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice if the said locker is not operated by **Remadevi P P and Omana P P** within **90 days** from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **28-07-2026** at around **12 PM.**

**Credila** (Formerly known as HDFC CREDILA FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED) Registered Office: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, All Cargo House, Kalina, CST Road, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400098, Maharashtra, India. T: +91-22-28266636, E: loan@credila.com

**POSSESSION NOTICE**

Under Section 13(4) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Securitisation Act, 2002") read with proviso to Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("SARFAESI Rules")

(APPENDIX IV)

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Credila Financial Services Limited (Formerly known as HDFC Credila Financial Services Limited) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") and exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (12) of the Section 13 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002, issued a Demand Notice as mentioned below calling upon the following Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) and Legal Heir(s) and Legal Representative(s) to pay amount as mentioned against the respective names together with interest thereon at the applicable rates within 60 days from the date of the said notice incidental expenses, costs, charges, etc. till date of payment and/or realization.

Name of Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) / Legal Heir(s) and Legal Representative(s) Loan Account Nos.	Description of Immovable Property (ies) / Secured Asset (s)	Date of Demand Notice	Outstanding Dues as on 16.02.2026	Date of Possession / Type of Possession
<b>DIVYA ANCY SAM, SAM C JOHN, SOSAMMA &amp; SARAMMA JOHN</b>	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF LAND HAVING AN EXTENT OF 02.77 ACRES IN RE.S.NO.312/3-3 IN S.NO.260/1A, TOGETHER WITH BUILDING BEARING NO.XV/23 SITUATED AT VIJAYAPURAM VILLAGE, KOTTAYAM TALUK, LYING IN SUB REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF KOTTAYAM ADDITIONAL AND IN THE REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF KOTTAYAMAM IS BOUNDED ON THE NORTH BY: PROPERTY OF SARAMMA JOHN, EAST BY: PROPERTY OF BABY KURYAN, WEST BY: PRIVATE ROAD SOUTH BY: PROPERTY OF C.J GEORGE.	16 <sup>th</sup> February, 2026	Rs. 32,95,676/- (Rupees Thirty Two Lakhs Ninety Five Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy Six Only)	24 <sup>th</sup> April, 2026 SYMBOLIC POSSESSION
<b>Education Loan Account No. A2211030071</b>				

However, since the borrower and guarantors having failed to repay the amount, Notice is hereby given to the borrower and the guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken physical possession of the property described herein below, in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules, on dates as mentioned above.

The borrower and the guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Credila Financial Services Limited (Formerly known as HDFC Credila Financial Services Limited) for an amount as mentioned and interest thereon.

(Authorised Officer)  
**Credila Financial Services Limited**  
(Formerly known as HDFC Credila Financial Services Limited)

Date : 27.04.2026  
Place : Kottayam

EDITORIAL

*Why One Of World's Wealthiest Countries Is Being Offered A 'Bailout' By Trump*

In 2024, the United States extended a \$20 billion swap arrangement to Argentina during a turbulent period in that country. The move helped stabilise the Argentine currency, the peso, prevented a sharp devaluation and restored confidence in financial markets. The principle is to provide temporary access to dollars, calm the system and withdraw support once stability returns. It is not at all a tool designed for reassurance or rescue. Wealthy Gulf nations, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), are asking Washington for a similar swap arrangement amid the war in West Asia. Not in aid, but in access to US dollars. It would have been unthinkable that oil-rich Gulf states, which have carefully built a reputation as investment magnets, would seek US financial assistance - not in the form of loans, but by requesting billions of dollars in exchange for dirhams until the impact of the Iran war subsides. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has revealed, what was being quietly discussed behind the scenes, that "many" American allies in the Gulf and Asia want what are known as currency swap lines. It is not hard to understand why these rich countries need America's help. But, in times of crises, even wealthy nations can find themselves knocking on America's door.

**The OPEC Bombshell**

The UAE on Tuesday dropped a bombshell, announcing it will walk out of OPEC and OPEC+ on May 1. The move comes against the backdrop of the Iran war, which has disrupted flows through the Strait of Hormuz and shaken global energy markets and amid its ongoing talks with the US over currency swap lines. It clearly means national survival now outweighs continuing to be part of the oil cartel. With energy prices already quite high, Abu Dhabi wants maximum flexibility to pump more if routes reopen, reroute flows, or deploy supply in line with its own security and economic interests rather than collective quotas. Its engagement with Washington on currency swaps points to a deeper shift, aligning more closely with the US financial and security umbrella as regional risks intensify. In effect, the UAE is hedging on two fronts: breaking free from OPEC+ constraints in oil while securing dollar liquidity in finance. It means that in a war-torn market, agility and alliances matter more than bloc loyalty. Saudi Arabia will be watching with unease.

For now, let's focus on the dollar question. The war on Iran is no longer a story of missiles and military strategy. It is slowly turning into a story about the global scramble for US dollars. The conflict has, as we know already, disrupted one of the most critical arteries of the global economy: the Strait of Hormuz. This narrow stretch of water carries over 20% share of the world's oil and gas traffic.

**Gulf's Concerns Are America's Too**

For Gulf economies, this is not a distant concern. It is existential. Their financial systems are deeply tied to oil income, and their oil exports are priced in US dollars. The system that took shape in the 1970s has made US treasuries and the dollar the most attractive destinations for countries to park their surplus capital. When that income is choked, everything else begins to strain: government spending, banking liquidity, and currency stability, etc. The UAE seems to be telling Washington: our dollar reserves are being depleted fast (by as much as \$120 billion and counting), and the pressure is building because we are unable to export in US dollars at pre-war levels. If this continues, we will be left with little choice but to shift trade into the Chinese Yuan, a currency the US is actively trying to contain. The UAE has also reportedly told the US that it was the who started the war, a conflict that the UAE did not want. In response, Washington is signalling willingness, but stopping short of commitment, keeping the door open, while making it clear that access to dollar lifelines is a privilege, not a right.

So, this is not just the Gulf's problem. It is very much America's as well. If the US wants to preserve the dominance of the dollar, it has a clear interest in stepping in to support its Gulf allies. And this is what the Trump administration has been mulling.

**What Is A Currency Swap Line?**

A currency swap line is essentially an agreement between two central banks, mostly involving the US, that allows one country to access US dollars in exchange for its own currency. It is like a financial safety valve. If a country such as the UAE needs dollars urgently, its central bank can temporarily swap the dirham with the US Federal Reserve and receive dollars in return. Later, the transaction is reversed at a pre-agreed rate.

No permanent transfer. No aid. You can say it is just liquidity on demand. But that liquidity can make all the difference, because, in a crisis, the problem is often not wealth, it is access. A country may have assets, reserves and long-term strength, but if it cannot quickly obtain dollars to meet immediate needs, panic can spread.

**Swap lines prevent that panic.**

**Why Dollars Matter So Much**

To understand the urgency of the Gulf's requests, we must grasp a simple truth: in the age we live in, the US dollar is the backbone of the global economy. As mentioned earlier, oil is priced in dollars. International trade is settled in dollars. Governments hold reserves in dollars. Financial markets run on dollars. The dollar is not just a currency. It is the system itself. For Gulf countries, this dependence is even deeper. Their currencies, including the UAE's dirham, are often pegged to the dollar. That means their stability depends directly on maintaining enough dollar reserves. If those reserves begin to dwindle, the consequences can be severe. A currency peg can break. Inflation can rise. Confidence can collapse.

This is why Scott Bessent framed swap lines not as a favour, but as a stabilising tool: a way to "maintain order in dollar funding markets" and prevent chaotic sell-offs of US assets. Imagine this: if countries cannot get dollars easily, they may start selling their prime assets, US bonds, in a rush. That could cause an earthquake in the world's largest economy.

One country, one curriculum: Crisis of federalism or education revolution?



