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47 Maoists surrender before Telangana DGP

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

B.Shivdhar Reddy, Director General of Police, Telangana, lauded the coordinated efforts of the Telangana Police following the surrender of 47 underground CPI (Maoist) cadres, including key leaders from the South Bastar Division.

The cadres surrendered along with 32 firearms and 515 rounds of live ammunition, marking a significant blow to

the Maoist network operating in the Dandakaranya region. The DGP appreciated the sustained and strategic efforts of the Special Intelligence Branch, Greyhounds, and district police in facilitating the surrenders.

Describing the development as a decisive moment, the DGP stated that the surrender of top and mid-level leadership indicates the near-total collapse of the South Bastar DVC structure.



He emphasized that the Telangana Police's proactive approach, coupled with the State Government's attractive surrender and rehabilitation policy,

has played a key role in encouraging cadres to return to the mainstream. Officials noted that in 2026 alone, 260 Maoist cadres have surrendered and 238 fire-

arms have been recovered, reflecting a steady decline in extremist activities.

The State Government has announced a total reward of Rs.1.50 crore for the surrendered cadres, with immediate relief of Rs.25,000 each already disbursed. Additional rehabilitation benefits, including financial assistance, healthcare, and livelihood support, are being extended to help them rebuild their lives.

Kavitha Launches New Political Pitch, SEEKS PUBLIC SUPPORT AFTER SPLIT FROM BRS

Hyderabad(TSIT):

Kalvakuntla Kavitha has begun pitching herself as a new political force in Telangana, rolling out a fresh slogan—"We are coming as a new political force, please bless us and join forces"—following her exit from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). Kavitha, daughter of former chief



minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao, recently resigned from both her party membership and her MLC post, blaming internal leadership and what she described as a "coterie-driven functioning" for the party's setbacks in the Assembly and parliamentary elections.

PM Modi, Mamata Banerjee are 2 sides of the same coin: Rahul



Kolkata (TSIT):

Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, said on Saturday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee are "both two sides of the same coin", considering that none of them care about the aspirations of the common people.

"The Prime Minister claims that he is a true nationalist. But he had done nothing for the poor people. He had done

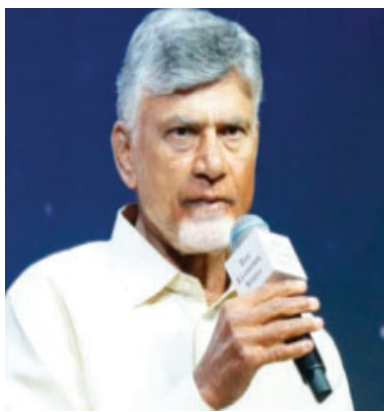
everything for the millionaires. Before the Left Front rule, Congress ruled West Bengal. At that time there were several industries in the state," LoP Gandhi said while addressing a campaign rally at Sreerampore in West Bengal's Hooghly district.

The Congress leader added, "Mamata Banerjee, too, like PM Narendra Modi, does not care for employment generation for the youth. Both the Prime Minister and the West Bengal Chief Minister are bothered about themselves. What PM Narendra Modi is doing in India, that is exactly what Mamata Banerjee is doing in West Bengal." Speaking at the rally, LoP Gandhi said that there is competitive corruption between Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the national level and Trinamool Congress at the state level.

CM Naidu Receives 'Best Reformer' Award, Unveils Vision for Amaravati

Amravathi (TSIT) N. Chandrababu Naidu stated that he considers it his "good fortune" to get another opportunity to build a world-class capital city in the form of Amaravati, after previously developing Hyderabad in united Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking at the Excellence Awards ceremony organized by The Economic Times in Mumbai, Naidu received the 'Best Reformer of the Year - 2025' award from Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Amaravati as 'Future City' Naidu said Amaravati is being envi-



sioned not just as a capital, but as a futuristic, eco-friendly "Green and Blue City" based on net-zero carbon principles. He described it as a "Hyderabad Plus" city, aiming to surpass Hyderabad in infrastructure and innovation, and invited global investors to participate in its development. Reforms Drive Development

Highlighting his governance philosophy, Naidu emphasized that reforms are key to wealth creation and welfare delivery. He recalled the success of "Vision 2020" and praised Prime Minister Narendra

Modi for steering the nation towards the goal of "Viksit Bharat 2047."

The Chief Minister said the future lies in green energy and artificial intelligence. Andhra Pradesh aims to contribute 160 GW to India's 500 GW green energy target. He also revealed that Google is set to establish a major data centre in Visakhapatnam with an investment of \$15 billion. Naidu underlined that development must benefit all sections of society. He spoke about initiatives like the 'P4' model—People, Poor, Partnership, Progress—and

called on affluent sections to support the underprivileged. He also reiterated his support for the Women's Reservation Bill. Raising concerns about declining fertility rates, Naidu proposed a forward-looking population management policy, warning that future economic strength will depend on demographic balance. Concluding his address, Naidu said that sustainable development, backed by reforms and innovation, will position Andhra Pradesh as a leading state in India's growth story.

Indian stock markets fall sharply amid IT rout, West Asia tensions this week



Mumbai, April 25 : The domestic equity markets closed on a weak note this week, with benchmark indices declining about 2 per cent amid escalating tensions in West Asia, a sharp spike in crude oil prices, and heavy selling in IT stocks weighing on sentiment. On a weekly basis, headline indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower, falling 2.3 per cent and 1.9 per cent, respectively.

However, broader markets showed relative resilience, with the BSE Midcap and BSE Smallcap indices slipping just 0.6 per cent and 0.2 per cent week-on-week.

On the liquidity front, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers, offloading equities worth Rs 1,369 crore during the week, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 9,782 crore. Sectorally, the IT pack emerged as the biggest laggard, plunging about 10 per cent on the BSE. The sell-off came after weaker-than-expected management guidance triggered fresh concerns over the FY27 earnings outlook, despite in-line quarterly earnings from Infosys and TCS.

In contrast, consumption-oriented sectors such as FMCG delivered a positive performance, with companies reporting double-digit volume growth. The BFSI segment has also posted steady results so far, with asset quality remain-

ing stable despite concerns stemming from the West Asia crisis, particularly in MSME and commercial vehicle segments. According to analysts, markets remained volatile with a

cautious undertone during the week, as early recovery attempts fizzled out amid resurfacing US-Iran tensions and continued disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.

They noted that elevated crude oil prices and stalled geopolitical negotiations kept investors on edge, limiting fresh buying and capping upside at higher levels, resulting in a range-bound market with a negative bias.

Analysts also highlighted that persistent FII outflows continued to weigh on sentiment, while strong domestic institutional inflows helped cushion the downside, indicating growing reliance on local liquidity.

Meanwhile, geopolitical developments remained a major overhang. After Iran announced the opening of the crucial Strait of Hormuz shipping lane, US naval forces intercepted an Iranian vessel, prompting renewed threats against Iranian infrastructure.

Iran subsequently re-imposed restrictions on the Strait of Hormuz, triggering a sharp spike in crude oil prices, which surged over 15 per cent during the week to \$107 per barrel. In a parallel development, US President Donald Trump reportedly extended the ceasefire arrangement with Iran indefinitely, adding to the uncertainty in the region.

Apart from geopolitical cues, investors also tracked the ongoing Q4FY26 earnings season for direction.

On Friday, the 30-share Sensex closed at 76,664, down 1,000 points or 1.28 per cent, while the 50-share Nifty settled 275 points, or 1.14 per cent lower, at 23,897.95. For the coming week, key data points include India's IIP data for March 2026, manufacturing PMI readings for April from the US, China and Japan, as well as US PCE inflation data. Additionally, major central banks, including the Federal Reserve, Bank of England, and European Central Bank, are scheduled to announce their policy decisions.

7-year-old girl among 4 people burned alive as scrap warehouse catches fire in Neemrana

Jaipur, April 25 : A devastating fire at a scrap warehouse in the Neemrana area claimed four lives, including that of a 7-year-old girl, after a massive blaze and subsequent explosion triggered panic late on Friday evening, said officials on Saturday.

"All four bodies have been recovered, and a thorough search of the entire area has been completed. The FSL team has also begun its investigation at the site. The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained," said Satvir Singh, Superintendent of Police, Kotputli-Behror.

The incident occurred at a warehouse located on Bichpuri Road in Mohladia village, where large quantities of scrap material, including empty perfume bottles, were stored.

According to officials, several labourers working inside the premises were trapped when the fire broke out. Four people, including a minor girl, were burned alive, and their bodies were later shifted to a government hospital.

Eyewitnesses reported that the flames quickly spread to an adjoining plastic granule manufacturing unit within the same premises.



A loud explosion in the factory intensified the blaze, sending panic across the area, which lies close to an industrial zone and nearby residential societies. Initial accounts suggest that workers attempted to escape but were unable to do so as a truck parked at the warehouse gate caught fire and blocked the exit. Trapped inside, they tried to scale a boundary wall towards the adjoining unit but failed due to its height, leading to the tragic loss of lives.

Multiple fire tenders from Neemrana, Ghiloth, and the Japanese Zone were rushed to the spot. After nearly two hours of firefighting efforts, the blaze was brought under control. Teams from the SDRF and forensic experts were also deployed to assist in rescue and investigation operations. Senior officials, including district administration and police authorities, reached the site to oversee relief efforts.

India, US discuss deepening strategic ties, reaffirm commitment towards Indo-Pacific security

Washington (TSIT):

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan held discussions with a senior US Indo-Pacific Command official, reinforcing the expanding strategic alignment between the two nations in terms of regional security. He engaged with General Kevin B. Schneider, Commander, Pacific Air Force and Air Component Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command, where both sides emphasised shared priorities in regional security and the sustained commitment to maintain peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. "General Anil Chauhan, CDS, engaged with General Kevin B. Schneider, Commander, Pacific Air Force and Air Component Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command, reaffirming

the deepening strategic convergence between India and the US. Deliberations underscored a shared resolve towards regional security and the enduring maintenance of peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific and beyond," the Headquarters of Integrated Defence Staff posted on X on Saturday.

It further mentioned that both sides articulated a "clear intent to expand and operationalise" the scope, complexity and frequency of bilateral and TriService engagements.

"Recognising technology as a defining determinant of modern power, the partnership continues to evolve with enhanced synergy, capability and strategic foresight," it added. Earlier this week, General Chauhan held several engagements with top UK military officials.

RBI proposes tighter rules for digital wallets to enhance customer protection



New Delhi (TSIT) : The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a draft Master Direction on Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) to

enhance security, customer protection and operational clarity for digital wallets and prepaid cards. RBI's draft would allow banks that issue debit cards to offer PPIs after informing the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems (DPSS), according to reports.

India key to Indo-Pacific strategy, says US INDOPACOM Commander

Washington, April 25 : India is emerging as a key pillar in the US strategy to counter China in the Indo-Pacific, with top American military leadership highlighting expanding defence ties and growing coordination with New Delhi.

Admiral Samuel Paparo, head of US Indo-Pacific Command, told lawmakers this week that engagement with India remains a priority, describing the relationship as "on an upward trajectory" and among his most active military partnerships. His remarks come as Washington sharpens its focus on China's military rise and seeks to deepen ties with regional partners to



maintain balance in the Indo-Pacific. In his testimony, Paparo said the US-India security relationship has seen "transformative growth through increasingly complex military exercises, defence sales, and strategic dialogue" under the Major Defence Partnership framework.

