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Mamata Banerjee slams BJP, alleges use of outsiders and attack on democracy in Assam polls

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Trump says Iran's handling of Strait of Hormuz is 'not the agreement we have'

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'I turned into an alcoholic': Aamir Khan shares painful post-divorce story

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SCAN FOR E-PAPER

**OM NAMO VENKATESAYA**

08-04-2026
Total pilgrims: 72,017
Toranues: 26,662
Hundi-kankulu: 4,17CR
Waiting Compartments: 05

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

WEATHER 37°C | °F

Precipitation: 0%
Humidity: 35%
Wind: 8 km/h

GOLD RATE

24K ₹ 1,54,950/-

INBRIFS

ISI-BKI TERROR MODULE BUSTED, 11 ARRESTED IN DELHI-PUNJAB ESPIONAGE PLOT

New Delhi, Apr 10: The Delhi Police Special Cell on Friday busted a major terror module allegedly backed by Pakistan's intelligence agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), arresting 11 suspects from Delhi and Punjab. Police said the module was involved in espionage, arms smuggling and planning terror attacks. Acting on leads, officials recovered nine solar-powered CCTV cameras installed near sensitive defence and security establishments across multiple locations. These cameras were transmitting live feeds to handlers in Pakistan using SIM cards. Authorities also seized four pistols, including foreign-made weapons, and 24 live cartridges

PUNJAB POLICE BUST ISI-BACKED BKI TERROR MODULE, TWO ARRESTED WITH EXPLOSIVES

Chandigarh, Apr 9: In a significant counter-terror operation, Punjab Police, in coordination with central agencies and the State Special Operation Cell (SSOC) of the Counter Intelligence Wing, has dismantled an ISI-sponsored Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) module, arresting two operatives, officials said. The accused, identified as Akash Masih and Jablaun, residents of Dulla Nangal in Gurdaspur, have prior criminal records. Their apprehension led to the seizure of a large cache of explosives and terror-related materials, including five hand grenades, two special detonators, a Push-to-Talk (PTT) timer with coder and decoder, a 9V battery, one kilogram of high explosive packed with nails, an improvised explosive device (IED), and a Baofeng walkie-talkie with trigger mechanism. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav stated that the recovered materials indicated preparations for high-impact attacks aimed at destabilizing public peace in Punjab. Deputy Inspector General of Police, Border Range, Sandeep Goel, added that initial investigations suggest the terror module was directed by foreign-based handlers.

10 pilgrims from Punjab dead, several missing after boat capsizes in Mathura's Vrindavan



Jagraon (TSIT) A boat carrying pilgrims, primarily from Punjab, capsized in Vrindavan's Yamuna on Friday afternoon, leaving 10 persons dead and several others missing. The accident occurred near Kesi Ghat when the boat carrying pilgrims moved into deeper waters and hit a floating pontoon.

A group of pilgrims, including children, had set out on a Yamuna trip in a private steamer. They were part of a larger group of 150 pilgrims from Ludhiana and Muktsar in Punjab. The deceased include six men and four women.

Authorities noted that a pontoon bridge had recently been dismantled in the area due to rising water levels, leaving some pontoon drums in the river, one of which the boat is believed to have collided

ed with. District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh reported six fatalities earlier, and later rescuers recovered four more bodies, taking the toll to 10, district administration officials confirmed.

"Sixteen to 17 people have been rescued safely so far. Efforts are ongoing to locate the missing," the DM said earlier, adding that all tourists onboard were from Punjab. The district magistrate said the exact number of people on board the boat at the time of the accident is yet to be ascertained. However, based on inputs from accompanying pilgrims, three to four persons are still reportedly missing.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognisance of the incident and expressed deep grief over the loss of lives. He conveyed his condolences to the

bereaved families.

The chief minister has directed officials to expedite the ongoing relief and rescue operations and ensure that the injured are provided immediate and proper medical treatment, officials said. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann spoke to Adityanath and said all necessary assistance would be provided to the victims. He said the boat was carrying 32 people hailing from Jagraon city in Punjab for darshan in Vrindavan. The Ludhiana administration has set up dedicated control rooms in Ludhiana and Jagraon - 01624223226 (SDM Jagraon office) and 01612403100 (Deputy Commissioner Office Ludhiana). Special teams of civil and police officers have already been dispatched from Ludhiana to Vrindavan, officials said.

CM Revanth Attends CWC Meeting in Delhi



New Delhi TSIT: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy attended the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting at Indira Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday. The meeting, chaired by AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, was also attended by Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, K.C. Venugopal, and other senior leaders. Chief Ministers from Congress-ruled states, including Siddaramaiah (Karnataka) and Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh), joined key deliberations. The CWC focused on political strategies and organizational matters to strengthen the party's national framework.

Pakistani youth using their energy to fuel terrorism: Rajnath

Noida (TSIT): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday targeted Pakistan, saying that some of the youth in that country are using their energy to fuel terrorism.

Speaking at the Convocation ceremony of Noida International University in Noida, the Defence Minister said, "When India's youth channel their energy correctly, they create technology that makes the world better. On the other hand, some Pakistani youth are using this same energy to fuel terrorism." He said youth are indeed an inexhaustible reservoir of energy. "This very energy forms the foundation of creation and development, and if it goes astray, it can also become



the cause of destruction," he said. India's rich cultural heritage plays a crucial role in guiding our youth in the right direction, he said. The Defence Minister called upon the youth to achieve their dreams through dedication. "Your circumstances, struggles, and dreams are what make you unique. Therefore, recognise your abilities and strengths, and then move forward with complete dedication," he said.

AP CABINET APPROVES RS. 10,239 CR CHIP PLANT, EYES VIZAG AS AI HUB



Amaravathi (TSIT): The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, led by CM Nara Chandrababu Naidu, approved multi-billion rupee investments on April 10, 2026, with a strategic focus on making Visakhapatnam a global AI and IT hub. Key clearances include the Adani Infra AI Data Center, IT parks by iSpout (Rs.1,000 crore), and a Rs.10,239 crore semiconductor OSAT facility by RRP Electronics in Sri Sathya Sai district. Other major nods went to a Shyam Metals steel complex (Rs.3,678 crore) and AM/NS pellet plant expansion (Rs.1,400 crore). The Cabinet also greenlit green energy projects, Amaravati Quantum Valley, healthcare AI systems, tourism infrastructure, and ex-gratia for accident victims.

Karnataka Home Minister clarifies no 'zombie drugs' exist; police arrest man for posting video

Bengaluru, April 10 : The Karnataka Police have arrested the man who posted the viral video claiming the availability of "zombie drugs" in Bengaluru city on Friday. However, Home Minister G. Parameshwara has clarified that no such drugs exist in Bengaluru.

He stated that the man in the video had consumed alcohol and taken tablets simultaneously, which caused him to behave unusually on a public road. The police in Bengaluru have arrested the accused, identified as Hemanth Kumar, a resident of the Vidyanarayana locality. He had recorded the video three days ago and posted it on social media.

The video showed a man acting like a "zombie" through his body language on a busy arterial road in broad daylight.

The police have also tracked down the man seen in the video in the city. He was subjected to a medical examination to check for the presence of narcotic substances.

The police stated that no narcotic substance was found during the tests. The accused, Hemanth Kumar, works as a field executive for an eyewear brand. Police investigations revealed that while he was travelling on Bagalur Main



Road at around 11.30 a.m. on April 7, he spotted a man in an intoxicated state, struggling to walk and behaving unusually. He recorded a 32-second video of the man and posted it on his Instagram account, the police said. The police were able to track him with the help of the scooter seen in the video. The clip later went viral and raised concerns about so-called "zombie drugs."

Sharing the video, Kannada film popular hero Duniya Vijay appealed to parents to take care of their children. "A new narcotic drug is available in Bengaluru, and youth should be careful. Parents must also remain vigilant. The police department should clarify the facts regarding the 'zombie

drug'. People must inform the police if they receive any information about it," he said.

After the video went viral on social media, the police launched an investigation and identified Hemanth as the person behind it. Police have also clarified that claims about "zombie drugs" are false.

Responding to the rumours, Home Minister G. Parameshwara dismissed the claims as baseless. He said preliminary information indicated that the individual was a lorry driver who had come from northern states such as Haryana or Punjab for work. The person had reportedly consumed medication for an illness along with alcohol, which led to his unusual behaviour.

New Delhi, April 10 : Amid internal rift within the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha on Friday shared a message on Instagram asserting that his parliamentary work would speak for itself.

Taking to the social media platform Instagram, Chadha posted a video and wrote, "With respect, to those questioning my parliamentary performance, I'll let my work do the talking."

The video featured a compilation of his interventions and questions raised in the Rajya Sabha, highlighting a wide range of public policy issues he has addressed.

In the video, Chadha is seen raising concerns on several matters, including the problem of data expiry, the need to make paternity leave a legal right, and the demand to end minimum balance penalties in banks. He also spoke about issues such as food adulteration, incoming call charges, 28-day recharge scam, taxation concerns, and excess baggage charges in airlines.

Further, he addressed broader systemic challenges such as paper leak scams, air pollution, exploitation of gig workers, delays in health insurance claims, and alleged irregularities at toll plazas. The video



also included his remarks on expensive airport food, data privacy breaches, the demand for a free annual health check-up as a right, and rising airfares.

Chadha additionally raised concerns over digital copyright strikes, GST reforms, the debt-to-GDP ratio, and tax relief for persons with disabilities and members of the armed forces. His interventions also touched upon the legalisation of virtual digital assets, labour reforms such as "right to hire and fire", and comparisons of taxation and service delivery standards.

Among other issues highlighted were rising inflation, the cancer train of Punjab, joint tax filing, rural banking infrastructure, water scarcity, and the digitisation of land records using blockchain technology. He also spoke about expanding UDAN cafes across India, urban traffic congestion, misleading product branding, and the gap between education and employment.

The video further showcased his demands related to wage indexation, conferring the Bharat Ratna on Bhagat Singh, 'One Nation, One Medical Treatment', menstrual hygiene, and Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers. Chadha also raised concerns about vanishing groundwater levels in Punjab, access to drinking water, and issues related to the state's heritage and infrastructure, including international flight connectivity.

The post comes at a time when speculation is mounting about Chadha's position within AAP. On April 8, a separate Instagram post shared by him drew attention after it featured a purported supporter suggesting that he should form a new youth-led political party instead of joining any existing organisation.

In the 22-second video, the supporter said that forming a "Gen Z party" could be a better option for Chadha, as it would attract strong youth backing and avoid potential backlash that might come from joining another political outfit. Reposting the clip, Chadha responded briefly, writing, "Interesting thought", accompanied by a thoughtful emoji.

Dr.Soumya Mishra Inaugurates New G+1 Barrack at Cherlapalli Central Prison

Hyderabad TSIT: Dr. Soumya Mishra, Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services, inaugurated a newly constructed G+1 barrack at Central Prison, Cherlapalli on Friday, marking a significant step towards improving prison infrastructure and inmate welfare.

The newly built barrack will accommodate an additional 108 prisoners, helping to ease congestion and enhance living conditions within the facility. The initiative reflects the Department's continued focus on modernization and capacity expansion. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Soumya Mishra said the construction of the barrack had been pending for nearly four years and was completed within six months through dedicated efforts.

She noted that the new facility would play a key role in strengthening infrastructure and ensuring better accommodation for inmates.

Emphasizing a reform-oriented approach, she stated that improving prison conditions is essential



for creating a humane environment that supports rehabilitation. During her visit, she inspected the prison garden where inmates are engaged in cultivating organic leafy vegetables, promoting both sustainability and skill develop-

ment. She also visited the prison industries unit and interacted with inmates working there. Further, she reviewed the proposed site for establishing an ITI training centre in collaboration with the Directorate of

Employment and Training, aimed at enhancing vocational skills among prisoners. Dr. Mishra also inspected the prison library and NIOS classroom facilities, highlighting the importance of education and continuous learning in the rehabilitation process. Senior officials of the Prisons Department, including IG Prisons N. Murali Babu, DIG Prisons Dr. D.Srinivas, Assistant Director of Industries S. M. Khalid Akthar, Superintendent of Central Prison Chanchalguda N.Shiva Kumar Goud, and Superintendent of Central Prison Cherlapalli G. Pramod, were present at the inauguration. The Prisons Department reiterated its commitment to infrastructure development, decongestion, and comprehensive rehabilitation of inmates as part of its ongoing reform initiatives.

