



Every single person linked to RG Kar rape-murder conspiracy will be brought to justice, says PM Modi

Kolkata, April 24 : Every individual, regardless of their influence, who is connected to the larger conspiracy surrounding the R.G. Kar rape and murder case will be identified and held accountable after the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in West Bengal next month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated during a campaign rally at the Panitah Assembly constituency in North 24 Parganas district on Friday.

NATION | NEWS

Nato says 'no provision' to expel members after report US could seek to suspend Spain

WORLD | NEWS



MIRAI GIRL BREATHED IN THE DARK

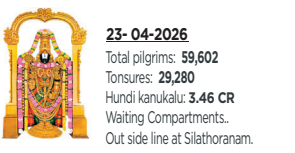
CINEMA | PAGE



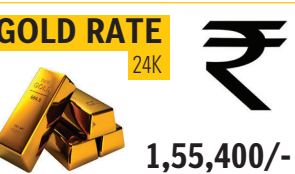
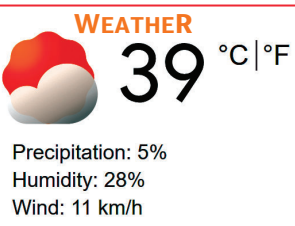
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OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



23-04-2026
Total pilgrims: 59,602
Tonsures: 29,280
Hundi Kanakulu: 3.46 CR
Waiting Compartments:
Out side line at Silathoranam.
Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) : 24 H



FRESH MANIPUR CLASHES LEAVE 3 DEAD IN UKHRUL DISTRICT

Imphal (TSIT): At least three people were killed and several others injured in separate firing incidents involving armed groups from the Naga and Kuki tribal communities in Manipur's Ukhrul district on Friday, officials said. According to a police official, in one of the incidents near Mullam village in the violence-hit district, security forces recovered two bodies. Ukhrul district, which shares an inter-state border with Nagaland and an international border with Myanmar, is predominantly inhabited by the Tangkhul Naga community. The two victims, identified as L. Sitlhou and P. Haolai, were found in camouflage attire with bullet injuries. A heavy exchange of fire had taken place between armed militants at Mullam village earlier in the morning. Several houses in the mountainous village were also set ablaze during the violence.

COCKTAIL WEATHER AHEAD AS TELANGANA FACES HEAT AND STORMS

Hyderabad (TSIT): The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad, on Friday issued a complex weather forecast for Telangana, predicting a week of extreme heat interspersed with intense spells of thunderstorms. In a literal 'cocktail' of weather extremes, heatwave conditions are expected to prevail, with temperatures ranging from 41 degrees Celsius to 44 degrees Celsius across the state. At the same time, evenings or late nights may witness intense, brief spells of thunderstorms, lightning and hailstorms at sporadic locations in several districts. Maximum temperatures are expected to hover between 41 degrees Celsius and 44 degrees Celsius in districts including Adilabad, Jagtial and Nizamabad through April 28. Even Hyderabad is expected to see a significant spike, with temperatures reaching the 41 degrees Celsius to 43 degrees Celsius range.

HILT policy to be implemented democratically: Bhatti

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu stated that the HILT (Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation) policy will be implemented in a democratic manner, ensuring the interests of both Hyderabad city and the state. Speaking at the Revenue Resource Mobilization Cabinet Sub-Committee meeting held at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Friday, he said the government is committed to inclusive development and is considering inputs from all stakeholders before finalizing the policy guidelines.

The meeting, attended by ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, D. Sridhar Babu, and Juppally Krishna Rao, along with industrial representatives, discussed key aspects of the HILT and UDL (Undeveloped Land) policies.

Amid rising pollution concerns, industrial representatives suggested relocating polluting units beyond the Outer Ring Road (ORR). Responding to this, the Deputy CM said all opinions are being examined carefully and decisions will be taken through a democratic



process. He emphasized that the government, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, has no intention of troubling industries and is focused on balanced growth. He also proposed consultations with industrial associations within the ORR to expedite policy implementation. Minister D. Sridhar Babu said the state aims to promote industrial growth with minimal pollution and revealed that the new industrial policy includes mandatory dormitory facilities for workers. Industrial representatives welcomed the HILT policy and

sought infrastructure development beyond the ORR, a transition period for implementation, and relief on conversion and utility shifting charges.

Meanwhile, Minister Juppally Krishna Rao directed officials to compile detailed data on government lands, including vacant and encroached properties across districts. sub-committee also decided to implement revised land market values from the first week of May.

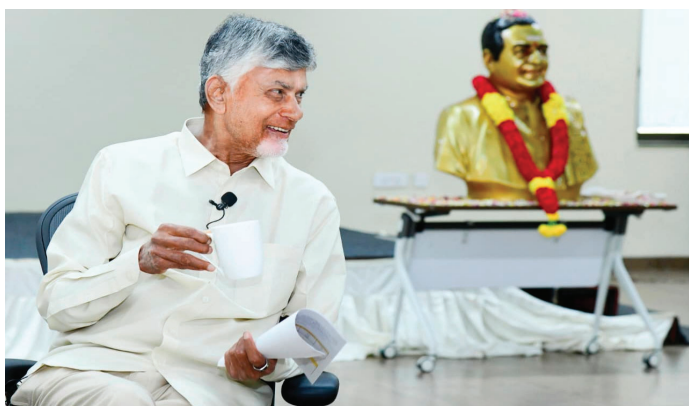
Senior officials, including Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao and Finance Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania, were present at the meeting.

CM Chandrababu Naidu Urges TDP Cadre to Rise as Leaders at Training Session

Amaravati (TSIT) : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu attended a training program for cluster in-charges at the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) central office and interacted extensively with party cadre. As part of the session, he also conducted an informal "Coffee with Cadre" interaction, discussing key political and organizational issues.

During the session, the Chief Minister focused on party ideology, strengthening organizational structure, and effective implementation of government welfare schemes. He encouraged cluster in-charges to actively engage with grassroots workers and transform every party activist into a capable leader.

Naidu emphasized the importance of staying informed about contemporary political developments and urged cadre to sharpen their understanding of the evol-



ing political landscape. He also highlighted alleged instances of lawlessness and violence by the opposition YSR Congress Party, even after losing power, calling for vigilance and strategic counteraction. Referring to recent incidents, including the Dastagir murder case and controversies involving

MLC Ananthababu, Naidu alleged that political violence and intimidation tactics were being used and stressed the need for party workers to remain cautious. Key Highlights from Chandrababu's Address: Party workers must seize opportunities and grow into leadership roles.

Telangana Govt Orders Major IPS Reshuffle; SHIKHA GOEL NAMED HOME PRINCIPAL SECRETARY



Hyderabad: The Telangana government has issued orders for a major reshuffle of IPS officers, with transfers and new postings set to take effect from May 1, 2026. Senior IPS officer Shikha Goel has been appointed as Principal Secretary of the Home Department. She will also continue to hold additional charge of the Cyber Security Bureau and the Forensic Science Laboratory. Devendra Singh Chauhan has been transferred and posted as Director General of Vigilance & Enforcement. Shahnavaz Qasim has been appointed as Inspector General of Police (IGP), Multi Zone-2, with additional charge

as IGP (Personnel). Tarun Joshi has been appointed as Commissioner of Police, Future City, following the retirement of Sudheer Babu. Avinash Mohanty has been transferred as Director General of the Drugs Control Administration and will also hold additional charge as Director of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). B. Sumathi has been appointed as Commissioner of Police, Malkajgiri, while Karthikeya has been assigned additional charge as IGP, Intelligence. The government stated the reshuffle aims to enhance administrative efficiency and strengthen coordination across police departments.

AAP MPs have cited several reasons for leaving party: HM Amit Shah

New Delhi, April 24 : Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that the decision taken by AAP MPs from Rajya Sabha, including Raghav Chadha, to part ways with their party is based on several reasons cited by them.

HM Shah's remarks during an election rally in West Bengal coincided with Chadha announcing a divorce with the AAP and leading a three-member party Rajya Sabha MPs' team to meet BJP National President Nitin Nabin at the party headquarters here.

Chadha had cited the AAP "stepping away from honest politics" as a key reason behind the decision by him and six other AAP MPs from Rajya Sabha to merge their parliamentary faction with the BJP. The AAP has 10 MPs in the Upper House.

In a message on X, Chadha said, "Today, exercising the provisions of the Constitution of India, more than two-thirds of the AAP MPs in the Rajya Sabha have merged with



the BJP. Seven MPs have signed the document, which was submitted to the Hon'ble Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, I, along with two other MPs, personally handed over the signed documents." Chadha was accompanied by Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal during the meeting with BJP president Nitin Nabin, who offered sweets to the AAP MPs after they went public with their switchover plan. Earlier, addressing a press conference along with AAP MPs Mittal and Pathak, Chadha said, "We have decided that we, the 2/3rd

members belonging to the AAP in Rajya Sabha, exercise the provisions of the Constitution of India and merge ourselves with the BJP." "The AAP that I gave 15 years of my life. Now the party has stepped away from honest politics. I am the right man in the wrong party. I am moving away from the party and going close to people," he said, adding that Rajya Sabha party colleagues like Harbhajan Singh and Swati Maliwal are among those parting ways with the AAP.

Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Friday announced the merger of two-thirds of the party's House members - 7 out of 10 - with the BJP, citing "suffocation" and lack of opportunity to serve people in the outfit that he founded with Arvind Kejriwal a decade ago.

Addressing a press conference along with AAP MPs Ashok Mittal and Sandeep Pathak, Chadha said, "We have decided that we, the 2/3rd members belonging to the AAP in Rajya Sabha, exercise the provisions of the Constitution of India and merge ourselves with the BJP."

"The AAP that I gave 15 years of my life. Now the party has stepped away from honest politics. I am the right man in the wrong party. I am moving away from the party and going close to people," he said, adding that Rajya Sabha party colleagues like Harbhajan Singh and Swati Maliwal are among those parting ways with the AAP. The seven AAP Rajya Sabha MPs are joining the BJP within days of Chadha's demotion in the House from the post



of Deputy Leader of the party for allegedly not raising key issues against the government.

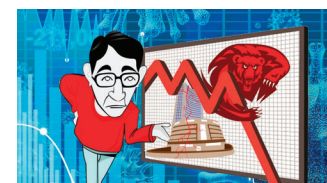
Interestingly, Ashok Mittal, who replaced Chadha as the new party Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha, has also joined him in the merger with the BJP. Amit, the rift with the party, Chandha posted a video and wrote, "With respect, to those questioning my parliamentary performance, I'll let my work do the 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.

Sensex falls 983 points, Nifty slips below 24,000 as oil spike hits sentiment



Mumbai, April 24 : Indian equity benchmarks ended sharply lower on Friday as a surge in crude oil prices rattled investor sentiment amid rising geopolitical tensions linked to stalled US-Iran talks and disruption at the Strait of Hormuz. The Sensex dropped 982.71 points, or 1.27 per cent, to close at 76,681.29, while the Nifty declined 275.10 points, or 1.14 per cent, to settle at 23,897.95.

Commenting on technical outlook, experts said that on the upside, 24,000 has now emerged as a strong resistance band, as the previous support has transitioned into a supply zone, capping recovery attempts. "A decisive move above 24,000 is required to ease

selling pressure and trigger a recovery towards 24,200, while a break below 23,800 could extend weakness towards the 23,600 level," an analyst stated. The sell-off was largely driven by weakness in information technology stocks, which bore the brunt of the decline.

Shares of Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, and Tech Mahindra emerged as the top losers on the Nifty IT index, dragging the sector down by around 5 per cent. Broader markets also mirrored the weak trend, with the Nifty MidCap and Nifty SmallCap indices falling 0.96 per cent and 0.87 per cent, respectively. Among sectors, apart from IT, the Nifty Pharma and Nifty Media indices also ended in the red, adding to the overall market weakness. However, the Nifty Metal index showed relative resilience, posting the smallest decline among sectoral indices.

INDIA SHARED ITS VISION TO HOST 2038 ASIAD AT OCA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: IOA

New Delhi, April 24 : India is looking to bring the Asian Games back to home soil for the first time since 1982 as the country expressed interest in hosting the Asian Games 2038, and the proposal for the same has been discussed at the Olympic Council of Asia's (OCA) executive board meeting in Sanya, China. While New Delhi hosted the inaugural edition in 1951 and the event's last Indian appearance in 1982. The 2038 bid will mark a potential return of the prestigious continental competition for the third time. As the 2026 edition will take place in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, Doha will host the 2030 and 2034 editions to be held in Riyadh, India is targeting the next available slot in 2038 along with the aggressive pitch for the 2036 Olympics. President of the Indian Olympic Association PT Usha has met with OCA chief H.E. Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani on Thursday to further strengthen the Olympic Movement across Asia.

Right to speedy trial cannot be exercised to grant bail in NDPS case: Supreme Court

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday said right to speedy trial is a precious constitutional right but it cannot be exercised to grant bail in matters governed by special enactment such as the NDPS Act, particularly where the recovery is of commercial quantity.

A bench of justices Sanjay Karol and Augustine George Masih made the observation while setting aside bail to two individuals by the Punjab and Haryana High Court in a case involving recovery of commercial quantity of heroin.

"The right to speedy trial, rooted in Article 21 of the Constitution, is undoubtedly a precious Constitutional right. That said, in matters governed by a special enactment such as the NDPS Act, particularly where the recovery is of commercial quantity, the said right under Article 21 must be exercised within the framework of Section 37 and cannot be pressed into service solely on the ground of delay to override it.