**PRİYANKA SAURABH**

"History is not for those who stop. One country, one curriculum... The opposition to loot in the name of education must continue." This sentence aptly captures the biggest debate currently underway in the Indian education system. The idea of "one country, one curriculum" proposed under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has become a subject of heated debate across the country. As of April 2026, states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal are opposing it, considering it an attack on their constitutional autonomy, while the central government is calling it a historic step towards establishing quality, equality, and uniformity in education. This begs the question: is this initiative truly a revolution in education reform, or an attempt to pressure the federal structure? The National Education Policy 2020 outlined a comprehensive overhaul of the Indian education system. Replacing the 34-year-old 1986 policy, it introduced a new structure—5+3+3+4—that makes education from elementary to secondary levels more flexible and inclusive. It defines basic education for children ages 3 to 8, primary for ages 8 to 11, upper primary for ages 11 to 14, and secondary education for ages 14 to 18. It prioritizes education in the mother tongue, multilingualism, vocational training, and digital literacy. The fundamental foundation of "One Nation, One



Curriculum" is the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which aims to establish a minimum educational standard across the country. However, it provides up to 30 percent flexibility to allow states to make modifications to suit their cultural and regional needs. However, opposing states believe this flexibility is merely symbolic and is an attempt to impose a centralized curriculum. According to the Constitution, education is a subject on the Concurrent List, meaning both the central and state governments have a role in it. States allege that the central government is exerting pressure by withholding funds under various schemes, such as the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. Tamil Nadu is a prime example, where thousands of crores of rupees have been withheld. The state government has protested this, calling it an attack on its policy independence. A major aspect of this controversy

concerns linguistic and cultural identity. Many states in South India view Hindi as an "imposed language," while the central government maintains that the three-language formula does not mandate any one language. Nevertheless, there are concerns that a uniform curriculum will lead to the neglect of regional languages and literature. For example, the rich cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu or the literary contributions of Bengal may be limited by a standardized curriculum. The central government argues that this policy will reduce inequalities in education. Currently, India's education system exhibits significant disparities—while private schools offer high-quality education, government schools suffer from poor results due to a lack of resources. The "One Nation, One Curriculum" initiative aims to ensure uniform quality, ensuring equal opportunities for every child in the country.

Additionally, the policy emphasizes skill-based education. Subjects like coding, artificial intelligence, and data science are proposed to be integrated from the elementary level, keeping in mind future needs. This initiative is considered crucial to India's global competitiveness. However, critics also call it "loot in the name of education." They say it will increase the privatization of education and boost the coaching industry. Cities like Kota already have a large coaching market, and a uniform examination system (like CUET) could further strengthen it. Meanwhile, the central government believes that a unified entrance exam will increase transparency and reduce corruption. Historically, education reforms in India have always been associated with controversy. From Macaulay's education policy during the British era to the Kothari Commission, every change has

sparked debate. But it is also true that progress is impossible without reform. International examples also make it clear that both uniformity and decentralization have their advantages and disadvantages. Countries like Finland have achieved excellent results by adopting a uniform education system, while countries like the United States have perpetuated inequality due to a decentralized system. India must adopt a balanced model that suits its diversity and population. At the political level, this issue is no longer limited to education. It has become a question of power balance between the central government and the states. While some states are adopting it and moving forward, others are challenging it to protect their rights. Looking ahead, India faces significant challenges. A robust and modern education system is essential to compete in the digital age. If the conflict between the state and the central government continues, students will be the biggest losers. Dialogue, cooperation, and balance are essential for improving education. Ultimately, it's important to understand that "one nation, one curriculum" is not just a policy, but a vision—an effort to provide a common educational foundation for the entire country. However, its implementation must be democratic and consensus-based. In a diverse country like India, any education model can only succeed if it balances local needs and national goals. The central government must increase dialogue with the states and understand their concerns, while the states must also adopt an open approach to change. If we look at this issue beyond politics, it becomes clear that the purpose of education is not merely to impart knowledge, but to create capable and informed citizens. And this goal will only be achieved if we move forward together.

THE DARK HISTORY OF TOXIC GASES – CHEMICAL DESTRUCTION THAT SHOOK HUMANITY

Science, created by human beings, was meant to improve life. Yet, at times, the very same science has turned into a threat to human existence. Chemical weapons stand as a striking example of this contradiction. They are not limited to battlefields alone; their impact extends deeply into human lives, the environment, and even future generations. That is why every year on April 29, the world observes a day of remembrance for the victims of chemical warfare, as a mark of respect to humanity. The events that unfolded during the World Wars remain a grim reminder of human cruelty. Particularly during the First World War, the use of chemical gases claimed lakhs of lives. Within moments, people suffered from suffocation, loss of vision, and severe burns to the skin, turning battlefields into living hells. These horrifying experiences shook the conscience of the world and led to a strong resolve to prevent the use of such weapons. In this background, nations across the world came together and made a significant decision to completely prohibit chemical weapons. Through this agreement, many countries stood united on a common platform, choosing the path of peace. The international organisation working towards this cause received global recognition, marking it as a victory for humanity. The very nature of chemical weapons is deeply alarming. They directly target the human body. Some agents burn and damage the skin, others disrupt the nervous system, while certain gases choke the lungs and block breathing. Within seconds, they can

take away lives. Their impact is not confined to humans alone; they contaminate the surrounding environment as well. Land, water, and air all become toxic, leading to the destruction of entire ecosystems. Even today, there are concerns that stockpiles of chemical substances still exist in certain parts of the world. This continues to pose a serious threat to humanity. In the face of such danger, there are no distinctions—neither rich nor poor, nor nations and borders. The effects are equally devastating for all. In such circumstances, the world must move forward with greater responsibility. Conflicts should not be resolved through war, but through dialogue. Only a peaceful approach can ensure a secure future. It is the responsibility of every individual to safeguard humanity. A world built on love and tolerance, rather than fear and hatred, is the true path to progress. Remembering the victims of chemical warfare is not just about recalling the past; it is also about taking a pledge to prevent such tragedies from happening again. The responsibility to protect this planet lies in our own hands.



**CHITIKENRA KIRAN KUMAR Member: IBRF**

Sabarimala-Linked Case Before Top Court Bench Impacts Other Religions Too

When the doors of Sabarimala were opened for all women, a question rang across the corridors of the Supreme Court and the country: Will the courts open gates of all religious institutions to women? There are many mosques that restrict the entry of women, also temples where women are not allowed in the sanctum sanctorum while men can. The ideal answer to this question would be yes, open the gates of all religious institutions to all individuals belonging to the faith or denomination, to men and women equally. The Centre, however, has argued before the nine-judge Supreme Court Bench that this shall be antithesis to plurality within faiths and denominations and disproportionate judicial interference in religious institutions. A court should not interfere in any religious practices, the Centre has argued. The moment a country realises something is a religious practice, it must not adjudicate upon the correctness or the essentiality of the practice. The denial of entry to women of child-bearing age in Sabarimala temple is part of 'diversity' within religion, the Centre maintained, citing instances of temples where men are not allowed. But the matter before the nine judges is bigger than Sabarimala. Two crucial petitions have been tagged with this matter. The first pertains to the Dawoodi Bohra community and the other is about the rights of Parsi women. The case of Parsi women was an appeal against the Gujarat High Court order where it was held that a Parsi woman loses her religious identity when she marries outside the community. The Dawoodi Bohra matter was a Public Interest Litigation before the Supreme Court. In both cases, the communi-



ties claimed immunity from judicial review citing denominational autonomy. The challenge to Muslim practices like polygamy and Nikah Halala is not before the bench directly but the judgment will have ramifications for all pending petitions where rights to equality and dignity of women are infringed upon by community or customary practices. The Case Of Dawoodi Bohra Women Female Genital Mutilation, as defined by the World Health Organisation, comprises procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is usually performed on girls between the age of three years and 15 years and occasionally on adult women. "The practice has no health benefits for women and can result in severe bleeding. Other problems surface later, including trouble urinating, cysts, menstrual difficulties, infections, complications during childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths. According to available data from 31 countries where FGM is practiced - including western, eastern, and north-eastern regions of Africa, and some countries in the Middle East