HIGH GOALS ARE THE FIRST STEP TO SUCCESS: DISTRICT COLLECTOR P. PRAVEENYA



Sangareddy, April 10 (TSIT) District Collector P. Praveenya advised students to set high goals and pursue their studies with determination to achieve success in life. On Friday, she visited the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule BC Girls Gurukul School and College at Muthangi in Patancheru mandal. Speaking on the occasion, she emphasized that the period from Class 9 to Class 12 is crucial in shaping a student's future. She urged students to start preparing early for competitive exams like NEET, JEE, and EAMCET from the Intermediate level itself, and also to gear up in advance for future competitive examinations after Intermediate. The Collector highlighted that Classes 9 to 12 form a vital phase in a student's life, and hard work during this period can help them reach great heights in the future. She advised every student to clearly define their goals and work with dedication to achieve them. She further stated that the government is providing special coaching for competitive exams such as NEET, JEE Advanced, and EAMCET, and encouraged students to utilize these opportunities effectively to secure seats in prestigious institutions. Praveenya also motivated students to face life's challenges with courage and move forward with confidence, noting that success comes to those who work hard.

OFFICIALS URGED TO ENSURE 'ARRIVE ALIVE' PROGRAMME SUCCESS: POLICE COMMISSIONER

Warangal, April 10 – Police Commissioner Sunpreet Singh directed officials to work collectively to make the 'Arrive Alive' programme, scheduled from April 13 to 18 as part of the Public Governance Progress Plan, a success. At a preparatory meeting with district Collectors from Hanumakonda, Warangal, and Janagama,



he stressed preventing road accidents by identifying black spots and taking immediate action. Officials from police, revenue, transport, and R&B departments were asked to coordinate awareness campaigns, enforce traffic rules, conduct school bus fitness checks, and install speed breakers and lights on accident-prone roads. Collectors Chahat Bajpai and Dr. Satya Sharada emphasized forming road safety committees, monitoring helmet use, and prioritizing student safety. Janagama District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha called for special focus on National Highway accident zones. The mission, officials reiterated, is to save every life.

RYTHU SANGHAM STATE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE MADE A SUCCESS: KONDAGURLA LINGANNA.



Mancherla, April 10 (TSIT): Kondagurla Linganna, District Secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Union, Mancherla, has called upon farmers to make the Telangana Rythu Sangham's Third State Conference a grand success. The conference is scheduled to be held on April 26, 27, and 28 at Kothagudem town in Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

Speaking at a mandal committee meeting of the Rythu Sangham held at Tallapet village in Dandepalli mandal on Thursday, Linganna urged farmers to participate in large numbers to ensure the success of the conference. On the occasion, a pamphlet related to the state conference was released.

He stated that the Rythu Sangham has been consistently fighting for farmers' issues such as remunerative prices, crop insurance facilities, bonus, Rythu Bharosa, farmer insurance, and bank loan-related problems. He noted that the Telangana Rythu Sangham is functioning under the aegis of the All India Kisan Sabha to safeguard farmers' rights.

Linganna criticized the Central Government's agri-

cultural policies, stating that they are pro-corporate and detrimental to farmers. He pointed out that despite farmers demanding the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission recommendations, including Minimum Support Price (MSP) and comprehensive crop insurance, the government has failed to respond adequately.

He further alleged that new initiatives such as the Seed Bill and Electricity Amendment Bill are imposing additional burdens on farmers, while the weakening of the rural employment guarantee scheme is adversely affecting the rural poor.

He added that the Rythu Sangham is striving for the resolution of farmers' issues in the state and is continuing its struggle to ensure irrigation water to every acre in Bhadradi Kothagudem district through the Sitarama Project. Appealing for broader support, he urged intellectuals, prominent citizens, and well-wishers of farmers to extend their cooperation—both moral and financial—and participate actively in making the conference a success.

FARMERS' DEVELOPMENT KEY TO STATE'S PROGRESS: MINISTER ADLURI LAXMAN KUMAR



Jagityala, April 10, TSIT: Adduri Laxman Kumar, Telangana State SC ST Handicapped Minister said that the development of the state will be realized only if the farmers develop in the state. Korutla MLA Dr. Sanjay and District Collector B Sathyaprasad inaugurated the maize purchase centers in Korutla and Metpelli Agricultural Market Committee on Friday. The

minister spoke on this occasion. Farmers in the district should not sell the maize grown to middlemen and lose money. It is advised to take advantage of the maize purchase centers set up by the government and get the government support price of 2400. Korutla MLA Sanjay said that the welfare of farmers is the goal of governments and every government is committed to the welfare of farmers.

DISTRICT SP CALLS FOR COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO MAKE 'ARRIVE ALIVE' A SUCCESS



Yadadri Bhongir, April 10 – District SP Akshansh Yadav said the 'Arrive Alive' programs, scheduled from April 13 to 18 as part of the 99-day 'Praja Palana – Pragathi Plan,' must be made a collective success through coordination among all departments. At a review meeting with Additional Collector Bhaskar Rao and officials from various departments, the SP outlined a six-day action plan: Gram Sabhas and road safety pledges (April 13-14), Children's Road Safety

Day with focus on helmets and seat belts for minors (April 15), mandatory helmet/seat belt compliance for government employees (April 16), first aid and emergency response training (April 17), and counseling for traffic violators (April 18). He also called for school bus fitness checks, eye tests for drivers, and human chain demonstrations at major junctions. All departments, he urged, must work in close coordination to ensure the campaign's success.

Menu should be implemented strictly for students: District Collector Adarsh Surabhi

Wanaparthi: District Collector Adarsh Surabhi has ordered to ensure strict implementation of the menu and provide all facilities to the students in the government hostels without causing any inconvenience. On Friday, the district collector visited the government BC college students' welfare hostel located behind the government polytechnic college. On this occasion, he inspected the students' rooms, kitchen, stock room and checked all the facilities provided in the hostel. Inquiring whether there are any problems in the supply of LPG gas, the collector suggested that if there are any problems, they should be brought to the atten-



tion of the Tehsildar immediately and they would be solved quickly. The Collector said that the students should be provided quality food according to the menu decided by the government. The

officials were directed to ensure strict implementation of the menu and provide all facilities to the students without any inconvenience. Also, when asked whether quality rice is being supplied to the hostel, the officials said that quality rice is being received. The collector spoke directly to the students and asked their views on the hostel facilities, and the students said that all the facilities are good. Double bedroom houses should be provided in the colony. The Collector visited a colony of double bedroom houses on the outskirts of Rajpet village. Talked to the locals there and got to know their problems.

Warangal Police Announce Weekend Special Programmes for Road Safety

WARANGAL, April 9, TSIT : In connection with the Warangal CP Arrive Alive programme, which was organized by State Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao and Police DGP Shivdhar Reddy as part of the ambitious public governance development programme of the state government. Warangal Police Commissioner has informed that weekend road safety programmes will be organized from April 13 to 18 of this month while explaining the programmes undertaken by Warangal Police Commissionerate to prevent road accidents. As part of this Arrive Alive programme, on the first day road safety committees will be formed at the village level and the members will be sworn in. On the occasion of Dr BR



Ambedkar Jayanti on the second day, people will be sworn in to obey the traffic rules at the idols and appropriate action will be taken to identify the intersections prone to accidents. The third day will be organized as Children's Road Safety Day and awareness will be given to the students about road crossing,

use of helmet and seat belt. On the fourth day, the authorities and public conducted awareness raising programmes on road safety through social media and conducted special checks on drivers and checked safety standards. On the fifth day, a training programme on Golden Hour Response will be conducted to create awareness

on life saving procedures during emergencies. The police commissioner explained to the officers that the sixth day will be held as zero enforcement day and an awareness conference will be held through counseling without imposing fines on the traffic violators. The main objective of these programmes is to increase awareness of road safety among people and reduce accidents. Warangal Police Commissioner advised people to follow traffic rules and cooperate for safe travel. DCPs Kavitha, Ankit Kumar, Additional DCP Prabhakar Rao, ACPs Satyanarayana, John Narsimhulu, Inspectors Sita Reddy, Sujatha, Srinivas and Ramesh participated in this meeting.

ARRIVE ALIVE" ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM UNDER PRAJA PALANA – PRAGATHI PRANALIKA

Sangareddy, April 10 (TSIT) District Superintendent of Police, Paritosh Pankaj, stated that the state government is giving special focus to preventing road accidents as part of the 99-day action plan under "Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika." As part of this initiative, special road safety awareness programs titled "Arrive Alive" will be conducted across the district for six days, from April 13 to April 18. Speaking to officials through a video conference, the SP issued several guidelines regarding the week-long campaign. He instructed that village-level road safety committees should be formed in every village with the involvement of sarpanches and youth. These committees should identify local road safety issues and take necessary steps to prevent accidents. To reduce accidents, he emphasized the importance of defensive driving practices. He also suggested creating awareness by displaying visuals of road accidents in the district through LED screens and flex banners.



The SP directed officials to intensify awareness campaigns by painting road safety messages on village walls and organizing short skits through police cultural teams to educate the public. He stressed that police personnel must strictly follow traffic rules themselves and act as role models. He also ordered that traffic challoans should be imposed even on police officers and staff who violate traffic rules. Additionally, he advised conducting meetings with auto, lorry, and bus driver unions to discuss traffic regulations and common issues faced by drivers. He recommended using public addressing systems, loudspeakers, and social media platforms to widely spread awareness about traffic rules.

COMPLETE ONGOING WORKS ON BHADRAKALI BUND IN TIME



WARANGAL, April 10, TSIT : Continued on Bhadrakali Bund City Mayor Gundu Sudharani directed the officials to complete the development works on time and with quality. On Friday Hanumakonda District Collector/Baldia Commissioner Chahat Bajpai inspected the ongoing works on Bhadrakali Bund in the 29th Division and also the ongoing development works at 12 Moris at the field level. On this occasion, many instructions were given to the officials to complete the works effectively. On this occasion, Mayor and Collector inspected the desilting works. Later, she visited the ongoing culvert construction works in Potana Nagar and ordered the officials to complete the works with quality and speed. EE Ravi Kumar, DEs Raj Kumar, Santhosh Kumar, AE Naresh and others participated in this programme.

CM and DCM directs Chief Secretary to instruct DCs and CEOs to prevent deduction of Gruha Lakshmi funds for loan repayments

CM ISSUES ORDER FOLLOWING APPEAL BY STATE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE GUARANTEE AUTHORITY AND MLC DINESH GOOLIGOWDA

Bengaluru: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has ordered immediate action regarding complaints that private finance companies and microfinance institutions are forcibly deducting money from the accounts of women beneficiaries under the state government's ambitious Gruha Lakshmi scheme, citing pending loans.

Following this, the Chief Secretary has instructed concerned officials to take necessary action.

Karnataka Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority vice president and MLC Dinesh Gooligowda, who is also the State Vice President of the Guarantee Implementation Authority, had written to CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar highlighting that private finance companies and microfinance institutions were deducting money from beneficiaries' accounts without their knowledge.

Acting swiftly, the CM directed Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to issue instructions to all Zilla Panchayat CEOs. Accordingly, the Chief Secretary has written to the Additional Chief Secretaries of the Home and Urban Development



Departments, as well as all Deputy Commissioners and ZP CEOs, directing them to take urgent action.

What did the appeal state? MLC and State Vice President of the Guarantee Authority, Dinesh Gooligowda, in his letter to CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, highlighted this serious issue.

The state government's flagship Gruha Lakshmi scheme has empowered crores of women across the state financially. The monthly assistance of Rs.2,000 deposited into women's accounts supports daily needs of poor and middle-class families.