"The constitutional right un-



der Article 21 and the special provision of law under Section 37, NDPS Act are to be read harmoniously and not placed in opposition to each other. The High Court, by failing to record its satisfaction on the twin conditions under Section 37, has in this court's view, committed an error," the bench said.

The top court said the impugned high court order reflects a lack of adequate consideration of the record as the accused him-

self admitted that 'apart from the present case one more case FIR is there against him'.

"The High Court, however, has recorded that the respondent is 'not involved in any other case', and has expressly counted that recording among the considerations weighing in favour of the grant of bail.

"The recording of the High Court and the admission by the respondent are irreconcilable.

A Court while considering the prayer for bail under a special statute and attracting Section 37 of the NDPS Act could not have granted relief on grounds directly at odds with the admissions made by the respondent in the very petition before it. The said order being contrary to facts is flawed that speaks for itself as it appears that this fact was not brought to the notice of the High Court," the bench said.

The apex court said the impugned high court order is conspicuously silent on the fact that the petition before the high court was the second petition under Section 483 of the BNSS, the first being dismissed as withdrawn.

"A Court entertaining a successive bail petition under a special statute is bound to refer to the fate of the earlier petition and to record what change in circumstances justifies a fresh consideration," it said while setting aside the high court order and directing the accused to surrender within a week.

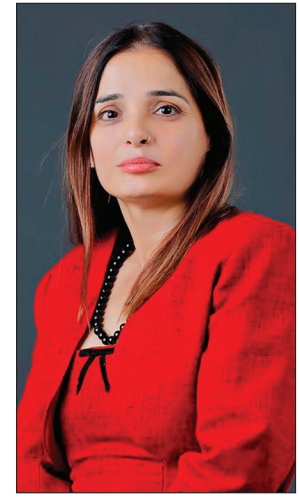
Noida International Airport appoints Nitu Samra as interim CEO

NEW DELHI: Noida International Airport on Friday announced the appointment of its Chief Financial Officer Nitu Samra as the interim Chief Executive Officer after authorities denied permission for foreign national Christoph Schnellmann to be at the helm.

"This change follows directions issued by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) that the Chief Executive Officer of an airport in India is required to be an Indian national," NIA said in a statement.

Samra will replace Schnellmann, a Swiss national who has led Noida International Airport (NIA) as the CEO since August 2020.

The regulatory issue related to the requirement of having an Indian national as CEO has been delaying the start of commercial operations of the airport, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 28.



Schnellmann will join the airport's Board of Directors as Executive Vice Chairman. In this role, he will continue to support the project and its transition to operations, the statement said.

With immediate effect, NIA said Samra has been appointed as the CEO on an interim basis until the Board of Directors can conclude a formal selection process.

Samra has been serving as the CFO since October 2021 and was closely involved in the airport's development journey, overseeing financial stewardship, governance, and strategic planning during a key phase of the project, the statement added.

NIA will be operated by Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (YIAPL), a subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG, under a public-private partnership.

Originally scheduled to commence passenger services in September 2024, NIA is being developed in four phases, along with a dedicated cargo terminal. It received an aerodrome license from the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in March.

YIAPL Chairman Daniel Bircher said that since the inauguration of the airport by the Prime Minister, the goal was to enable the start of operations as early as possible.

Nagpur man booked over objectionable remarks on Gadkari

NAGPUR: Police have registered a case against a Nagpur-based man for allegedly circulating an objectionable video on social media targeting Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, officials said on Friday.

According to the officials, the accused has been identified as Ayush Rameshchandra Agarwal, a resident of Manewada.

The case was filed following a complaint by Sumitkumar Rakeshkumar Chauhan, who claims to be an office-bearer of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha. Police said Chauhan had come to Nagpur on April 18. While he was near the Yashwant Stadium, he came across a video posted on Facebook by a user named 'SK Chavan'.

The video allegedly contained objectionable remarks about Gadkari, the Lok Sabha MP from Nagpur, they said.

Chauhan later approached the police and lodged a formal complaint, based on which the Dhandoli police registered an offence against Agarwal under relevant sections of law related to promoting offensive content on social media.

An official from the Dhandoli Police Station said, "We are verifying the video and the account from which it was circulated. Further investigation was underway."

Kejriwal strayed from AAP's founding principles, says MP after quitting party



NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, who on Friday announced her decision to quit AAP, alleged that the party under its national convener Arvind Kejriwal had strayed from its founding principles and shielded individuals involved in misconduct.

In a post on social media on X (formerly Twitter), Maliwal said she had chosen the path of national and public service in 2006.

She said, "From the RTI movement and the Anna movement to the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party and my eight years of dedicated service at the Delhi Commission for Women, I contributed with absolute honesty and devotion at every stage."

"With great sorrow today, I must say that the principles, values and resolve for honest politics with which we began this journey have been abandoned by Arvind Kejriwal ji and, at his behest, the entire Aam Aadmi Party," she added.

Recalling the incident which had taken place at Kejriwal's official residence, Maliwal further alleged that she was subjected to "severe physical assault and gross misconduct" on his instructions and claimed that attempts were made to shield the accused.

She also accused the party leadership of allowing "rampant corruption", promoting "criminal elements" and failing to address issues related to harassment and violence against women.

"Seeing the unchecked corruption growing in the Aam Aadmi Party under Kejriwal ji's patronage, incidents of harassment and assault against women, the promotion of tuggish elements, and the betrayal and looting happening with Punjab, I have decided to leave the party today," Maliwal declared.

In a massive jolt to AAP on Friday, seven of its Rajya Sabha MPs, including Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal, quit the party. Addressing a press conference, Chadha said that party MPs Harbhajan Singh and Swati Maliwal are also quitting the AAP.

Maliwal said that she will be speaking on the matter in greater detail once she is in Delhi on Friday night.

NHRC notice to TN govt, Virudhunagar SP over deaths in blast at fireworks unit

NEW DELHI: The NHRC on Friday said it has issued a notice to the Tamil Nadu government and the Superintendent of Police of Virudhunagar, in the wake of an explosion at a private firecracker manufacturing unit in that district in which several lives were lost.

At least 23 people were charred to death, and a few others sustained grievous injuries following a massive explosion at the unit near Virudhunagar on April 19, local police had said.

The National Human Rights Commission in a statement said it has taken suo motu cognisance of a media report that several workers died and six others were injured in an explosion at a private firecracker manufacturing unit in the Kattanarpatti area of Virudhunagar district of Tamil



Nadu.

"Reportedly, more than 100 workers including women were present at the factory complex when the incident occurred on

April 19. The blast was allegedly triggered due to friction during the chemical mixing and manufacturing process. Reportedly, in a recent similar incident in the

district, four persons had died," it said.

The Commission has observed that the content of the news report, if true, raises serious issues of human rights violations of the victims.

Therefore, it has issued notices to the chief secretary of Tamil Nadu and the Superintendent of Police, Virudhunagar, seeking a detailed report on it within two weeks, it said.

The report should include the status of health of the injured persons, investigation of the case and compensation, if any, has been paid to the next of kin of the deceased and the injured persons, the rights panel.

In a separate statement, the NHRC sought a report on the explosion at a thermal power plant in Chhattisgarh, which killed 13

workers and injured 20 others on April 14.

It gave two weeks to the state's chief secretary and the director general of police to submit the report, expecting details on the status of the disbursement of compensation to the affected workers and the health of those injured.

The NHRC also took suo motu cognisance of a media report which said that two girl students died after an iron gate of a government primary school collapsed upon them in Odisha's Gajapati district on April 15.

Reportedly, the incident occurred when the girls were playing near the school entrance.

It issued notices to Odisha chief secretary and Gajapati superintendent of police seeking a detailed report on it within two weeks.

AAP strong alternative in Gujarat, will win Rajkot civic polls: Sisodia

RAJKOT: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia on Friday said that his party has emerged as a strong alternative in Gujarat and will sweep the upcoming Rajkot Municipal Corporation election.

Speaking to reporters here on the last day of campaigning for the April 26 polls, Sisodia accused the BJP-led state government of systematically weakening public hospitals and governance over the last 30 years.

Elections to local bodies in Gujarat, including 15 municipal corporations, will be held on April 26, and votes will be counted on April 28. "AAP has now emerged as a strong alternative. This time it will win in the Rajkot Municipal Corporation," the former deputy chief minister of Delhi said. He targeted the ruling party, alleging that the condition of government schools in Rajkot is

"extremely poor".

While some school buildings had undergone improvements after AAP raised the issue, the quality of education remains poor, he said, and accused the government of weakening public hospitals and the overall system over the last 30 years. Schools, hospitals, and governance systems have systematically deteriorated, Sisodia claimed, asserting that people now have an alternative which they will use in elections.

The senior AAP leader also participated in a roadshow with a large number of supporters and party workers in Rajkot.

More than 4.18 crore voters will be eligible to exercise their franchise in the local body polls, which will cover 34 district panchayats, 260 taluka panchayats, and 84 municipalities, besides 15 municipal corporations.

Modi biggest brand ambassador for Bengal's tourism: Abhishek Banerjee

HOWRAH: Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee on Friday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he had inadvertently become the "biggest brand ambassador" for West Bengal tourism by showcasing the state's Ganga ghats, roads and street food during campaign visits.

Addressing election rallies in Jagatballavpur and Domjur assembly constituencies in Howrah district, Banerjee said Modi's public appearances, including eating muri on a pavement in Jhargram and walking along the Ganga, had done more to promote the state than official tourism campaigns.

"If Bengal had not been promoted this way -- how beautiful the Ganga is, how developed the roads of Jhargram are -- people of

the country would not have known or understood. The biggest brand ambassador for tourism of Mamata Banerjee's Ma-Mati-Manush government is Narendra Modi," he said.

"The road he walked on was built by Mamata Banerjee's government, the footpath was laid by Jhargram municipality, and the boy selling muri has his home in Bihar, where Modi's own double-engine government rules. He has come to Bengal out of economic compulsion," Banerjee said in an apparent dig at the BJP's governance record in its alliance states.

The TMC leader said BJP leaders were "exposing themselves" without any help from the opposition.

"They came to change Bengal, but they are chang-

ing themselves," he said.

Banerjee invited BJP leaders to visit the state throughout the year, not just during elections, to enjoy its street food such as 'phuchka', 'jhal muri', rolls and 'kachuris'.

Targeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Banerjee said he had advised him to "drink more water and keep a cool head" in view of the summer heat and early indications after the first phase of polling.

Referring to the first phase of polling, Banerjee expressed confidence that TMC's performance would mirror its 2021 sweep, saying, "The party has crossed a century."

A TMC spokesperson at a media conference claimed the party was leading in over 125 of the 152 seats that went to the polls on Thursday, while

Shah put his party's estimate at over 110 seats.

Both parties have claimed that they would win by a landslide, following the first phase of polling, which saw nearly 93 per cent turnout, the highest since Independence.

At an election rally at Canning Paschim, Banerjee also dismissed allegations that he used inappropriate language against Shah, saying he had only advised the home minister to drink more water in the summer heat and challenged him to stay in Bengal till May 4 noon.

"I have not used a single bad word against anyone. I only said it is very hot, drink more water. If you have the courage, stay in Bengal on May 4 noon," he said, adding that the results would separate "milk from water."

'Gaddars': Punjab CM Bhagwant slams AAP MPs who quit party

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday dubbed AAP's Rajya Sabha members, who quit the party and announced joining the BJP, as "gaddars" (traitors).

Addressing a press conference here, Mann alleged that the BJP was trying to break the AAP and had "betrayed the people of Punjab."

When they did not find anything against Bhagwant Mann, they tried to break AAP, said Mann, who returned on Friday after nearly a week-long visit to the Netherlands and Finland to attract investments for his state.

They are perturbed why Mann is becoming the leader of people, Mann said, hitting out at the BJP.



People of Punjab are with AAP; they firmly stand with the party, he said.

He also said that the party is bigger than an individual, and 6-7 people who have left do not comprise Punjab.

Chadha and Pathak on Friday announced that they are joining the BJP along with five other MPs of the party.

Earlier, addressing a joint press conference in

Delhi, AAP Rajya Sabha MPs Raghav Chadha and Sandeep Pathak said they were joining the BJP.

Chadha claimed that nearly two-thirds of AAP's Rajya Sabha MPs had quit the party and would join the BJP as a separate faction.

Swati Maliwal and Harbhajan Singh were among the seven who quit, he revealed.

Addressing the media, Mann said, "I have been saying this earlier too that the BJP does not get along with Punjab and Punjabis."

Anything with which people of Punjab are happy about, it tries to spoil it, he charged.

"When the AAP government was formed in Punjab, it withheld the state's rural development funds,"

he alleged.

He alleged that the "BJP started keeping a grudge against Punjab after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had to take a U-turn over the (now-repealed three) farm laws".

Citing other examples like the Bhakra Beas Management Board, he said it shows that the BJP cannot win in Punjab, but it indulges in 'tikrambaazi' (trick games). Today, the BJP betrayed the people of Punjab by calling some of our RS members to its side, he said.

Mann claimed that through the surveys, the BJP must have come to know the ground reality and thought of creating a flutter by engineering defections. But Punjabis do not tolerate betrayal, he said.

Drunk 'friends' nabbed for public row in Gurugram after video goes viral

GURUGRAM: The Gurugram Police has arrested a man and woman for allegedly engaging in a public fight, spouting cuss words at each other, at Bristol Chowk here, police said on Friday.