Hectic activity in K'taka Cong: Shivakumar camps in Delhi; Siddaramaiah meets supporters



Bengaluru, April 25 : There is hectic political activity taking place in Karnataka Congress with Deputy Chief Minister, D.K. Shivakumar camping in Delhi to meet leaders of the Gandhi family and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah holding a closed door meeting with his supporters in Bengaluru.

Congress sources state that the controversy surrounding Davanagere bypolls has given opportunity to Shivakumar to initiate action against CM Siddaramaiah camp leaders. They also indicate that CM Siddaramaiah's camp will come up with a counterstrategy soon.

Although the two leaders had earlier projected unity through joint appearances, including breakfast

meetings, recent developments suggest that the leadership debate may resurface prominently after the bye-election results.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah held a meeting with his close ministers, even as Shivakumar and his brother D.K. Suresh headed to Delhi.

While both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar have publicly displayed unity, their supporting legislators have issued contrasting statements.

Siddaramaiah's son, Congress MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah, asserted that his father would continue as Chief Minister for a full five-year term. On the other hand, legislators aligned with Shivakumar have claimed that he

would assume the Chief Minister's position within the current tenure.

Until recently, the Congress high command was occupied with elections in five states. With those polls now almost concluded, the arrival of Shivakumar in Delhi has fuelled political curiosity.

On the other hand sources confirmed that CM Siddaramaiah convened a closed-door meeting with trusted ministers at a private venue on Cunningham Road in Bengaluru, reportedly to discuss Cabinet reshuffle and internal party concerns. Ministers including Bhairati Suresh, G. Parameshwara, K.H. Muniyappa, Satish Jarkiholi, B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, and Dinesh Gundu Rao were said to be present.

The meeting is believed to have focussed on concerns that close aides of the Chief Minister are being targeted and on Siddaramaiah's perceived silence. Participants reportedly expressed apprehension that unilateral decisions within the party could harm senior leaders' standing and alienate communities ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections. There was also a call for Siddaramaiah to intervene more actively to prevent damage to the party.

Justice Lisa Gill Sworn In as First Woman Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court



Justice Lisa Gill made history on Saturday by taking the oath as the first woman Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Raj Bhavan in Amaravati, where Governor Justice S. Abdul Nazeer officially administered the oath of office. Prior to the ceremony, Chief Minister N.

Chandrababu Naidu paid a courtesy visit to Justice Lisa Gill. He extended his warm wishes and congratulated her on the historic milestone of becoming the first woman to head the state's highest judicial institution.

Hailing from Chandigarh, Justice Gill brings decades of extensive legal experience to her new role. After secur-

ing her law degree from Punjab University, she commenced her legal practice as an advocate in 1990. Throughout her career, she built a strong foundation by handling a wide array of civil, criminal, and constitutional cases at the Punjab and Haryana High Court. She was later elevated as a judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court in

March 2014. Her appointment is being viewed as a significant moment for the state's legal framework. Members of the legal fraternity have expressed optimism, anticipating that the Andhra Pradesh judicial system will gain new momentum and clear direction under the seasoned leadership of Justice Lisa Gill.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi Smashes 36-Ball Century as RR Set 229-Run Target for SRH



Rajasthan Royals' young sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi delivered a batting masterclass, smashing a phenomenal 36-ball century to propel his team to a massive 228

for 6 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the ongoing IPL 2026 season. The high-scoring encounter unfolded at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. Sunrisers Hyderabad cap-

tain Pat Cummins won the toss and elected to bowl first, a decision that quickly backfired. Although opener Yashasvi Jaiswal departed early for 10, Vaibhav Suryavanshi launched a relentless assault on the SRH bowling attack. He signalled his intentions instantly by hammering four consecutive sixes in the very first over. Suryavanshi was eventually dismissed for a blistering 103 off just 37 deliveries, an innings laced with 12 massive sixes and five boundaries. Notably, his 36-ball ton is now the third-fastest century in Indian Premier League history. He found solid support from Dhruv Jurel, who scored a well-paced 51 off 35 balls. The duo forged a crucial 112-run partnership off 62 balls for the second wicket, stabilizing the innings while maintaining a staggering run rate. In the death overs, Donovan Ferreira provided the finishing touches with a rapid 33 off 16 deliveries, pushing the final total well past the 220-run mark. The Sunrisers' bowling lineup struggled severely under the onslaught. Shakib Hussain emerged as the most expensive bowler, conceding 62 runs in his four overs. Captain Cummins was the lone economical figure, finishing with impressive figures of 1 for 27. Sunrisers Hyderabad now face a monumental chase to secure a victory.

Ranveer Singh mimicry row settled, K'taka HC accepts apology



Bengaluru, April 25 : The Karnataka High Court on Saturday accepted an undertaking by Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, known for his role in 'Durandhar', to visit the Chamundeshwari Temple in Mysuru and tender an apology for his mimicry of a deity depicted in the film Kantara Chapter-2. Meanwhile, the complainant and advocate Prashant Methal stated in Bengaluru that the matter has been settled and that the court will issue an order in this regard soon. The bench, headed by Justice M. Nagaprasanna, accepted Ranveer Singh's undertaking to make amends for his mimicry of the temple deity's depiction in the film. The court observed that it would pass a formal order after recording the actor's apology and indicated that it may direct him to visit the temple within four weeks. Senior counsel Sajjan Poovayya, appearing for Ranveer Singh, submitted that the actor had filed a revised affidavit offering an unconditional apology. He also stated that Ranveer Singh would visit Chamundeshwari Hill and tender his apology for the act of mimicry. Speaking to the media at the Bengaluru Police Commissioner's office, the complainant, advocate Prashant

Methal, said that the Ranveer Singh case had been settled. He said that arguments were heard on the affidavit submitted to the court, which stated that the actor would visit Chamundeshwari Hill in Mysuru "in due course". He added that they had raised arguments on what "due course" implies, whether it is 15 days, 30 days, one year, or even 10 years. The actor's counsel submitted that, due to security concerns, a specific timeline could not be provided. After Durandhar 1 and 2, there appears to be a need for enhanced security. Methal said they expressed confidence in the Karnataka Police, who can provide foolproof security when the actor visits. He further stated that the bench agreed with this position. The affidavit has been filed, stating that he will come soon and apologise before the goddess. He added that forgiveness is a fundamental principle of all religions. Since he has tendered an apology, no further punishment is necessary. He said it is appropriate to end the matter here and that it would not be proper to continue. It can be recalled that the controversy, often referred to as the "Kantara mimicry row", arose from an incident during the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on November 28, 2025.

'Kejriwal is corrupt and liar', 'Did not join BJP under any compulsion': Swati Maliwal

New Delhi, April 25 : A day after former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Swati Maliwal, along with six other Rajya Sabha MPs, including Raghav Chadha, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), she cited AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal's "corruption, hooliganism and lies" as the reason. Maliwal also clarified that she has not joined the BJP under any compulsion. During an interaction with IANS, she rekindled her time with the AAP.

Maliwal said: "I have been working with Arvind Kejriwal since 2006. I left my home, gave up my job, and stayed in jhuggi areas for seven years, supporting him in every movement."

However, reiterating her allegations from 2024, she added, "Arvind Kejriwal got me brutally beaten by his aides at his residence. When I tried to file an FIR, I was threatened and intimidated. Even over the past two years, several attempts were made to force me to withdraw the FIR."

She also accused Kejriwal of being an "anti-woman person". Maliwal asserted that she had tried to improve the party for the past two years, however, she said that change is not possible with "so much of money game".

"I tried to raise issues in the past two years but no body listened to me," she claimed. Referring to previous instances of



several leaders quitting the AAP, Maliwal said, "Every good person has left Arvind Kejriwal at some point or the other. When one realises that he (Kejriwal) is corrupt and a liar, he or she leaves him."

"There are thousands of volunteers whose names we might not know, they also have left the AAP. Arvind Kejriwal had shown a dream to all of us but later he himself became corrupt," she added.

Blaming Kejriwal for focusing to lead a luxurious life, she said: "Simplicity was one of our very important aspects when we started, that has been completely lost by Arvind Kejriwal."

Maliwal alleged that after losing the Delhi Assembly polls, the AAP Chief is now running the Punjab government "via remote control".

"He (Kejriwal) has imposed all the rejected MLAs from Delhi on Punjab. Didn't he find any Punjabi to appoint to

any of the commissions? And Bibhav Kumar, who hit me and had behaved so rudely, Arvind Kejriwal has given that man Z security in Punjab. He has appointed that person as the Chief Advisor to (Punjab Chief Minister) Bhagwant Mann," she alleged.

Moreover, she added, "He (Kejriwal) has made the AAP government in Punjab as a personal ATM. Due to him, today Punjab has drowned into corruption."

The MP further blamed the AAP for illegal sand mining and drug mafia "taking over" Punjab. She accused the AAP of using Punjab in order to lead a lavish lifestyle.

"Punjab will never forgive them," she asserted. Sharpening the attack on her former party, Maliwal alleged that for the last two years, despite being the only woman AAP MP, she was not allowed to speak in the Parliament out of the party's allotted time.

Trump cancels negotiators' Pakistan trip, citing 'tremendous' infighting in Iran leadership

New York, April 25 : US President Donald Trump on Saturday night cancelled his negotiators' trip to Pakistan because of the confusion over who is in charge of Iran and the "tremendous infighting" among their leadership. After Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi landed in Islamabad on Friday, Trump's Spokesperson Karoline Leavitt had announced that the negotiators, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and his Special Representative Steve Witkoff, would go there.

She said Vice President JD Vance would be standing by to join them if it seemed useful. Striking an optimistic note, she said the US had "certainly seen some progress from the Iranian side in the last couple of days". However, Tehran had already ruled out direct talks with Washington by Araghchi, who was in Islamabad. Significantly, Iran's Parliament Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf, a hardliner who led the Iranian team in the April 11 direct talks with the US,

was not going to Islamabad. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei, who accompanied Araghchi, said on X, "No meeting is planned to take place between Iran and the US. Iran's observations would be conveyed to Pakistan". Araghchi tried to pass off the Islamabad visit as a routine affair of bilateralism that was part of a swing through Oman and Russia. Oman had acted as the go-between in the indirect negotiations in Geneva a couple of



days before Israel bombed Iran, with the US joining in, making it a confrontation between the US and Iran. Russia is one of Iran's supporters, providing it with intelli-

gence and material help, and diplomatic support. In his short post on Truth Social, Trump did not make any fresh threats against Iran, but said, "We have all the cards, they have none! If they want to talk, all they have to do is call!" "Too much time wasted on travelling, too much work! Besides which, there is tremendous infighting and confusion within their 'leadership'," he said. The split in Iran's leadership, between moderates and hardliners, came to the fore last week

when Araghchi, considered a moderate, declared on Friday that the Strait of Hormuz was open, only to have the hard-line Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) reinstate it on Saturday. After attempts at restarting the stalled negotiations in Islamabad last week-end and earlier this week failed, Trump extended the ceasefire indefinitely, but kept the Naval blockade of Iranian ports. In threats against Iran in the past, he had said he would wipe out its civilisation and take out all its bridges and

power stations. Tasnim, the semi-official news agency, said that negotiations "depend on the lifting of the US naval blockade". "Officials have argued that the continued blockade constitutes a violation of the truce," it added. It said that Araghchi met with Pakistan's military chief Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and briefed them on "Tehran's positions regarding the latest ceasefire developments" in the Iran war.