However, recent reports indicate that some private finance companies, microfinance institutions, and self-help groups are forcibly deducting this amount as loan repayments or interest immediately after it is credited. In some cases, pressure is being exerted on bank officials or beneficiaries are being threat-

ened to recover the money.

The government provides this financial assistance for women's personal use and empowerment. Using it for loan recovery defeats the core objective of the scheme and is pushing already struggling women into deeper financial distress.

Key demands in the appeal: Strict order: Banks and financial institutions must be strictly instructed not to deduct Gruha Lakshmi funds towards loan repayments.

Awareness & grievance system: A dedicated helpline or district-level committee should be established for beneficiaries to report such incidents immediately.

Legal action: Strict legal action, including cancellation of licenses, should be taken against institutions that deduct money without consent.

The letter urged immediate intervention to safeguard the interests of poor women and ensure effective implementation of the scheme.

First time in India: Parkinson's patients to better with the availability of Indigenously Developed APOSAN® 3ml Pen by Rusan Pharma

Bangalore : Rusan Healthcare Pvt. Ltd, of Rusan Pharma Limited, an integrated global pharmaceutical company, has announced the launch of the multi-dose delivery pen device - APOSAN® 3ml Pen (Apomorphine Hydrochloride solution for injection in cartridge)(10 mg/ml)(3 ml pre-filled cartridges) for treatment of motor fluctuations commonly known as 'ON-OFF' episodes in patients suffering from Parkinson's disease (PD). Rusan pioneered apomorphine therapy in India with the launch of APOSAN® in 2018 (2ml and 5ml ampoules), demonstrating strong clinical

impact and positive patient outcomes in Parkinson's management. The company now offers a comprehensive apomorphine portfolio, including 2ml injections, 3ml pre-filled cartridges with a multi-dose pen, and 5ml infusion pumps, addressing both rapid rescue from OFF episodes and sustained symptom control.

The APOSAN® 3ml PEN features a multi-dose, dial-a-dose mechanism with an enhanced dose-visibility window, enabling accurate and consistent administration. It reduces handling complexity and supports safer, more reliable self-administration, minimizing dosing errors. Its light-

weight, portable design allows convenient subcutaneous use at home.

Commenting on the launch, Ms. Malavika Kaura Saxena, Chief Marketing Officer, Rusan Healthcare, said, "The APOSAN® 3ml PEN marks a significant step forward, offering a portable, multi-use solution for reliable apomorphine delivery. Complemented by the APOSAN® HOPE Program with structured onboarding, guided support, and patient-centric services, it simplifies adoption and ongoing therapy management, enabling patients and families to use the treatment with confidence and continuity."

Students with Highest Marks in PUC Honoured at Vasavi International PU College



Vijayanagar : Vasavi International PU College organized a felicitation program to honour students who secured top marks in the PUC examinations, along with their parents.

The students honoured on the occasion included Amulya, B.N. Shreya, Yashaswini, Jaladhari Lahari, Tarun, L. Madan M, and Bhoomika N. The event celebrated their academic excellence and recognized the support of their parents.

Secretary of Vasavi Group of Educational Institutions, D.R. Vijayasaarathi, felicitated the students and appreciated their achievements. The program was attended by the college principal, teaching staff, and members of the management.

Speaking on the occasion, D.R. Vijayasaarathi said, "Talent does not belong to a select few; every child possesses potential. It is important to identify, encourage, and support it. In this direc-

tion, Vasavi institutions are taking the lead."

He further stated that the institution's primary objective is to ensure that every child receives education and that no one is deprived of learning opportunities. "Though a majority of our students come from poor and middle-class backgrounds, we provide them with high-quality, hi-tech educational facilities comparable to top institutions," he added.

He also highlighted that along with encouraging meritorious students, the institution organizes job fairs after graduation to create employment opportunities, benefiting thousands of youth so far.

On the occasion, it was announced that students securing high marks and taking admission for higher education will be given a 50 percent fee concession.

Nagabhushana Leads Kannada Zee5's Genre-Bending Original Series 'Jerax'

Bengaluru: Kannada ZEE5's upcoming original series Jerax brings together a compelling creative collaboration, with actor-producer Daali Dhananjaya backing the project and Srinidhi Bengaluru taking charge as director.

The platform has now announced Nagabhushana as the lead actor, marking a significant milestone in his steadily rising journey as a bankable performer. Having built a strong connection with audiences through relatable, humorous social media content, Nagabhushana transitioned seamlessly into films and web series with notable performances in Ikkat, Tagaru Palya, Vidyapati, and Honeymoon. His grounded acting style and natural screen presence have made him one of the most relatable faces in contemporary Kannada entertain-

ment. Jerax has already sparked curiosity, starting with its intriguing title. The series is set in the Mandya-Mysuru belt and follows Prakash, a xerox shop owner whose life takes an unexpected turn when he discovers he possesses unusual powers.

With this announcement, Kannada ZEE5 continues to strengthen its focus on stories rooted in local sensibilities and creators who bring cultural truth and contemporary relevance to the screen. Lead Actor Nagabhushana says, "JERAX is unlike anything I've been a part of, it's unpredictable, eccentric and constantly shifting. The world Srinidhi has created feels familiar and bizarre at the same time, and as a performer, that space was exciting to explore. I'm thrilled that Kannada ZEE5 is giving room for stories that dare to be different."

CSR Initiative by Polaris Transforms Lives of Persons with Disabilities

Bengaluru : In a powerful step towards inclusion and dignity, Voice of Needy Foundation (VNF) distributed livelihood kits to over 20 persons with disabilities at its Hesaraghatta MDC. The beneficiaries



received petty shop carts, tailoring machines, grocery materials, and essential tools enabling them to start their own income generating activities. This life-changing initiative was made possible through the generous CSR support of Polaris India Pvt Ltd, reaffirming its commitment to empowering marginalized communities and creating sustainable impact. The event was attended by Mrs. Ashima Sharma, Mrs. Rita, and Mr. Madhu from Polaris, along with representatives from SVP India — Mr. T.V. Srinivasan and Mr. Sanjay Manohar. Mr. Arunkumar and VNF team members were also present. For many beneficiaries, this support is not just a kit—but a new beginning towards self-reliance, confidence, and a life of dignity.

Salute Your Work, You Will Reach the Top” at Bharat LEADS Summit 2026: Padma Shri Dr. C.N. Manjunath

Bengaluru: Bharat LEADS Summit 2026 Held at Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, The Centre for Leadership, Empowering Attitude Development for Sustainability (LEADS Next Gen Centre), under the Faculty of Management and Commerce, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS), Bengaluru, organized the Bharat LEADS Summit 2026 with great enthusiasm and participation.

The Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Dr. C.N. Manjunath, attended the summit as the Chief Guest and delivered an inspiring inaugural address.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Manjunath highlighted the strength of India's democracy rooted in diversity, digital empowerment, and global diaspora. He



pointed out that nearly 35% of doctors in the United States and around 32% of engineers and scientists are of Indian origin, reflecting India's growing global influence.

Emphasizing the importance of execution over ideas, he stated that success lies in transforming vision into action. Citing the

example of development works on National Highway-44, he explained how determination and leadership can turn challenges into achievements.

He underscored that challenges and failures are integral to success, urging students to develop resilience and confidence. Drawing from his tenure as Director of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, he spoke about the importance of discipline, teamwork, and respect for every employee, which contributed to remarkable institutional growth. Dr. Manjunath also highlighted India's significant role in the pharmaceutical and technology sectors, noting that a substantial portion of medicines and technological products used globally are produced in India.

Addressing the youth, he stressed the importance of nation-building and responsible use of intelligence. He outlined key values such as Intelligence, Integrity, Integration, Innovation, and Involvement as essential for personal and national development.

He cautioned against stress, unrealistic expectations, and shortcuts, emphasizing that sustained success requires patience, dedication, and continuous learning. He encouraged students to focus on gaining practical knowledge along with academic qualifications. The summit witnessed the presence of eminent dignitaries including Mr. Ramanan Ramanathan, Mr. Rishikesh Patankar, Vice President, National Skill Development Corporation, and representatives from NITI Aayog, along with industry leaders.

Asia Jewels Show 2026 Inaugurated in Bengaluru



Bengaluru, April 10, 2026 – The much-awaited Asia Jewels Show 2026, a fine jewellery exhibition, was inaugurated today at Hotel JW Marriott in Ashok Nagar. The three-day event (April 10, 11, and 13) will remain open from 10:30 AM to 8:00 PM. Actress Pragya Nagra, along with Fasiha Nauman (finalist of Miss Universe Karnataka) and Sharanya Shetty, graced the launch. Kamalesh, Sales Head of

HRS Media, was also present. The 61st edition of the show features exclusive, high-end jewellery designs from top jewellers across India, including gold, diamond, platinum, traditional, wedding, antique, Kundan, Jadau, Polki, silver, and lab-grown diamond jewellery. Organizers described it as a one-stop destination for wedding and festive season shopping in South India.

C.G. Srinivasan a Powerful Figure Without Holding Any Post, Says MP Basavaraj Bommai; Urges Dalits to Demand Their Rights



Bengaluru, April 9, 2026 – Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai described industrialist C.G. Srinivasan as a powerful and influential figure despite holding no official position, speaking at a felicitation programme for the Dalit entrepreneur here on Thursday.

"Many gain influence through positions, but some become powerful even without holding any office. Srinivasan belongs to the latter category," Bommai said. He praised Srinivasan

for organizing SC/ST entrepreneurs after resigning as Chief Manager in the Industries Department and for working selflessly for society without compromise. Bommai urged Dalit communities to demand and secure their rights from the state government, emphasizing that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar enshrined rights in the Constitution because marginalized communities were often unaware of them. He stressed that SC/ST communities must enter the industrial sector and

focus on entrepreneurship rather than seeking jobs, noting that around 5,000 entrepreneurs have emerged through Srinivasan's efforts. The MP also highlighted that during his tenure, increased reservation benefits have led to over 4,000 engineering seats and more than 400 medical seats going to SC/ST students. Former CM Jagadish Shettar, MPs Kumar Nayak and Mallesh, and other dignitaries attended the event.

Amazon Brings Counterfeit Crimes Unit to India

Bengaluru, April 10, 2026 – Amazon today announced the expansion of its Counterfeit Crimes Unit (CCU) to India, reinforcing its global commitment to protecting consumers and brands from counterfeit goods. The unit will bring together Amazon's local experts, working closely with Indian brands, sellers, and law enforcement agencies to combat counterfeit operations and safeguard consumer trust in India's fast-growing e-commerce sector.

The expansion of CCU to India reflects Amazon's commitment to preserving marketplace integrity while helping protect customers and sellers on amazon.in. The unit will focus on proactively detecting and removing counterfeit listings, safeguarding intellectual property, and enabling coordinated enforcement action against bad actors, while deepening collaboration with industry bodies and government stakeholders. This effort is in line with

Amazon's broader long-term commitment to India, including its plan to invest more than \$35 billion across its businesses in the country through 2030.

"Protecting customers and brands from counterfeit goods is fundamental to preserving trust in our store and protecting sellers," said Kebharu Smith, Director of Amazon's Counterfeit Crimes Unit. "Our global anti-counterfeiting efforts have helped prevent millions of dollars in potential harm. With CCU expanding to India, we're bringing that same commitment and expertise to help protect customers, brands, and sellers on amazon.in. We're combining advanced technology, dedicated teams, and strong partnerships with brands and law enforcement to take the fight to bad actors on the ground in India. This helps create a safer marketplace for customers, sellers and brands."

KARNATAKA LEADS WITH RECORD HYDROPOWER GENERATION, KPCL SETS NEW BENCHMARK

All-time high of 15,509 million units of electricity generated in 2025-26

Bengaluru : State-owned Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), a leading power producer, has set an all-time record by generating 15,509 million units of hydropower during the financial year 2025-26.

This achievement gains added significance as Karnataka has recently been ranked among the leading states in hydropower, with an installed capacity of 3.63 gigawatts, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation."

total of 15,509 million units of electricity was generated from Four stations in the Sharavathi valley. Four in the Kali valley. Two each in the Varahi and Cauvery valleys . One each in the Krishna and Tungabhadra river systems

In comparison, the previous record was 13,853 million units in 2024-25.