A video of the row outside a liquor shop circulated widely on social media.

The police, taking cognisance of the viral video, registered a case and then arrested the two late at night.

In the footage, the two can be seen engaged in a physical fight amid heavy traffic.

The man is seen pulling the woman's hair and repeatedly slapping her, said police.

A bystander recorded the incident and later shared it online.

A few more people were seen filming the altercation

and asking the woman to leave.

Social media users tagged the Haryana Police and Gurugram administration, demanding strict action.

The arrested woman was identified as Riya Kumari alias Riya, a resident of West Bengal, and the man as Rohit Kumar, a resident of Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan.

Riya Kumari lives on rent in Wazirabad village, while Rohit lives in Chakkarpur in Gurugram, said police.

"During interrogation, the accused revealed that they knew each other and that the incident occurred after they had drunk heavily. An argument broke out between them over an old matter and quickly escalated into a public uproar," an officer said.

Siddaramaiah Using 'Escape Formula' on Internal Quota: R. Ashok



Bengaluru: Opposition Leader R. Ashok on Thursday accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of adopting an "escape formula" in allocating internal reservations, claiming that no community would benefit from the decision. Speaking to reporters,

Ashok said the Congress government was staging a "drama" to avoid addressing two pressing issues—youth agitating for government jobs and Scheduled Communities fighting for internal reservations. "On one side, youth are protesting for jobs. On the other,

community members are demanding internal quotas. To escape both, the CM resorted to this formula," he alleged.

He pointed out that the previous BJP government had provided 17% reservation. "Why was it reduced to 15% now? Instead of challenging this in court, the government reduced the quota, doing injustice to all," Ashok said. He also claimed that no consultations were held with leaders from the 52 caste groups or religious seers (Swamijis) before the decision. The opposition leader warned that the struggle for internal reservation would continue uninterrupted.

From Budget to Action Plan: Workshop on Effective Utilisation of Rs.4344 Crore Allocation

Bengaluru : North City Corporation organized a Budget to Action Plan" workshop at the IAS Officers' Association Hall on Infantry Road, with the objective of ensuring effective and efficient utilisation of the 4344 crore allocation approved for the 2026-27 financial year.

Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar, presided over the programme and stated that every rupee allocated to the Corporation must be utilised effectively for public benefit. He noted that all engineers are working diligently towards the city's development and that the Additional Commissioners are



extending full support in coordination.

The Commissioner further stated that when engineers, officials, and city stakeholders come together and actively participate in planning, it leads to the formulation of better and more practical projects

that can be implemented effectively. He expressed satisfaction that several experts and stakeholders had come together to contribute ideas that would benefit the public.

Objective of the Workshop: The workshop aimed to

understand budget allocations in depth and discuss strategies for effectively implementing key initiatives to improve the quality of life of citizens in the North City Corporation area. With the upcoming Pink Line and Blue Line Metro corridors, which will bring 18 new metro stations within the jurisdiction, discussions focused on improving walkability, cycling infrastructure, bus networks, and seamless metro integration.

Discussion on Action Plans:

Officials from various departments, experts, and NGOs participated in the workshop and discussed

strategies to translate budget provisions into actionable plans. Practical discussions were held to identify impactful and feasible projects for the city's development.

Implementation Roadmap:

The draft action plans prepared during the workshop will be refined and submitted to the Commissioner. These plans will then be implemented in a phased manner. Monthly review meetings will be conducted to monitor progress, along with quarterly comprehensive progress reports to ensure effective and time-bound execution of budget goals.

DK Shivakumar Urges Defence Minister to Relax Height Norms for Bengaluru's Growth



New Delhi: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has appealed to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to ease building height restrictions imposed by the Defence Department around military airfields in Bengaluru, stating that the curbs are obstructing the city's development.

Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru Development portfolio, met the Union Minister in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum on the issue. He pointed out that airport authorities are imposing excessive conditions while issuing No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for construction within a 20 km radius of Defence airports, particularly around HAL Airport, which is located in the heart of the city.

"Bengaluru is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. Demand for development projects near HAL Airport is very high, but additional restrictions are blocking progress," the DCM said.

He noted that while GSR 751(E) sets a 150-metre height limit within a 15 km radius of airports, Defence airports have extended this limit to 20 km. Shivakumar cited global examples like Singapore, London, and Dubai, where airports drive urban transformation and employment.

He requested that the height limit be confined to a 15 km radius and that authorities balance aviation safety with urban growth. Previous letters to the Defence and Civil Aviation secretaries were also mentioned.

Aakash Karnataka Shines in JEE Main 2026; Adarsh Kumar Behera Secures AIR 43



Bengaluru : Students of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), Karnataka, have delivered an outstanding performance in JEE Main 2026, reflecting strong academic consistency and a high level of preparedness across centres.

Leading the cohort is Adarsh Kumar Behera, who secured an impressive All India Rank (AIR)

43 and Karnataka State Rank 2, emerging as the top performer from the state. Notably, he also achieved a 100 percentile in Mathematics and Chemistry, showcasing exceptional subject mastery. In JEE Main 2026 (Session 2), students from Aakash Institute across Karnataka delivered strong results, with several students securing top

ranks. Other top performers include Pranil Singla (AIR 211), Ayush S Kolekar (AIR 276), and Naman Agarwal (AIR 785), all of whom achieved ranks within the top 1000 nationally.

Additional notable performers include Aditya, T R S Sanjeev, Johann Job, Gudala Satya Yashasw, and Prachet Jalashankar M, among others, reflecting a broad base of strong academic performance across the state.

According to the National Testing Agency (NTA) results released on 20th April 2026, 15 students from Aakash Institute across Karnataka delivered an excellent performance in JEE Main 2026 (Session 2), with multiple students qualifying for JEE Advanced.

TCS World 10K 2026 to Begin April 26; CM Siddaramaiah Extends Support



Bengaluru: A delegation from Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), along with Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board Chairman and KPCC Vice President S.E. Sudheendra, met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to discuss the inauguration of the 18th edition of the TCS World 10K race. The event, themed "Forever Bengaluru," will be held on April 26, 2026. The race features multiple categories, including 10 km, 4.5 km, and 3 km distances, open to young men and women, senior citizens, and participants in various costumes. Winners will receive cash prizes. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah extended his best wishes for the successful completion of the event. Procama company Managing Director Vivek Singh and John were also present during the meeting.

KJ GEORGE INAUGURATES RAJKUMAR PARK, OPEN-AIR THEATRE IN KAMMANAHALLI

Bengaluru: Energy Minister K.J. George on Thursday inaugurated the Natasaarvabhowma Dr. Rajkumar Park in Kammanahalli and dedicated a newly constructed open-air theatre to the public. Speaking at the event, George said the park, named after the leg-



endary actor Dr. Rajkumar, is being well-maintained. "The open-air theatre will serve as a platform for various community programs. Other parks in the constituency will also be renovated and beautified further," he added. The Minister inspected the park's cleanliness and visitor facilities, distributed wheelchairs to persons with disabilities, and gave sports equipment to athletes. He also visited Hennur Biodiversity Park, reviewing sustainable development works. Officials were instructed to install drip irrigation systems to enhance green cover and put up a name board for a park being developed in honor of leader B. Basavalingappa. George performed groundbreaking for road works, street lighting, drainage, and drinking water projects in areas including Kammanahalli, HBR Layout, Vinobha Nagar, Nagawara, and Hennur. Interacting with local leaders and contractors, he stressed high-quality execution and timely completion. Responding to residents' drinking water concerns, he assured that tankers would serve areas facing shortages. Local officials and block Congress presidents attended the event.

Nippon Paint Hosts Exclusive Meet & Greet with Royal Challengers Bangalore Players, Strengthening Fan and Dealer Engagement

Bangalore : Nippon Paint (India) Private Limited (Decorative Division), Asia's leading paint manufacturer, conducted an exclusive 'Meet & Greet' session with players of Royal Challengers Bangalore at The RCB Café, Bangalore. Organized as part of its associate sponsorship with the team, the event created a memorable platform for fans to



interact with their favourite cricketers. Players Venkatesh Iyer, Jacob Duffy, and Abhinandan Singh graced the occasion and engaged with fans in an energetic and interactive session. Dealers, contest winners, and members of the Nippon Paint ecosystem had the opportunity to connect with the players, followed by group photos

and selfies - much to the delight of everyone present. A total of 55 dealers, 10 architects, and 3 contest winners, along with the Nippon Paint ecosystem, were invited to be part of this exclusive experience. About the event, Mr. Mark Titus, President - Nippon Paint (India) Private Limited (Decorative Coatings Business) said,

CMR University Brings Young Innovators Together to Turn Local Challenges into Global solutions at CAUSE 2026



Bengaluru : CMR University successfully concluded its flagship Global Open Innovation Challenge held on April 23 and 24, 2026, at its scenic Lakeside Campus in Bagalur. The event was organized as part of the university's annual Design Thinking Day celebrations, Cause 2026, led by the Department of Common Core Curriculum.

Held under the theme "The Future is Local," the two-day challenge brought together young innovators to explore solutions rooted in local contexts. The initiative encouraged participants to rethink innovation by drawing inspiration from community

needs, indigenous knowledge systems, and everyday lived experiences.

At the event, students actively engaged in designing context-driven and sustainable solutions across diverse focus areas, including Community Development, Urban Infrastructure and Everyday Systems, Health and Wellbeing, Environment and Sustainability, and Learning Skills.

The valedictory ceremony was graced by Chief Guest Mr. Anwar Khan, Senior Director and Chief Architect at Capgemini, in the presence of distinguished dignitaries including Mr. Jeya Chandran, Regional Head - Southern

India, UNDP; Dr. K. C. Ramamurthy, IPS (Retd.), Former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, and Chairman, CMR Group of Institutions & CMR University; Dr. H. B. Raghavendra, Vice Chancellor, CMR University; and Dr. Praveen R, Pro Vice Chancellor & Registrar, along with the university's deans and directors.

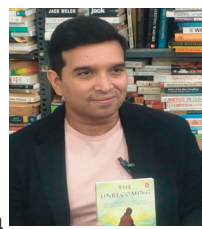
This year's edition of the challenge witnessed an overwhelming response, with over 893 teams and more than 3,500 students participating from 120 institutions across 10 countries and 127 cities. The global representation included participants from Abu Dhabi,

Cameroon, Germany, the USA, Sudan, and Canada, among others. The diversity was further enriched by participation from Indian cities such as Ahmedabad, Delhi, Chennai, Pune, and regions like Odisha.

Over 100 projects were shortlisted and showcased, including an AI-powered platform for persons with disabilities, disaster rescue systems, and AI-based monitoring for illegal activities and poaching. Innovations also featured road accident alerts, a smart fisherman border alert system, and solutions for leak detection, smart pipelines, and GIS-based distribution. Dr. K. C. Ramamurthy, IPS (Retd.), Former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, and Chairman, CMR Group of Institutions & CMR University, in his presidential address, expressed pride in the innovative ideas presented by students from across the world. He emphasized that strong general knowledge and problem-solving skills are key to translating such ideas into impactful solutions. Team Nano Heel won the National Category, Team Biota Backers secured the CMR Category, and Team Bohos Online from Germany emerged as the International Category winner, all recognized for their impactful, locally driven innovations.

Kartikeya Vajpai Brings 'The Unbecoming' to Bengaluru, with a Foreword by the Dalai Lama

Bengaluru : Bengaluru's vibrant literary circle welcomed a new voice as author and lawyer Kartikeya Vajpai launched his debut novel 'The Unbecoming' at Blossom Book House in the city. The event drew a mix of readers, writers, and professionals, reflecting the city's growing appetite for thought-provoking, introspective literature. The book, featuring forewords by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Swami Sarvapriyanana, places itself within a wider philosophical dialogue on modern living and the human condition. Blending contemporary spiritual thought with literary fiction, 'The Unbecoming' explores themes of identity, purpose, and self-awareness. Moving beyond a conventional launch format, the evening evolved into an engaging exchange of ideas around inner inquiry, personal growth, and the process of shedding conditioned identities, resonating strongly with Bengaluru's intellectually curious audience. Speaking at the launch, Author Vajpai said, "This book comes from a very personal space of questioning who we really are beneath everything we have been told to become. Over time, we begin to carry identities shaped by



family, society, ambition, and fear, and we rarely stop to examine whether they are truly ours. The Unbecoming is an invitation to pause and reflect on that. It encourages a deeper inquiry into what happens when we begin to let go of these layers, not in rejection, but in understanding. When that process begins, there is a certain lightness and clarity that emerges, allowing us to respond to life more honestly rather than react out of conditioning. For me, the idea was to explore that inner shift through storytelling and make it accessible in a way that feels real and relatable."

ICICI Home Finance Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office: W Mall Building, 2nd floor, Wexco Homes, Kanjikuzhi, Kottayam - 686004
[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs, Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Sarin Sabu (Borrower) Surya Sudhakaran (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHKOM00001360467, LHKOM00001360767	Resy No 391/4-4 Kulathingal House Pothampuram P.O, Pampady Kottayam Kerala- 686502	Rs. 12, 80,651/- April 21, 2026	Rs. 17,53, 027/- To Rs. 1,75, 303/-	May 20, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	May 27, 2026 11:00 AM To 05:00 PM	May 26, 2026 Before Auction	Symbolic Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-https://BidDealin) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Mortgagors/notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till May 26, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule. The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before May 26, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before May 26, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit https://www.icicifh.com/

Date: April 25, 2026
Place: Kottayam

Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited",
CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

Germany's First 'Military Strategy' In 77 Years Is A Wake-Up Call For India

On April 22, India and Germany signed a Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap in Berlin, alongside a P-751 submarine deal inching towards closure between ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Mazagon Dock. On the same day, the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung released something far more consequential for Europe's strategic future: the public portion of the Gesamtkonzeption militärische Verteidigung, the "overall conception of military defence", Germany's first formal military strategy since 1949. The timing is deliberate and tells us something important.