BJP SLAMS KARNATAKA GOVT OVER INTERNAL RESERVATION DECISION, CALLS IT UNJUST

Bengaluru, Apr 25 (UNI) Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, on Saturday criticised the state government's decision on internal reservation, terming it arbitrary and detrimental to Scheduled Caste communities.

Addressing mediapersons at the BJP state office, Jagannath Bhavan, he alleged that the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government had taken a decision in a manner that "left communities to fend for themselves," without a clear or just framework. He further claimed that the Deputy Chief Minister was not present during the decision-making process, indicating possible internal differences within the government.

Narayanaswamy questioned the delay of nearly three years in



arriving at the decision, stating that it could have been completed within a few months. He said internal reservation was crucial for filling nearly four lakh posts and alleged that the government was caught in a "crisis of its own making," resulting in injustice to Scheduled Castes. He also pointed out that over 56,000 youth were awaiting recruitment and accused Congress ministers of failing to stand up for their respective communities. He alleged that

the decision would not stand legal scrutiny and said the BJP would oppose it. Former union Minister A. Narayanaswamy said the government had effectively "driven the final nail" into the issue of internal reservation after three years, and accused it of misleading Dalits. He announced that the BJP would launch protests against the decision. Criticising the Chief Minister, he alleged that multiple commissions had been constituted and their reports subsequently rejected, and urged that no retired judges should accept positions in such commissions. State BJP Vice-President N. Mahesh said that during the tenure of former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, reservation for SCs and STs had been increased in 2022, benefiting students in professional courses over the past four academic years.

BWSSB Offers Rainwater Harvesting to Cut Penalties

In view of a possible monsoon deficit, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has launched an initiative to boost groundwater levels and reduce dependence on surface water sources in Bengaluru.

BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar announced that the board will install state-of-the-art rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems in buildings of willing customers, aiming to accelerate adoption across the city.

The new third-generation RWH technology is designed to function in minimal space, addressing a major concern among residents. Equipped with advanced features such as SS316 anti-choke mesh, high-velocity streamliner



design, and over 90% water recovery using gravity through a 60-micron filter, the system ensures efficient and high-quality water filtration. Officials stated that the

system also includes an automatic waste expulsion mechanism, enhancing water purity and reducing maintenance requirements. The initiative is expected to significantly

reduce dependence on Cauvery River and groundwater resources. Currently, BWSSB collects nearly 3 crore per month as penalties from customers who have not

installed rainwater harvesting systems. Under the new scheme, the board will bear the installation cost initially and recover it in phases, equivalent to the penalty amount, offering financial relief to residents while promoting sustainable water use.

The system has already been successfully implemented at 75 pilot locations, delivering promising results. Residents have reported improved water quality and reduced water bills. Based on this success, BWSSB is planning a large-scale rollout across the city.

The proposal will be further discussed in the upcoming BWSSB board meeting before final implementation.

IKS Health Announces Agreement to Acquire TruBridge to Strengthen Access to Rural and Community-Based Healthcare

Bengaluru : Inventurus Knowledge Solutions, Inc. ("IKS"), the U.S. subsidiary of Inventurus Knowledge Solutions Limited (NSE: IKS) ("IKS Health"), a global leader in care enablement solutions, announced it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire TruBridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: TBRG) ("TruBridge"), a prominent provider of healthcare technology solutions for rural and community hospitals. This proposed strategic acquisition underscores a commitment to broaden access to high-quality care and support the clinicians and hospitals that serve communities across the United States.

Today, nearly one in five Americans face challenges accessing care. By bringing together IKS Health's comprehensive care enablement capabilities that serve a range of healthcare organizations with TruBridge's deep expertise in supporting rural and community hospitals through revenue cycle management and electronic health record (EHR) solutions, the combined healthcare technology company is expected to strengthen local healthcare systems, and enable patients to receive essential care closer to home while also enhancing care delivery across the ambulatory and acute care continuum.

Post closing, the combined company will deliver continuous improvement and connected workflows to the core of rural healthcare and to medical groups overall, combining agentic artificial intelligence (AI) with human-in-the-loop expertise to proactively address complex operational challenges. As the platform incorporates a broader range of clinical and

financial data, it is designed to become increasingly intelligent and efficient. This growing intelligence, reinforced by human insight, is anticipated to ensure community hospitals and medical groups have the financial resilience and advanced support needed to focus on the health of their patients.

"By welcoming TruBridge, IKS Health is extending its proven, clinician-first experience to the vital rural and community hospital market," said Sachin K. Gupta, Founder and Global CEO of IKS Health. "This new entity supports our long-term vision of building a comprehensive care ecosystem for all types of healthcare organizations. By pairing TruBridge's essential system of record with our AI-driven system of action, we are moving beyond simply recording data to actively solving the complex operational challenges facing providers today. The combined entity will work toward ensuring community care teams have the same access to advanced technology and financial resilience, enabling them to deliver exceptional care close to home."

Together, the organization will bring modern revenue cycle management, predictive analytics, and advanced EHR capabilities to support more than 2,000 healthcare organizations and over 150,000 clinicians with a broad portfolio of AI-driven and human-led solutions designed to improve clinical, operational, and financial excellence.

"I am excited for TruBridge and IKS Health to combine forces and expand the focus on strengthening rural and community healthcare," said Chris Fowler, President and CEO

of TruBridge. "IKS Health shares our passion to improve provider experiences and financial results, ultimately leading to healthier lives and positive patient outcomes. It's rewarding to know that our employees will have more ways and opportunities to deliver exceptional value to our customers and their patients."

Under the terms of the agreement, TruBridge shareholders will receive \$26.25 in cash for each share of common stock. The acquisition has been approved by the Boards of Directors of IKS Health, IKS, and TruBridge, and is expected to close during the third calendar quarter of 2026, subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions, including the requisite shareholder approvals and the Hart-Scott-Rodino (HSR) notification and waiting period. In connection with the transaction, TruBridge has entered into voting and support agreements with TruBridge's largest shareholders, Pinetree Capital Ltd., L6 Holdings Inc. and Ocho Investments, LLC, who have agreed—subject to the terms of the agreements—to, among other things, vote the shares they control, representing in total approximately 27% of TruBridge's outstanding shares of common stock, in favor of the transaction.

IKS will finance the acquisition primarily through the incurrence of new indebtedness, including a term loan underwritten by Citibank, JPMorganChase, and Deutsche Bank, which is subject to satisfaction of customary conditions (including approval of the shareholders of IKS Health).

Guru Muni Narayana Prasad passes away

Thiruvananthapuram, April 25 : Renowned spiritual teacher, philosopher, and head of the Narayana Gurukulam, Guru Muni Narayana Prasad, passed away in the early hours of Saturday at the age of 87. He breathed his last at around 3:55 am while undergoing treatment at a private medical college hospital in Venjaramoodu, near here. He had been ailing with age-related health issues for

some time. Born in 1938, Muni Narayana Prasad began his professional life as an engineer before turning to spirituality. A close disciple of Nitya Chaitanya Yati, he later succeeded him as the Guru of the Narayana Gurukulam in 1999. Under his leadership, the Gurukulam expanded its presence and activities across India and abroad, fostering philosophical inquiry, education, and spiritual dialogue.

Dr. Rajkumar is the only person who always drew everyone's attention with a smile without losing patience and tolerance : Tejaswi Surya



Bengaluru: Dr. Rajkumar is the only person who always drew everyone's attention with a smile without losing patience and tolerance in any difficulty, be it happiness or sadness, he is always a great actor. Dr. Rajkumar, said Tejaswi Surya, MP from Bangalore South Lok Sabha constituency. He spoke at the unveiling of the statue of Dr. Rajkumar built by the Dr. Raj fan club in front of Shanti Uphara Hotel

in Jayanagar assembly constituency. As an example of this, Veerappan, even when Dr. Raj Kumarar was kidnapped, did not get distracted and faced everything with a smile no matter what the difficulty was. The MLA of the constituency, C. K. Ramamurthy, said that if there was anyone who acted in mythological, social, godly roles, whatever they were, it was Dr. He described him as

Rajkumar alone. If his struggle and achievements are to be preserved even after a thousand years, it will be possible through the construction of statues, which will be an example for the next generation.

Mrs. Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar, founder of P. R. K Production, spoke and said that Dr. Rajkumar is a great achiever in acting, he is a sweet face at home or in front of the common people. I did not have any kind of pride that he was a great actor, I appreciated him as the only person who sees everyone as equal in society, even if he is poor. Former BBMP members and Dr. Babu, president of the Kannada club of Rajkumar fans, and fans were present.

PhysicsWallah's Prarthana Nagappa Secures State Rank 1 in Karnataka SSLC with 100% Score



Bengaluru : Education company, PhysicsWallah (PW) celebrates the success of Prarthana Nagappa Biradar Patil, who scored 100% in the Karnataka Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) Exam 2026.

A resident of Athani in Belagavi, Prarthana scored full marks in every subject totalling 625 out of 625 marks. She credited her school teachers and parents for their support while also thanking her online teachers. "I made a study timetable with daily targets and tried to follow it sincerely. My school teachers were very helpful in helping me prepare for both internal and external exams and my parents' were with me every step of the way," Prarthana said, while adding, "I also studied online with PhysicsWallah and my teachers there helped me get conceptual clarity. Plus, self-study became much easier with all the practice questions & revision classes." She prepared for her SSLC examinations through PW's Udaan batch along with PW's free modules designed specifically for the Karnataka SSLC syllabus. Along with consistent classroom learning at school, she focused on solving previous years' question papers and strengthening her understanding across subjects. Alakh Pandey, Teacher, Founder and CEO of PhysicsWallah, said, "Prarthana's result reflects the impact of disciplined preparation, conceptual clarity, and consistent revision. At PW, we aim to make quality learning resources accessible to students preparing for different state boards, and we're proud to have offered support to our students through this important phase."

Obstruction to Census Duty: Abuse of Female Staff - Case Registered



Bengaluru: An incident has come to light where officials engaged in the National Census-2027 work were obstructed and verbally abused while discharging their duties within the jurisdiction of Bengaluru North City Corporation.

On April 20, Smt. Veena, an enumerator assigned to Ward No. 43, visited Peri Monarch Apartment located near Sultanpalya Main Road, R.T. Nagar, to collect census information. However, the concerned

resident refused to provide the required details. Subsequently, on April 25, during verification, Smt. Rashmi R, Supervisor (Circle-2), visited the location and sought the necessary census information. The resident not only refused to cooperate but also obstructed the census work and verbally abused the female staff using inappropriate language. Based on the complaint, Dr. Lokesh, Census Charge Officer, has registered a case against the concerned individual under Section 11(1) of the Census Act, 1948, and Sections 223 and 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Warning Census work is a matter of national importance, and obstructing officials in the discharge of their duties is a punishable offence. Strict legal action will be taken against such acts, warned Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar. Public Advisory from commissioner The Commissioner has appealed to the public to cooperate with enumerators and provide accurate information, as it is the legal duty of every citizen.