"KPCL has made consistent efforts to meet the state's power demand. Even some of the oldest hydropower stations—such as Shivanasamudra, Shimsha, Sharavathi, and the Mahatma Gandhi Hydel Power Station Jog Falls—have delivered impressive performance. Improved maintenance practices have played a key role in boosting generation," said Managing Director KPCL and Additional Chief Secretary (Energy), Gaurav Gupta.

New Milestones in Sharavathi and Varahi Valleys

The Sharavathi and Varahi valley power stations together generated 8,696 million units, setting another record in 2025-26. Sharavathi valley: Target 4,800 MU Achieved 5,642 MU

(+17.54%) . Mahatma Gandhi Hydel Power station Jog Falls: Target 549 MU Achieved 643 MU (+17.15%)

Gerusoppa Hydro Electric Project: Target 1,060 MU Achieved 644 MU . Varahi Hydroelectric Project: Target 1,060 MU Achieved 1,599 MU (+50.85%) . Bhadra Hydroelectric Project: Target 55 MU Achieved 68 MU (+25.39%) . Shimsha Hydroelectric Project: Target 47 MU Achieved 66 MU (+41.03%). Mani Dam Hydro Electric Power: Target 24 MU Achieved 32 MU (+34.37%)

Record Production in Individual Stations

Mahatma Gandhi station: Previous record 550 MU (2021-22) Now 643 MU (+16.92%) Gerusoppa: Previous record 641 MU (2007-08) Now 644 MU. Varahi: Previous record 1,401 MU Now 1,599 MU (+14.13%)

EDITORIAL

Over 1 Lakh US Troops Are Stationed In Europe. What Happens If They Leave?

Wednesday was the day after the United States and Iran had agreed on a two-week ceasefire. Obviously, the pause in the West Asia war was going to dominate the press conference at the White House. During the press briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt dropped a bombshell. In response to a question, she casually revealed that President Donald Trump would be discussing the US's potential exit from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with Secretary General Mark Rutte later that day.

Trump has been angry over the fact that several European NATO members refused his call to support the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran. Only days earlier, he had signalled how far he was willing to go, saying America's membership was not "beyond reconsideration". Then came the meeting itself. Trump and Rutte spoke privately for nearly two hours, described afterwards as a blunt and tense exchange. If there had been hope that diplomacy might cool tempers, it faded quickly. Within minutes, Trump took to Truth Social and delivered a pointed message:

"NATO WASN'T THERE WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, AND THEY WON'T BE THERE IF WE NEED THEM AGAIN."

The Leaked Messages

One could see it coming. Last year, in an accidentally leaked WhatsApp chat, Vice President JD Vance and War Secretary Pete Hegseth called the Europeans "free-loading". There is a strong feeling in the Trump administration that Europe has taken the US for a ride for far too long. "Yeah I think they've been freeloading," Trump had told reporters back then, when asked if he agreed with Hegseth, who was quoted as saying in the leaked Signal chats. A user identified as Vance had even said, "I just hate bailing Europe out again", and a user identified as Hegseth replied: "I fully share your loathing of European freeloading. It's PATHETIC."

Will the US, however, really leave the 32-nation alliance? If America, its most powerful member, were to leave, defence experts in Europe believe the consequences would extend far beyond the continent.

The Unmistakable Numbers

To understand the scale of such a move, it is important to begin with what the US currently provides to NATO. Around 1 lakh highly trained American troops are stationed across Europe. The US has air bases in Germany and Italy, naval facilities in Spain, intelligence hubs, logistics networks, missile defence systems and rapid response units across Europe. These forces are deeply integrated into NATO command structures and would be among the first to respond during a crisis. Needless to say, their presence acts as a deterrent in a big way, particularly against Russia. It is to be noted that the American role is not limited to troops. The US makes up the backbone of NATO's nuclear deterrence. It is no secret that American nuclear weapons are stationed in several European countries under NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangement. More important than the weapons is the guarantee behind them. The credibility of NATO rests on the assumption that the US would come to Europe's defence. If Washington were to withdraw, that assumption would certainly weaken. Even if treaties remained, the psychological impact would be immediate, because deterrence depends as much on perception as on capability.

Edit

COMMERCIALIZATION OF FAITH:

A Serious Question on VIP Darshan and Neglect of Common Devotees



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(Where does the common devotee stand in the growing trend of VIP darshan?)

In a country like India, where religion and faith are not merely a matter of personal belief but an integral part of social and cultural life, temples and pilgrimage sites have played a vital role. For centuries, these places have been considered symbols of equality, peace, and spiritual balance. "All are equal in God's court"—this statement is not just an ideal but a deeply held belief in Indian society. However, in recent years, this belief has been questioned. Many major temples and pilgrimage sites across the country charge hefty fees for VIP darshan, special pujas, abhishekam, and aarti. In exchange for these services, devotees are promised relief from long queues, reduced darshan time, and a more convenient experience. At first glance, this system appears to be an alternative, but when it impacts the experience of ordinary devotees, it becomes a serious social problem. Today, the situation is such that on one hand, there are those who, by paying extra money, can easily have darshan in a few minutes, while on the other, large numbers of ordinary people stand in queues for hours, sometimes even entire days. During this time, they face crowds, jostling, rude behavior, and sometimes even physical violence. This experience is not only



uncomfortable but also humiliating—especially when one has come there with faith and devotion. It's natural to question whether faith itself is becoming a "premium service"? Should there be discrimination based on economic status even for the sake of seeing God? This situation isn't limited to religious sites, but rather reflects the growing inequality in our society. From ration shops to gas cylinder lines, and now even temples—the middle class and common people often face chaos and struggle. The argument in favor of VIP culture is that it provides additional revenue to temples, which can be used to improve their facilities and services. This argument is somewhat valid. Large temples receive millions of devotees daily, making it difficult to manage them. Therefore, if some people pay an additional fee and demand special arrangements, the proceeds could be used for public amenities. But problems arise when this system becomes unbalanced. When VIP privileges

become so abundant that the resources and time available to ordinary devotees begin to fall short, it becomes a form of injustice. It has often been observed that general queues are blocked for VIP darshan, further prolonging the wait for ordinary people. This naturally leads to dissatisfaction and resentment. Furthermore, the behavior of temple staff and security personnel is also a significant issue. In many cases, ordinary devotees are treated rudely and disrespectfully, while VIPs are treated with extreme courtesy. This duality further deepens the existing class divide in society. This is also negatively impacting the very spirit of religious sites. Temples are not just places of worship, but also centers of mental peace and spiritual balance. When visitors encounter chaos, crowds, and discrimination, their spiritual experience is affected. This experience can leave them feeling disappointed and frustrated. The solution to this problem is not easy, but it is not impossi-

ble. First, temple administrations should ensure that the number and impact of VIP services are limited. These services should only be intended to provide additional convenience, not to curtail the rights of ordinary devotees. Second, modern technologies can be used for crowd management. Measures such as online booking, time slot systems, and digital queue management can better manage crowds, ensuring an orderly and respectful experience for all devotees. Third, staff and security personnel should be trained in sensitivity and courtesy. Every devotee, whether VIP or ordinary, deserves respect. This sentiment should be reflected not only in policies but also in practice. Fourth, the government and relevant trusts should establish clear guidelines on this issue. Ensuring equality and transparency at religious sites is not just an administrative responsibility, but also a moral one. Finally, it's also essential that society itself becomes aware of this issue.

THE SKILLS THAT SUSTAIN US BEGIN LONG BEFORE SCHOOL



Much of the public conversation about education focuses on curriculum. We ask what children should know, how quickly they should learn it, and how systems can measure whether learning is happening at scale. These questions matter, especially in countries like India where millions of children are moving through education systems at the same time. But anyone who spends time observing young children knows that the foundations of learning are laid long before formal schooling takes shape. In the early years of life, children are forming the capacities that will guide them through everything that comes later. They are learning how to persist with a task that is difficult. They are discovering how to regulate frustration. They are learning how to trust others and how to work alongside them. These are often called "all-round skills," but they are simply the human abilities that allow us to navigate life with other people. What makes these skills difficult to build through policy alone is that they do not emerge primarily from instruction. They grow through repeated interactions with adults and with the environments children

inhabit. A small example illustrates the point. When an adult tells a child they will return in ten minutes and then actually does so, something meaningful is taking place. The child is not simply waiting. They are experiencing consistency. They are learning that the world has rhythms they can rely on. When this happens repeatedly, children begin to feel confident exploring beyond immediate reassurance. They try things that may not work the first time. They ask questions that may not have immediate answers. Over time, these interactions accumulate into something larger. Trust begins to form. Confidence grows. The child develops the emotional stability that allows learning to take root. In many ways this is the true work of early childhood. It happens through ordinary moments that rarely appear in assessment frameworks. A teacher noticing when a child is discouraged and encouraging them to try again. A caregiver responding to a question with patience rather than dismissal. A group of children solving a problem together without an adult stepping in immediately. These interactions shape the way children approach

the world. Some children come to see effort as something worthwhile because they have experienced encouragement when they tried. Others hesitate because earlier experiences have taught them that mistakes lead to correction rather than curiosity. The environments surrounding children are now shifting rapidly. Digital tools and intelligent systems are entering homes and classrooms with increasing speed. In many situations they offer real advantages. Teachers managing large classrooms can use them to organise information more efficiently. Programmes working across entire districts can identify patterns in learning that might otherwise take months to detect. Yet the deeper question remains whether these systems strengthen the conditions through which children develop the abilities that sustain them through life. Technology can organise information and reduce administrative burden. It can offer educators insights that help them plan better. But the core experiences through which children develop resilience, trust, and curiosity still emerge through human interaction. Children learn persistence

by encountering challenges that require effort. They learn empathy through relationships with other people. They develop problem-solving skills by trying things that do not always work immediately. These processes cannot be compressed without changing their nature. The challenge for education systems is therefore not whether to introduce technology, but how to ensure that technological systems support rather than replace the relational foundations of learning. This requires careful design choices. Systems that assist teachers rather than override their judgment. Tools that reduce administrative work so that educators can spend more time observing and responding to children. Platforms that encourage exploration rather than simply rewarding speed and correctness. If the goal of education is to prepare children for life, then the skills that sustain life must remain central to the environments we build. Long after the details of a curriculum fade, the habits children develop in the early years continue to shape how they face uncertainty, how they work with others, and how they approach the challenges ahead.

WHAT MAY HAPPEN AT THE END OF THE 14-DAY CEASEFIRE

The two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran, announced on April 7, 2026, has provided a temporary halt to what had become an accelerating cycle of escalation. US President Donald Trump framed it as a victory, claiming the US had met its military objectives and that a longer agreement was close to finalisation. Iran accepted the ceasefire on the condition that ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz would do so in coordination with its armed forces. Both sides had reasons to welcome an off-ramp. Neither side has fully stopped fighting. The ceasefire, as it stands, may be better understood as a pause rather than a settlement.

● **What Iran Wants From This Deal**

After months of experiencing constant high-alerts, missile strikes, and assassinations, Iran's primary incentive for accepting a two-week pause for talks has been a promise of breathing space. Iran's agreement to the talks despite the temporary two-week window, countering the very first point of its 10-point proposal, only confirms this theory. In these two weeks, irrespective of the negotiation's outcome, Iran is looking to recover and regroup, in terms of military strength, public morale and broader political consolidation under the new leadership. However, hours after the ceasefire announcement, Israel has reportedly continued its strikes on Iran, as confirmed by Israeli military officials. These Israeli strikes may derail US-Iran negotiations, as proven twice in the past. The IRGC may not observe a political agreement that does not address the core condition of a ceasefire. These reported ceasefire violations are not marginal complications. They suggest this deal rests



on the assumption that US agreement ensures Israel's alignment. This assumption, however, might not hold true in reality.