Why This Document Is Historic

For seventy-seven years, Germany has deliberately avoided having a "Militärstrategie". The word itself carried too much weight, too much memory. Post-war Bonn, and later Berlin, worked through Weissbücher, Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien, and NATO planning documents. The deliberate vagueness was the point. A Germany with a signed military strategy was a Germany with strategic ambition, and strategic ambition was precisely what post-war German political culture had been built to suppress. That reticence is now history. Signed by Generalinspekteur Carsten Breuer in April 2026 and publicly endorsed by Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, the Gesamtkonzeption promulgates a single organising objective: to make the Bundeswehr "die stärkste konventionelle Armee Europas", that is, the strongest conventional army in Europe. Pistorius puts it in language that would have been heretical in Berlin a decade ago. Germany, he writes, must be the "Schrittmacher unter den europäischen Nationen", the pacemaker among European nations. The document's subtitle, "Verantwortung für Europa" (responsibility for Europe), bears the same weight.

THIS IS A RUPTURE, AND A DELIBERATE ONE.

What Motivated It

The first force is Russia. The strategy names Moscow as the largest and most immediate threat to German, European and transatlantic security. It argues Russia is actively preparing the conditions for a war against NATO, already conducts hybrid operations inside alliance territory, including Germany, and views military force as a legitimate instrument of policy. Moscow's strategic goal, the document assesses, is the collapse of "Bündniskohäsion", that is, alliance cohesion, and the strategic decoupling of the United States from Europe. The second force, arguably the more important one, is Washington. The Gesamtkonzeption openly references the US 2026 National Defense Strategy and its calls for allies to take greater responsibility for their own security. It accepts with rare clarity that Europe must now do more. The thesis is one line: "Die NATO muss europäischer werden, um transatlantisch zu bleiben." It means NATO must become more European to remain transatlantic. This is a document planning for a semi-absent America while remaining diplomatic about it.

The Significant Facets

The document organises the Bundeswehr's transformation across three phases running to 2039. Phase one, to 2029, focuses on "Maximierung Verteidigungsfähigkeit", that is, maximisation of defence readiness. Phase two, roughly to 2035, delivers "starker Aufwuchs durchhaltefähiger Streitkräfte", marked by the growth of sustainable forces aligned with the alliance. Phase three, from 2039, aims for "technologisch überlegene Streitkräfte" (technologically superior forces). The personnel target is 460,000 soldiers, minimum, by 2035, active and non-active combined, with full equipment for all units, as the document calls it, "Vollausstattung". Six national capability priorities structure spending and procurement: long-range precision strike and integrated air and missile defence, "Informationsüberlegenheit", or information superiority, powered by artificial intelligence, a sovereign cloud-based "Digital Backbone", national command capability for Multi-Domain Operations, the "Operationsbasis Deutschland" or homeland as operational base for NATO forces, and national crisis response. The permanent deployment of the "Brigade Litauen" in Lithuania, the first such basing outside German soil in the Bundeswehr's history, is highlighted as the visible symbol of the new posture.

Ukraine, And The Lesson From It

The document's "Kriegsbild", its picture of future war, reads like a comprehensive distillation of three years of observation in Ukraine. It is organised based on six concepts. "Entgrenzung des Krieges", the dissolution of boundaries between civil and military, home and front, combatant and non-combatant. "Multi-temporaler Krieg", where state-of-the-art systems operate alongside legacy platforms and improvised drones. "Transparentes Gefechtsfeld", the transparent battlefield where real-time reconnaissance makes concealment nearly impossible. "Wirkung auf Abstand", long-range precision effects that eliminate safe rear areas. Automation and autonomy that compress decision cycles beyond human capacity. And most strikingly, "effiziente Masse", efficient mass, the recognition that cheap mass-produced systems combined with high-end assets produce decisive effects, and that the economy of war matters again. The explicit warning against building "die Armee von gestern für den Krieg von morgen" - the army of yesterday for the war of tomorrow - is a direct rebuke of institutional inertia. It is the lesson every serious military has had to confront since February 2022.

Why This Matters For India

First, Germany's move towards a more autonomous European defence posture alters the balance India has historically managed between Washington, Moscow, and Europe. For India, this means the previous policy framework of triangulating among these powers, within the context of a stable, US-led transatlantic order, is now evolving. India will have to adjust its approach as Germany signals a more independent European role, making Europe a more active strategic actor.

An End To US-Iran War Is Hiding In Plain Sight - If They Can See It

America has achieved its core objective: Iran's nuclear threat is comprehensively set back years, if not decades. Staying in the Gulf now serves no purpose; the longer the standoff drags on, the greater the risk of a war that could cripple global energy lifelines. A strategic walkway - trading dominance for deterrence - may be the only way to prevent it. An indefinitely extended ceasefire should bring relief. In the Middle East, it brings a quieter dread. The truce that paused the 40-day US-Israel-Iran war has entered its third week - a pause, not a peace, in which everyone is reloading. America's seizure of an Iranian vessel and Tehran's calibrated retaliation show that no calm ever arrived. The Strait of Hormuz has become a stage for two exhausted adversaries in a high-stakes game of chicken, one radar blip from a conflagration neither wants. The question is straightforward: Where do we go from here? The Balance Sheet The war was an asymmetric dismantling. Iran absorbed the seismic shock of "Epic Fury" without state collapse - proof of its technocratic capacity, security apparatus, ideological resolve and nationalist sentiment. It defended its territory and projected defiance to rally support. Its leverage over the Strait of Hormuz is now its undisputed geopolitical currency. But the other side of the ledger is just as stark. American air and naval forces achieved their objectives. Iran's navy has been reduced to fast-attack craft and seabed debris; mili-



tary-linked industry is severely damaged. B-2 bombers have entombed the highly enriched 440kg uranium stockpile under tons of concrete and granite - a radioactive grave surveilled ceaselessly from above. Breakout time has been reset from weeks to years, perhaps indefinitely. The bill: over \$300 billion in Iranian infrastructure damages, a generational setback. The Realpolitik Calculus Continuing the blockade and "Economic Fury" sanctions yields diminishing returns and mounting risk. The blockade is a tripwire; the longer the Fifth Fleet plugs the Strait of Hormuz, the greater the chance of a miscalculation that reignites war. Stalemate is not stability - it is the prelude to crisis.

Some in Washington and Tel Aviv ask: Iran is on its knees, why not finish the job? The temptation is understandable - and catastrophically misguided. "Epic Fury" was devastating because it was calibrated. It struck nuclear and military targets while avoiding the regime's absolute red line: energy infrastructure. Should the war restart, there is nowhere left to go but up the escalation ladder, and the only remaining rungs lead directly to Iran's refineries and export terminals. Iran is Not Unprepared An attack on those targets would pose an existential threat, and Tehran has prepared for exactly this. Its missile and drone forces, degraded but far from destroyed, would be unleashed not on American

warships but on the soft underbelly of the global energy system. Aramco's Abqaiq facility could be struck repeatedly; the UAE's oil infrastructure would burn. Most ominously, the vulnerable desalination plants supplying over 90% of the Persian Gulf's freshwater - and Israel's own capacity - would be systematically targeted. The result would be a regional catastrophe rendering the littoral states of the Persian Gulf uninhabitable. This is not alarmism; it is the logical terminus of an escalation pathway both sides have so far had the prudence to avoid. To restart the war is to choose that terminus. Abandonment, Of A Different Kind This reality makes a cynical but pragmatic exit imperative. The

United States should abandon the conflict in its entirety - not via a treaty photo-op, but through quiet strategic de-escalation rooted in off-shore balancing. The hawks' objection is predictable: why walk away now? Because the nuclear programme is entombed, the navy wrecked, the industrial base shattered. An indefinite garrison achieves nothing; remaining merely converts a punitive success into an open-ended occupation of a waterway and a catastrophic escalation. Yet a half-measure exit - withdrawing the fleet while maintaining full financial warfare - is not de-escalation at all. It merely shifts the domain of conflict. Reopening the Strait while keeping the economy suffocated by sanctions removes

any incentive for Tehran to behave as a status-quo power. Denied revenue to rebuild, Iran would weaponise the very access America claims to have restored. The blockade would migrate from the sea lanes to the global economy. A withdrawal from the Gulf must, therefore, be paired with a de facto relaxation of "Economic Fury". The two levers are not independent; pulling one without the other guarantees that the mechanism jams. Washington can frame this as a mission-complete transition. The uranium is entombed; any attempt to rebuild enrichment sites will be met with precise air strikes. By stepping back, the White House can sell a narrative of punitive victory: Iran is denied the bomb and forced to live with the consequences of its intransigence. No Marshall Plan, no sanctions relief, no compensation. In Washington's transactional vernacular, that is the punishment. The Iranian Equation For Tehran, this is the bitterest of pills, but one it can swallow. Under this de facto arrangement, Iran does not surrender. It can claim it weathered the American storm, that its sovereignty remains intact. National pride remains unscathed. This path also offers Iran the only sustainable exit from economic oblivion. To rebuild, Iran must sell oil. To sell oil, it needs secondary sanctions to be eased - not lifted entirely, but rendered non-enforceable through deliberate inattention to third-party energy transactions.

IS BORING GOOD? TIM COOK WOULD SAY 'YES'!

Steve Jobs famously said, "It's better to be a pirate than to join the Navy". But as his first chosen successor moves away from the top job at Apple, 15 years after Jobs' death, the company he founded is as far as possible from a bootleg vessel as can be. Jobs was a genius, a visionary in design, product and marketing. Is Tim Cook close to any of these? Heck, no! Apple events don't unleash epochal products anymore. In fact, recent announcements show a clear lack of imagination with AI or device innovation, with markets repeatedly giving them thumbs down after every new iPhone unveiling. Has Tim Cook in his 15 years made Apple boring? Of course, yes. But is boring as bad as it is made out to be? The answer in Apple's case is a resounding NO. Boring is essential for corporate longevity. So, Cook isn't a showman-inventor but an operations expert. While it's fun and glamorous to be a buccaneer-style founder, the heavy-lifting lies in putting the ship together to insulate it against choppy waters, regulatory and geopolitical attacks, and make it into an institution that is structured in operations, governance, product pipeline, succession planning, for these give returns to all its stakeholders, including the innovators at its core. In short, a closer look shows how Cook's every weakness is actually a thought-through strategy to steer Apple to stable waters. Let's begin with the biggest criticism of Cook: Making Apple boring. No out-of-the-world device innovations and no jaw-dropping AI announcement either.

APPLE'S AI HESITANCE

Cook is a firm believer in being the best, which might

not necessarily mean being the first. For him, market-timing and first-mover advantage is subordinate to readiness. Cook's strategy is to patiently wait while others validate demand and the noise settles. Historically, Apple then goes for the kill in that category with a product that is dramatically more useful and practical to mainstream users. The Cook era is full of late-but-integrated entries: Apple Watch in 2014, Apple Pay in 2014, AirPods in 2016, Vision Pro in 2023 with retail availability in 2024, and Apple Intelligence in 2024. None were first in their category; all were framed as deeply integrated with Apple's hardware, software and services stack. The success of each of these products is validation of Cook's strategy. Though analysts have labelled Apple as an AI laggard, Cook, while announcing John Ternus, the company's hardware chief, as his successor, did tease 2026 as the year with an 'incredible' pipeline of products, including a foldable iPhone and AI-focused wearables. But Cook's Apple doesn't build everything. It builds only when a dependency threatens to become a chokepoint. So, in the AI cycle, Cook has signalled a greater willingness to loosen his traditional M&A discipline, saying Apple was open to deals that accelerate its roadmap and had already acquired seven small AI firms in 2025.

LASTING LEGACY

It is now clear that there will be no radical iPhone upgrades, and yes, there are Reddit threads arguing for and against it; but the debate is largely settled around the belief that a boring phone is better than unstable, reckless radicalism.