and Asia - more than 230 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to the practice. More than 4 million girls are estimated to be at risk of FGM annually and the matter is of global concern. In India, it is mostly practiced within the Dawoodi Bohra Community. The Bohras are a small, close-knit, prosperous sect of Shia Ismaili Muslims based primarily in Gujarat. The community has a diaspora population in many countries, including the US, Canada, Australia and in countries of Europe and Africa. The Bohra population has been estimated to be about 1.5 million total worldwide. There are several sects within it - Dawoodi, Suleimani and Alvi, with the Dawoodi Bohras being the largest group. The community has submitted before the Supreme Court that their practice is of female circumcision or Khafd, and should not be termed mutilation since it comprises only a nick and not removal of any part of the genitalia. The Indian Medical guidelines do not permit this procedure, which has added risks - being conducted in unhygienic conditions by quacks or unauthorised personnel. Various resolutions of the United Nations term FGM as

violative of right to life, dignity and health. The Case Of Parsi Women Within the Parsi community, a clear asymmetry has long existed. A Parsi man who marries outside the faith does not lose his right to enter the fire temple or to participate in the funeral rites of his parents at a Parsi crematorium. The position of women, however, has been markedly different. The case of Goolrukh Gupta brings this disparity into focus. It raises a fundamental question: does a Parsi woman forfeit her religious identity upon marrying under the Special Marriage Act? Traditionally, Parsi women who marry non-Parsis have faced the prospect of excommunication, effectively losing their religious identity and being denied access to fire temples (Agiaries) and Parsi burial grounds. These practices stem from conservative interpretations of Zoroastrian doctrine, which tend to impose stricter consequences on women than on men, who typically retain their religious identity despite marrying outside the community. In 2012, the Gujarat High Court held that a Parsi woman's religious identity ceases upon such a marriage. This ruling has since been challenged before the Supreme Court.

# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO QUIT OIL CARTEL OPEC

**AGENCY**  
**UAE:** The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is quitting the Opec and Opec+ groups of major oil producing nations next month after nearly 60 years of membership. The UAE said its decision would help it meet growing global energy demand in the long term after recent investments to boost its production capacity. It is seen as a blow to the cartel, with one analyst describing the exit as "the beginning of the end of Opec". The Gulf state's energy minister said being a country with no obligation under the groups would give it more flexibility. Opec was formed in 1960 by five countries - Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela - to defend the interests of major oil exporters by coordinating production to ensure steady revenue for its members. The number of countries in the cartel has fluctuated over the years, but in addition to the five founding members it also includes Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria and the Republic of the Congo. The UAE joined in 1967, and its departure will leave the cartel with 11 mem-



bers. There are an additional 10 non-Opec members in the wider Opec+ alliance. The UAE's departure represents a win for US President Donald Trump, who has previously attacked Opec for "ripping off the rest of the world". In January he asked Saudi Arabia and other Opec nations to "bring down the cost of oil" and doubled-down on his threat to use tariffs. And Saul Kavonic, head of energy research at MST Financial, said it was "the beginning of the end" for the alliance. "With the UAE leaving, Opec loses about 15% of its capacity and one of its

most compliant members." The UAE's decision came as the World Bank warned the war in the Middle East has caused the biggest loss of oil supply on record. Energy prices will rise by about a quarter on average as a result this year, it said, while it could take six months for shipping through the key Strait of Hormuz to return to pre-war levels. "The poorest people, who spend the highest share of their income on food and fuels, will be hit the hardest," said the World Bank's chief economist Indermit Gill. The UAE's decision to leave Opec will

not have an immediate impact on global energy supply, due to the ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz, but could lead to a longer-term boost in output. The country has invested heavily in boosting its production capacity and has wanted for a long time to pump more oil, economists said. David Oxley, chief climate and commodities economist at Capital Economics, said its departure could lead to lower oil prices but higher volatility on the market in the coming decades. He added that while the UAE is small, the implications could

be major if other member states leave, or countries such as Russia and Saudi Arabia decide to ramp up production as a result. Dr Carole Nakhle, chief executive of Crystol Energy and secretary general of the Arab Energy Club, told the BBC the UAE's decision "has been a long time in the making". "Abu Dhabi has pursued ambitious production capacity growth, yet often felt constrained by group quotas, especially amid uneven compliance by some members," she said. Nakhle added that Iran's actions as an Opec member were likely to have reinforced the UAE's decision. According to the latest figures from Opec, the UAE produced 2.9 million barrels of oil a day in 2024. Saudi Arabia, Opec's de facto leader, produced nine million barrels of oil. "Saudi Arabia will struggle to keep the rest of Opec together, and effectively have to do most of the heavy lifting regarding internal compliance and market management on its own," Kavonic said, adding other Opec members could follow suit. "This presents a fundamental geopolitical reshaping of the Middle East and oil markets," he added.

# UAE says it will leave OPEC effective May 1

**AGENCY**  
**Dubai:** The United Arab Emirates announced Tuesday that it will leave the oil cartel OPEC and its wider OPEC+ group effective May 1, a move rumoured for some time as the Emirates chafed under production restrictions and had increasingly frosty relations with neighbouring Saudi Arabia.



The UAE had been a long-time member of OPEC, first through its emirate of Abu Dhabi in 1967 and later when the UAE became its own country in 1971. The UAE had been a long-time member of OPEC, first through its emirate of Abu Dhabi in 1967 and later when the UAE became its own country in 1971. But the UAE has been increasingly trying to leverage its own foreign policy in the Middle East that has contradicted some positions of Riyadh over time—particularly as Saudi Arabia began to directly challenge the Emirates in trying to draw foreign investments as the kingdom opened up under assertive Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The UAE made

the announcement via its state-run WAM news agency. "This decision reflects the UAE's long-term strategic and economic vision and evolving energy profile, including accelerated investment in domestic energy production, and reinforces its commitment to a responsible, reliable, and forward-looking role in global energy markets," the UAE said. "Following its exit, the UAE will continue to act responsibly, bringing additional production to market in a gradual and measured manner, aligned with demand and market conditions," the country added. Saudi Arabia has long been considered a

heavyweight of OPEC, an oil cartel based in Vienna that has seen some of its market power wane as the United States increased its production of crude oil in recent years. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have increasingly competed over economic issues and regional politics, particularly in the Red Sea area. The two countries had joined together in a coalition to fight against Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels in 2015. However, that coalition broke down into recriminations in late December, when Saudi Arabia bombed what it described as a weapons shipment bound for Yemeni separatists backed by the UAE. Saudi broadcasters, long based in Dubai, the economic hub of the UAE, have pulled back to the kingdom in recent months as tensions rose.

# Forever New Debuts in Vishakhapatnam with Its Exclusive First Store

**AGENCY**  
**Vizag, April, 2026:** Vishakhapatnam steps into a new retail moment this April as Forever New opens its first store in the city at Inorbit Mall, Upper Ground Floor. The launch on April 15, 2026, marks the brand's entry into Andhra Pradesh, bringing its signature world of refined occasionwear and modern femininity to a market influenced by evolving, design-led sensibilities.



The store is conceived with a modern, streamlined layout that prioritises clarity and ease. Within it, a wide array of elegant apparel is brought together for a fashion-forward clientele, pieces that move across occasions without excess. The space is structured to allow fluid navigation, where collections can be experienced without visual clutter, and decisions feel intuitive rather than directed. Defining the launch is the latest collection, New Wave, a celebration of effortless silhouettes and refined summer dressing. Designed for the modern woman who

moves seamlessly through moments, it brings together fluid shapes, soft tailoring, and elevated details that feel as easy as they are elegant. From sun-soaked beach holidays to leisurely brunches and intimate evening soirées, the collection offers a versatile wardrobe, with lightweight fabrics, feminine hues, and timeless cuts that embody ease, confidence, and understated sophistication. The in-store experience is designed as premium, with a focus on comfort and considered service. This extends into Forever New's

wider customer offerings. The Allure loyalty programme introduces members to an exclusive ecosystem of rewards, early access to collections, and curated experiences. Complementing this is the Home Shopping service, allowing customers to connect with a personal style consultant virtually, receive selections at home for trial, and make purchase decisions within their own space. As the first Forever New store in Vizag, the launch creates a new point of access for customers in the city,

bringing the brand's collections and services into a dedicated retail environment while amplifying its presence in India. Commenting on the launch, Shifali Singh, Country Director - India for Forever New said, "We are pleased to introduce Forever New to Vishakhapatnam with our first store in the city. This opening allows us to bring our design philosophy and customer experience closer to a new audience, while continuing to expand our presence in India."