● **The Hormuz Question**

The ceasefire is conditional on Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz. This can be considered the primary point in Iran's proposal that incentivised the US to accept it as a framework for negotiations. Iran has agreed to allow passage, but emphasised that this will be under the supervision of its armed forces. This is not a full return to pre-war conditions. Iran's parliament has already passed legislation

formally enshrining a toll system on Hormuz traffic. The IRGC has been operating a de facto vetting and fee arrangement since mid-March. The ceasefire does not appear to resolve either of these developments. Splitting this transit fee between Iran and Oman might also draw criticism from other Gulf nations like the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are key US allies in the region. The UAE has already expressed opposition, stating that the waterway cannot be held hostage by any single country and that free navigation must be part of any final settlement. Their exclusion from the

transit arrangements is likely to be a source of friction in the weeks ahead.

The broader stakes of Hormuz extend beyond the immediate conflict. Control and assured access to the sea lanes of communication has been a foundational pillar of US power projection for decades. Iran's ability to impose coordinated passage through the Strait represents a structural shift in the waterway's legal and strategic status. While the successful blockade has emerged as proof of Iran's dominance over the Strait of Hormuz at a military level, this transit fee is a step toward institutionalising control. Should that arrangement become codified through any longer-term agreement, the US may find itself under pressure to counter it, regardless of the diplomatic framing around the current pause.

● **The Gaza-Lebanon Problem**

Within hours of the announcement, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made clear that the ceasefire did not include Lebanon. Israel's strikes against Hamas have also continued despite a ceasefire in early 2025. Pakistani mediators had urged all warring parties to observe a ceasefire everywhere, and Islamabad initially indicated that Lebanon was covered. Netanyahu and US Vice-President JD Vance have directly rejected that reading. In mid-March, Israel launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon, and its forces have remained in active combat with Hezbollah ever since. Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah is, therefore, expected to continue regardless of what is agreed between Washington and Tehran. Despite mentioning it in their proposal as a symbolic gesture.

Attack on Saudi pipeline wipes out 10 pc of oil export capacity, disrupts supply

According to the Saudi Press Agency, a strike on a pumping station along the strategic pipeline reduced throughput by around 700,000 barrels per day. The route has become a critical export lifeline, enabling crude shipments to bypass the constrained Strait of Hormuz. Regional tensions have escalated since the February 28 offensive by the United States (US) and Israel on Iran, which killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and triggered a wider regional conflict, increasingly drawing energy infrastructure into the crossfire. The US and Iran agreed on Wednesday, April 8, to a two-week conditional ceasefire, with direct talks scheduled in Islamabad aimed at resolving differences and securing a lasting peace.

ENERGY NETWORK TARGETED ACROSS REGIONS

Saudi officials said the attacks struck a broad range of facilities, including oil and gas production sites, transport networks, refineries, petrochemical plants and electricity infrastructure in Riyadh, the Eastern Province and Yanbu Industrial City.

The Manifa and Khurais oil fields were also hit, reducing



production capacity by a combined 600,000 barrels per day. The losses have tightened supply from one of the world's leading exporters at a time when global markets remain under pressure.

REFINERIES AND GAS EXPORTS DISRUPTED

Major refining facilities in Jubail, Ras Tanura, Yanbu and Riyadh sustained damage, directly affecting exports of refined petroleum products. Gas processing plants in Ju'aymah were also impacted by fires, disrupting shipments of liquefied petroleum gas and natural gas liquids.

Casualties and opera-

tional disruption
The attacks resulted in the death of one Saudi national from industrial security personnel and injuries to seven others. Several facilities reported operational shutdowns, compounding the disruption across the energy sector.

GLOBAL SUPPLY CONCERNS INTENSIFY

Saudi authorities warned that continued strikes could undermine supply security and slow recovery in global energy markets, contributing to increased volatility and inflationary pressure worldwide. The developments come as diplomatic efforts intensify ahead of expected talks in

Islamabad, even as uncertainty persists over maritime access and regional stability. With critical infrastructure under strain and export routes constrained, the scale of disruption is likely to keep global energy markets on edge in the coming weeks. The East-West Pipeline has a maximum capacity of about 7 million barrels per day, of which around 5 million bpd are available for export. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, plays a central role in global crude markets. It has come under attack from hundreds of Iranian missiles and drones since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, most of which were intercept-

ed, authorities have said. Below are some reactions from analysts and traders:

SHOHRUH ZUKHRITDINOV, A DUBAI-BASED OIL TRADER:

"This is a logistics shock layered on top of a production shock. The market has lost its main workaround for the Strait of Hormuz."

EDWARD MEIR, MAREX ANALYST:

"The oil market is quite tight, and although the Saudis have the benefit of exporting via their pipeline to the Red Sea the fact that this has also been impacted is somewhat surprising and even more bullish (to oil prices), as the thinking was that this transit point was experiencing fewer problems. "The outage of Gulf exports also explains why physical prices are well above futures and have not dropped much of late."

JOHN PAISIE, PRESIDENT OF STRATAS ADVISORS:

"The lost production and exports through the East-West Pipeline builds on the ongoing disruption of oil supply stemming from the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz - and adds to the upward pressure on oil prices."

Swiggy Leadership Rejig: Co-Founder Nandan Reddy Quits; Board To See Changes



Nandan Reddy, the co-founder of Swiggy has quit the company and will move on from the online food and grocery delivery major with immediate effect to pursue other independent projects, the company said in an exchange filing on Friday. On the other hand, Swiggy's other co-founder Phani Kishan, who also is the chief growth officer and Group CFO Rahul Bothra have been appointed as the Executive Directors effective June 1. Additionally, the company is welcoming Renan De Castro Alves Pinto from Prosus Ventures as a Nominee Director. Each of these appointments shall be subject to requisite

shareholder approvals. Reddy during the early days along with co-founder and group CEO Srihasha Majety had helped set up operations. While he held many positions in Swiggy, he was more recently leading the Crew, Swiggy's AI concierge offering. After his exit CEO, Kapoor will now take charge of Crew."

"Nandan has been a vital collaborator and a visionary force throughout Swiggy's evolution—from our beginnings in a single Bengaluru neighbourhood to becoming a nationwide platform serving millions. His steadfast commitment to our culture, innovation, and the consumer experi-

ence is woven into our DNA. While his daily presence will be missed, I look forward to the impact of his future endeavours," said Majety. An important point to note is that Reddy is the latest co-founder to quit the company. Reddy and Majety had started the company along with Rahul Jaimini, who exited the company in 2020 to start his own company, Pesto Tech. Swiggy Share Price Today The scrip closed 1.14% higher at Rs 275 apiece on Friday. This compares to a 1.16% advance in the NSE Nifty 50 Index. During the day, the stock rose as much as 3.25% to Rs 280.75 per share.

RBI Proposes Rs 1 Lakh Crore Asset Threshold For Upper Layer NBFC Classification

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a major overhaul of the framework used to classify upper layer non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), introducing a Rs 1 lakh crore asset size threshold as the primary criterion for identification. Under the draft amendment to the Scale-Based Regulatory (SBR) framework, NBFCs with asset sizes of Rs 1 lakh crore and above would be categorised as upper layer (NBFC-UL) entities. This marks a shift from the existing two-pronged methodology that combined asset size and a parametric scoring system. The central bank has also proposed including government-owned NBFCs in the upper layer classification, aligning with its broader objective of maintaining an ownership-neutral regulatory regime. Currently, such entities are placed in the Base Layer or Middle Layer and are excluded from upper layer categorisation. Despite the proposed shift to a more transparent and absolute asset-based criterion, the RBI



said parametric scoring would continue to play a role in identifying systemically important NBFCs. The methodology assigns a 70% weightage to quantitative parameters and 30% to qualitative factors. Additionally, the top 50 NBFCs based on total exposure would automatically be considered for inclusion in the upper layer. In addition, Upper layer NBFCs will be identified periodically and Rs 1 lakh crore asset size threshold will be

reviewed every five years. As part of the regulatory tightening, NBFCs classified in the upper layer will be required to comply with enhanced prudential norms within a two-year transition period. This is aimed at strengthening risk management and ensuring financial stability in the sector. In another key proposal, the RBI has allowed upper layer NBFCs to use state government guarantees as a credit risk transfer instrument without any cap, sub-

ject to specified conditions. This move is expected to improve credit flow while maintaining safeguards. The RBI has invited feedback from NBFCs, stakeholders, and the public on the draft amendment directions until May 4, 2026. The proposed changes are part of the regulator's ongoing efforts to simplify classification norms, enhance transparency, and better align regulatory oversight with the scale and systemic importance of large NBFCs.

White House staff told not to place bets on prediction markets

White House staff were warned last month not to use insider information to place bets on predictions markets. The email was sent to staff on 24 March, a day after US President Donald Trump announced a five-day pause on his threat to attack Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure. It referred to press reports that raised concerns over government officials using non-public information to place bets on platforms like Kalshi or Polymarket. White House spokesman Davis Ingle told the BBC that "any implication that Administration officials are engaged in such activity without evidence is baseless and irresponsible reporting." The Wall Street Journal first reported the email on Thursday. Ingle also said that all federal employees are subject to government ethics guidelines that prohibit the use of insider information for financial gain. "The only special interest that will ever guide President Trump is the best interest of the



American people," he added. The BBC has contacted Kalshi and Polymarket for comment. Polymarket came under scrutiny in January after a gambler made nearly half a million dollars on the capture of Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro just before it was officially announced. It was unclear who placed the bet. The anonymous account had a blockchain

identifier of letters and numbers. The incident raised concerns about whether they had benefited from inside information of the US military operation. Predictions markets, which host more than \$44bn (£33bn) in trades, have become increasingly popular in the past year. The predictions can be related to anything. They mostly involve sports but users can

also place bets on whether, for instance, the US central bank will cut rates or the results of local elections. Prediction market bets on conflicts have fuelled debate over how industry should be regulated. This week, US Congressman Ritchie Torres, a Democrat who sits on the House Financial Services Committee, sent a letter to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission that called for an investigation into "suspicious" trades. The commission regulates the derivatives trading, which includes prediction markets. In March, Democrat leaders introduced legislation that would completely ban prediction market betting related to war or military action. "Corruption and exploitation are thriving right now within the gaps and loopholes of prediction markets," said US Senator Andy Kim from New Jersey. "This manipulation leaves the select few winning big, at the expense of working Americans," he said.

PATENT CLIFF IMPACT:

Eli Lilly's Market Share Stumbles As Generic Weight-Loss Drugs Gain Ground In India

Weight loss drug manufacturer Eli Lilly's market share in India declined in March, while rival drugmaker Novo Nordisk's share remained steady. The slip came after patent for a key ingredient in these weight loss drugs, such as semaglutide, expired earlier in the month, and the pharma market got flooded with cheaper generic Indian substitutes. The market share fell from 61% in February to 56% in March, CNBC reported, citing data from industry intelligence provider Pharmarack. The data pointed out that Novo Nordisk's market share held steady at 25%. The shift to generic and more affordable alternatives was expected to impact sales of Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly both, but early data has revealed that the latter has taken the bigger hit. A further erosion is expected in sales of Eli Lilly's more expensive tirzepatide-based brands as the presence of cheaper weight loss drugs grows, according to experts. Within a matter of weeks, the



Pharmarack report noted that 13 Indian generic drug companies have collectively launched 26 brands of semaglutide, which is prescribed for both weight loss and diabetes management. India's 100 million diabetics and 125 million pre-diabetics make for a huge market for such drugs. The starting price of Eli Lilly's Mounjaro is around 13,800 rupees (\$148) per month, Mumbai-based diabetologist Rajiv Kovil told CNBC. He pointed out that, it is twice the price for Novo's semaglutide drugs and 10 times more than the cheapest

of the generic versions. A long list of pharma giants, including Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., Biocon Ltd. and Lupin Ltd., are in the frontline for providing generic substitutes. Patent Expiry Recap For years, the 'miracle' weight-loss drug semaglutide — an engine behind global blockbuster Ozempic — was a luxury reserved for the few who could stomach a Rs 20,000 monthly bill. On March 20, 2026, things changed when patent for Semaglutide officially expired in India.