Between Fear And Opportunity: Sri Lanka's India Dilemma

Sri Lanka is once again at a moment of crisis - shaped by economic uncertainty, energy insecurity, and the aftershocks of its recent financial collapse. Recent attacks on Iran have further disrupted energy markets, exposing the fragility of supply chains. Yet, as so often in its post-independence history, the central question is not the nature of the crisis, but whether the country has the vision to convert it into opportunity. At a time when India is emerging as a principal driver of regional growth and connectivity, Sri Lanka faces a stark choice: align with this transformation, or remain constrained by the anxieties of the past. History offers instructive parallels. The Netherlands positioned itself as Europe's logistics hub after the Second World War, while Singapore became Southeast Asia's gateway. Both translated geographic advantage into sustained execution. Sri Lanka, too, was poised - by geography and history - to play a comparable role for South Asia. Yet its trajectory has been marked by false starts and unrealised expectations. External shocks played a part, but the deeper constraint has been internal: populist politics and an inward-looking mindset, accompanied by unease about external engagement, particularly with India. The contrast is striking. Sri Lankans have excelled globally in open, competitive environments. Yet, at home, the country has struggled to align policy with opportunity. Recent proposals on energy connectivity between India and Sri Lanka-including an oil pipeline, the development of the Trincomalee tank farm, and the transformation of the Port of Trincomalee into a regional energy hub-reflect a long-overdue recognition of strategic reality. Interest from the United Arab Emirates strengthens the case. Sri Lanka's annual oil and petroleum requirement is roughly equivalent to about one week's requirement for India, making practical arrangements on energy security relatively straightforward. These discussions have gained urgency. The strategic imperative, however, is fundamentally Sri Lanka's: to finally operationalise an asset that has remained unrealised for decades. Sri Lanka's wind energy potential in the northwest - estimated at over 15,000 MW, around three times current capacity - offers another opportunity. Exporting renewable energy to India is both commercially viable and strategically transformative. Yet, Sri Lanka's experience suggests that opportunity alone is not



enough. The trajectory of Indo-Sri Lankan economic relations reflects this pattern of missed opportunities. India's first-ever Free Trade Agreement with any country, signed with Sri Lanka in 1998, held considerable promise, but progress has been uneven. Delays in the Trincomalee tank farm project, signed in 2009, and the cancellation of the Sampur power project illustrate this pattern, as does the more recent cancellation of a major wind project in Mannar and Pooneryn. The ports sector tells a similar story. Sri Lanka's deep-water advantage at the Port of Colombo has made it a vital transshipment hub, with nearly 50% of its volume linked to India. However, as India expands its own port infrastructure, this advantage cannot be taken for granted. The withdrawal from the East Container Terminal arrangement reflected recurring hesitation, while progress on the West Container Terminal must be followed by further development, including Colombo's North Port. Connectivity must extend beyond ports. Bandaranaike International Airport requires expansion and investment, potentially through partnerships with India and Japan. Measures such as pre-clearance arrangements for Indian travellers in Colombo, akin to US-style pre-clearance in Abu Dhabi, could further deepen linkages. Looking ahead, more ambitious infrastructure links - through road and rail connections between India and Sri Lanka - should be explored, despite political sensitivities. Sri Lanka's mineral resources-graphite, phosphate, and ilmenite-also offer opportunities for integration into regional supply chains, particularly in meeting India's growing industrial demand. In this regard, the recent proposal by Japan for an India-Sri Lanka export-oriented economic cor-

ridor merits serious consideration. Across decades, successive governments have often squandered strong mandates through short-term populism. Each crisis has raised hopes of course correction; too often, those hopes have faded. There are, however, clear examples of progress. Tourism is one such area. India is now Sri Lanka's largest source of visitors, and this flow has been both economically beneficial and socially well-received. Sri Lanka has the potential to position itself as a preferred leisure destination for Indian travellers - perhaps even as a "new Goa" for segments of the market, with Colombo only about an hour further from Delhi. Digital cooperation is another promising frontier. Collaboration on digital public infrastructure, including initiatives around a unique digital identity, could enhance service delivery, expand financial inclusion, and integrate Sri Lanka more deeply into regional ecosystems. The central challenge, therefore, is not one of geography or resources, but of mindset. Sri Lanka must recognise that while asymmetries in size and power are real, India is an opportunity that should be seized with clarity and confidence, as an equal partner.

For such a partnership to succeed, the Indian side must move decisively to translate agreements into tangible outcomes, with faster and more responsive execution. India, as the larger partner, should also be more sensitive to the imbalance inherent in the relationship, and accordingly more accommodating. If that shift occurs, Sri Lanka can still realise its long-delayed destiny as South Asia's logistics and economic hub-its own version of the Netherlands or Singapore, albeit belatedly. The present crisis is not just a test of resilience-it is a test of imagination.

Petrol, Diesel Price Hike Imminent? Emkay Sees 'Rs 10/Litre Increase In First Round'

AGENCY
Mumbai: A potential hike in petrol and diesel prices may be on the horizon, with brokerage firm Emkay Global Financial Services warning that continued disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz could force the government to act. The brokerage expects a first round of price hikes of around Rs 10 per litre, although it noted this would only partially offset losses faced by oil marketing companies (OMCs). In a report released on Friday, Emkay said that any prolonged closure or disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil transit route, would tighten supply and keep crude prices elevated, making India's current fuel price freeze increasingly unsustainable. The pressure stems from persistently high global oil prices, with Brent crude hovering around \$100-\$120 per barrel, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions affecting flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Since a significant portion of global oil supply passes through this chokepoint, any disruption directly impacts import-dependent economies like India. As a result, Indian fuel retailers are facing rising under-recoveries, as domestic pump prices have



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not kept pace with global benchmarks. Impact On Inflation, GDP And Markets According to Emkay, a Rs 10/litre increase would cover only about 53% of current under-recoveries, leaving room for further hikes if crude prices remain elevated. However, the brokerage cautioned that a sharper increase could trigger inflationary shocks and broader macroeconomic risks. It estimates that a Rs 10 hike could have an approximately 75 basis points impact on inflation, including second-order effects. Emkay noted that even a partial price hike would not allow the government to roll back recent excise duty cuts, which have

a potential fiscal impact of about 0.2% of GDP. Meanwhile, equity markets could react negatively in the short term. The brokerage warned that a fuel price hike could trigger a correction, especially as market valuations are already near long-term averages. Emkay also believes that if crude prices remain high due to continued tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, additional rounds of price hikes may follow, likely in a staggered manner. Despite this, the firm described the current energy shock as "transient", expecting eventual stabilisation in global markets once supply normalises. The report also flagged sectoral

risks, noting that automobiles (OEMs, ancillaries, lenders) and cement companies are likely to be among the biggest losers due to higher fuel costs. Separately, Kotak Institutional Equities had outlined a more severe scenario. In its recent report, the brokerage estimated that fuel prices may need to rise by Rs 25-28 per litre to fully align with global crude prices, assuming an Indian crude basket of \$120 per barrel. However, it added that

political considerations, especially around ongoing state elections, have likely kept actual hikes more moderate. Kotak also highlighted that Indian refiners are facing an incremental monthly burden of around Rs 270 billion, despite modest increases in LPG and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices. A Rs 10/litre excise duty cut announced on March 27, 2026, has provided some relief but limited the government's fiscal flexibility. However, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has dismissed reports of an imminent price hike. In a statement posted on X, the ministry said there is "no such proposal under consideration", calling such reports "misleading" and aimed at creating panic. The government also emphasised that India is among the few countries where petrol and diesel prices have remained unchanged for nearly four years, attributing this stability to coordinated efforts between the government and public sector oil companies to shield consumers from global price volatility.

AI is already leading to fewer jobs for young people, says Sunak

AGENCY
London: Artificial intelligence (AI) is flattening the jobs market for young people and governments should eliminate National Insurance to make hiring workers more attractive, former prime minister Rishi Sunak has told the BBC. Sunak, now an adviser to AI firm Anthropic and Microsoft, said while he is an enthusiast for the transformative impact of AI, he said concerns from graduates looking for entry level jobs were justified. He said company bosses were privately acknowledging to him that recruitment of young people is flattening because of the technology. "There are reasons to be worried and think about the future. But we are able to do something about this," he said. Sunak suggested rebalancing the tax system by abolishing National Insurance

"over time" and replacing it with taxes on corporate profits. These, he said, would be boosted by productivity and efficiencies in deploying AI. Sunak said it is becoming tougher for young people to get jobs in service sectors such as law, accountancy and the creative industries. Meanwhile, he said chief executives are telling him that "flat is the new up".



String Metaverse Limited Announces Successful OFS with Strong Retail Participation; Board to Consider Bonus Issue for Public Shareholders



Hyderabad, India - April 24, 2026: String Metaverse Limited today announced the successful completion of its Offer for Sale (OFS) of equity shares, which witnessed a strong and broad-based response from investors across categories. The OFS was conducted over two trading days with the following subscription levels: - Non-Retail Investors (April 21, 2026): Subscribed approximately 149% - Retail Investors (April 22, 2026): Subscribed approximately

495% The Company noted particularly strong participation from retail investors, reflecting sustained investor confidence in its growth prospects and strategic direction. Following the successful completion of the OFS, the Company expects to be in compliance with the Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) requirements as prescribed under applicable regulations. In recognition of the strong participation and continued support

from public shareholders, the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to meet on April 29, 2026, inter alia, to consider a proposal for the issuance of bonus equity shares subject to necessary approvals and applicable regulatory requirements: - The proposed bonus issue may be structured to enhance participation of public shareholders - The promoters may forgo/renounce their entitlement to the bonus shares, thereby supporting an increase in public

shareholding The proposed corporate action is aimed at: - Rewarding public shareholders for their participation and continued support - Enhancing public shareholding and market liquidity - Aligning the Company's ownership structure with its long-term growth and participation objectives The proposed bonus issue remains subject to approval of the Board of Directors and such statutory and regulatory approvals as may be required.

RELIANCE INDUSTRIES Q4 RESULTS:

Profit Declines 9%, Margin Contracts The Most In 14 Quarters

AGENCY
Mumbai: Reliance Industries Ltd. reported a 9% quarter-on-quarter fall in fourth-quarter profit, while operating margin posted its sharpest contraction in 14 quarters as lower profitability offset higher revenue growth. Revenue rose 11% from the previous quarter, but lower operating performance weighed on earnings, the oil-to-telecom conglomerate said in an exchange filing on Friday. The operating income or the earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation fell 4% on a sequential basis and margin narrowed to 15% from 17.4%. Reliance Industries Q4 Results Key Highlights (Consolidated, QoQ) Revenue up 11% to Rs 2,94,059 crore versus Rs 2,64,905 crore (Bloomberg Estimate: Rs 2,82,748 crore) Ebitda down 4% to Rs 44,141 crore versus Rs 46,018 crore (Estimate: Rs 47,343 crore) Margin contracts 240 basis points to 15.0% versus 17.4% (Estimate: 16.7%) Profit down 9% to Rs 16,971 crore versus



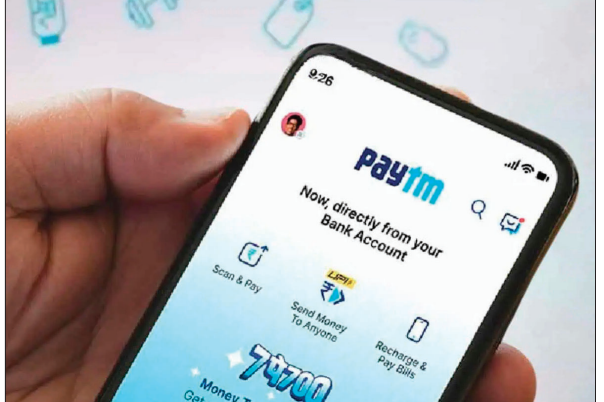
Rs 18,645 crore (Estimate: Rs 16,944 crore) Segment Performance Digital revenue rose 3% quarter on quarter to Rs 45,945 crore, while Ebitda increased 4% to Rs 20,041 crore. Margin expanded to 43.62%, making it one of the stronger contributors in the quarter. Retail revenue increased 1% to Rs 98,457 crore. Ebitda was largely flat at Rs 6,921 crore, Margin contracted to 7.03%. O2C revenue rose 14% to Rs 1,84,944 crore, but Ebitda fell 12% to Rs 14,520 crore. Margin contracted 7.85%, indicating pressure

despite higher sales. Oil and gas revenue increased 1% to Rs 5,867 crore, while Ebitda declined 14% to Rs 4,195 crore. Margin contracted to 71.50%. Other businesses posted revenue growth of 57% to Rs 27,976 crore, while Ebitda was flat at Rs 2,746 crore. Margin contracted to 9.82%. Jio Listing, Consumer Growth "Jio continues to transform India's digital landscape," Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said. He added that the company is "advancing steadily towards the listing of Jio

Platforms." Reliance's investor presentation showed Jio ended FY26 with more than 524 million subscribers, including 268 million 5G users. Fixed broadband connections crossed 27 million, while AirFiber subscribers reached 12.9 million. Balance Sheet Growth For FY26, Reliance reported record consolidated revenue of Rs 11,75,919 crore, up 9.8% from a year earlier. Ebitda rose 13.4% to Rs 2,07,911 crore, while profit after tax increased 18.3% to Rs 95,610 crore.

RBI cancels banking licence of Paytm Payments Bank

AGENCY
Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India on Friday, April 24, said it has cancelled the banking licence issued to Paytm Payments Bank. The licence was cancelled as the "affairs of the bank were conducted in a manner detrimental to the interest of the bank and its depositors", the RBI said in a statement. "The general character of the management of the bank is prejudicial to the interest of depositors as also the public interest," it said. Consequently, Paytm Payments Bank is prohibited from conducting any "banking" business, it said. The RBI also said it will make an application to the high court to wind up the bank. "Paytm Payments Bank Limited has enough liquidity to repay its entire deposit liability upon winding up of the bank," it said. Paytm Payments Bank has been barred from onboarding new customers with



effect from March 11, 2022. Paytm Payments Bank Ltd has lost its banking licence, with the Reserve Bank of India banning the lender from carrying out operations with immediate effect. The RBI said Paytm Payments Bank has enough funds to repay its liabilities during the winding-up process. Today's decision is the last RBI action against the lender in a long process of regulatory action to close Paytm Payments Bank. The RBI

had already banned it from taking new customers and accepting deposits. The RBI's action began in 2022 when it imposed curbs on the lender. It tightened the curbs in 2024 after repeated supervisory concerns over governance, compliance and operations surfaced. The RBI cited multiple grounds for cancelling the licence, including the conduct of the affairs of the bank going against the interests of the lender and its depositors.