**ABOUT FOREVER NEW:** Forever New is one of the fastest-growing premium fashion retail brands. From dresses for every occasion to work-wear essentials, sparkling accessories, stylish footwear, and the perfect-fit denim, Forever New is committed to fashion that stays relevant beyond one season & elevates personal style. The brand continues to focus on creating easy-to-wear and timeless collections of ensembles dedicated to celebrating modern femininity.

# Elections winding down, oil at USD 120: Is India going to increase fuel prices?

**AGENCY**  
**Hyderabad:** The government has said it clearly and more than once that there is no plan to raise petrol or diesel prices. But with Assembly elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala and Puducherry drawing to a close and global crude hovering near USD 120 a barrel, that assurance is doing little to the growing speculation. Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, sought to calm nerves at an inter-ministerial briefing last week. "LPG, petroleum and diesel are available in sufficient amount and the prices have not increased, so please do not panic," she said, adding that the government had taken steps to ensure supply continuity despite disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis. **Numbers tell a different story** The reassurance, however, is contrary to what oil companies are actually absorbing. With India's crude basket trading at around USD



110 per barrel, under-recoveries for oil marketing companies (OMC) - the gap between what they pay and what they can charge - are estimated at Rs 18 to Rs 20 per litre for petrol and diesel, even after the Rs 10 per litre excise duty cut the government announced in March earlier. Emkay Global Financial Services, in a recent note, said the situation was unsustainable over the medium term and expected an initial retail price hike of Rs 10 per litre. The brokerage said that even this would not fully cover OMC losses, and that a steeper increase would risk inflation. **Kotak**

Institutional Equities estimated in a report cited by CNBCTV18 that petrol and diesel prices could rise by Rs 25 to Rs 28 per litre, with OMCs collectively absorbing an additional burden of Rs 27,000 crore every month at the current price. **Election factor** Analysts note that the timing of any revision is as much political as it is economic. Polling concludes on April 29, with vote counting scheduled for May 4, which has become the reference point about when prices might increase. Fuel prices in India have historically remained static during

major election cycles, and the current freeze is widely seen through that lens. The Ministry of Petroleum has dismissed this, saying claims of a post-poll hike are misleading and aimed at creating unnecessary anxiety. It pointed out that India is among the few countries that has not revised fuel prices in four years despite sustained global volatility. What the global picture looks like Underpinning all of this is the disruption to supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of the world's crude oil passes. The prolonged closure has sent crude surging, with prices now sitting close to USD 120 per barrel. At this level, domestic retail prices, frozen since 2022, will increasingly be difficult to sustain. Petrol prices in major cities currently range close to Rs 100 per litre. A hike of Rs 25 to Rs 28 would push them past Rs 120, which is an unprecedented level, with cascading effects on transport, logistics and household budgets.

# Indian airlines warn of shutdown risk amid soaring ATF costs, seek urgent govt relief

**Mumbai:** Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet have told the government that the country's airline industry is under extreme stress and on the verge of "stopping operations", as they sought revision in ATF pricing and financial support. The West Asia turmoil has pushed up oil prices, and airspace restrictions have increased airlines' operating costs, especially on long-haul routes. Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) accounts for around 40 per cent of a carrier's operational expenses. Against this backdrop, the Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA) has written to the civil aviation ministry, seeking steps to extend the same fuel pricing mechanism uniformly across both domestic and international operations as was done in the past with the establishment of the crack band. With an unprecedented rise in jet fuel prices and exorbitant crack/differential between crude and ATF, the federation said the operation of



airlines is being challenged in totality. "... any ad hoc pricing (domestic vs international) and/or irrational increase in the price of ATF will result in unsurmountable losses for airlines and will lead to grounding of aircraft, resulting in cancellation of flights," the federation, which represents Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, said. "In order to survive, sustain and continue operation, we request your urgent intervention for immediate and meaningful financial support to tide over the current situation," it said in a letter on

April 26. Also, the airlines have sought temporary deferment of excise duty on ATF, which is at 11 per cent. "With the abnormal increase in ATF prices from the pre-crisis period, adding rupee depreciation to the increased prices, the 11 per cent excise duty also increases manifold for the airlines and adds to the ATF price as a big impact on airlines," they said. Last month, the government limited the hike in ATF price to Rs 15 per litre for domestic operations, but for international operations, the price rose by Rs 73 per litre.

# ELON MUSK, SAM ALTMAN MOVE COURT IN HIGH-STAKES SHOWDOWN OVER AI

**Oakland:** Technology tycoons Elon Musk and Sam Altman are poised to face off in a high-stakes trial revolving around the alleged betrayal, deceit and unbridled ambition that blurred the bickering billionaires' oneshared vision for the development of artificial intelligence. The trial, which began on Monday, April 27, with jury selection, centres on the 2015 birth of ChatGPT maker OpenAI as a non-profit startup primarily funded by Musk before evolving into a capitalistic venture now valued at USD 82 billion. The trial's outcome could sway the balance of power in AI, a breakthrough technology that is increasingly being feared as a potential job killer and an existential threat to humanity's survival. Those perceived risks are among the reasons that Musk, the world's richest person, cites for filing an August 2024 lawsuit that will now be decided by a jury and US District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers in Oakland, California. The civil lawsuit accuses Altman, OpenAI's CEO, and his top lieutenant, Greg Brockman, of double-crossing Musk by straying from the San Francisco company's founding mission to be an altruistic steward of a revolutionary technology. The lawsuit alleges they shifted



into a moneymaking mode behind his back. OpenAI has brushed off Musk's allegations as an unfounded case of sour grapes that's aimed at undercutting its rapid growth and bolstering Musk's own xAI, which he launched in 2023 as a competitor. Trial promises clashing testimony from two tech titans Musk, who invested about USD 38 million in OpenAI from December 2015 through May 2017, initially was seeking more than USD 100 billion in damages. But any damages now are likely to be much smaller after a series of pre-trial rulings that went against Musk. Musk has since abandoned a bid for damages for himself and

instead is seeking an unspecified amount of money to be paid to fund the altruistic efforts of OpenAI's charitable arm. The money would be paid primarily by OpenAI's for-profit operations and Microsoft, which became the company's biggest investor after Musk cut off his funding. Musk's lawsuit also seeks Altman's ouster from OpenAI's board. Musk's decision to stop funding the company contributed to a bitter falling out between the former allies. Musk says he was responding to deceptive conduct that OpenAI's board picked up on when it fired Altman as CEO in 2023, before he got his job back days later. But the

trial also carries risks for Musk, who last month was held liable by another jury for defrauding investors during his USD 44 billion takeover of Twitter in 2022. Any damaging details about Musk and his business tactics could be particularly hurtful now because his rocket ship maker, SpaceX, plans to go public this summer in an initial public offering that could make him the world's first trillionaire. However, it turns out, the trial is expected to provide riveting theatre, with contrasting testimony from two of technology's most influential and polarising figures in the 54-year-old Musk and the 41-year-old Altman. "Part of this is about whether a jury believes the people who will testify and whether they are credible," Gonzalez Rogers said during a court hearing earlier this year while explaining why she believes the case merited a trial. The judge will make the final decision on the case, with the jury serving in an advisory role. Evidence has included glimpses of the AI race's early days Musk, whose estimated fortune stands at about USD 780 billion, has long been hailed as a visionary for his roles creating digital payment pioneer PayPal, electric automaker Tesla and rocket ship maker SpaceX.