India's resilient macros and strong domestic liquidity cushion geopolitical shocks for now, but confluence of global risks could turn the tide: PL Asset Management

Mumbai, April 10, 2026: According to PL Asset Management, the asset management arm of PL Capital Group (Prabhudas Lilladher), while global markets reacted sharply to disruptions in energy supply and shifting monetary policy expectations, Indian equities showed relative stability, underpinned by strong domestic macroeconomic fundamentals, robust liquidity conditions, and continued institutional participation. It highlights that resilient macro and supportive domestic liquidity has cushioned India against any geopolitical headwinds. However, PL Asset Management warns that India's macro picture could turn adverse as a confluence of risks — rising crude prices, a weaker rupee, slower global growth, disrupted logistics chains, and tighter global financial conditions — could together widen the fiscal deficit, slow GDP growth, and erode the macro tailwinds currently supporting market confidence. The firm notes that this scenario



demand vigilance, not complacency. Escalating geopolitical tensions, particularly US-Israel strikes on Iran in late February, have raised concerns around potential disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz—a critical artery handling nearly 20% of global oil supply—thereby heightening risks to India's current account and inflation trajectory through elevated crude prices. PL Asset Management highlights that India's growth momentum continues to remain robust, with Q3 GDP expanding by 7.8% and full-year FY26 growth projected at 7.6%, supported by healthy private

consumption growth of 8.7% and a sharp 13.3% expansion in manufacturing. It expects the India-US tariff reduction, the progress on the India-EU FTA, and the government's ₹12.2 lakh crore infrastructure push under Budget 2026 to boost export competitiveness, unlock new growth avenues, and accelerate the domestic capex cycle, reinforcing India's medium-term growth outlook. On inflation, PL Asset Management notes that it remains comfortably within the RBI's tolerance band, providing policymakers with room to manoeuvre. In fixed income markets, bond

yields have edged higher, with the 10-year G-Sec hovering around 6.70%, largely influenced by global yield movements and elevated supply expectations. Importantly, it notes that the recent market corrections have created a more favorable valuation backdrop, with the Nifty trading at a 5.6% discount to its five-year average PE, enhancing the medium-term risk-reward for investors. FIIs recorded net outflows of ₹6,640 crore, strong countervailing inflows from DIIs to the tune of ₹38,423 crore, along with sustained SIP participation, have helped anchor equity markets. Mr. Siddharth Vora, Head - Quant Investment Strategies & Fund Manager, PL Asset Management said, "The global environment is transitioning into a high-uncertainty, liquidity-constrained regime, driven by geopolitical risks and persistent energy disruptions. Elevated crude prices are expected to keep inflation sticky and interest rates higher for longer, creating pressure on

earnings, fiscal balances, and currency stability, with the rupee remaining vulnerable. While valuations may appear reasonable on the surface, rising input, energy, and financing costs pose a meaningful risk to earnings, increasing the likelihood of valuation compression. Market sentiment remains fragile, with flows and liquidity conditions playing a critical role in near-term direction. As a result, markets are likely to remain event-driven and volatile, reacting sharply to developments in geopolitics and energy prices. In this environment, disciplined risk management and selective positioning become essential. A preference for large caps, along with factors such as value, quality, and low volatility, is likely to be more resilient. Sectorally, metals, energy, pharma, industrials, autos, and PSU financials appear relatively better placed, supported by domestic and cyclical drivers. Gold continues to serve as an important hedge in portfolios.

Trump says Iran's handling of Strait of Hormuz is 'not the agreement we have'

US President Donald Trump has accused Iran of doing a "very poor job" in its handling of oil passing through the pivotal Strait of Hormuz, arguing it was "not the agreement we have". The comments reflect the fragile nature of the ceasefire agreement, with reports showing conflicts on what was included in the accord. It came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government was to begin direct talks with Lebanon, focusing on the disarmament of Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militant group, and establishing peaceful relations. A US State Department official confirmed it would host a meeting next week in Washington "to discuss ongoing ceasefire negotiations with Israel and Lebanon". Lebanese officials had called for a ceasefire before the talks begin, but Netanyahu said in a subsequent address to residents of northern Israel: "There is no ceasefire



in Lebanon." After Israeli strikes continued in Lebanon throughout Thursday - targeting what it described as Hezbollah rocket launch sites in the south - attacks appeared to at least temporarily taper off overnight in the region. Trump said in an interview that Israel would be "scaling back" its strikes in the country to support peace talks. "I spoke with Bibi and he's going to

low-key it. I just think we have to be sort of a little more low-key," Trump told NBC News after a phone call with Netanyahu. The strikes on Thursday led to new evacuation warnings for residents in the southern suburbs of the capital, Beirut. The head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said on X that this included the Jnah area, which includes

two major hospitals. "At this time, no alternative medical facilities are available to receive approximately 450 patients from the two hospitals (including 40 patients in the ICU), rendering their evacuation operationally unfeasible," he said. Among those being treated at the hospitals, Tedros added, were some of the 1,150 people that Lebanon's health ministry said were wounded in

Wednesday's massive wave of Israeli strikes. At least 303 people were killed. Tedros also said that the headquarters of the Ministry of Public Health, which "hosts five shelters accommodating more than 5,000 people", is in the evacuation area. That ceasefire began with confusion over whether Lebanon, Israel's second front, was to be included. Iranian officials and mediators from Pakistan said it was, US and Israeli officials said clearly that it was not. Amid the confusion, the wave of Israeli strikes on Lebanon - the heaviest since the conflict began six weeks ago - prompted Iran to declare that Israel was breaking the terms of the ceasefire, to once again halt passage of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and to threaten retaliatory strikes. Trump posted to Truth Social over ship traffic through the pivotal waterway, which typically sees 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas

(LNG) passing through. "There are reports that Iran is charging fees to tankers going through the Hormuz Strait," he wrote. "They better not be and, if they are, they better stop now." Israel's military continues to occupy a large part of the south of Lebanon, where it has destroyed villages in recent days. Without a commitment to a temporary ceasefire at least, it is not clear how productive talks could proceed between the two sides. It is also unclear how much sway the Lebanese government, with which the Israelis will be negotiating, will have over Hezbollah, which despite having representation in the Lebanese government is a separate entity backed by Iran. The Lebanese government banned Hezbollah's military activities in early March, days after the start of war with Israel, but it has not stopped the group from carrying out military operations.

GERMAN TRANSGENDER FAR-RIGHT EXTREMIST ARRESTED IN CZECH REPUBLIC



A convicted German transgender right-wing extremist, who has been on the run for months, has been arrested in the Czech Republic. Liebach was arrested on the basis of a European arrest warrant in Krásná in the east of the country, some 100km (62 miles) east of the capital, Prague. In August 2025, Marla-Svenja Liebach, formerly known as Sven, failed to appear at the prison in the German town of Chemnitz, where she was to serve an 18-month jail term. German media reports say Liebach used to be a member of a neo-Nazi group called Blood and Honour. In July

2023, Liebach was sentenced by the Halle District Court in Saxon-Anhalt to a total of one year and six months in prison without parole for extreme right incitement to hatred, defamation, and insult. Liebach appealed against the sentence and lost. At the time she was known as Sven Liebach. A spokesperson for the Halle public prosecutor's office told the BBC that Liebach was now in custody in the Czech Republic. Liebach is expected to be extradited to Germany. At the end of 2024, Liebach had her gender entry in official records changed from male to female.

TAIWAN OPPOSITION LEADER MEETS XI JINPING IN BEIJING



China's President Xi Jinping received Taiwan's main opposition party leader on Friday, in a rare meeting which saw both sides stress a desire for cross-strait peace. Cheng Li-wun is the Kuomintang's (KMT) first sitting leader to visit China in a decade. In 2016, Beijing cut off high-level communications with Taiwan after the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Tsai Ing-wen became president, citing her refusal to endorse the concept of a single Chinese nation. The DPP is among those who have criticised Taiwan as part of its territory and has not ruled out taking the self-governed island by force. "The leaders of our two parties are meeting today in order to safeguard the peace and stability of our shared homeland, to promote the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, and to allow future generations to share in a bright and beautiful future," said Xi in a meeting at China's Great Hall of the People on Friday. He added that China was willing to strengthen exchange and

dialogue together with various parties, including the KMT - though it would have to be on the condition of opposing Taiwan independence. Xi also reiterated that those on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are Chinese, and that they all wanted peace. In response, Cheng said the "rejuvenation of the Chinese people is a shared aspiration of the people on both sides of the Strait". She added that it would be a "positive contribution to world peace and human progress". In a press conference after her closed-door meeting with Xi, Cheng said young people of every generation had to understand that opposing Taiwan independence and maintaining the 1992 Consensus was a way to "avoid war, prevent tragedy, work together and create peace." The 1992 Consensus is an understanding between the then-ruling KMT and the Chinese Communist Party about there being "one China", while leaving room for different interpretations of what that means. The DPP has consistently rejected the 1992 Consensus, arguing that it undermines Taiwan's sovereignty.

Hip-hop pioneer, Afrika Bambaataa, dies aged 68

Afrika Bambaataa, one of the founding figures of hip-hop culture, has died at the age of 68, the Hip Hop Alliance has confirmed. In a statement, the organisation said Bambaataa helped shape a "global movement rooted in peace, unity, love, and having fun", paying tribute to his role in the emergence of hip-hop as both a musical genre and a cultural force. Born Lance Taylor in the Bronx, Bambaataa grew up during the era of the black liberation movement. In 1973, he co-founded the Universal Zulu Nation, an international hip-hop awareness group. In his later years, Bambaataa's reputation was overshadowed by allegations of child sexual abuse and trafficking, which he denied. TMZ, which was first to report his



death, said the artist died in Pennsylvania due to complications from cancer on Thursday. Bambaataa was born to Jamaican and Barbadian immigrant parents. As a teen, he became a member of the Black Spades gang, parlaying his leadership abilities to form the Universal Zulu Nation, that sought to channel youth culture away from violence and towards creativity.

Ceasefire or no ceasefire, the Middle East's reshuffling is not yet done

The best hope for the ceasefire talks in Pakistan is that both the United States and Iran have strong reasons to call a halt to the war. The biggest obstacle to their success is a total absence of trust, no discernible common ground and the fact that Israel, America's full partner in the war, has hugely escalated its onslaught on Lebanon. US President Donald Trump is already speaking about the war in the past tense. He has declared victory and needs an exit. Not only does he have a state visit from King Charles in the diary for later this month, followed by a summit with China's President Xi Jinping in May, there are midterm elections in November. With America's summer



holiday season looming, Trump also needs petrol prices to fall back to where they were before he went to war. Royal visits, summits and elections do not mix well with wars. Iran's regime has its own reasons to end the war. It is as defiant as ever, still able to

launch missiles and drones, with its social media warriors pouring out AI videos lampooning Donald Trump. But Iran has suffered massive damage. Cities have come to an economic standstill and the regime needs time to regroup and will try to use the talks in Pakistan

to strengthen its position. The Pakistani intermediaries who will be shuttling between the two delegations have a tough job on their hands. The declared positions of the two sides are as far apart as it is possible to be. Trump has a 15-point plan that has not been published but leaked versions make it sound more like a surrender document than a basis for negotiation. Iran's 10-point plan contains a list of demands that America has consistently rejected in the past. Creating a more durable ceasefire will require some kind of agreement to at least keep talking about the two sides' contradictory lists of intractable issues. It would be hard enough to work through them in peacetime.

Melania Trump denies ties to Jeffrey Epstein and urges hearing for survivors

First Lady Melania Trump has denied connections to Jeffrey Epstein, telling reporters at the White House that any claims linking the two "need to end today". In a surprise announcement on Thursday, the first lady called for congressional hearings for survivors of Epstein's sex trafficking. She also denied online rumours that Epstein introduced her to Donald Trump, calling them "mean-spirited attempts to defame my reputation". It is unclear what prompted the announcement. The intervention has produced a mixed response from Epstein survivors. One survivor, Lisa Phillips,



described the statement as a "bold move" but questioned what more the first lady could do to support Epstein's accusers. There was no prior indication from her office that she would make a statement on Epstein, and the White House did not share the topic earlier when

her remarks were put on its daily schedule. The president told news outlet MS Now he did not know about his wife's statement ahead of time. Meanwhile, the New York Times quoted a spokesperson for Melania Trump as saying the president knew that the first lady

planned to make a statement, but later said it was unclear if he was aware of the topic of the remarks. Melania Trump said she had not been a victim of Epstein, with whom she only briefly "crossed paths" in 2000. "I have never had any knowledge of Epstein abuse of his victims," she said. "I was never involved in any capacity. I was not a participant." She also denied knowing Ghislaine Maxwell, the disgraced financier's jailed associate. She referred to a 2002 email between her and Maxwell released in the Epstein files, calling it nothing more than "casual correspondence" and a "polite reply".