Markets slide for third straight day as crude spike, IT sell-off drag sentiment

AGENCY
Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled over 1 per cent on Friday, falling for the third consecutive day, as a sharp rally in crude prices and massive selling in IT counters weighed heavily on investors' sentiment. Unabated foreign fund outflows, a negative trend in global markets amid prolonged conflict and continued disruption in the Strait of Hormuz added to the gloom. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 999.79 points, or 1.29 per cent, to settle at 76,664.21. During the day, it plunged 1,260.13 points or 1.62 per cent to 76,403.87. A total of 2,905 stocks declined, while 1,326 advanced and 158 remained unchanged on the BSE. The wider gauge NSE Nifty slumped 275.10 points, or 1.14 per cent, to end at 23,897.95. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,829.33 points, or 2.33 per cent, and the Nifty dropped 455.6 points, or 1.87 per cent. "Indian equity markets extended their



decline for a third consecutive session, as renewed risk-off sentiment weighed on investor confidence. Ongoing tensions in the Middle East, coupled with persistent weakness in the IT sector, continued to pressure an already fragile market backdrop. "Volatility also increased, with the India VIX rising 6 per cent, reflecting heightened fear and uncertainty amid the prolonged conflict and continued disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, with no meaningful signs of de-escalation,"

Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said. From the Sensex constituents, Infosys dived 7.09 per cent after its revenue growth forecast for FY27 came in lower than market expectations. HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints and ICICI Bank were also among the major laggards. In contrast, Trent, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the winners. The

Highlights
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BSE SmallCap Select index dropped 0.95 per cent, and the MidCap Select index dipped 0.91 per cent. All sectoral indices ended lower. The BSE IT tanked 5.13 per cent, BSE Focused IT (4.65 per cent), Healthcare (1.35 per cent), Telecommunication (1.33 per cent), Realty (1.30 per cent), Services (1.17 per cent) and Consumer Discretionary (1.04 per cent). "Indian markets extended their weakness for a third consecutive session, closing on a cautious and lower note as subdued global

cues, weak earnings sentiment from IT majors, rising crude oil prices, inflation concerns, and currency pressure weighed on overall sentiment, keeping investors largely on the sidelines despite selective stock-specific buying interest," Gaurav Garg, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 2.17 per cent higher at USD 107.3 per barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,254.71 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. "IT stocks led the decline following disappointing quarterly earnings, while selling pressure was broad-based across sectors. FIIs returned to net selling again after a brief spell of inflows," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi and Shanghai's SSE Composite index ended lower, while Japan's Nikkei 225 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled higher.

B. Netanyahu treated for early-stage prostate cancer

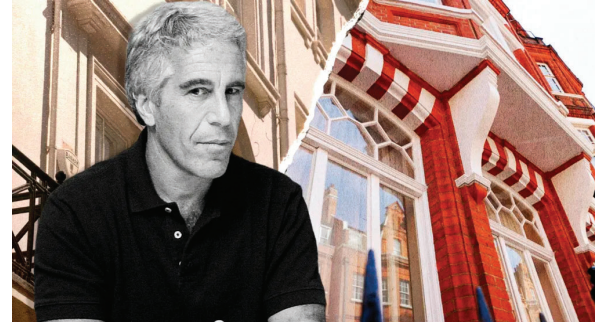
AGENCY
Tel Aviv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he is "in excellent physical condition" after the publication of his annual medical report revealed he had a malignant tumour removed. In a post on X on Friday, Netanyahu said that during routine medical monitoring following successful surgery for an enlarged benign prostate, doctors found an early-stage malignant tumour. Treatment had "removed the problem and left no trace of it", he added. Netanyahu said he had requested to delay publication of his health record so it was not released at the height of the US and Israel's war with Iran, to prevent Tehran from spreading "even more false propaganda against Israel". The 76-year-old Israeli leader said he underwent the initial surgery for an

enlarged benign prostate in 2024 and has been under routine medical monitoring. "A tiny spot of less than a centimetre" was discovered during the most recent check up. "I had a minor medical issue with my prostate that was completely treated. Thank God, it's behind me," he said. In the lengthy post, Netanyahu also said he chose to undergo treatment because "when I'm given information in time about a potential danger, I want to address it immediately". He added: "This is true on the national level and also on the personal level". The revelation comes as Netanyahu is due to visit the White House in the coming

weeks as the US seeks to broker a long lasting peace deal in the war with Iran. Israel's ceasefire agreement with Lebanon, following fighting between Israel and Iran, has also been extended by three weeks.



EPSTEIN HOUSED ABUSE VICTIMS IN LONDON FLATS



AGENCY
London: Sex-criminal financier Jeffrey Epstein housed women who say he abused them in several London flats in the years after UK police decided not to investigate him, the BBC can reveal. We found evidence of four flats, rented in the affluent borough of Kensington and Chelsea, in receipts, emails and bank records contained within the Epstein files. Six of the women housed in them have since come forward as victims of Epstein's abuse. Many of them - from Russia, eastern Europe and elsewhere - were brought to the UK after the Metropolitan Police decided not to investigate Virginia

Giuffre's 2015 allegation that she had been a victim of international trafficking to London. The Met said it followed "reasonable lines of inquiry" at the time, interviewing Giuffre on multiple occasions following her complaint and co-operating with US investigators. Some of the women housed in the London flats were coerced by Epstein to recruit others into his sex trafficking scheme, as well as regularly transported to Paris by Eurostar to visit him, according to emails in the files, searched through millions of pages of records gathered by the US Department of Justice in its investigation of the disgraced financier.

South Africa's top envoy to Ghana summoned over attacks on foreigners



AGENCY
Ghana: South Africa's top envoy to the country over reported "acts of intimidation and harassment" against its citizens and other African migrants in the southern African nation. Earlier this week, video clips were shared online showing vigilante groups attacking and confronting people they believed were in South Africa illegally - in one of them they challenge a Ghanaian man over his status. Xenophobia has long been an issue in South Africa and has been accompanied by occasional outbursts of deadly violence.

Ghanaian officials have met the man in the video to offer him support and also urged citizens living abroad to continue being "law-abiding". The West African nation's foreign affairs ministry said it had also met South Africa's acting high commissioner to Ghana, Thando Dalamba, and raised a formal protest over the recent "xenophobic incidents" against foreigners, including its citizens. It cited a video clip showing a group of South Africans questioning a Ghanaian man. The group demand to see the man's documents and even when he produces them.

Behind Nigeria's murky coup plot - the money, the prayers and a Nollywood arrest



AGENCY
Nigeria: For months rumours and secrecy have surrounded last year's alleged Independence Day coup plot in Nigeria - but with this week's indictment of six civilians accused of involvement comes the first details of what is said to have been an elaborate plan to oust President Bola Tinubu. It was due to take place on 1 October 2025 - the day Nigeria marked the 65th anniversary of its independence from the UK. But at the very last minute the celebratory parade, to be attended by the president, was cancelled - and the government and military were tight-lipped about why. It was only in January that the military announced, in a statement short on detail, that 16 unnamed senior military officers were to face a court-martial over an alleged plot - effectively admitting a coup attempt had been thwarted. Now court documents, filed by state prosecutors at the Federal High Court in the capital, Abuja, have revealed the name of the alleged mastermind and suggest that one of the major aims of the plotters was to destabilise the state ahead of the planned takeover. The

six going on trial at the High Court cannot go before a military court as they are civilians, including a serving police inspector and retired military personnel. They have denied the 13 charges, including treason, terrorism and money laundering - and while they may not necessarily be the ringleaders, their trial is likely to shed light on an alleged plan that is said to have involved all elements of Nigeria's security forces. Nigeria has a long history of military takeovers but has been under civilian rule since 1999. Several other West African countries have experienced coups in recent years and there has been speculation that Nigeria could be next, with economic hardship rising and accusations that the political system was rigged in favour of a small elite. Court documents point to Colonel Mohammed Ma'aji as the alleged chief strategist. Little is known about the 50-year-old, a Muslim born in western Niger state who spent much of his early army career in the southern oil-rich Niger Delta region and where he climbed the ranks in the mid-2000s.

POISONING SUSPECTED IN DEATHS OF 18 WOLVES IN ITALIAN NATIONAL PARK

AGENCY
Italy: Poisoning is suspected in the deaths of 18 wolves within a few days in a national park that straddles three regions of central Italy. After the carcasses of 10 wolves were found last week, another eight were found when patrols were stepped up in recent days in the Abruzzo, Lazio, and Molise National Park. The park authority said last week that traces of suspected poisoned bait had been found in an area where five of the wolves had been found dead and the latest deaths elsewhere raised "very strong suspicion" of further poisoning. The authority said it was working to determine the cause of death and collaborating



with local public prosecutors. The park's initial suspicions appear to have been corroborated in tests carried out by the local animal health research institute IZS. Thirteen of the dead wolves were taken to the institute in Teramo, which found the "presence of pesticides for agriculture used in poisoned bait for animals".

Nato says 'no provision' to expel members after report US could seek to suspend Spain

AGENCY
Kyiv: Nato says there is no provision for member states to be suspended or expelled from the military alliance after a report said the US could seek to suspend Spain over its Iran war stance. Reuters quoted a US official who said an internal Pentagon email had suggested measures for the US to punish allies it believed had failed to support its campaign. The email also suggested reviewing the US position on the UK's claim to the Falklands islands in the south Atlantic, which are also claimed by Argentina. A Nato official told the BBC that the alliance's founding treaty "does not foresee any provision for suspension of Nato membership, or expulsion". Spain's leader has also



dismissed the report. The BBC has contacted the Pentagon and UK government for comment. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticised Nato allies for their reluctance to play a greater role after the US and Israel attacked Iran on 28 February and Iran subsequently restricted shipping through the key Strait of

Hormuz route. Spain has refused to allow the use of air bases on its territory for attacks on Iran. The US has two military bases in Spain, Naval Station Rota and Morón Air Base. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez told reporters: "We do not work based on emails. We work with official documents and official positions taken, in this case,

by the government of the United States." Sánchez added that Spain supported "full co-operation with its allies, but always within the framework of international law." Meanwhile, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has insisted that greater involvement in the war or the current US blockade of Iran's ports is not in the UK's interest. The UK has allowed the US to use British bases to launch strikes on Iranian sites targeting the Strait of Hormuz and RAF planes have taken part in missions to shoot down Iranian drones. The UK, France and others have said they would be willing to keep the Strait of Hormuz - a global oil shipping route - open after a lasting ceasefire or the end of the war.

No 10 says Falklands sovereignty rests with UK after report of US 'review'

AGENCY
London: Sovereignty of the Falkland Islands "rests with the UK", Downing Street has said, following a report the US could review its position on Britain's claim to the territory. An internal Pentagon email reported by Reuters suggested the US was considering options to punish Nato allies it believed failed to support its war on Iran. The options discussed also included seeking Spain's suspension from Nato over its opposition to the war. BBC News, which has not been able to review the document, has contacted the Pentagon about it. The Falkland Islands, a British overseas territory in the



south-west Atlantic Ocean, remain the subject of a sovereignty dispute between Britain and Argentina. Asked about the report, a No 10 spokesman on Friday said: "The Falkland Islands have hugely voted overwhelmingly in favour of remaining a UK overseas

territory, and we've always stood behind the islanders' right to self-determination and the fact that sovereignty rests with the UK." The prime minister's official spokesman also said the government "could not be clearer about the UK's position", and that "sovereignty

rests with the UK and the islanders' right to self-determination is paramount". He continued: "We've expressed this position previously clearly and consistently to successive US administrations and nothing is going to change that." Previous US administrations have formally recognised the UK's de facto administration of the islands, but have not taken a formal position regarding sovereignty. "The Falkland Islands has complete confidence in the commitment made by the UK government to uphold and defend our right of self-determination," the islands' government said in a statement.

Key suspect in notorious Tadamon massacre during Syria civil war arrested



AGENCY
Syria: A key suspect in one of the most notorious killings of the Syrian civil war has been arrested, Syria's interior minister has said. Amjad Youssef was wanted over the mass killing of civilians in April 2013 in the Tadamon district of Damascus. Footage emerged in 2022 showing Syrian soldiers leading victims, bound and blindfolded, to a pit before shooting them. The video became one of the most direct pieces of visual evidence of extrajudicial killings by then government forces. Interior Minister Anas Khattab said Youssef was the main perpetrator of the massacre and was taken into custody after a "well-executed" security operation. Syria's state news agency said he was detained in Hama province. Footage published by the UK-based monitoring group the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) appeared to show Youssef after his arrest, sitting in a police car, his nose and forehead bloodied. The killings at Tadamon attracted widespread attention after video, filmed by the perpetrators, showing it taking place was leaked nine

years later. In the film, victims are seen being led one by one to the pit and shot. It was one of several mass killings in Tadamon by government forces around that time. Human Rights Watch (HRW), which has visited the site, said there was evidence that 288 were killed in Tadamon, 41 in the incident in April 2013. It said 11 blindfolded victims shown in the video were shot at close range and pushed into a machine-dug grave. It has called the area "a huge crime scene". HRW senior researcher Hiba Zayadin said the leaked video "filmed by the perpetrators themselves who laughed as they killed their victims, shows the [former] Syrian government's callous disregard for people's lives." "This massacre is just one horrific incident in a pattern of state violence and apparent war crimes." The government at the time, led by President Bashar al-Assad, was toppled by rebels in December 2024. Assad's forces had fought jihadist and rebel groups in the civil war which began in March 2011 when security forces cracked down violently on peaceful pro-democracy protests.