# Suspect charged with attempted assassination of Trump at Washington dinner

A California man has been charged with attempting to assassinate US President Donald Trump after trying to storm a gala event with weapons on Saturday night. Cole Tomas Allen, 31, was also charged with two firearms offences when he appeared in court in Washington DC on Monday. He did not enter a plea. He was carrying a semi-automatic handgun, a pump-action shotgun and three knives as he charged past a security checkpoint at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner on Saturday, say prosecutors. The incident has sparked a White House security review. A Secret Service agent was shot but not seriously wounded during the attack at a hotel. The accused faces life in prison if found guilty. Dressed in a blue jumpsuit with a nametag, the suspect appeared calm at Monday's court appearance in the nation's capital. He



was softly spoken as he answered almost every question from the judge with either "yes, your honour" or "no, your honour". He stated his age and said he had a master's degree. Three US marshals stood behind him, and one was at his side, while the federal prosecutor handling the case, US Attorney for Washington Jeanine

Pirro, looked on. During Saturday night's incident, Trump, Vice-President JD Vance, cabinet members and other White House officials were rushed from the Washington Hilton hotel ballroom after gunfire rang out. The suspect allegedly rushed through a security checkpoint one floor above the basement venue. "One Secret

Service officer was shot in the chest, but was wearing a ballistic vest that worked," Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche told a news conference on Monday. "This heroic officer who was hit fired five times at Allen, who was not shot but fell to the ground and was promptly arrested." It is not clear whether the Secret Service

agent was shot by the suspect, or was caught in cross-fire from other law enforcement. The agent has been released from the hospital. Attempting to assassinate the president carries a potential life sentence. The other charges - transportation of a firearm between states to commit a felony and discharging a firearm in a crime of violence - both have maximum sentences of 10 years. The suspect is due to appear in court again on Thursday. The court heard that the accused crossed multiple state lines in order to try to kill Trump. The suspect left his home in the city of Torrance in the Los Angeles area on 21 April, travelling by train to Chicago, said officials. On 24 April, he left Chicago, and arrived in Washington where he checked into the Hilton on the eve of the gala. The suspect studied at the prestigious California Institute of Technology, and worshipped

at the Pasadena United Reformed Church in the Los Angeles area. Federal campaign finance records show he donated \$25 to a Democratic Party political action committee in support of Kamala Harris for president in 2024. According to an affidavit, the accused sent an email to his family shortly before the attack that said, "Administration officials... are targets, prioritized from highest-ranking to lowest". "I would still go through most everyone here to get to the targets if it were absolutely necessary," he allegedly added. He was remanded in custody and prosecutors said more charges could be filed. The accused has not been cooperating with investigators, law enforcement sources told the BBC's US partner CBS. As US investigators look into the third alleged assassination attempt against Trump, security officials are reviewing the president's protection protocols.

## MAN ADMITS PLOTTING ATTACK ON TAYLOR SWIFT CONCERT IN VIENNA



A 21-year-old Austrian man has admitted plotting a jihadist attack on a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna in August 2024. The man, named only as Beran A, also admitted to being part of a terrorist organisation, although he denied other charges including involvement in planning an attack in the Islamic holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The state prosecutor told the court in Wiener Neustadt near Vienna that police had found an almost completed bomb during a search of the man's house. Beran A was arrested after a tip-off from the CIA just before Swift's opening concert in Vienna

in 2024. As a result, all three sold-out gigs by the US superstar singer at Vienna's Ernst Happel Stadium were cancelled. More than 195,000 people in total had been expected to attend. Thousands of disappointed fans roamed the streets of the city, singing and exchanging Taylor Swift-themed friendship bracelets. Beran A was brought into the courtroom, wearing a blue shirt and handcuffs, to face charges of terrorism and other offences. He went on trial with another 21-year-old man, named as Arda K, who is accused of being part of an Islamic State cell with him.

## Rescuers race to free survivors trapped inside train after fatal Indonesia crash



Rescuers are racing to try and free people trapped inside a train involved in a fatal collision outside the Indonesian capital Jakarta on Monday. At least 15 people were killed and dozens injured in the accident which took place when a stationary passenger train was hit from behind by a long-distance commuter train running on the same track. Local media ran footage of passengers on medical trolleys near Bekasi Timur Station, with other images showing rescuers trying to free people from the train wreckage. There are still victims who are alive "but they're pinned by train material", Mohammad Syafil, who leads Indonesia's search and rescue agency, told reporters early on Tuesday. "There are some victims who are alive to this minute and we're hoping to extricate them," he said. "We need to involve personnel with certain skills to perform a measured extrication." Bobby Rasyidin, the president director of state-owned railway operator KAI, said on Tuesday that 84 people are being treated for their injuries in nearby hospitals. The accident

involved one taxi and three commuter trains. It started at about 20:00 on Monday, when one of the commuter trains hit the taxi, which was lying across the middle of the rail crossing. A second train was forced to stop at the station because of this collision. Nearly an hour later, the third train, a long-distance commuter train, then crashed into a women-only carriage on the second train, while pulling into the station. Some people screamed "hysterically" as the trains collided, one passenger told the BBC's Indonesia service. Other eyewitnesses said they saw "many victims" injured in the crash. Jakarta Police Chief Insp Gen Asep Edi Suheri said six or seven people remained trapped inside the carriages. Medical expenses for the injured and funeral expenses for the deceased will be fully covered by KAI and insurance, authorities say, adding that the Bekasi Timur Station will be closed to commuters for the rest of Tuesday. Indonesia's public transport network in general has a high accident rate, due in part to ageing infrastructure and poor maintenance.

## JAPAN AIRLINES TRIALS HUMANOID ROBOTS AS GROUND HANDLERS



Japan Airlines (JAL) will start using humanoid robots in ground handling tasks at Tokyo's Haneda airport from May, in a two-year trial it said is aimed at easing employees' workload. For a start, the Chinese-made robots will be deployed to load and unload cargo containers, JAL and GMO AI & Robotics, its partner in the project, said in a demon-

stration to the media on Monday. Japan's aviation industry is wrestling with a labour crunch brought on by an increase in inbound tourism and a declining working-age population, said JAL, which employs some 4,000 ground handling staff. The carrier hopes that these robots can also be used to clean cabins and operate ground support equipment in future.

## US political violence generates a familiar cycle - this time it's in overdrive

For many in the ballroom at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner on Saturday night, the scene was painfully familiar. Shots fired, confusion and panic, and a sense that the normal order of things had been violently interrupted. Erika Kirk, whose husband, the conservative activist Charlie Kirk, was shot and killed last September, was in tears. Congressman Steve Scalise, majority leader in the House of Representatives who suffered life-threatening injuries in a shooting at a baseball practice with Republican teammates in 2017, was escorted out by security. So was Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr, who lost his father and uncle to assassin's bullets. Many journalists in attendance had been at the



2024 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, where an assailant opened fire on Donald Trump, grazing his ear, before being killed by a Secret Service sniper. In modern America, it seems, political violence has become an ever-present storm, that can strike anywhere, at any moment. Saturday night was the third time that Trump has been directly targeted - after

the Butler attack and another attempt in 2024 at his Palm Beach golf resort. In a separate incident, the Secret Service killed an armed man trying to enter Trump's Mar-a-Lago club, although the president was not in Florida at the time. These incidents have become frequent enough that there is almost a routine to them. Trump, reflective, calls for unity and a cooling of political

rhetoric. News coverage speculates about a "new tone" from the president. Ultimately, partisan divisions reassert themselves - often with Trump leading the way. That cycle is in overdrive this week. On Saturday night, Trump called for unity. "His many detractors should grant that his comments late Saturday at a White House press briefing hit the right notes of gratitude and comity," a Wall Street Journal editorial observed. On Sunday evening, in a sit-down with CBS' 60 Minutes programme, Trump blamed Democrats for creating an atmosphere that encouraged the shooting, then derided interviewer Norah O'Donnell as "a disgrace" and "horrible" after she asked about the manifesto written by the alleged assailant.