US has let in 4,499 refugees since October - all but three were South African



President Donald Trump's overhaul of US refugee policies has created a major shift in the number and nationalities of people admitted to the country, US government data shows. Since October 2025, 4,499 refugees were resettled in the US, according to the Refugee Processing Center. All, except three from Afghanistan, were South African. In the last full fiscal year of the Biden administration, which started in October 2023, 125,000 people were accepted from 85 countries. Last year, Trump halted all refugee admissions, including for applicants from warzones, but allowed Afrikaners, a white minority group he said was persecuted, to seek resettlement. South Africa objected to his characterisation. In announcing the change, Trump said it would help strengthen national security and public safety. Priority was to be given to Afrikaner South Africans and "other victims of illegal or unjust discrimination in their respective homelands", according to an announcement. The president "has explained why we are resettling Afrikaner refugees in the United

States", a state department spokesperson told the BBC when asked about the latest resettlement figures. "The US position on this humanitarian initiative has not changed." Diplomatic tensions between Washington and Pretoria have been rising since Trump returned to the White House. Just over a year ago, South Africa's ambassador in the US, Ebrahim Rasool, was expelled after accusing Trump of "mobilising a supremacism" and trying to "project white victimhood as a dog whistle". Then, in the Oval Office in May, Trump confronted his South African counterpart, Cyril Ramaphosa, where he claimed that white farmers in South Africa were targets of persecution and "genocide". Ramaphosa tried to refute Trump's assertions and was backed up by John Steenhuisen, the white leader of the Democratic Alliance, which is part of the coalition government. "Certainly, the majority of South Africa's commercial and smallholder farmers really do want to stay in South Africa and make it work," Steenhuisen told Trump.



Russia and Ukraine agree to Orthodox Easter truce

Dutch police urge victims of 'international sextortion campaign' to come forward

Dutch police have issued a social media plea for victims of an alleged "international sextortion campaign" to come forward, warning that dozens of women and girls were coerced into degrading sexual acts on camera. Investigators say a 22-year-old Dutch man, posing online as a teenage girl, contacted victims on popular platforms and persuaded them to send explicit photos. Once he had the images, he allegedly blackmailed them into creating increasingly graphic, extreme and sadistic photos and videos - including performing sex acts on themselves and licking

toilet seats - under threat of sharing the photos with friends, family or classmates. Prosecutors say the suspect, identified only as Damian A. under Dutch privacy laws, has confessed. He was arrested in January 2025 and went on trial this week in the city of Dordrecht. He is charged with online sexual assault and online rape. Prosecutors have requested a nine-year prison sentence plus psychological treatment. "I didn't think about the consequences. That you can hurt people," Dutch media reports quote him as saying. A verdict is expected in the coming weeks.

BRONNY JAMES SETS UP FATHER
LEBRON IN LAKERS WIN

Bronny James passed to parent LeBron for the first son-to-father assist in NBA history as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Golden State Warriors 119-103. Bronny, 19, stole possession and passed to LeBron, who ran the length of the court for an uncontested dunk that was part of a 26-point contribution from the 41-year-old. The pair recorded the first father-to-son assist in a match against the Brooklyn Nets last month. LeBron also added 11 assists while Bronny scored 10 points with three assists as the Lakers saw off their state rivals. The Lakers sit fourth in the Western Conference while the Warriors are in 10th, with both having already qualified for the post-season play-offs that begin on 18 April. Elsewhere, the New York Knicks won 112-106 against the Boston Celtics, with Josh Hart scoring 26 points, to put pressure on their opponents



Bronny James passed to parent LeBron for the first son-to-father assist in NBA history as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Golden State Warriors 119-103.

in the Eastern Conference. The sides are third and second respectively in the standings, with two matches left to play in the regular season. The Toronto Raptors triumphed 128-114 against the Miami Heat while the Houston Rockets won 113-102 against Philadelphia 76ers to solidify their chances of a play-off place. In

matches between sides already out of post-season contention, the Chicago Bulls won 119-108 against the Washington Wizards while the Indiana Pacers beat the Brooklyn Nets 123-94. The WNBA has approved expansion teams in Cleveland, Detroit and Philadelphia and will become an 18-team league by 2030. The

Cleveland franchise will be the first to make their debut in the competition - they will appear in 2028 - while Detroit and Philadelphia will follow in 2029 and 2030 respectively. The WNBA has gone through a period of expansion in recent years with the Golden State Valkyries joining in 2025 while the Toronto Tempo and the Portland Fire are set to follow this year. The new season starts on 8 May and its regular season will run to 24 September. The sides are third and second respectively in the standings, with two matches left to play in the regular season. The Toronto Raptors triumphed 128-114 against the Miami Heat while the Houston Rockets won 113-102 against Philadelphia 76ers to solidify their chances of a play-off place.

Stojsavljevic, 17, wins as GB
take charge in BJK Cup

Teenager Mika Stojsavljevic stunned Talia Gibson, ranked more than 200 places above her, in straight sets as Great Britain took a 2-0 lead over Australia in the Billie Jean King Cup. The world number 275, making her debut in the competition, defeated Gibson, 56th in the WTA rankings, 7-6 (7-4) 7-5 in the opening singles match in Melbourne. Harriet Dart, ranked 173rd in the world, then fought back from a set down to beat Kimberly Birrell 4-6 6-3 6-3 in a little under two and a half hours. A doubles and two reverse singles follow on Saturday, with Great Britain only needing to win one match to advance to the eight-team finals in Shenzhen, China, in September. The losers face a play-off in November. Stojsavljevic, 17, is the second-lowest ranked player in a Great Britain team missing Emma Raducanu, Sonay Kartal, Katie Boulter, and Fran Jones - all of whom



are ranked inside the world's top 100 for singles. But the 2024 US Open junior champion, described by Great Britain captain Anne Keothavong as "not your average 17-year-old", was unfazed by her underdog status and the Australian crowd, holding her nerve to clinch the first set in a tie-break after letting a 3-1 lead slip. She later saved five break points in the penultimate game of the match before converting her first match point. "It feels amazing. I can't believe it. I can't even remember the last point,"

Stojsavljevic said. "I had amazing support from the side and managed to get through. "Going into it, I knew she'd have the home ground. I'm grateful to the people supporting GB today. "It was a good match. We have very similar games, both quite aggressive, so I'm happy I got through it." Keothavong added: "She's not your average 17-year-old. For some, it can be overwhelming, but I think for Mika, she's really taken it into her stride. I also have to credit her team-mates.

Lucknow Super Giants Bring In South African
All-Rounder To Replace Rs 2 Crore Star

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) have signed Protea all-rounder George Linde as a replacement for Wanindu Hasaranga, who has been ruled out of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026. Hasaranga was signed by LSG for INR 2 crore at the auction but has been sidelined due to a hamstring injury he sustained in Sri Lanka's opening game of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. Linde, a left-handed batting all-rounder who bowls slow left-arm orthodox, has represented South Africa in 3 Tests, 4 ODIs and 37 T20Is. In T20Is, Linde has scored 403 runs and picked up 35 wickets. He brings extensive experience in the



shortest format, having played 250 T20 matches. This will be his maiden stint in the IPL. He will join LSG at his reserve price of INR 1 crore. "We are preparing for the fact that he isn't going to be able to join us. We are

looking at replacements, that should be announced in 24-48 hours," LSG's Director of Cricket Tom Moody had said during the game at the Eden Gardens on Thursday, which LSG won by three wickets on the last ball.

His recent T20 game came in the bilateral series against New Zealand last month, where he picked up only one wicket in four innings. Linde, 34, was in the Proteas squad for the Men's T20 World Cup and has also been part of franchise leagues such as SA20, the Hundred, Major League Cricket, and the PSL. In all, he has taken 218 wickets in 250 T20s at an economy rate of 7.42. He now joins the Rishabh Pant-led side at his base price of Rs 1 crore. LSG will next face Gujarat Titans (GT) at their home ground BRSAVB Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Sunday afternoon.

Ex-India Star's Daughter Asks For Meeting
With Gill, Gets Lesson On Humility

A sweet conversation between former Indian cricket team wicket-keeper batter Wriddhiman Saha and daughter Anvi has gone viral on social media. In a video posted by Wriddhiman's wife Romi Mitra, Wriddhiman responded to repeated requests from his daughter about meeting Shubman Gill. Incidentally, Gill was Wriddhiman's teammate during their time in IPL side Gujarat Titans. "You want to meet Shubman Gill? Ok! But like everyone else, you'll have to wait in line and meet him. No unfair advantage will be given," he responded to Anvi's requests. While Anvi reminded her father that he was a star who shared the dressing room



with Gill, Wriddhiman quickly responded that it was in the past. Wriddhiman earned a lot of respect during his playing days and is considered a major name in the history of Bengal cricket. Mohammed Shami congratulated Wriddhiman Saha for

leaving an 'indelible mark' on the game of cricket after the wicket-keeper batter retired from all forms of cricket. Saha received a guard of honour from his teammates on the second day of their Ranji Trophy match against Punjab at

Eden Gardens back in February 2025. "Today we bid farewell to a true legend of Indian cricket, Wriddhiman Saha. His brilliant glove work and countless memorable moments, both on and off the field, have left an indelible mark. From the Ranji Trophy to the national team, his dedication and passion have inspired us all. Wishing you the best in your next chapter, Wriddhiman. Your legacy will continue to inspire generations!" In 141 First-Class matches, Saha has scored 7,169 runs at an average of 48.68, including 14 centuries and 44 fifties. The 40-year-old last played for India in December 2021 against New Zealand at the Wankhede Stadium.

Pakistan Selector Misbah Ul Haq Defends
Working With PSL Franchise Amid Controversy

The Pakistan Cricket Board's policy of allowing its employees to work with franchises in the Pakistan Super League has come under scrutiny after former captain Misbah ul Haq confirmed he was involved with Peshawar Zalmi as consultant. The PCB at the start of the PSL had stopped Sarfaraz Ahmed and Wahab Riaz from working with the Quetta Gladiators franchise. The board said under its policy former players who were on the PCB payroll were not allowed to work in the PSL in any capacity as it was a conflict of interest. But Misbah defended his involvement with Peshawar Zalmi despite being a paid national selector and batting consultant with the PCB. "I had signed a contract with Zalmi before I became national selector and I only work for them as consultant on given days in a season," Misbah told the media wearing the Peshawar Zalmi kit. Asked how he got permission from the PCB to work in the PSL when Sarfaraz who was with him on the selection committee and Wahab were stopped from working with Quetta Gladiators, Misbah said his case was different and the PCB



can best explain this. Misbah who has also remained the national team's head coach and chief selector and has been in and out of the PCB in some capacity since 2019 said as a national selector it was helpful for him to work closely in the PSL and watch the young players in action. "When you watch and observe them up close and see how they react to a particular situation it becomes easier for you to take decisions as a national selector," he said.