Tehran should make a 'wise deal', Hegseth says, as Iran's foreign minister heads to Pakistan for talks

AGENCY
Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says his trip to Islamabad, Muscat and Moscow is to "closely coordinate with our partners on bilateral matters and consult on regional developments". In a post on X, he says: "Our neighbors are our priority". Away from the Middle East, EU leaders are hosting a summit with their counterparts from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon in Cyprus. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz told fellow leaders that the EU is willing to gradually ease sanctions on Iran in the event a comprehensive agreement is reached, according to the Reuters news agency. "It is, so to speak, part of the contribution we can make to advance this process and,



hopefully, lead to a lasting ceasefire," Merz said. AFP is reporting comments from European Council President Antonio Costa, who said the Strait of Hormuz must "immediately reopen without restrictions and without tolling", adding that this is "vital for the entire world". Speaking before the meeting, the bloc's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas warned

that the world could end up with a more dangerous Iran if talks did not produce as strong an agreement as the 2015 Iran nuclear deal President Trump withdrew from during his first term. We've been keeping an eye on two ships sanctioned by the US over their links to Iran as they travelled through the Strait of Hormuz today. Ship-track-

ing data from MarineTraffic shows a crude oil tanker named Yuri began crossing the strait overnight before coming to a halt to the east of Larak Island, where it has remained throughout today. The tracking site shows the ship is loaded with cargo and had previously broadcast its location close to Kharg Island, Iran's main oil export port. The ship's current destination is not known. A second ship, a chemical tanker named Avon, also transited through the strait early this morning. It had spent much of this month sitting off the coast of the UAE and ship tracking data shows it is laden with cargo. It now appears to be heading out into the Gulf of Oman, where the US last week implemented a blockade line.

KENYAN LEADER SPARKS UPROAR AFTER MOCKING NIGERIANS' SPOKEN ENGLISH

AGENCY
Kenyan President William Ruto has faced a social media backlash after publicly suggesting that Nigerian-accented English was incomprehensible and required a translator. Addressing Kenyans living in Italy on Monday, Ruto said: "If you listen to a Nigerian speaking, you don't know what they are saying - you need a translator," while boasting that Kenyans spoke "some of the best English in the world". His remarks drew fierce condemnation from Nigerians and other Africans online who accused the Kenyan leader of demeaning a fellow African nation. "English is a colonial language, not a measure of intelligence,

capability, or national progress," wrote Hopewell Chin'ono, a Zimbabwean journalist. As former British colonies, both Kenya and Nigeria share English as an official language, but each country has developed distinct spoken varieties with different phonetic structures. These differences reflect the influence of indigenous languages - Nigeria has more than 500 languages which shape its cadence and intonation, while Kenya's Bantu, Nilotic and Cushitic mix give rise to its own accents. But in his address to the diaspora gathering, Ruto said Kenya's education system produced strong English proficiency and that it was difficult to understand Nigerians when they spoke English.



IPL 2026: Gujarat Titans Set 205/3-Run Target for Royal Challengers Bengaluru

AGENCY
Mumbai: Virat Kohli was dropped on duck by Washington Sundar in the first over of RCB's 206-run chase against GT in Bengaluru. Earlier, Sai Sudharsan's third IPL century powered GT to 205/3 against RCB. Sudharsan slammed 100 off just 58 balls to lead GT's charge, slamming 11 fours and five sixes to lit up the Chinnaswamy Stadium. During his knock, Sudharsan broke Chris Gayle's record to become the fastest player to score 2,000 runs in IPL. Put in to bat, Shubman Gill had a 128-run opening stand with Sudharsan, the last season's Orange Cap winner with 759 runs, getting into his rhythm hitting 11 fours and five sixes. Gill made a quiet 24-ball 32. Making his GT debut, Jason Holder (23 not out; 10 balls) smashed two sixes and one four in the final over to prop up the total. Kohli dropped on 0! Massive blunder from Sundar as he fumbled



an easy catch at mid-wicket. Kohli went for the flick and hits it straight at Sundar, who absolutely shells it. Huge let-off for Kohli! 18 runs off the final over and GT reach 205/3! This is the highest total for GT vs RCB, bettering 200/3 at Ahmedabad in 2024. Decent cameos from Sundar, Buttler and Holder take GT past the 200-run mark after Sai Sudharsan's anchored the

innings with a 58-ball 100. Big chase coming up in Chinnaswamy! Now Krunal has gone down! Holder is having a laugh about it, perhaps at the sheer absurdity of another injury delay. The physio has charged down to the middle once again. After a brief wait, Krunal has decided to soldier on. Holder clearly sees the humorous side to all the drama! Holder goes bang! Patidar gives the

ball to Krunal and regrets it straightaway. Holder welcomes him back with a towering six—just clearing his front leg to heave the ball over cow corner. A top-tier shot from the big man! Drama in the final over! Rasikh Salam Dar goes down, clutching his right leg. The physio has rushed out straightaway. He was just about to deliver the first ball of the innings' finale but had

to pull out late in his run-up. This looks like a serious concern for RCB! Gujarat Titans opener Sai Sudharsan scripted history with his batting on Friday night during a match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. The southpaw, who started the season poorly with just one fifty in six matches, slammed a sensational century (100 off 58) against RCB. During the knock, Sudharsan also reached the milestone of 2,000 IPL runs. He achieved the feat in his 47th innings, surpassing the previous record held by Chris Gayle. The former West Indies opener had reached the milestone in 48 innings. RCB skipper Rajat Patidar won the toss and opted to field against GT in the game. It's the Royal Challengers Bengaluru's final home game of the season at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. The Gujarat Titans came into this clash on the back of a heavy 99-run loss to the Mumbai Indians.

Sai Sudharsan Regains Form In Style, Slams Century For Gujarat Titans Against RCB



Gujarat Titans batter Sai Sudharsan regained form in style as he slammed a century off 57 balls during the IPL 2026 match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Friday. The knock consisted of 11 fours and five sixes. It has been a modest season for the batter as he scored just 135 runs in his first six innings of IPL 2026 with just one half-century. However, he looked in complete control against the RCB bowlers as he played brilliant cricket to keep the scorecard ticking. He looked completely at ease against the likes of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood as he faced the majority of balls in the powerplay and made sure that GT was well on its way to a big total.

Ex-New Zealand Star, Who Played 28 Tests, Banned From County Cricket For Cocaine Use

AGENCY
New Zealand: Former New Zealand cricket team pacer Doug Bracewell was banned from county cricket after he tested positive for cocaine on for a second time. The cricketer was handed a two-year suspension by the England Cricket Board (ECB)'s Cricket Regulator for the violation during a match in September 2025. The sample was collected during a Division One match between Essex County Cricket Club and Somerset County Cricket Club in Chelmsford on September 25. According to reports, the World Anti-Doping Agency-accredited laboratory in London confirmed the presence of cocaine. Bracewell did not possess a Therapeutic Use



Exemption and he also admitted to using cocaine on the evening of September 24 and into the early hours of September 25. The charge, brought under Articles 2.1 and 2.2 of the ECB Anti-Doping Rules, related to "both the presence and use of a prohibited substance". However, the cricket regulator said that

the substance use was unrelated to sporting performance and that led to the two-year suspension which is in line with the punishment for substance abuse. Bracewell accepted the punishment and as a result, no hearing took place in the matter. The suspension was backdated to November 24 and it will run

to November 23, 2027. All results recorded between the date of the test and the provisional suspension were disqualified. Bracewell, who played 28 Tests for New Zealand, announced his international retirement in December. "The Club supports the Cricket Regulator's decision to impose a period of ineligibility of two years. All employees are required to meet the highest standards of professional conduct. While the Club does not condone Bracewell's behaviour, we are committed to supporting him through rehabilitation in line with our policies and procedures. Essex County Cricket Club will not be sanctioned as part of the decision," the official statement from the county side read.

Pakistan Star's Emotional Outburst On Live TV On National Team Snub: "700-800 Runs"

AGENCY
Islamabad: Pakistan cricket team batter Khushdil Shah questioned the team management and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) over his exclusion from the national side despite enjoying a brilliant run of form. Khushdil, who currently plays for Karachi Kings in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), slammed an unbeaten 44 off just 14 deliveries to guide his team to victory over Lahore Qalandars at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Thursday. Following the win, Khushdil spoke to Pakistan great Rameez Raja and opened up about not being considered for the Pakistan cricket team. "Sab players se main alag hoon. Na main social



media par hoon, na main purani baaton ka rona rota hoon ki mere saath kya galat hua [I'm different from everyone else. I'm not on social media, nor do I hold grudges that I was treated unfairly!]." "Maine abhi haal hi mein No. 5 aur 6 par 700-800 runs banaye hain, double hundred bhi kiya hai,

badi innings kheli hain. Phir bhi, itne sab ke baad mujhe team se drop kar diya gaya [I scored 700, 800 runs at number 5 or 6 in domestic cricket, yet I was dropped from the team]," he said in the post-match interview. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has withdrawn the No Objection

Certificate (NOC) issued to pacer Mustafizur Rahman for the Pakistan Super League 2026, following a medical review after the third ODI against New Zealand. According to a BCB statement, Mustafizur will undergo an immediate scan to assess his condition. He will then begin a rehabilitation programme under the supervision of the board's medical team, ruling him out of the remainder of this season's PSL. "The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) wishes to inform that, following the conclusion of the 3rd ODI against New Zealand, the team's medical staff has reviewed the condition of national team pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman,"

Rafael Nadal Teams Up With Thibaut Courtois, Plays Tennis Against Jude Bellingham Inside Bernabeu



AGENCY
Mumbai: Rafael Nadal was back on a tennis court — one inside Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium — on Thursday. The Madrid Open set up the temporary court on the Bernabeu field and players will be allowed to practice on it until April 30. The retired Nadal, an avid Madrid fan, is the most

successful player at the Madrid Open, having won the tournament five times. He partnered with Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois in a friendly session against world No. 1 Jannik Sinner and Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham. Bellingham was at the Madrid Open on Wednesday watching young Spanish sensation Rafael

Jódar win in his debut at the tournament. The Madrid Open is being played at the Caja Magica tennis complex in the Spanish capital. "It was very special to enjoy this unique court at the Bernabeu," Nadal wrote on Instagram. Iga Swiatek, ranked No. 4 on the women's tour, also was at the Bernabeu event.

Korda takes Chevron lead as England's Rhodes impresses

AGENCY
NYC: American Nelly Korda leads the Chevron Championship — the first women's major of the year — by two strokes after posting a sublime seven-under-par 65 in the first round. The two-time major winner, who claimed this title in 2024, looked back to her imperious best in a bogey-free round at Houston's Memorial Park Golf Course. "The wind was picking up here and there," said Korda. "Through the trees it was definitely gusting so I had to lock in on a couple of yardages here and there. "Overall, I just felt really good, though, out there." England's Mimi Rhodes, who won three times during last season's Ladies European Tour, is four shots off the top on her tournament debut. The 24-year-old had five birdies and two bogeys in an impressive 69 and is one of 10 players on three under par. "I felt ready," said Rhodes. "Getting here on Sunday, it was probably a benefit to me that I was able to see the course a bit more. "I did as much prep as I could and felt comfortable coming into this round. It was more about coming in and



being confident around there, which I thought I did." South Korea's Somi Lee and Thailand's Patty Tavatanakit, who won this tournament in 2021 when it was in California, both carded 67s and are joint second on five under. England's Charley Hull, who is fourth in the women's world rankings, is on level par following a round that included three birdies and three bogeys.

TURKEY TO RETURN TO F1 CALENDAR IN 2027



AGENCY
Turkey: The Turkish government says Formula 1 is to return to the country next season for the first time since 2021, on a five-year agreement. The government said the agreement was due to be announced Friday at an event featuring Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Formula 1 chief executive Stefano Domenicali and FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem. Erdogan said the deal would be for "at least five years". The Istanbul Park circuit first hosted F1 from 2005 through 2011, and next year's race would be the first since Turkey returned to the calendar in 2020 and 2021 during disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Valtteri Bottas won the most recent race for Mercedes. Hosting F1 would "demonstrate to the world that our country is the safe haven of its region," Erdogan said. There was no immediate confirmation from F1 or the FIA. The news comes after the Iran war caused widespread disruption to sports in the region and forced F1 to call off races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia scheduled for this month. That left a large gap in this year's schedule. The Miami Grand Prix next week will be the first F1 race since the Japanese Grand Prix on March 29. F1's return to Istanbul had been widely expected since Domenicali said in February that it was a candidate to return.