## Russian superyacht sails through Strait of Hormuz despite blockade

A superyacht linked to one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's key allies has sailed through the Strait of Hormuz, despite the ongoing blockade of the critical shipping channel. The 142m-long (465 ft) multi-deck luxury boat, named Nord, is linked to sanctioned Russian billionaire Alexei Mordashov. It travelled from Dubai to Muscat, Oman, over the weekend - one of few private vessels to transit through the strait in recent months. Iran held high-level talks with Russia this week as its standoff with the US over the strait's re-opening continues. Approximately one-fifth of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies



normally pass through the waterway. Mordashov, who has close ties to Putin, is not listed as the formal owner of the Russian-flagged boat. However, Nord's records indicate it was registered to a firm owned by his wife in 2022. Nord, estimated to be worth more than \$500m (£370m), left

Dubai on Friday night and arrived at Al Mouj - a marina in Oman's capital - on Sunday morning, according to data on the Marine Traffic platform. The route shown on the tracker has been used by vessels crossing with agreement from Iran. It is not clear whether Nord gained permis-

sion from Iran to sail through the route. Mordashov made his fortune largely through his steel and mining company Severstal - the largest such firm in Russia. With an estimated net worth of about \$37bn (£27bn), he is the richest Russian national listed by the US business magazine Forbes. Iran has severely restricted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz in response to US and Israeli strikes that began on 28 February. Earlier this month, Tehran warned that any vessel that approaches the strait would be targeted. The US then announced that its forces would intercept or turn back vessels travelling to or from Iran's ports.

## Jimmy Kimmel rejects White House criticism over Melania widow joke



Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel has defended a joke in which he called Melania Trump an "expectant widow" just days before a shooting incident at the White House Correspondents' Dinner. The first lady described a Kimmel sketch which aired last Thursday as "hateful and violent", and the White House urged his network, ABC, to fire the comedian. Three days later, a gunman opened fire at the White House Correspondents' dinner in Washington DC, which Donald Trump attended with Melania. Authorities have said the gunman's attack may have targeted members of the Trump administration. Kimmel said the original joke was a "light roast" about the 23-year age difference between the president and his wife. "I agree that hateful and violent rhetoric is something we should reject, I think a great place to start to dial that back is having a conversation with your husband about it." On Monday, Melania wrote in a post on X that "people like Kimmel shouldn't have the oppor-

tunity to enter our homes each evening to spread hate". "His monologue about my family isn't comedy - his words are corrosive and deepens the political sickness within America... How many times will ABC's leadership enable Kimmel's atrocious behavior at the expense of our community?" President Trump also said he appreciated that so many people were "incensed by Kimmel's" remarks, claiming they were a "call to violence", in a post on Truth Social on Monday afternoon. "[T]his is something far beyond the pale. Jimmy Kimmel should be immediately fired by Disney and ABC," he added. The BBC has contacted ABC for comment. Kimmel was taken off air last September after he made comments about the shooting of conservative influencer Charlie Kirk. In a monologue, Kimmel said the "Maga gang" - a reference to Trump's followers - was trying to "score political points" from the murder of Kirk. His show was reinstated a week later.

## Third Ukrainian strike hits Russian oil refinery and prompts evacuations

A major Russian oil refinery on the Black Sea has been hit for the third time this month by Ukrainian drones, causing a "massive fire" and forcing the evacuation of people living nearby, local officials have said. Earlier strikes in the past two weeks at the Tuapse refinery caused a big oil spill in the sea and residents reported "black" rain falling on the city and leaving an oily residue everywhere. Ukraine's military confirmed the latest drone strike, saying such refineries helped fund Russia's full-scale invasion launched in 2022. More than 160 firefighters were deployed to extinguish the blaze, Krasnodar regional governor Veniamin Kondratyev said on Tuesday. No casualties were reported. In a post on



Telegram on Tuesday morning, Kondratyev said firefighters and other rescuers were working in "extremely difficult conditions", and he described their efforts as "true heroism". "Our top priority is preserving the lives and health of city residents and visitors," he added. The head of the local municipal district, Sergei Boyko, asked residents of nearby streets to

leave and reports said a temporary evacuation centre had been set up in a local school. Meanwhile, the regional crisis centre warned that "due to the severe fire, combustion products are being released into the atmosphere". Residents were urged to wear masks and rinse their nose, eyes and throat, as well as keep windows closed and

limit time outdoors. Anastasia Troyanova, a local correspondent for environmental news outlet Kedr, described "a huge cloud of black smoke over the town; it smells of burning". In Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the country's emergency minister to fly to Tuapse urgently to oversee firefighting and cleanup efforts. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Ukraine had struck oil storage facilities intended for export operations, accusing Kyiv of destabilising global energy markets. In a statement, Ukraine's military confirmed it had again hit the Tuapse refinery, as part of concerted efforts to "reduce the military-economic potential of the Russian aggressor".

## SUSPECTED GUNMAN AGED 89 HELD IN GREECE AFTER FIVE WOUNDED



The suspect, an 89-year-old man, was held in Greece after five people were wounded in the attack. The suspect is being held in Greece after the attack.



## "Mujhe Hara Do Ge?" PM Modi Joins Gangtok Children For Game Of Football



Unfolding another chapter from his visit to Gangtok, Prime Minister Narendra Modi played a friendly football match with local children on Tuesday. From kicking the ball around the park to interacting with school-going children, it was a sight to behold seeing the country's top leader enjoying the beautiful game with local youngsters. PM Modi shared several pictures and videos

from the football exhibition. In a video, he could be heard playfully asking children: "Mujhe hara to nahi do ge (I hope you are not going to defeat me. Are you?)" The morning football game in Gangtok was a part of PM Modi's broader engagement with youth. It also aligned with his persistent efforts to promote sports and fitness across India, through various initiatives. In other posts

on social media platforms, PM Modi described the session as "energising". "Nothing like playing some football with my young friends in Sikkim on a lovely Gangtok morning!" he wrote in one of the posts. According to the itinerary, PM Modi is on a 2-day visit to Gangtok, where he also held a roadshow at Lok Bhawan. After reaching Gangtok, PM Modi launched several



development projects worth over Rs 4,000 crore across the state while also attending the closing ceremony of Sikkim's 50th year of statehood at Paljor Stadium. The projects span a wide range of sectors, including infrastructure, connectivity, healthcare, education, power, urban development, environment, tourism and agriculture, the officials said. The Prime Minister also

addressed a gathering on the occasion. Modi was also scheduled to be present at the opening ceremony of the year-long celebrations of 50 years of Sikkim's statehood at Paljor Stadium last year, but he could not reach the venue due to inclement weather. He, however, addressed the gathering through video conferencing from Bagdogra in neighbouring West Bengal.

## IPL 2026: Punjab Kings Set 222/4 Target for Rajasthan Royals



## Delhi Cop, Who Once Played With Virat Kohli And Gautam Gambhir, Created Green Corridor For Lungi Ngidi

Delhi Capitals fast bowler Lungi Ngidi suffered a horrible neck injury during the IPL 2026 encounter against Punjab Kings at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi last week. Ngidi looked in a lot of pain after landing awkwardly while trying to take a catch and the team physio quickly rushed in to check on the cricketer. Everyone on the ground looked extremely worried and an ambulance entered the field to transport the player who remained motionless for some time. Delhi was on the verge of hitting peak traffic at that time but a decision taken by ACP Sanjay Singh proved to be a masterstroke. While the journey from the stadium to Rajender Nagar usually takes around half



an hour, ACP Sanjay Singh decided to implement a green corridor and as a result, the ambulance carrying Ngidi was able to reach the hospital in just 11 minutes. ACP Sanjay Singh revealed how to get the know about the injury and what led to his instant reac-

tion. "I'm ACP Traffic of Centre District, and the Arun Jaitley Stadium comes under this jurisdiction. Whenever IPL matches take place, the overall jurisdiction lies with the DCP, and I also control a few things. I was outside the stadium, someone was watch-

ing the match on mobile, and then I was informed that someone had faced an injury inside the stadium and an ambulance had entered the field," Singh told Hindustan Times. "I thought if the ambulance entered the field, then the player had to be taken to the hospital. We had to give the route to the traffic guys. I went there, and the ambulance was near Gate No.2. The Delhi Capitals officials were inside the ambulance, wearing an oxygen mask. He wasn't moving, and panic gripped the people. I asked the driver, 'Where are you taking him?' It was then that he said that the plan was to take him to BLK Max Hospital in Rajender Nagar."