BDA Announces '1.5 Million Native Plants Planting Initiative on World Environment Day' - A Landmark Urban Greening Drive

Bengaluru : Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has announced the launch of an ambitious environmental initiative titled the '1.5 Million Native Plants Planting Initiative' on June 5, World Environment Day, aimed at significantly enhancing Bengaluru's green cover through large-scale native plantations across multiple locations in the city. Under the leadership of the Chairman, BDA, N. A. Haris M.L.A., this initiative marks a major step towards sustainable urban development and ecological restoration, reinforcing the Authority's commitment to building a greener and more climate-resilient Bengaluru.

In the context of rising temperatures and the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect being experienced across Bengaluru, this initiative is designed as a strategic intervention to mitigate heat stress, improve



microclimates, and enhance urban livability. The program aims to plant 15 lakh (1.5 million) native saplings under CSR through a coordinated, time-bound effort involving government agencies, civic bodies, institutions, NGOs, volunteers, and active citizen

partnerships for long-term environmental stewardship.

With 41 days of preparatory planning underway, BDA is putting in place robust mechanisms to ensure effective execution, monitoring and long-term sustainability of the plantations.

As part of this initiative, BDA will also be seeking to achieve a Guinness World Record, reflecting the scale and collective effort envisioned for this drive. Speaking on the occasion, N A Haris, Chairman, BDA, stated: "This initiative represents our commitment to securing Bengaluru's ecological future. By prioritizing native species and community participation, we are creating a model for sustainable urban greening that will benefit generations to come."

Ashwini Vaishnav Inaugurates 'Aditya' Complex at BEML, ENVISIONS SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY FOR SOUTHERN METRO CITIES

Bengaluru, April 25: Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, and Electronics & IT, inaugurated the 'Aditya' complex at BEML's Tippasandra campus in Bengaluru on Friday. The state-of-the-art facility is dedicated to manufacturing high-speed rail components, marking a significant step in India's indigenous engineering capabilities. The newly launched complex will focus on developing B-28 coaches for high-speed trains. Highlighting the complexity of high-speed rail technology, the Minister described the initiative as a major milestone in strengthening India's self-reliance in advanced transportation systems. Emphasising future connectivity, Vaishnav noted that high-speed rail will transform intercity travel, making major cities function



like extended urban clusters. He cited the example of travel between Chennai and Bengaluru, which is expected to reduce to just 73 minutes, effectively integrating the two cities. On rail expansion, the Minister announced improved connectivity between Mumbai and Bengaluru, including a new Mail Express with LHB coaches via Hubli and the upcoming

Vande Bharat Sleeper Express service. He also confirmed that a Vande Bharat Express service between Mangaluru and Bengaluru will be launched soon, with key technical upgrades such as electrification of the Hassan-Mangaluru section and installation of Automated Emergency Braking systems. Praising engineers at the

Tippasandra facility, the Minister said their work on next-generation rolling stock is crucial to India's vision of becoming a developed nation. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding infrastructure while ensuring environmental sustainability and public awareness.

ICICI Home Finance Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurli Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office: W Mall Building, 2nd floor, Wexco Homes, Kanjikkuzhi, 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 Earnest Money Deposit	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 Kulthalingal House Pothenpura P.O, Pampady Kottayam Kerala - 686502	Rs. 12, 80,651/- April 21, 2026	Rs. 17,53, 027/- 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 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-<https://BidDeal.in>) 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.icicifin.com/>

Date: April 25, 2026 Place: Kottayam Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited", CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

Collapse of the AAP Mirage: From Anna's Square to the Ruins of a Broken Promise

The departure of seven MPs from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is unfolding a situation that is bruising, public and irreversible. It admittedly elicits a vicarious sense of justice among those who watched the AAP weaponise falsehood against the Congress for over a decade. The lies were elaborate, the propaganda industrious, and the damage real. Schadenfreude, in this instance, is not an entirely dishonourable emotion.

And yet, two wrongs have never made a right. Alongside this spectacle of self-implosion runs a far more sinister story: the BJP's continued practice of purchasing mandates through lure and coercion, of engineering defections, of bending democratic institutions to achieve what Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ideologues have long dreamed of: a single-party state. The AAP crisis cannot be allowed to obscure that existential threat to Indian democracy. The promise that was never meant to be kept Let's recall 2011. A man in a Gandhi topi stood at Jantar Mantar and spoke of an India scrubbed clean of corruption. Arvind Kejriwal had won the Magsaysay Award for championing the Right to Information. He had filed a signed affidavit pledging never to use an official car or government bungalow. He had demanded a Lokpal so powerful it could, in the words borrowed from his Janlokpal Bill, "break open the almirahs of the Prime Minister." Gullible, idealistic, genuinely good-hearted Indians believed him. They believed because they wanted to believe. Today, that same man travels in large cavalcades at public expense. He fought bitterly in court to secure a Lutyens' Delhi bungalow. His official chief minister's residence was refurbished at a cost that scandalised even his admirers. As admin incharge of the Congress Party, I may also take the liberty of sharing that no top leader of Congress has ever misused public funds to have a luxurious living. The bungalows belonging to the Gandhi's even have a spartan style. People were merely amused to see the kitchen of Sonia Gandhi, when Rahul Gandhi released a video discussing food with his mother. It was simply a middle-class kitchen of the 80s. Frugal living!

The Lokpal that Kejriwal once made a national cause has now become a historical footnote. No one today even recalls that India has one. And the Lokayukta in Delhi? Kejriwal stonewalled its appointment for years. Punjab's Lokayukta, first appointed under a Congress government, survives, but the official website is not consistently accessible to the public. The fraud on the people of India is total.

One important historical correction must be made here. The Lokpal movement was not Kejriwal's original idea - it was mooted decades ago by Shanti Bhushan, leading lawyer and politician.

It was Sonia Gandhi who resolved to legislate a Lokpal, announcing it in her presidential address at the Burari convention of the AICC in 2011. It was her sincerity and political will that produced the Lokpal Act during UPA-2, after extensive consultations and study by a joint parliamentary committee.

Kejriwal was an opportunist who recognised a wave already created by Congress, rode it and then, with shameless cunning, turned it against the very party that had initiated it. Congress's own failure to forcefully underline Sonia Gandhi's foundational contribution is a matter of serious introspection.

The ideology-free vacuum and its consequences AAP's most lasting and most corrosive legacy is not corruption. It is the active delegitimation of ideology itself. Kejriwal did not merely lack a political ideology. He propagated against the very concept. He presented ideology as an obstacle to governance, a distraction from the practical business of delivering services. Governance, he insisted, was a managerial problem, not a moral or political one. This was a profoundly dangerous idea. It created an ideological vacuum in Indian politics at precisely the moment when the RSS-BJP combine was prepared to fill any available space with its far-right, communal, anti-constitutional worldview. AAP's assault was directed specifically at the constitutional, republican, secular legacy of the Congress, the legacy of Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar, and the independence movement. It succeeded in weakening that tradition. And into the space it cleared, marched something far darker.

The consequences were predictable. A party without ideological moorings must navigate by the winds of popular sentiment. Kejriwal chose to be led by surveys rather than values, mob mood rather than constitutional principle. This is majoritarianism. Not democratic, not egalitarian, but a system that finds a common enemy, inflames primal passions, and converts public anger into personal power. The Delhi riots of February 2020 were the most devastating verdict on this ideology-less governance. A city under the AAP government burned. Then the chief minister, for days, he was conspicuously absent, silent and passive. When AAP did speak, it found its voice to malign the Tablighi Jamaat over COVID-19. It was a baseless, communally charged attack on a Muslim organisation. The party that had claimed to stand above communalism collapsed, silently, into it.

The mirror and the original

In retrospect, the structural similarity between AAP and BJP was always hiding in plain sight. Both built their power on a cult of personality. Both weaponised media. The RTI champion, Kejriwal moved first to exclude journalists from Delhi Secretariat the moment he came to power, a playbook Modi had already written in Gujarat and would later deploy nationally. Both relied on the management of popular sentiment. The difference is this: Modi's BJP is honest about its authoritarianism within its support base. The RSS's communal project is no secret to those who vote for it. The edifice is aligned with the foundation. AAP, by contrast, built a democratic facade over an authoritarian structure. When the facade fell, as it inevitably must, there was nothing behind it. You cannot sustain a political movement that rides on democratic and republican aspirations while delivering an authoritarian regime. The supporters of AAP were not ill-intentioned; they were deceived. And deceit, unlike conviction, has no endurance.

Hindutva To Parivartan: Decoding Shift In BJP Campaign Strategy From 2021

In any election, for any political party, voting is never shaped by a single issue, a single agenda, or one isolated political plank. Elections are always fought on multiple layers. That is the context in which this election in West Bengal also has to be understood. As the principal opposition force in Bengal, the BJP too has adopted multiple strategies in its campaign. What is striking this time is the visible shift from its 2021 approach. In that Assembly election, the campaign was far more sharply defined by Hindutva, particularly hard-line Hindutva, with the slogan of Jai Shri Ram dominating almost every political theatre. The slogan itself had become a mode of politics. But electoral politics is also a process of trial and error. And the BJP appears to have understood something important about Bengal. Mamata Banerjee's deployment of Bengali identity politics has worked, to a large extent, as a counter to hyper-Hindutva. There is a broader social understanding that Bengali identity has historically been mixed, Aryan and non-Aryan strands, layered histories, and plural inheritances. Socially and culturally, Bengalis often see themselves as pluralistic, heterogeneous, and, in a broad sense, secular. Because of that, a monolithic Hindutva framework does not always sit naturally with Bengal's political culture. Sanatan civilisational themes may have resonance, but in the electoral arena, aggressive Hindutva as a singular campaign idiom has limits in Bengal. And the BJP seems to



have recalibrated accordingly in 2026. That does not mean Hindutva has disappeared. It remains the party's core ideological anchor. 'Jai Shri Ram' is still present. Even after the first phase of polling, on Friday, while travelling along the banks of the Ganges at Gwalior Ghat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi heard supporters raising Jai Shri Ram slogans, and he responded in kind. After some time, that was seen as a signal that the slogan remains part of the campaign grammar. But noticeably, in the opening stretch of the campaign, PM Modi had emphasised Jai Maa Kali, Jai Maa Durga, invoked Mahishasur Mardini, and spoke of divine protection for Bangla. That itself reflected a tonal adjustment. The larger strategic shift, however, is

unmistakable: from Hindutva to Parivartan, change. Even on Friday, in a press conference, Home Minister Amit Shah made that point directly. He said this is not about changing an MLA, a cabinet, or even merely changing a chief minister. This is about changing Bengal. That formulation matters. The BJP is presenting itself not as the force creating change, but as the vehicle through which the people of Bengal are changing the regime. PM Modi too, in Panihati, framed it similarly: Bengal wants freedom - freedom from violence against women, freedom from unemployment, freedom from deteriorating law and order, and what he repeatedly described as 'jungle raj'. This election's slogan is less "religious mobilisation" and more