Rs 21 Crore For One Ticket? FIFA World Cup Final Prices Break Internet

FIFA's resale site has four tickets on sale for the World Cup final for just under \$2.3 million (approx. Rs 21.67 crore) each. The \$2,299,998.85 seats for the July 19 match at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, are located behind a goal in the lower deck in block 124, row 45, seats 33-36. FIFA does not control the asking prices on its Resale/Exchange Marketplace but takes a 15% purchase fee from the buyer of each ticket and a 15% resale fee from the seller. An aisle seat 33 in block 146, row 32 of the lower deck listed as easy access standard was listed at \$207,000, while a category two seat in the last row of the uppermost third deck was listed at \$138,000 for



block 310, row 26, seat 23. A few feet away, seat 21 has an asking price of \$23,000. The lowest-priced tickets for the final listed Thursday on the

Marketplace were \$10,923.85 for four seats four rows from the top of the upper deck behind a goal, in block 323, row 23, seats 13-16. "FIFA has

established a ticket sales and secondary market model that reflects standard ticket market practices for major sporting and entertainment

events across the host countries," the governing body said in a statement. "The applicable resale facilitation fees are aligned with industry standards across North American sports and entertainment sectors. FIFA's variable pricing ticketing approach aligns with industry trends across various sports and entertainment sectors, where price adaptations are made to optimize sales and attendance and ensure a fair market value for events." FIFA says it reinvests World Cup revenue among its 211 members to develop the sport. FIFA put new blocks of tickets on sale Wednesday on its direct tickets site. Available tickets for the final cost \$10,990. Tickets were available from FIFA at

\$11,130 for the July 14 semifinal in Arlington, Texas, and at \$9,660 and \$4,360 for the July 15 semifinal in Atlanta. Prices for the U.S. opener against Paraguay on June 12 at Inglewood, California, were listed at \$4,105, \$2,735, \$2,330 and \$1,940, while seats for the Americans' second match against Australia on June 19 at Seattle cost \$2,715. Tickets for the U.S. group stage finale against Turkey on June 25 at Inglewood cost \$2,970 and \$1,345. Canada's opener vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 12 at Toronto was available for \$3,360, \$2,240, \$1,645 and \$980. No tickets were listed directly by FIFA for the June 11 tournament opener between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City.

'Kara Official Telugu Teaser' Unveiled - Dhanush Headlines a Grit-Driven Drama Set for April 30, 2026 Release

The makers of Kara, starring Dhanush and directed by Vignesh Raja, have released the Kara Official Telugu Teaser, marking a decisive push into the Telugu market ahead of the film's theatrical arrival on April 30, 2026. With this, the film sharpens its presence among Telugu audiences, who have already been tracking its content across languages. Presented in Telugu by CH Sathish Kumar & Rajesh Kumar Bobbara under Vigneshwara Entertainments - R Star Logistics, the film is set for a wide theatrical rollout across the Telugu States. Backed by Dr. Ishari K. Ganesh under Vels Film International Ltd, in association with Think Studios and Vigneshwara Entertainments, Kara has been steadily positioning itself as a cross-market film drawing attention beyond its primary language. The Kara Official Telugu Teaser stands apart in its approach. Instead of revealing plot details, it establishes mood, terrain, and character. Framed within a stark, lived-in landscape, the teaser introduces Dhanush in a stripped-down, unembellished form, where stillness and observation replace conventional hero-driven beats. The emphasis is not on spectacle, but on the weight carried by the character himself, suggesting a figure shaped by circumstance and consequence. Director Vignesh Raja, who earned critical recognition for Por Thozhil, appears to extend his preference for controlled storytelling here as well. The



teaser signals a film that leans into atmosphere and character dynamics, rather than overt exposition, allowing intrigue to build through suggestion rather than declaration. Audience engagement around Kara has been gradually intensifying. The Telugu track from the movie, Kannamma Naa Kannamma has crossed 4.1 million views, indicating a strong emotional response. In parallel, Telugu viewers have been actively following Tamil-language songs, promotional material, and interviews, reflecting the film's growing resonance across linguistic boundaries. With a

proven connection to Telugu audiences through films like Raghuvaran B.Tech (VIP), Asuran, and Saar (Vaathi), Dhanush returns with a role that appears to prioritize internal conflict and performance depth. The film also stars Mamitha Baiju alongside an experienced ensemble including Jayaram, K. S. Ravikumar, Karunas, and M. S. Bhaskar. Technically, Kara is supported by a team known for craft-driven work. Cinematographer Theni Eswar brings a grounded visual approach, while editor Sreejith Sarang shapes the film's rhythm with precision.

'THEATRES ARE IN THE HANDS OF FOUR DEMONS'

Actor-director Sheraz Mehdi has expressed deep anguish over the lack of theatre allocation for the re-release of his film O Andala Rakshasi, alleging that small films are being systematically sidelined in the Telugu film industry. Speaking at a press meet held at the Telugu Film Chamber, Sheraz Mehdi said that despite planning a re-release of the film on April 24 following audience demand, not a single theatre was allotted in the Nizam region. He described the situation as unfair and discouraging for independent filmmakers. "This is not the first time our film has been denied theatres. Small films are being suppressed," he said. He further alleged that the theatre distribution system in the Telugu film industry is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. "Movie theatres are in the control of four powerful people who are blocking small films from releasing. I will fight this legally," he stated.



ances regarding screen allocation.

"SMALL FILMS ARE BEING KILLED"

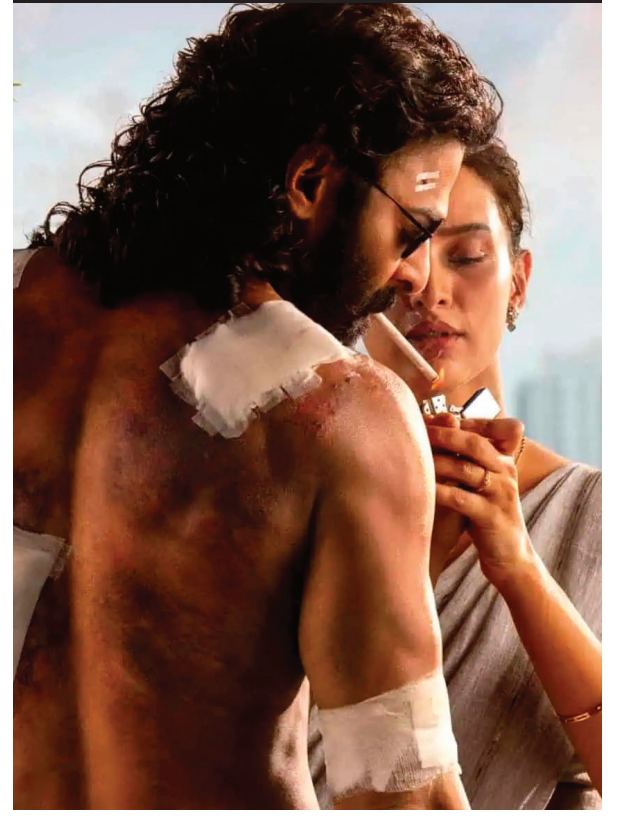
He warned that the current environment is extremely difficult for small producers and filmmakers. "Small filmmakers are suffering. Good films are being killed before they reach audiences. Such a situation does not exist anywhere else in the world—not even in Bollywood," he remarked. He added that unless equal opportunities are provided to smaller productions, emerging talent will struggle to survive in the industry.

POSITIVE RESPONSE TO O ANDALA RAKSHASI

According to the film's team, O Andala Rakshasi, directed by Sheraz Mehdi and featuring him in the lead role, had earlier received a positive response from audiences.

Spirit Schedule Change, Prabhas To Vacation

A key schedule of Prabhas' Spirit that was supposed to happen this month was pushed to May. We do not know the reasons and Prabhas headed to Europe for a vacation in this gap. In all probability, there may be change in Kalki 2 schedule planned next month as a result of this change. A leaked picture from the sets of Prabhas' upcoming film Fauzi has gone viral on social media, forcing the makers to issue a strict warning. Director Hanu Raghavapudi urged fans not to share such images and spoil the cinematic experience. The team warned that accounts circulating the leaked photos could face legal action and be treated as cybercrime. Rebel star Prabhas is currently one of the busiest actors in Indian cinema, with multiple projects lined up. Amid this packed schedule, new developments have emerged regarding potential collaborations being discussed behind the scenes. We at Guite reported earlier that Dinjith Ayyathan, who gained attention with the films like Kishkinda Kaanda and Eko, recently narrated a script to Prabhas. According to reliable industry sources, the story is said to be a larger-than-life concept designed on a grand scale that could suit the actor's pan-Indian image. However, the final approval from Prabhas is still awaited. Interestingly, Dinjith is not the only filmmaker who has pitched an idea to the star. Rajkumar



Periasamy, who directed the successful film Amaran, has also reportedly narrated another story to Prabhas a few days ago. As of now, the actor has not made a final decision regarding either of the scripts. Both projects were reportedly pitched by Hombale Films, the production house that has been closely working with

Prabhas on multiple ventures. Fans are now eagerly waiting to see if the actor will give the green signal to either of these scripts. If even one of these projects moves forward, it could turn into another big-ticket pan-Indian film featuring the Baahubali star.



While Aditya Dhar continues to make headlines with his high intensity storytelling and the buzz surrounding Dhurandhar, it is his wife Yami Gautam who is now drawing attention for a very different reason.

Yami Gautam spent 4 months learning Quran

While Aditya Dhar continues to make headlines with his high intensity storytelling and the buzz surrounding Dhurandhar, it is his wife Yami Gautam who is now drawing attention for a very different reason. During the making of Haq, Yami reportedly underwent an intense preparation process for her role as Shazia Bano. According to the film's director Suparn Verma, the actress spent close to four months studying the Quran to better understand the character and her world. The preparation was not limited to reading alone. It involved grasping the context, emotional depth, and cultural nuances required to portray a character inspired by the Shah Bano case. The film itself deals with sensitive subject matter, making authenticity a key aspect of the performance. In an industry where quick turnarounds are often the norm, such a

detailed approach to a role stands out. Yami's effort reflects a commitment to craft that goes beyond the surface, focusing on immersion rather than just execution. What makes this even more noteworthy is the contrast it presents. While Dhar's films are known for their scale and impact driven storytelling, Yami's process for Haq highlights a quieter, more internal method of approaching a character. Two distinct creative approaches, yet a shared dedication to storytelling. And perhaps that is what makes this story resonate, not just the preparation itself, but the intent behind it. Filmmaker Suparn S Varma opened up about the extensive research that went into making Haq. He revealed that the team spent nearly a year and a half understanding Islamic law to bring authenticity to the story, while lead actor Yami Gautam also learnt the Holy Quran to prepare for her role. In a recent

conversation with BBC Asian Network, Suparn spoke about the preparation behind the film and praised Yami's commitment to her character. "I literally had Yami learn the Quran. She spent four months understanding the dialect, the way we are using Quran," he said. The director said the research process was particularly important given the current climate of misinformation.

MIRAI GIRL BREATHED IN THE DARK

Ritika Nayak just shared stunning new pictures, and they are impossible to scroll past. Shot in dramatic low light, the Mirai actress wears a simple black scoop-neck bodysuit paired with loose cargo trousers, and proves that less is always more. In the black and white shot, she leans back with both arms raised above her head, eyes looking straight into the camera with a confidence that hits hard. The moody shadows and sharp contrast make the photo look like a professional magazine spread. The other pictures switch to warm golden tones and

the result is breathtaking. Same outfit, same pose, but the rich amber lighting wraps around her like fire, making her glow from within. Hair loose and wild, red earrings adding a tiny pop of colour, she gazes upward looking effortlessly stunning. Ritika debuted with Ashoka Vanamlo Arjuna Kalyanam in 2022 and scored her biggest hit yet with Mirai in 2025. She has films with Anand Deverakonda and the Indo-Korean horror comedy Korean Kanakaraju lined up next. These pictures are just more proof that her star is firmly on the rise.

RUGGED CHARM MEETS EFFORTLESS STYLE

VishnuManchu turns up the heat in this striking new photoshoot, exuding raw intensity and masculine elegance. Dressed in sleek black jeans and a leather-textured jacket, #VishnuManchu balances mass appeal with refined swag. From the earthy backdrop to the powerful stance beside the beastly machine, every frame screams attitude and confidence.



'JAITLEY' IS A GOOD ENTERTAINER WITH HUMOR, SUSPENSE AND THRILL. AUDIENCE WILL BE SURPRISED: DIRECTOR RITESH RANA

Bollywood's favorite duo Satya and director Ritesh Rana are going to entertain with 'Jaitley'. Produced by Chiranjeevi (Cherry) Hemalatha Peddamallu under the banner of Clap Entertainment, this film is being presented by Mythri Movie Makers. Miss Universe India Rhea Singha is making her debut in Telugu cinema as the heroine. Vennela Kishore and Ajay are playing key roles. The teaser trailer of this film has created a good buzz with a wonderful response. 'Jaitley' is going to be released in theaters on May 1st as a world wide grand. On this occasion, director Ritesh Rana shared the features of the film in a press conference.



I developed this story with a writer named Jayendra during Covid in 2020. We have been planning to make this film since then. We finally started it last November and are now bringing it to release.

When did the 'Jaitley' journey begin?

just a thriller but a thriller with some humor. The entire shooting will take place on a flight. It is an experiment. When I spoke to some people, I got opinions about whether such an experiment is necessary at this time. Later, I felt like doing this film with Satya. After 'Mathu Vadalara', I got that budget and market scope. We changed the character to suit Satya and made it.

What was Satya's reaction when he told the story? When I first told him this story, his character was a flight attendant. Then when I told him, 'You are the hero,' he was shocked. At first, he said it was a risk. But after I explained in detail how I would make it, he got very excited. His character has seriousness, humor, suspense... everything.