## He Played U-19 World Cup With Virat Kohli, Now He Is An Umpire In RCB Star's IPL Game

The year was 2008. India won the U-19 World Cup title under the captaincy of Virat Kohli and Indian cricket found a new hero. This was the win that catapulted Kohli into superstardom and 18 years later, he is hailed as one of the greatest batters in modern cricket. However, the 'Player of the Match' in the final against South Africa was someone who is no longer a cricketer. Ajitesh Argal took two wickets for just seven runs and played a big role in the victory. However, despite getting picked by Kings XI Punjab in IPL 2008, he did not have a thriving career and after working in the Income Tax Department, Argal passed the BCCI umpiring examination and became an



umpire in IPL 2026. During the match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Delhi Capitals on Monday, Kohli and Argal once again shared the cricket field and their interaction has gone viral on social media. Following RCB's win, Kohli was seen having a conversation with Ajitesh on the field and that was a heart-

warming sight for all cricket fans. It left social media users buzzing, who quickly started reminiscing about the 2008 World Cup. Former New Zealand pacer Mitchell McClenaghan has lauded Virat Kohli's remarkable consistency while also highlighting the impact of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh

Hazlewood following Royal Challengers Bengaluru's emphatic nine-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in their recently concluded IPL 2026 match. RCB's thumping victory at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Monday was set up by a fiery new-ball spell from Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood, who dismantled Delhi's batting line-up to bowl them out for just 75, the lowest total of the season. The chase was then completed with ease, underlining RCB's all-round dominance. Reflecting on Kohli's sustained excellence in the tournament, McClenaghan emphasised the discipline and adaptability that have defined the veteran batter's journey over the years.

## Virat Kohli's Young Fan Breaks Down After Security Stops Him From Meeting India Great, Internet Reacts

Virat Kohli is easily the most-followed cricketer on the planet. Wherever he goes, a long beeline of fans is always present to catch a glimpse of the star. While Kohli can often be seen obliging fans with autographs and selfies, it is not always possible for him to attend to everyone. Recently, a video went viral from RCB's team hotel in which a boy was seen waiting for Kohli to get an autograph on his bat. However, Kohli did not notice the boy and walked towards his room. The boy broke down in tears after throwing the bat away in disappointment. The little boy was really sad when he couldn't get Virat Kohli's autograph. He tried to follow his hero, but the security guards had to stop him. Feeling overwhelmed, he dropped his bat and started



to cry, running back to his mom and dad. Meanwhile, former New Zealand pacer Mitchell McClenaghan has lauded Virat Kohli's remarkable consistency, while also highlighting the impact of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood following Royal Challengers Bengaluru's emphatic nine-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in their recently

concluded IPL 2026 match. RCB's thumping victory at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Monday was set up by a fiery new-ball spell from Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood, who dismantled Delhi's batting line-up to bowl them out for just 75, the lowest total of the season. The chase was then completed with ease, underlining RCB's all-round dominance.

## Why A 'Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Question' To Manu Bhaker Has Created A Social Media Storm

It was a question about a young achiever to another young achiever. Manu Bhaker, the first Indian woman shooter to win an Olympic medal, was on Monday asked about 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. However, it has generated a strong response from social media. Speaking on the sidelines of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) 75th anniversary celebrations in Delhi, Manu spoke about Sooryavanshi. "I would say that if the mentorship is good, the company around him is good, and the people around are good, then age is just a number. And there is no age for talent. Great things happen at 60, they happen at six. So if the people around him men-



tor him well and guide him properly, then I am sure he will be the next big star," the 24-year-old shooter was quoted as saying by news agency ANI. Manu Bhaker won two bronze medals at the 2024 Paris Olympics. First, she won a bronze in the 10m pistol event and then another in 10m pistol mixed team, becoming the

first Indian to win two medals in a single Olympic Games. Reacting to the question directed at Manu, former KKR team director, Joy Bhattacharjya wrote on X: "Folks, she is an Olympic medalist. To ask her what she thinks of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is unfair to her achievements and her sport."

## Delhi Capitals Owner Sends Big Message After Humiliating Defeat Against RCB



Delhi Capitals co-owner Parth Jindal took to social media to react to his side's humiliating loss against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, in New Delhi on Monday. Josh Hazlewood took four wickets while Bhuvneshwar Kumar took three, as Delhi Capitals were bundled out for just 75. In reply, Virat Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal made short work of the run-chase, as RCB registered a brilliant nine-wicket win. This was DC's second loss in a row, following a match where Punjab Kings chased down a record 265-run target. "Stay together more than ever now @DelhiCapitals - really very tough to take but we must keep fighting and keep believing," Parth Jindal posted on X (formerly known as Twitter). Axar Patel didn't have much to answer when Delhi Capitals failed to defend 264 against Punjab Kings on Saturday and looked even more perplexed after his team crumbled to 75 versus Royal Challengers Bengaluru in

their second straight IPL surrender within a space of 48 hours. Delhi Capitals were reduced to 9 for 6 inside Powerplay overs with Bhuvneshwar Kumar getting appreciable swing and Josh Hazlewood executing short ball tactic to perfection. The result was season's lowest score and RCB cantered to a nine-wicket win. "Even I don't know what happened. That's why they say you have to be on your toes in cricket. We have to move on from this match," Axar said at post match presentation ceremony. The single that David Miller refused in a one-run defeat against Gujarat Titans did affect the tournament momentum for DC and Karun Nair dropping dummies against Punjab Kings only made matters worse. "From today's point of view, you can say it did effect, but you can look back, if the catches were taken (Nair) or had we taken the single against GT, then momentum would have been with us."

## Elena Rybakina Bows Out Of Madrid Open, Aryna Sabalenka Reaches Quarters

Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina fell to a shock 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 defeat by Anastasia Potapova on Monday in the Madrid Open fourth round. Earlier world number one Aryna Sabalenka overcame Naomi Osaka 6-7 (1/7), 6-3, 6-2 in a gripping battle to reach the quarter-finals. Third seed Coco Gauff was eliminated in a three-set battle with Linda Noskova decided on a final set tie-break in an exciting fourth-round clash. In the third round of the men's draw, second seed Alexander Zverev won in straight sets against Terence Atmane and

Alexander Blockx earned a surprising win against world number five Felix Auger-Aliassime. In the day's late match Kazakhstan's Rybakina, the world number two, was shocked by her 56th-ranked opponent. Both players secured two breaks in the first set before Potapova edged Rybakina in the tie-break. In the second set Rybakina captured her fifth break point of a long fifth game to nose ahead but lost the eighth and 10th games as Potapova triumphed. "I'm speechless, I'm extremely happy, it was such a tough match and tough opponent," said Austria's Potapova. "My

team helped me today, they were there for me, big thanks to them." Sabalenka, who has claimed titles at Miami, Indian Wells and Brisbane this year, was tested by her Japanese opponent but came back from a set and a break down to triumph. "When (she) put me under pressure, I was able to pull out really incredible shots and incredible tennis. So I'm happy," said Sabalenka. The first set between the two four-time Grand Slam winners was tight, with only one break point forced, by Sabalenka, which Osaka saved to hold for 2-1. Osaka dominated in the tie-break, ripping into a 5-

0 lead and then triumphing when Sabalenka lashed a return wide. Reigning champion Sabalenka stepped up a gear in the second frame, although world number 15 Osaka dug deep to survive three break points and then managed to engineer a break for herself to take a 2-1 lead. However, the Belarusian immediately broke to love and then again in the eighth game, serving out to take the second set. Only Rybakina has beaten Sabalenka this year, in the Australian Open final, and the 27-year-old dominated in the third set, securing two breaks to triumph.



## Dhanush's Kara Promises a Gritty, Realism-Driven Tale Ahead of April 30 Release

The trailer stands apart in both tone and intent. Eschewing conventional hero-driven elevation, it builds its impact through silence, tension, and emotional weight. At its core is a man pushed into extraordinary circumstances - captured through a deeply internalized performance by Dhanush. His portrayal reflects a character shaped by pressure, survival, and consequence, rather than spectacle or glorification.