"regime change". The Parivartan rallies reflect this. Four or five major yatras have revolved around that theme, and almost every top BJP leader has been part of what can only be called a carpet-bombing campaign strategy centred on change. Through this shift from hyper-Hindutva to Parivartan, the BJP is trying to activate anti-incumbency. And after 15 years in power, anti-incumbency, as many would say, is almost a law of political nature. District by district, there are visible signs of discontent. And the BJP believes it is the only viable beneficiary of that mood because the Left and Congress remain organisationally weak. Though the Congress has shown signs of renewed aggression, Mamata Banerjee long occupied much

ther, raising infiltration, or ghuspethiya, and border concerns and trying to consolidate Bengali anxieties not through Ayodhya or Ram Mandir, which interestingly has not been central this time, but through security and identity politics. Even among women voters, the BJP has sought to challenge one of Mamata Banerjee's strongest social constituencies. The women's reservation issue has been used politically. PM Modi has framed the BJP as the protector of women. He has even referenced remarks made by Mamata Banerjee after the RG Kar episode, questioning how a chief minister could suggest women should avoid moving out at midnight, and turned that into a larger critique about women's security. Even the symbolic presence of Abhaya's mother, Ratna Debnath, at Panihati lent emotional and political weight to PM Modi's visit. All this shows that the strategy this time is layered, calibrated, and multi-pronged. And at the centre of much of this is Amit Shah. In many ways, this entire strategic shift bears Amit Shah's imprint. His extended stay in Kolkata itself is significant. Staying for days, holding meetings late into the night with BJP leaders, personally reviewing constituency-wise calculations, and repeatedly telling candidates: increase the margin, increase the margin. It is not only about winning seats. It is about generating confidence and creating the atmosphere that victory is within reach and that each candidate has a duty not merely to win.

Protest Origins To Major Rebellion: Story Of AAP So Far

There was a time when the Aam Aadmi Party was not just a political party; it was an emotion, an uprising, a moral assertion against a system perceived as corrupt. It rose from the dust of Ramlila Maidan, powered by the movement led by Anna Hazare, with Arvind Kejriwal as its most visible face. But this is also where the story begins to turn interestingly, and somewhat ironically. Because a movement that set out to "change the system" slowly began to resemble the very system it once opposed. The first cracks appeared early. As activism transitioned into politics, the paths of Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal diverged. The simplicity of protest gave way to the strategy of power. Allies like Baba Ramdev drifted apart. The language of moral absolutism softened into the grammar of political convenience. And then came the first big irony - in politics, "never" often quietly becomes "sometimes." The same Indian National Congress that was fiercely attacked became the very support system for forming a government. Leaders once targeted for imprisonment - Sonia Gandhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav - suddenly became part of the political ecosystem AAP learned to navigate. And the contradictions didn't stop there. At one point, sharp criticism of MK Stalin - and later, public camaraderie. The shift wasn't subtle; it was symptomatic of a larger transformation. A party that once claimed to be "different" was beginning to look very familiar. AAP's politics developed a peculiar rhythm - storms of allegations, followed by silences of resolution. Big accusations were made against powerful figures, yet rarely pursued to their logical legal conclu-

sions. And in the two cases that did escalate, against Nitin Gadkari and Arun Jaitley, public apologies marked an unexpected end. This was a party that promised "evidence-backed anti-corruption," but often concluded with "apology-backed closure." Then came power and with it, scrutiny. Governance in Delhi was packaged through narratives like mohalla clinics and education reforms, yet these too attracted criticism and counterclaims. The promise to transform the Yamuna River into something like the Thames gradually became a rhetorical fixture rather than a visible transformation. On pollution, the blame game evolved, initially directed at Punjab, and later, when Punjab came under AAP's control, redirected elsewhere. The problem remained. Only the excuse changed geography. Meanwhile, allegations of corruption began to surface, liquor policy controversies, administrative questions, and the now widely discussed "Sheesh Mahal" narrative, which stood in stark contrast to the party's original image of austerity and simplicity. And then came the internal story - arguably the most revealing chapter. A party that once championed internal democracy saw the steady exit or marginalisation of prominent voices. Yogendra Yadav and Ashutosh were among the early exits. Later, tensions involving figures like Swati Malival added to the narrative. This is not unusual in politics, but here, it carried a sharper irony. Because this was the same party that had criticised others for "high command culture." A pattern began to emerge: any leader who grew too prominent risked becoming inconvenient for Arvind Kejriwal.

INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS TODAY



PRIYANKA SAURABH

India-South Korea relations are gaining new importance in today's global era. Both countries are champions of democratic values, economic development, technological progress, and regional peace. The shifting balance of power in Asia, China's growing assertiveness, supply chain crises, the Ukraine war, Middle East tensions, and growing competition in the Indo-Pacific region have provided opportunities for India and South Korea to draw closer. The two countries have enjoyed friendly relations for years, but the time now demands that these relations be further enhanced with new energy, new direction, and practical cooperation. India-South Korea relations are not limited to modern diplomacy, but also have strong cultural and historical roots. Civilizational links between the two countries date back to ancient times. The mention of Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya, known in Korea as Queen Hyo Hwang-ok, connects the two countries culturally. This relationship continues to be the basis of emotional ties between the peoples of today. Consequently, the potential for cultural exchange, tourism, and public relations between the two countries is immense. India and South Korea established formal diplomatic relations in 1973. Since then, relations between the two countries have steadily progressed. In 2010, the relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership and later upgraded to a Special Strategic Partnership. This demonstrates that both countries view each other as long-term partners. High-level visits, foreign ministerial meetings, business dialogues, and defense talks continue to strengthen these ties. South Korea is an important economic partner for India. South Korea is technologically advanced, industrial-

ly strong, and has an export-oriented economy, while India, with its large market, young population, and rapidly growing economy, is attracting global attention. This presents immense potential for trade and investment between the two countries. Bilateral trade has grown in recent years and has reached approximately \$27 billion. However, this remains low compared to its potential. India's trade deficit with South Korea also remains a concern. Major South Korean companies have long been investing in India. Korean companies have a strong presence in sectors such as electronics, automobiles, mobile phone manufacturing, steel, shipbuilding, and infrastructure. South Korean investments could be extremely useful in boosting India's manufacturing sector. Korean technology and capital can play a significant role in initiatives such as "Make in India," "Digital India," "Startup India," and "Green Energy." Nevertheless, there are some challenges. The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was implemented in 2010, with the aim of boosting trade. However, the expected results have not been fully realized. Non-tariff barriers, quality standards regulations, complex regulatory processes, logistical problems, and market access difficulties continue to hinder trade growth. India will need to diversify its exports, while South Korea will need to provide more opportunities for Indian products and services. Today, major changes are taking place in the global supply chain. Companies are seeking to reduce their dependence on China and are seeking new production centers. This situation presents opportunities for both India and South Korea. If South Korean companies establish large-scale production centers in India, they will benefit from a large market, affordable labor, and a strategic location. India will benefit from increased technology, employment, and export potential. Electronics, semiconductors, battery manufacturing, automobiles, defense production, and shipbuilding are areas where cooperation could grow rapidly. Cooperation between the two countries is also crucial from a strategic perspective. India supports a free, open, and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific region. South Korea also supports regional stability and maritime security. China's aggressive policies, pressure

on sea lanes, and regional tensions have forced many countries to seek new partners. India and South Korea could be natural allies in this regard. However, South Korea's security priorities differ somewhat. Its primary focus remains the North Korean nuclear threat and its military alliance with the United States. India's concerns, on the other hand, relate to China, the Indian Ocean, border security, and regional balance. Nevertheless, the two countries share common interests in several areas. Joint work could be undertaken in defense industry cooperation, cybersecurity, maritime surveillance, counterterrorism efforts, and new military technologies. South Korea has established a strong global presence in the defense sector. It possesses modern defense production capabilities. If India emphasizes joint production, technology transfer, and research collaboration, both countries could benefit. India's self-reliant defense policy and South Korea's technological capabilities can create new possibilities. Technology has become a crucial pillar of international relations today. Artificial intelligence, 5G, 6G, semiconductors, robotics, green energy, electric vehicles, and digital innovation will shape the economy of the future. South Korea is among the leading countries in these areas, while India is rapidly advancing thanks to its digital talent, software capabilities, and startup ecosystem. If the two countries work together to build a "digital bridge," a new model of technological leadership could emerge in Asia. Education and human resources cooperation can also strengthen ties. Indian students can access higher education, research, and technical training opportunities in South Korea. Korean students can benefit from India's culture, history, yoga, Ayurveda, information technology, and management education. University partnerships, scholarships, and joint research programs could provide a strong foundation for future collaboration. Cultural ties between the two countries are growing rapidly. Korean music, films, and television programs have grown in popularity in India. South Korea is seeing a growing interest in Indian yoga, food, dance, and spiritual traditions. This cultural connection is not just a means of entertainment, but also a means of fostering trust and understanding between peoples.

Shipping Firms Pay Record Premiums To Bypass Hormuz Chaos

As tensions linked to the Iran conflict disrupt the Strait of Hormuz, shipment businesses are paying up to \$4 million for last-minute transit slots through the Panama Canal, triggering a major shift in global trade routes. With regular bookings exhausted, companies are turning to costly auctions to avoid long delays and to avoid the waterway off Iran's coast, as rerouted cargo drives a surge in demand for canal crossings. What Are The Current Transit Costs? The standard cost for a vessel to transit the canal typically falls between \$300,000 and \$400,000, with the exact figure determined by the ship's specifications. Historically, companies seeking to expedite their journey by securing an earlier crossing slot would incur an additional premium ranging from \$250,000 to \$300,000. However, recent market shifts have seen this supplementary cost surge significantly, with the average auction price for an early transit now reaching approximately \$425,000. The Panama Canal serves as a critical artery for global trade, facilitating the trans-



port of diverse goods, including automotive components, agricultural grain, and consumer electronics, between China and Europe, as well as between China and the US East Coast. While the canal does handle some petroleum shipments, it is not a viable large-scale substitute for the Strait of Hormuz due to significant physical limitations. The primary constraint lies in the canal's dimensions. Ricaurte Vásquez, the canal's administrator, clarified that the sky-high fees are not a result of structural congestion or a backlog of

ships at the canal. Instead, the price surge is driven by last-minute shifts in global trade and a heightened sense of urgency among vessel operators following the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Panama's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formally condemned the seizure of the MSC Francesca, a Panama-flagged, Italian-owned container ship, by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on Wednesday. The ministry characterised the act as an "illegal seizure" and a "grave attack on maritime security," noting that

the vessel was forcibly diverted into Iranian territorial waters while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz, which carries 20% of global oil and 11% of seaborne trade, has been effectively closed for nearly two months due to the Iran war, with Iran reportedly using sea mines and threatening tolls. Oil prices have jumped from around \$66 to over \$107 a barrel, fuelling inflation fears and prompting shippers to seek safer alternatives. Experts warn this breakdown in long-standing maritime conven-

tions could usher in a costly new era for global shipping. Operational and political flashpoints intertwine Panama's windfall from diverted traffic comes alongside a diplomatic blow, as its government accused Iran of seizing a Panama-flagged vessel in the Strait of Hormuz. The seizure underscores the intersection of operational challenges with geopolitical tensions. Such incidents heighten uncertainty for shipowners and insurers, who may avoid Hormuz even after a peace deal until security is verifiably restored. Future scenarios for maritime trade If the Hormuz closure persists, Panama Canal premiums could rise further, straining supply chains and pushing some trade to alternative chokepoints like the Suez or Cape routes. Conversely, a resolution could ease congestion but leave a lingering precedent for toll imposition in other straits, as seen in recent comments about the Malacca Strait. Either path signals a shift toward more politicised and costly control of global shipping arteries.