Sanjiv Goenka's Father-Like Moment With LSG's
New Batting Sensation Mukul Choudhary

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) owner Sanjiv Goenka had a beautiful moment on the field with the team's new batting sensation Mukul Choudhary after the latter turned into a match-winner in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash against the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). Goenka, who is often seen supporting his team from the sidelines, had a lengthy discussion with Mukul on the field after the middle-order batter an unbeaten 54 off just 27 balls to take his team past KKR's 181-run total in a thrilling encounter at the iconic Eden Gardens. In a video that has surfaced on social media, Goenka could be seen appreciating Mukul and cherishing his performance the way a



father does. LSG Owner Sanjiv Goenka with Mukul Choudhary after nail-biting win After the game, Mukul opened up on his cricketing journey, revealing that he first took up the sport when he was 12-13, though his father wanted him to become a cricketer, even before he was born. "Even before my dad got married, it was his dream that his son would play

cricket. Financial condition was not very good at the start. I began playing at 12-13 years old. There were not a lot of academies in Jhunjhunu and then I moved to Jaipur," he said. Highlighting his efforts to adapt to the evolving game, he added, "I saw how much T20 cricket is growing, so I moved to Gurgaon (now Gurugram) and stayed there for 3-4 months."

Easy Wins For Zeel Desai,
Sahaja Yamalapalli As India
Seal Tie Against Mongolia In
Billie Jean King Cup



India enjoyed a dominant day at the office as Zeel Desai secured a straight-sets victory on her Billie Jean King Cup debut against 15-year-old Anu-Vjin Gantor while Sahaja Yamalapalli followed suit, winning without dropping a game to seal the tie against Mongolia in the Asia/Oceania Group I on Friday. Zeel drubbed her rival 6-0 6-0 in mere 37 minutes before Sahaja Yamalapalli trounced 32-year-old Jargal Altansarnai by an identical scoreline in 42 minutes at DLTA Complex. It was not more than a casual hitting session for the home players as unranked rival players did not have the game to hurt them. India take on Korea on Saturday, the final day of the competition, in their last outing of the tournament, and most likely, the hosts will keep their place in

Group I. The defeat against Thailand put India in a spot as it hurt their chances to finish in top-two. The top two sides in the six-team event will progress to play-offs while the bottom two will be relegated to Group II. Considering the inexperience of Gantor, who has managed to win just one game so far in the tournament, India captain Vishal Uppal didn't mind putting in Desai, giving her some match practice. Clearly, the unranked Gantor is not yet ready to play at this level. She has a lot to learn but such defeats can be demoralising too. Putting an uncooked player at this level could only be because of lack of options. Gantor hardly won a point on her own. Only when Zeel made an unforced error, the Mongolian had a point to her name.

Liverpool to sign Germany forward
Endemann in July

Liverpool have reached an agreement to sign Germany international Vivien Endemann when her contract expires at Wolfsburg this summer. The 24-year-old forward will join on 1 July following three seasons with Wolfsburg and a seven-year stay in her homeland. Endemann has 17 senior international caps for her country, scoring three times, and was part of the squad that won bronze at the 2024 Olympic Games. She has scored three goals and provided three assists in

eight Frauen-Bundesliga starts this season, as well as netting in a 5-2 victory over Manchester United in the Women's

Women's World Cup qualifying victories over Slovenia and Norway in March. It is a strong start to

Liverpool have reached an agreement to sign Germany international Vivien Endemann when her contract expires at Wolfsburg this summer.

Champions League in November. Endemann was also on the scoresheet in both of Germany's most recent

Liverpool's summer transfer business, with the club moving away from the bottom of the Women's

Super League table this season following a difficult start. They currently sit 10th in the table, eight points above bottom club Leicester City, after a bright second half of the campaign and the arrival of new players in January. Gareth Taylor's side will also compete in the Women's FA Cup semi-finals when they face Brighton on 10 May (14:00 GMT kick-off). Endemann previously spent two years with SGS Essen and SV Meppen before joining two-time Women's Champions League winners Wolfsburg in 2023.



ADITYA DHAR, THE DIRECTOR OF “DHURANDHAR:

The Revenge,” shared a social media post calling Prabhas a legend and said he is eagerly waiting to watch his film “Spirit” in theatres

The most celebrated filmmaker right now Aditya Dhar responded to a post by director Sandeep Reddy Vanga, who had appreciated “Dhurandhar: The Revenge.” In his reply, Aditya Dhar asked him to convey his love to “legend



Prabhas.” Following this interaction, discussions have started about how sensational a film would be if Aditya Dhar and Prabhas collaborated. “Dhurandhar: The Revenge” is creating a storm at the box office, having collected ₹1680 crore worldwide so far. Responding to criticism from some in Bollywood who labeled the film as propaganda, director Sandeep Reddy Vanga made a strong statement. He said that those who make such propaganda films are the same people who spread negativity about honest films like “Dhurandhar: The Revenge,” which aim to present the truth. Thanking him for his support, Aditya Dhar replied that

Sandeep Reddy Vanga is an inspiration for standing firmly by his beliefs and creating content he truly believes in.

For every film from Pink Elephant Pictures, I ensure your heart and pocket are happy: Producer Niharika Konidela

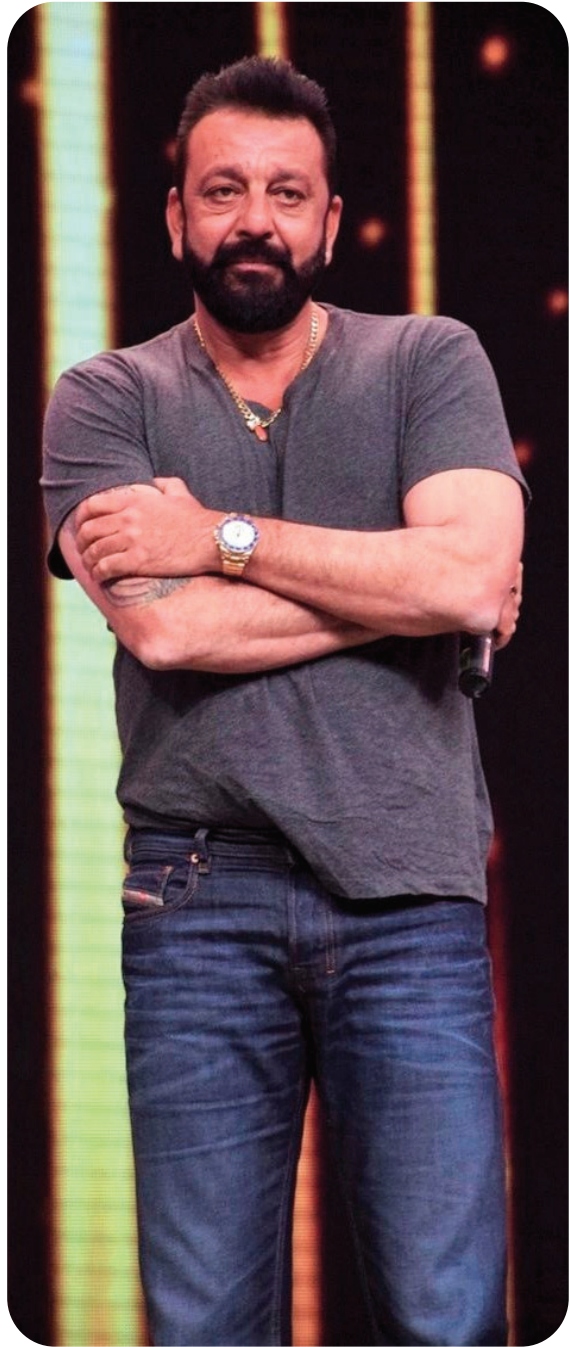


RAKASA” film has great longevity and will run for a long time, a cool breeze in this hot summer for families: Ravi Shankar (Mythri Movies)* “RaaKaaSaa” team brought family audiences back to theatres: A c t o r

Brahmaji The Raakaasa Blockbuster Distributors Success Meet unfolded as a vibrant and celebratory gathering, bringing together distributors, exhibitors, and the core team behind one of the season's most consistent theatrical successes. With the film continuing its strong run across centres and holding a significant number of screens into its second week, Raakaasa is not only sustaining momentum but actively expanding its reach, most notably with a 2100

flat ticket pricing initiative across single screens in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana from April 10. What makes this phase particularly significant is the nature of its growth. Beyond numbers, the film has evolved into a clear audience-driven success, with family audiences emerging as the primary force behind its theatrical momentum. Positioned as a light-hearted, accessible entertainer, Raakaasa has created a strong connect across age groups, where children engage with its imaginative elements and adults respond to its humour, resulting in repeat footfalls and a stable, sustained run across centres.

SANJAY DUTT- ONLY INDIAN ACTOR WITH 4 FILMS IN RS 1000 CRORE CLUB SO FAR



Saba Qamar hits back at ‘drunk’ claims after viral dance clip

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan has never shied away from speaking about his personal life, often addressing his relationships and struggles with remarkable honesty. Over the years, his journey, from marriages to separations has remained a subject of keen interest among fans and the media alike.<In a latest interaction, the actor once again opened up about one of the most difficult phases of his life which was his first divorce from Reena Dutta. Aamir revealed that the emotional toll of the separation pushed him towards alcohol, marking a drastic shift from his otherwise disciplined lifestyle. Speaking on Duologue with Barun Das, Aamir shared that he was a teetotaler before the divorce. However, the day Reena left

with their children proved to be overwhelming. Left alone and unable to cope with his emotions, he turned to alcohol for the first time in a serious way. Aamir said, “I was a teetotaler until I went through my first divorce with Reena. And then, on the first day when she left with the kids, and I was alone at home, I couldn’t handle my emotions at that time. I had never, I used to never drink alcohol. I had drunk once or twice for a couple of scenes, but that was only because I had to drink for the scene. I mean, I was not into alcohol at all.” “That night, I had alcohol at home to serve guests and all that, so I started drinking. And for the next one and a half years, I drank almost a bottle a night. Now that’s really extreme, from a person who was a teetotaler to

someone who consumes a bottle a night is very extreme,” he added. Aamir also reflected on how deeply the separation affected him emotionally, making it one of the lowest points in his life. Aamir Khan married Reena Dutta in 1986 at the age of 21, and the couple parted ways in 2002 after 16 years of marriage. He later married filmmaker Kiran Rao in 2005, and the two announced their separation in 2021.



Rakshasapuram will captivate audiences as a unique crime thriller; releasing at the end of this month - Presenter K.S. Rama Rao



Creative Commercials banner and is gearing up for a grand Telugu release soon. During a recent event held at FNCC, Hyderabad, producer K.S. Rama Rao shared the highlights of the film.

Prominent Producer K.S. Rama Rao said: My career began with a dubbed film. I released the movie Erra Gulabeelu, starring Kamal Haasan, in Telugu, and it became a massive success. Now, after a brief hiatus, I am once again bringing a movie titled Rakshasapuram to the Telugu audience under our Creative Commercials banner. Director Ravi Saranga has brilliantly crafted this film as a unique crime thriller. It was produced by my friend Ravi Varma. I was personally thrilled after watching this movie. I called producer Ravi Varma and told him that I would release this film in Telugu.

Renowned producer K.S. Rama Rao is bringing the Kannada superhit film Rakkasapuradol, starring Raj B. Shetty, to the Telugu audience under the title Rakshasapuram The film is produced by K. Ravi Varma under the K.N. Entertainments banner and directed by Ravi Saranga. Presented by K.S. Rama Rao, the movie is being released under the

Jayaho Janardhana title poster launch by visionary director Sampath Nandi

The movie Jayaho Janardhana is being produced by Panuganti Sarath Reddy as the producer and director under the banner of Panuganti Productions. Naresh Vasam and Ramyashree are playing the lead roles in this film and 30 Years Prithvi, Roller Raghu, Chalaki Chanti, Maim Madhu, Dayananda Reddy, Jabardast Raghava, Jabardast Apparao, Jabardast Rajamouli, Patas Praveen, Nemali Raju, BVM Sivashankar are playing other important roles in this film. Nandamuri Hari is the editor of this movie, Vijay Tagore is the cameraman, Bhupathi Yadagiri is the director and Charan



Arjun has given the music. Recently, the poster launch of this movie was done by visionary director Sampath Nandi. Producer and director Panuganti Sarath Reddy said that this film is being produced as a love

commercial comedy drama. After the poster launch, Sampath Nandi Garu said: He congratulated the producer, director Panuganti Sarath Reddy and the movie team and wished this movie a good success.

‘I turned into an alcoholic’: Aamir Khan shares painful post-divorce story

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