Set against the backdrop of the 1991 Gulf War and the fuel crisis in India, Kara grounds its narrative within a socio-political reality rarely explored in mainstream storytelling. Director Vignesh Raja, following the acclaim of Por Thozhil, continues his commitment to controlled, realism-driven narratives. The trailer hints at a tightly constructed story where personal conflict intersects with larger economic disruptions, unfolding with precision and restraint. The film features Mamitha Baiju as the female lead, bringing emotional depth to the narrative, alongside a seasoned ensemble including K. S. Ravikumar, Jayaram, Karunas, and M. S. Bhaskar. Their presence reinforces the film's performance-driven approach. Technically, Kara is backed by a craft-focused team. Cinematographer Theni Eswar brings a raw, naturalistic visual texture, while editor Sreejith Sarang



ensures narrative sharpness. Music by G. V. Prakash Kumar adopts a minimal, atmospheric approach, allowing mood and silence to heighten the film's emotional impact. The film's buzz has been consistently building across platforms. The Telugu song Kannamma Naa Kannamma has crossed 4.1 million views, while the teaser crossed 2.6 Million views in just three days. Telugu audiences have

actively engaged with the film content, promotional material, and interviews - highlighting Kara's growing cross-market resonance. Adding to this momentum, Dhanush, at the telugu pre-release event, described the film as "a story of an ordinary man in extraordinary situations," calling it a project "very close to our hearts," while also praising Vignesh Raja as an exceptional filmmaker.

## TABU STEPS INTO #KING100



King Nagarjuna's milestone 100th film, currently referred to as #King100, is steadily taking shape under the prestigious Annapurna Studios banner, carrying the weight of both legacy and expectation. Helmed by Ra Karthik, marking his Telugu debut, the project is being mounted as a fitting celebration of the star's long-standing cinematic journey. The production is

moving forward at a steady pace, with key portions already underway. Adding significant momentum to the project, actress Tabu has officially come on board in an important role and has already joined the shoot. Her inclusion has instantly elevated curiosity around the film, not just for her screen presence but for the emotional resonance tied to her past collaborations with Nagarjuna.

## Megastar Chiranjeevi, Most Successful Director Bobby Kolli, Leading Production House KVN Productions' #ChiruBobby2 Look Test Completed, First Pic Out

Megastar Chiranjeevi is gearing up for another massive outing as he reunites with director Bobby Kolli for a sensational new project backed by the esteemed KVN Productions. The film produced by Venkat K Narayana, currently referred to as #ChiruBobby2, has officially begun as the look test for the film was successfully completed, setting the stage for a massive cinematic spectacle. The first look-test image is out, and it's clear, another powerful and striking look for Chiranjeevi is loading. The project has already sparked excitement, thanks to a hard-hitting concept poster that hinted at an electrifying new shade of Chiranjeevi. This marks the duo's second film together after delivering the blockbuster Waltair Veerayya, strengthening the anticipation surrounding their reunion. Known for his energetic, mass-appeal storytelling, Bobby Kolli is said to be crafting one of the most intense characterizations for the Megastar. With a script designed to magnify



Chiranjeevi's towering screen presence, the combination promises a festival of high-octane moments.

The team will soon reveal details about the auspicious muhurtham and the commencement of regular shooting. Fans and movie buffs are already on standby, eagerly awaiting the official launch of what promises to be a blockbuster ride.

## SAREE BY THE SEA AND HEARTS SHATTERED



Pooja Hegde, who is gearing up for her much-awaited film Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, recently took a refreshing break and headed to her native place for a soul-fulfilling trip. The actress shared a beautiful set of pictures that give fans a rare and personal glimpse into her life away from the film sets and glamour of the city. From offering prayers at an ancient temple adorned with vibrant flower garlands, to sitting peacefully inside a stunning traditional temple in a bright pink and gold saree,

Pooja looked every bit graceful and grounded. She also soaked in the breathtaking coastal beauty, framing the golden sunset with her hands into a heart shape by the sea, while surfers walked along the sandy shore nearby. What makes these photos truly special is how effortlessly Pooja blends tradition with joy. Draped in a gorgeous peach silk saree near a heritage villa surrounded by palm trees and greenery, she radiates warmth and simplicity. This trip clearly shows the real, rooted, and beautiful side of Pooja Hegde.

## Deepika Padukone's pregnancy rocks Raaka, big decision taken

Deepika Padukone recently announced that she is expecting her second child with husband Ranveer Singh. The news has brought joy to fans and the film industry alike. At the same time, it has raised questions about her ongoing film commitments, particularly



ly her remaining schedule for the much-awaited action film Raaka, starring Allu Arjun. Raaka Shoot Adjustments With nearly 50 days of shooting left for Raaka, the production team has opted for careful planning rather than delaying the project. Director Atlee has reportedly devised a plan to ensure Deepika can continue working

safely during her pregnancy. Key action sequences will now be shot using a body double. Close-up shots of Deepika have already been completed, and VFX will be used to integrate her scenes seamlessly. Despite the changes in how action sequences are filmed, Deepika's character in Raaka will remain fully intact. She will continue shooting dramatic and dialogue-heavy scenes, while her stunt double will handle the physically demanding parts. Sources confirm that her role is central to the story, with no deletion or reduction due to her pregnancy. Deepika is also filming for Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming film King. The makers have reportedly reshuffled the schedule to prioritise her action

and song sequences, allowing them to be completed early. This careful planning ensures that her workload remains manageable while maintaining her performance quality. Deepika has worked with stunt doubles before. During the shoot of Pathaan, her double performed several stunts, which were later enhanced with motion capture and VFX. For Raaka, the team is applying a similar approach to ensure her safety while preserving the high-octane impact of the action sequences.



## Thalapathy Vijay's 'Jana Nayagan' finally gets its release date

After months of delays, Tamil star Thalapathy Vijay's much-awaited political action drama, 'Jana Nayagan,' is finally ready for a theatrical release. Reports suggest that the film will hit cinemas worldwide on May 8, 2026. Fans have been eagerly waiting for the movie, and the announcement has brought excitement across Tamil Nadu and other regions.

### Censor Issues Resolved

The film faced major hurdles with the censor board, which prevented its earlier release. Originally, 'Jana Nayagan' was scheduled to release during Pongal 2026, and it had already received record advance bookings of over Rs. 100 crore worldwide. After resolving all certification issues, the path is now clear for the movie to reach audiences.

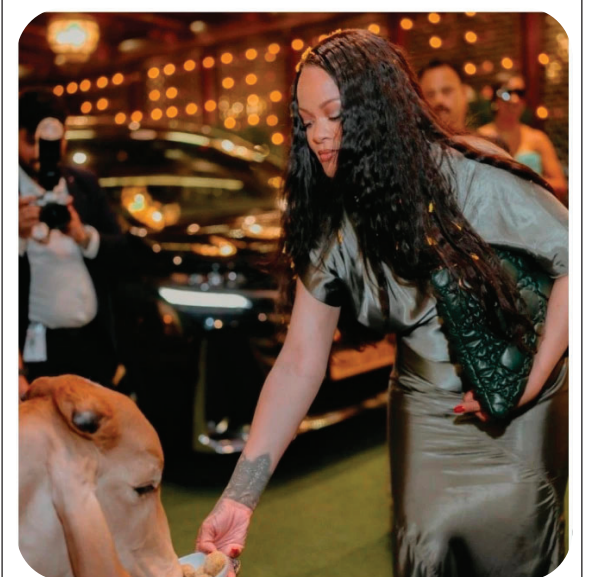
### Leak and Box Office Expectations

A few days ago, the entire film was leaked online, causing concern among the makers. Despite this, Vijay's massive fan following is expected to ensure strong box office collections. Since this is also believed to be his final film before stepping into full-time politics, the opening days are expected to be extraordinary. Positive word-of-mouth could help the movie break records in Tamil Nadu.

### About the Film

Directed by H Vinoth, 'Jana Nayagan' stars Vijay as a former police officer. The film features Pooja Hegde as the female lead and Bobby Deol as the main antagonist. The ensemble cast also includes Prakash Raj, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Mamitha Baiju, Priyamani, and Narain in key roles. The film is a remake of the Telugu movie 'Bhagavanth Kesari' and is produced by KVN Productions.

## RIHANNA FEEDS CALF WHILE CARRYING CALFSKIN BAG, SPARKS OUTRAGE



Rihanna is back in India, and this time it's not just about the glam. The global pop icon is reportedly in Mumbai for high-profile appearances tied to her brand Fenty Beauty, deepening her business footprint in the country after her headline-grabbing Ambani performance last year.