China car giant BYD says it can thrive without US

The recent surge in fuel prices due to the war in Iran has spurred demand for electric vehicles around the world, and Chinese car makers are making the most of the opportunity. China is the world's top producer of EVs, and while its manufacturers remain largely shut out of the major car market of the United States, they are benefiting from an uptick in interest and orders via dealerships across Asia and elsewhere. BYD, which overtook Tesla as the world's largest seller of electric vehicles last year and is expanding aggressively overseas, is at the centre of this shift in focus. "We survive and are successful without the US market today," BYD executive vice president Stella Li told the BBC at the Beijing Auto Show. Instead of aiming for US customers, the company says its challenge is meeting increased demand in other regions, including Brazil, the UK and Europe. "Consumers feel the daily savings when oil prices increase. EVs help them save money every day," Li said. "Actually, we are now suffering [insufficient] capacity. Our demand is much higher than what we can supply." BYD is betting on its new "flash charging" technology which Li



describes as a "game-changer" to help overcome one of the biggest barriers to EV adoption - concern over charging speeds. Flash charging can add hundreds of kilometres of range in minutes - a development Li said could persuade previously reluctant customers to consider an EV and allow BYD to compete more widely. At this year's Beijing Auto Show, now the largest industry event in the world, more than 1,400 vehicles from hundreds of Chinese and foreign companies were on display with Chinese car-makers centre stage. BYD's global push is unfolding against a complex geopolitical backdrop. Chinese EV-makers face tariffs and regulatory scrutiny in global markets, particularly in the world's largest consumer market, the US. The US has

criticised Chinese government subsidies and voiced concerns over data protection and national security. But Li said the firm was winning greater brand recognition in other markets, including the UK. While they were once known for undercutting rivals on price, Chinese firms are increasingly competing on technology - particularly in batteries, charging infrastructure and software integration. "We are not just a car company. We produce one-third of global smartphone components, we are a leading player in battery storage, solar panels, buses, and trucks. So BYD is an ecosystem," said Li. Robots and flying cars The Auto Show displayed examples of innovation from other firms, going far beyond the cars themselves.

ASUS LAUNCHES EXPERTBOOK ULTRA, AN AI-POWERED FLAGSHIP OF THE INDUSTRY, PERIOD! THAT IS BUILT FOR BRILLIANCE



India April 2026: ASUS today, announced the launch of ExpertBook Ultra, the absolute industry flagship, along with a significant expansion in the versatile ExpertBook P series portfolio for a truly Worry-free business experience. The ASUS ExpertBook Ultra is a Copilot+ PC designed to enable CXOs and Business Leaders to achieve True Focus and an Ultra State of Mind where Brilliance is Born, through an Ultra-Light design, Elite Cutting-

Edge AI-Powered Performance, Vivid Display, Immersive Audio, All Day Battery, Ultimate typing experience, Segment leading Military grade Durability, Enterprise-Grade Security, Super Premium Enterprise Grade Service Support, and Seamless Expandability. The ExpertBook P series has also expanded with ExpertBook P3 and ExpertBook P5 also brings high-performance AI productivity and future-proof

scalability to manage the dynamic demands of enterprises and businesses across India. These new business laptops are unified by the ASUS 'Worry-Free Business' commitment, blending elite performance, security, durability, connectivity, durability and mobility, with India's most comprehensive commercial support ecosystem. The ASUS ExpertBook Ultra is positioned to be The Flagship of the Industry. Period! It is an ultra-portable flagship

laptop meticulously crafted from AZ31B magnesium-aluminum alloy, a material typically reserved for Aerospace and Formula 1 applications, with a Nano Ceramic surface with a 9H hardness rating. It is engineered to deliver an unprecedented balance of performance, durability, aesthetics, and user experience. The ExpertBook Ultra defies the established laws of physics, as it seamlessly integrates the latest Intel® Core™ Ultra Series 3 processor, an incredibly powerful GPU, and an advanced NPU into a single heterogeneous AI computing platform in an aerospace-grade chassis and is featherlight starting from 0.99 kg. This new Copilot+ PC is engineered as a future-proof asset, designed to induce a state of 'Brilliance' - an elite cognitive flow state where technology becomes invisible - empowering leaders to execute their vision with total clarity and zero friction.

RELIANCE INDUSTRIES Q4 REVIEW:

Brokerages Stay Bullish Despite Weak Results, Energy Pressure

Reliance Industries' March quarter earnings missed Street estimates, with the drag coming largely from its energy businesses and softer retail margins. Macquarie called it a "soft print," pointing to weakness in oil-to-chemicals and upstream operations. It also flagged a more structural concern - upstream gas EBITDA appears to be in decline, and the brokerage sees incremental downside risk if energy weakness lingers, especially after recent cuts to consensus earnings forecasts. 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)



Still, the quarter wasn't without offsets. Jio continued to clock healthy subscriber additions, helping cushion the miss. Macquarie believes this, along with likely positive sentiment around a potential Jio listing, could keep the stock supported. It has maintained an Outperform rating on Reliance Industries, with a target price of Rs 1,570. Morgan Stanley struck a similar balanced tone. The brokerage has retained its Overweight rating on the stock, with a target price of

Rs 1,803. While overall performance was largely in line, it highlighted retail as a clear bright spot. Growth was led by quick commerce, fashion, and grocery, while the FMCG segment stood out with revenues more than doubling. On the flip side, Morgan Stanley flagged underperformance in oil-to-chemicals margins versus peers, along with higher costs weighing on upstream profitability. For a meaningful rerating, the brokerage believes two levers matter: tighter energy and chemical

markets, and sustained traction in retail's top-line growth. It does, however, see early signs of improvement emerging across chemicals, fuels, and consumer businesses. Macquarie on Reliance Industries Macquarie maintains an Outperform rating with a target price of Rs 1,570. Q4 was a soft print. The miss was driven by weakness in the Energy divisions and lower margins in Retail. Jio subscriber growth remained supportive. Upstream gas EBITDA is seen in structural decline, with KGD6 production past its peak. The brokerage flags additional downside risks from continued weakness in the Energy segment. However, it remains constructive, expecting positive sentiment to build ahead of the Jio listing. Morgan Stanley on Reliance Industries Morgan Stanley maintains an Overweight rating with a target price of Rs 1,803. Retail growth surprised positively, led by quick commerce, fashion and grocery.

AXIS BANK DECLARES FINAL DIVIDEND; APPROVES RAISING RS 55,000 CRORE VIA DEBT, EQUITIES

Axis Bank on Saturday informed the exchanges that its board has declared a final dividend of Rs 1 per equity share, while also approving the plan to raise up to Rs 55,000 crore via debt and equity. The dividend, which is subject to approval of the members of the bank at the ensuing Annual General Meeting, will be paid within 30 days from the date of conclusion of the AGM, an exchange filing stated. The record date for determining the shareholders' eligibility was not disclosed. Also, the private lender said, it has secured the board's nod to raise up to Rs 35,000 crore via the issuance of debt instruments, including long term bonds, masala bonds, green bonds, and other debt securities. Separately, another Rs 20,000 crore is planned to be raised via the issuance of convertible securities or equity shares through qualified institutional placement (QIP), or through American



Depository Receipts (ADRs) or Global Depository Receipts (GDRs), it stated. This takes the total planned fundraise to Rs 55,000 crore. Axis Bank, on Saturday, also declared its fourth quarter results. Net profit rose 9% from the previous three months to Rs 7,071 crore, marginally above the consensus estimate of Rs 6,958 crore, as shared by the analysts tracked by Bloomberg. The bottomline was down 0.6% from Rs 7,117 crore a year earlier. The lender said

tax expense for the quarter was lower by Rs 2,193.2 crore after income-tax authorities allowed depreciation on intangible assets linked to the acquisition of Citi's India consumer business. Net interest income, the difference between interest earned and interest paid, rose 5% from a year earlier to Rs 14,457 crore, missing the Rs 14,727-crore Bloomberg estimate. Net interest margin was 3.62%, compared with 3.64% in the previous quarter.

L&T Finance Ltd. posts record Rs. 3,003 crore FY26 profit, unveils Lakshya 2031 growth plan

L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF) records highest ever consolidated annual Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 3,003 Crore (before effect of Labour Code considered in Q3FY26) in the financial year ended March 31, 2026 (FY26), up 14% Year-on-Year (YoY) and consolidated PAT of Rs. 807 Crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026, up 27% YoY. Accelerates technology deployment momentum to fully transform to an AI-enabled lender. Strong retail franchise with a Retail Book Size of Rs. 1,19,508 Crore, up 26% YoY for the financial year ended March 31, 2026. Highest ever annual retail disbursements for the financial year ended March 31, 2026 stood at Rs. 83,213 Crore, up 39% YoY. Consolidated Book stands at Rs. 1,21,728 Crore for the financial year ended March 31, 2026. Launches 5-year strategic plan Lakshya 2031. Continuous improvement in credit cost and profitability trajectory. Board recommends a



dividend of Rs. 2.75 per equity share for financial year ended March 31, 2026. L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), one of the leading Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in India has recorded highest ever consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 3,003 Crore (before effect of Labour Code considered in the third quarter ended December 31, 2025) for the financial year ended March 31, 2026, up 14% YoY. The Company has posted a PAT of Rs. 807 Crore, up 26% YoY for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026. The retail book now stands at Rs. 1,19,508 Crore, up 26% when compared with retail book for the financial year ended March 31, 2025.

The Company has also recorded highest ever annual retail disbursements at Rs. 83,213 Crore, up 39% YoY and highest ever quarterly retail disbursements at Rs. 24,107 Crore, up 62% for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026. After successfully executing its strategic plan Lakshya 2026, the Company announced its next 5-year strategic plan Lakshya 2031. As a part of its Lakshya 2031 strategy, the Company aims to balance resilient growth with consistent returns and truly transform into a Risk-first, Technology-first, Multi-product Retail Financier of Choice. The Company will be focusing on tech-enabled granular exe-

cution and will work towards consistently achieving a Book Growth of over 20%, maintaining Credit Cost of less than 2%, achieving Return on Assets (RoA) between 3% - 3.2%, and Return on Equity (RoE) between 16% - 18%. The Company's customer-facing PLANET app, which has emerged as a powerful digital channel for customers, crossed more than 2.40 Crore downloads as of March 31, 2026, comprising more than 19.2 Lakh customers on the rural side. As of March 31, 2026, this channel has done collections of over Rs. 9,500 Crore while servicing over 12 Crore requests and has sourced loans of around Rs. 29,000 Crore.

Commenting on the financial results Mr. Sudipta Roy, Managing Director & CEO, LTF, said, "FY26 has been a good year for us, despite significant headwinds in our micro-finance business in the initial months of the year and the end of the year closing with geopolitical tensions. Through the course of the year, we remained steadfast in our approach—tightening credit and risk administration frameworks, strengthening collections infrastructure, accelerating our AI-led technology transformation and continuously focusing on growth across all our business lines. On the microfinance business, our focus was on navigating the cycle with prudence and our efforts have yielded results, with business parameters across both disbursements and collection efficiencies now reverting to near pre-crisis levels, giving us confidence that the financial year beginning April 1, 2026 (FY27) will be a stable and productive year for this segment."

Iran's foreign minister says he shared Tehran's 'views' on ending war at Islamabad talks

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was heading up talks with Pakistan earlier, but who is actually making decisions in the country? BBC Persian's Amir Azimi has more. Formally, the answer is clear. Mojtaba Khamenei has assumed the role of supreme leader following the killing of his father, Ali Khamenei, on the first day of the war on 28 February. But in practice, the picture is far murkier. Mojtaba Khamenei has not been seen in public since taking power. That absence matters. In Iran's political system, authority is not just institutional - it is also performative. On paper, diplomacy sits with the government. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi continues to represent Tehran in talks with the US, under Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Araghchi's role looks operational rather than directive. His brief reversal over whether the



Strait of Hormuz was open or closed offered a rare glimpse of how little control the diplomatic track has over military decisions. Pezeshkian, meanwhile, has aligned with the broader direction of the regime without visibly shaping it. But neither appears to be setting strategy and their authority is further put into question

by the fact that Iran's delegation is headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf. A former Revolutionary Guard commander, Ghalibaf's position is precarious - active but not clearly authorised. He insists his actions align with Mojtaba Khamenei's wishes, yet there is little visible evidence of direct co-ordina-

tion. In a system that depends on signals from the top, that ambiguity is telling. Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif has just shared an update on X following talks with Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi. "Had a most warm, cordial exchange of views on the current regional situation. We also discussed matters of

mutual interest, including the further strengthening of Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations," he writes. It follows earlier comments from Pakistan's deputy prime minister, Ishaq Dar, who said the meeting between Sharif and Araghchi "lasted around two hours approx". "The Prime Minister emphasized on the importance of dialogue and diplomacy for the peace and stability in the region and beyond," he writes. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has now left Islamabad, according to Iran's state-run IRNA. A short while ago the news agency Reuters news agency shared photographs of a motorcade, which it said was believed to be Araghchi's, leaving the Pakistani capital. Iranian MP Mahmoud Nabavian has threatened regional countries with destructive action if the US attacks again. "Regional movements indicate the new folly of the evil

American regime," he writes on X. "The leaders of the regional countries should know that this time, Iran's crushing response will lead to the complete cessation of regional oil production, the destruction of all infrastructure, and the displacement and refugee status of their people," he adds. Nabavian is a hardline MP who was part of Iran's delegation at the first round of talks in Islamabad. US President Donald Trump has extended a ceasefire with Iran for an unspecified period. However, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said yesterday that the US was "locked and loaded" on Iranian infrastructure. Iran has attacked what Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described as the "presence of the US" in Gulf countries since the war began. We now know that Iran's foreign minister has met Pakistan's prime minister and the head of the army.

THIRTY-ONE SLOTHS DIE IN FLORIDA BEFORE OPENING OF ATTRACTION



Thirty-one sloths planned for a new "slothnarium" in Florida died before the attraction's planned opening, authorities have found. The mammals were planned to be showcased at a permanent, public exhibit at Sloth World in Orlando, set to open this spring. Many of the sloths died due to conditions at a Florida warehouse where they had been shipped, according to a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) report released on Friday. Others arrived in Florida already dead or appeared in ill health and later died, the report states. The owner of

Sloth World has denied allegations in the report and said there was "so much false and inaccurate information out there right now". "The truth is, we lost sloths that had a virus of which showed barely any symptoms and was undetectable even after necropsy," Ben Agresta, the owner of Sloth World, told Fox-35 in Orlando. The BBC has contacted Sloth World, along with its listed owner and representatives. Sloth World is advertised as Orlando's only "slotharium", with a rainforest-inspired habitat "designed exclusively with sloth well-being in mind."

Thousands at risk after multi-million dollar Everest flood warning system left to rust



An early flood warning system designed to save the lives of thousands of people in the Everest region may no longer be working, Nepalese officials have admitted to the BBC, after it was allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. The disclosure came after villagers in the local Sherpa communities told the BBC no inspection of the UN-supported project had been carried out for many years after the dangerous Imja glacial lake was last drained in 2016. Since then, no maintenance has been undertaken, which means siren towers have been left to rust, while some have even had their batteries stolen, according to locals. On top of this, the satellite data reception transmitting the lake's water level - which can then be used to send out mobile phone alerts to locals - has been unreliable, officials at Nepal's department of hydrology and meteorology (DHM) told the BBC. The Imja lake, which sits at a little over 5,000m (16,400ft) above sea level, has not burst since it was drained a decade ago - at which point, it was almost 150m deep in places. Back then, the depth of the lake was reduced by about 3.5m as part of a \$3.5m

risk reduction project, which included the early warning system. But scientists warn global warming-induced fast melting glaciers are causing many Himalayan glacial lakes to expand dangerously - meaning they can then burst out and sweep away downstream settlements, trekking routes and bridges. Ice loss rates have doubled in the Hindu Khush Himalaya region since 2000, according to a recent assessment by the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. Experts say rising temperatures have also left mountains less stable, unleashing rockfalls and triggering catastrophic floods. In the Everest region alone, there have been at least five floods from glacial lakes in the last five decades, leaving those living in Imja lake's path fearing for the future. "Going by the state of the siren towers, we don't expect to get any flood warning from them even when Imja lake bursts out," said Ang Nuru Sherpa, chairman of the Chaurikharka buffer zone area adjoining the Sagarmatha national park in the Everest region.

THE VIRAL MANIFESTO OF 'ANTI-WOKE' TECH BOSS WITH NHS AND DEFENCE CONTRACTS



It's not often a thousand-word social media post from a US tech firm goes viral. But the post from Palantir - a 22-point manifesto of sorts - currently has over 30 million views on X. It is the work of the controversial company's co-founder and chief executive, who has criticised the belief that all cultures are equal and called for

universal national service. Alex Karp also called the disarmament of Germany and Japan after World War Two an "over-correction", backed AI weapons and condemned "ruthless exposure" of the private lives of public figures. Karp's views matter - his company's growing roster of UK government contracts include the NHS, the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Financial Conduct Authority and 11 police forces. Not to mention its multi-million dollar deals with the US and other powerful governments. But as the firm increasingly embeds itself in public bodies, the opinions and influence of its leaders leave some fearful.

Explosions and gunfire as armed groups launch co-ordinated attacks across Mali

Explosions and sustained gunfire have been reported in Mali's capital, Bamako, as armed groups launch apparently co-ordinated attacks across the country. The military said in a statement on Saturday that "fighting is ongoing", adding "our defence and security forces are currently engaged in repelling the attackers". Witnesses have told news agency Reuters of explosions and gunfire around Kati, home to a major military base outside the capital. Soldiers have been deployed to block off roads in the area. There are also reports of attacks in Gao and Kidal in the north, and Sevare in central Mali, in what one analyst described as the largest jihadist attack in years. Mali has for years been plagued by



jihadist insurgencies by groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, as well as a separatist movement in the country's north. Reports suggest the assault by the separatist Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) - which seeks a breakaway ethnic Tuareg state - was primarily focused on northern cities, while the jihadist group Jama'at

Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) had staged simultaneous attacks on multiple locations across the country. Mali's military said it was fighting unidentified "terrorist groups" and the situation was under control, but unconfirmed reports suggest fighting continues. While some residents describe calm in most parts of the capital, there are ongoing reports of

gunfire in some areas. Checkpoints have been established on roads leading to the airport and vehicles are being searched, according to reports. One resident, who was travelling back to Bamako from Ethiopia, told the BBC all flights into the city had been cancelled early on Saturday. It is not yet clear whether the reported attacks have affected the airport. The UK Foreign Office has advised against all travel to Mali following the attacks, adding Bamako International Airport had been temporarily closed. Ulf Laessing, head of the Sahel programme at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Mali, told the BBC the incident appeared to be the "largest co-ordinated jihadist attack on Mali for years".

Palestinians in West Bank and some in Gaza vote in local elections

Palestinians are voting in local elections on Saturday, including the first poll of any kind to be held in Gaza since 2006. Elections are taking place across the occupied West Bank, as well as in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza where Hamas operates. Hamas was not allowed to stand and several other factions have boycotted it over a requirement that candidates recognise the authority of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), which dominates the Palestinian Authority (PA) governing the parts of the occupied West Bank not under Israeli control. Fatah, the faction led by President Mahmoud



Abbas and which dominates the PLO, was violently ousted from Gaza after the last elections there, which Hamas won triggering a power struggle between the two groups. More than a million voters across the Palestinian territories are eligible to take

part, according to the Ramallah-based Central Elections Commission, including 70,000 in Deir al-Balah, where 12 polling stations were scheduled to operate. Results are expected late on Saturday or on Sunday. While Hamas was not on the ballot in Deir al-

Balah, Reuters news agency reported that one slate of candidates was widely seen as being aligned with it. The central city was chosen as the sole Gaza area where elections would take place as it was not as badly damaged as other places during the Israel-Hamas war. A fragile ceasefire is in place as part of President Trump's 20-point peace plan, which halted the fighting in October last year. Hamas continues to operate in parts of Gaza where Israeli forces have withdrawn from, and Reuters reported that its police force was involved in security operations around polling stations.

KATYA ADLER: EUROPE'S NATO ALLIES PUSH BACK AT REPORTED US THREAT TO SPAIN



It's become a joke - through gritted teeth - these days in EU circles, that whenever leaders meet, as they did these last two days in Cyprus - expecting to discuss practicalities, such as the new EU budget - they get railroaded by yet another crisis. There is the ongoing energy crisis provoked by the US-Israel war on Iran, Russia's aggression in neighbouring Ukraine, now in its fifth year. And this Friday morning, souring relations between Europe and the United States, along with a potentially devastating defence impact, reared its Medusa-like head. Again. "No worries," Spain's determined-to-appear-calm prime minister, Pedro Sanchez, said to waiting journalists as he arrived at the leaders' summit. "We are fulfilling our obligations toward Nato." What did he feel compelled to say he wasn't fretting about? An email, originating from the US Pentagon and first reported by Reuters on Friday had

leaked, suggesting measures for the US to punish allies it believed had failed to support the US-Israel campaign against Iran. The email said the US could seek to suspend Spain from Nato over its stance. There is actually no provision in the Nato treaties to expel a member country. And any action to bar Spain from filling key civilian or military roles in Nato, also alluded to in the email as possible punitive action, would have to be taken unanimously amongst all Nato members. Fellow EU leaders at the Cyprus summit, who are also in Nato, leapt to Spain's defence. Dutch prime minister Rob Jetten said he wanted to be "crystal clear" that Spain was and would remain a full Nato member. He said European countries were currently "doing a great deal to strengthen Nato". That, he said, was also in America's interest. A high-ranking German official said "Spain is a member of Nato."

Seven dead in major Russian attack on Ukraine

At least seven people were killed in Russian strikes across Ukraine overnight, including five in the central city of Dnipro, where officials said an apartment building was hit. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the latest attack lasted "practically all night", while rescue workers were still searching for survivors under rubble in Dnipro on Saturday morning. British jets were scrambled from Romania during the heavy attack when Russian drones were detected near the border, though the UK Ministry of Defence rejected a report it had shot some down. Meanwhile, Ukraine carried out some of its longest-distance drone strikes deep inside Russian territory. In Yekaterinburg, almost 1,000 miles (1,600km) from



Ukraine's border, the governor said six people were injured when a building was struck - while in nearby Chelyabinsk, a local leader said drones targeting an industrial facility were intercepted. Russian missiles and drones also targeted the northern city of Chernihiv, where officials said two people were killed, as well as Odesa and Kharkiv. Ukrainian authorities said they repelled the

vast majority of the more than 600 Russian drones, which appears to have been the largest attack in several days. Zelensky wrote on social media: "The Russians' tactics have not changed: strike drones, cruise missiles, and a significant amount of ballistics." Most of the targets are ordinary infrastructure in cities. Residential buildings, energy, and enterprises have been damaged." Russia's

Ministry of Defence said it had shot down 127 drones over more than a dozen regions. The department also said it had taken control of Bochkove, a village in the Kharkiv region, on Saturday morning, according to state-linked news agency Tass. The settlement is close to Ukraine's northern border with Russia, where invading forces have made repeated attempts to push further south towards the city of Kharkiv. Ukrainian authorities have not commented on Russia's claim to have gained control of the village, nor has BBC News been able to independently verify it. Elsewhere, Romania's defence ministry said it was investigating "the fall of an object" on its territory close to the Ukrainian border during the Russian attack.

US JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DROPS PROBE INTO FED CHAIRMAN JEROME POWELL

The US justice department is dropping its investigation into the Federal Reserve chairman, Jerome Powell, over alleged building cost overruns. US Attorney Jeanine Pirro said instead there would be an internal investigation led by the central bank's inspector general. President Donald Trump has said the cost of the Fed's building renovations were too high, as part of a long-standing feud with Powell. Powell's term is nearing its end and the US Senate is considering Trump's nominee for his replacement, Kevin Warsh. A key Republican, Thom Tillis, has withheld his support for Warsh unless the Trump administration would drop its investiga-

tion into Powell. "American taxpayers deserve answers about the Federal Reserve's fiscal mismanagement, and the Office of the Inspector General's more powerful authorities best position it to get to the bottom of the matter," said White House spokesman Kush Desai in a statement. "The White House remains as confident as before that the Senate will swiftly confirm Kevin Warsh as the next Federal Reserve Chairman to finally restore competence and confidence in Fed decision-making." In her post on X, Pirro said she would not "hesitate to restart a criminal investigation should the facts warrant doing so". The Fed declined to comment.



IPL 2026: Rajasthan Royals Set 228/6-Run Target for Sunrisers Hyderabad



Punjab Kings scripted history with their six-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in an IPL 2026 match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi, on Saturday. They completed the highest successful chase in IPL history. In pursuit of a target of 265, PBKS reached home in 18.5 overs. Prabhsimran Singh (76 off 26) and Priyansh Arya (43 off 17) took Punjab off to a terrific start before Shreyas Iyer (71 not out off 36) finished the game for the side. Earlier, KL Rahul hit a mind-boggling 152 not out as DC posted a mammoth total of 264 for 2 after opting to bat first. Rahul scored his 152 not out off 67 balls, with the help of 16 fours and nine sixes. Nitish Rana also contributed to DC's total with 91 off 44 balls. His innings was laced with 11 fours and four sixes. The duo stitched a 220-run partnership off 95 balls for the second wicket. The 152-run knock by Rahul is the highest score by an Indian batter in IPL history. This is it from this space, folks! We hope you liked our coverage of the game. Meanwhile, stay connected to NDTV Sports as Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has been firing on all cylinders in the second match of the double-header day. To follow the live blog of the match, [CLICK HERE](#).

Goodbye! Punjab Kings have chased down a 265-run target with seven balls to spare! This is an unbelievable victory by the side, which remains unbeaten in IPL 2026. They won the game against Delhi Capitals by six wickets. This is the highest successful run-chase by a team in IPL history. PBKS have broken their own record of 261 against KKR in 2024. Punjab Kings are cruising towards victory. T Natarajan was smashed for 16 runs. Shreyas Iyer hit a six and a four before Shashank Singh got a thick outside edge to beat short third for a boundary. PBKS need 23 off 18 balls. This was an eventful over from Kuldeep Yadav. Shreyas Iyer was dropped once and ended up smashing the spinner for three sixes and one four. A total of 23 runs came off the over. Iyer also raced to his half-century. Punjab Kings need 39 off 24 balls. This is their game to lose. 15.2 - Karun Nair has dropped Shreyas Iyer again! He has dropped the Punjab Kings captain for the second time in three balls. On this occasion, Iyer miscued Kuldeep Yadav's delivery to long-on. Nair settled under it, but the ball slipped out of his hands once again. 14.6 - Shreyas Iyer has been dropped at long-off.

KL Rahul Breaks 150-Barrier In IPL, Becomes The Highest Indian Scorer Ever With Terrific Knock For DC vs PBKS



Unstoppable, unbelievable - adjectives are falling short for KL Rahul after what he produced for Delhi Capitals against Punjab Kings in an IPL 2026 match. On a hot afternoon in the national capital on Saturday, Rahul turned up the heat further with a mammoth 152 off 67 balls. His innings included 16 fours and nine sixes. It is the highest individual score by an Indian in IPL history, surpassing Abhishek Sharma's 141 (SRH vs Punjab Kings, 2025). This also marks just the third 150-plus score in IPL history, after Chris Gayle's 175 (RCB vs Pune Warriors, 2013) and Brendon McCullum's 158 (KKR vs RCB, 2008).

Why Ishan Kishan Is Not Leading Sunrisers Hyderabad In IPL 2026 Match vs Rajasthan Royals

Ishan Kishan didn't come out for the toss of Sunrisers Hyderabad's IPL 2026 game against Rajasthan Royals on Saturday as the former team's regular skipper, Pat Cummins, returned to action. In the absence of Cummins, Kishan was appointed captain of SRH and led the side in seven games. Cummins missed the first half of IPL 2026 as he was recovering from a lumbar bone stress injury in his back. Upon his return, Cummins took over the captaincy of SRH, with Kishan being included in the playing XI only as a player. Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Cummins won the toss and decided to bowl first against Rajasthan Royals in match number 36 of IPL 2026



at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Saturday. Cummins replaced Dilshan Madushanka, while Praful Hinge was added to the playing XI in place of Harsh Dubey. Speaking during the toss, Cummins said, "We're going to have a bowl first. The wicket looks good, but we have to see what we

need to chase down. (How are you feeling?) Still really fresh. It's been a little while, but I've had really good preparation, a couple of bowls over here. I haven't played a game for a while, so we'll see how we go. But the body feels awesome. I've come in for Madushanka, and Hinge has come in for

Harsh Dubey." RR skipper Riyan Parag said, "We were looking for the same as well, but having said that, over the last couple of seasons, we haven't really done well chasing. So I'm happy with defending as well. I think we've played most of our cricket here, the majority of our cricket here. We know this wicket really well. We have had our camp right since the season started as well. Seems like a pretty good wicket. Maybe a little bit of dew coming in later on, but it won't really play that much of a role. I feel the openers have done really well, but they can continue doing well, and hopefully we can pick up our slack. (Combination the same?) No, we're going for one instead of three-two."

Anushka Sharma's Guilty Expression After 'Money Splashing' Act On Virat Kohli's Six Caught On Camera

Royal Challengers Bengaluru continued their high-flying run in the top half of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, securing yet another victory to boost their play-off hopes on Friday. Chasing a target against the Gujarat Titans, RCB rode on Virat Kohli's brilliant 81 to overhaul the total with seven balls to spare. Although Kohli received a lifeline right at the start of his innings, he made sure GT came back to regret the dropped catch when he was yet to open his account. Before being dismissed by Jason Holder, Kohli had hit eight fours and four sixes. One of the sixes that the RCB icon hit even had his wife,



Anushka Sharma, celebrating in the stands. Anushka, who has attended almost all of RCB's home games this season at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, was seen making a money-splashing gesture in the stands. However, as soon as the cameraman turned his attention

towards her, she realised that it was not an act she should have done on camera. Her 'guilty expression' said it all. As for the match, Kohli scripted history as he became the first batter in the Indian Premier League (IPL) to hit 800 fours. Kohli achieved the milestone

during his knock of 81 runs. Virat Kohli now has 807 boundaries to his name in 274 IPL matches, the most by any batter in the tournament's history. He is well clear of the second-placed Shikhar Dhawan, who has 768 fours to his name. Kohli also became only the third batter to smash 300 sixes in IPL history, after Chris Gayle (357) and Rohit Sharma (310). Kohli now has 303 maximums to his name. Kohli scored 81 runs off 44 balls against GT, hitting eight boundaries and four sixes. With this knock, he also claimed the Orange Cap for being the leading run-scorer in the IPL 2026 at the moment.

WHY IS KELLY NOT AN AUTOMATIC STARTER FOR ARSENAL OR ENGLAND?

The shirt-twirling. The historic goals. The open-mouthed delight. Chloe Kelly is firmly etched into football folklore. An extra-time winner at Euro 2022 to clinch England's first international title and the decisive penalty three years later to retain the trophy made sure of that. Despite those defining interventions for the Lionesses, Kelly's impact has faded. Rarely a starter for Arsenal, the 28-year-old managed just nine minutes off the bench in England's recent World Cup qualifiers with Spain and Iceland. As the Gunners' attentions turn to a Champions League semi-final against Lyon on Sunday, BBC Sport assesses why Kelly is not an automatic choice for either club or country. In 2022-23, fresh off her Euros heroics, Kelly was an integral part of



Gareth Taylor's Manchester City side and started all but one of their Women's Super League fixtures. Since then, it has been a different story. Dogged by injuries, she has made more appearances off the bench in the past three years than she has started games, with her time at City unravelling before her switch to Arsenal in January 2025.

Shortly before that move, Kelly went public on a "disappointing" and "not right", external situation having started just one match for City in the WSL in 2024-25. The move to Emirates Stadium began promisingly. She started nine of Arsenal's remaining 14 games, including the Champions League final victory over Barcelona.

Defending Champion Carlos Alcaraz To Miss French Open With Wrist Injury

Two-time reigning French Open champion Carlos Alcaraz said on Friday he will not play at this year's tournament as he recovers from a wrist injury. The Spaniard said the call was made after undergoing tests on his right wrist, ruling him out of the year's second Grand Slam and the Italian Open. "We have decided that the most prudent thing to do is to be cautious and not participate in Rome or Roland Garros," Alcaraz said on social media. "This is a difficult time for me, but I'm sure I will come out of it stronger," Alcaraz added, saying that he and his team would monitor his recovery before deciding when and where he would return. Alcaraz sustained the injury during the first round of the Barcelona Open last week, where he beat Otto Virtanen but subsequently pulled out of the tournament. The 22-year-old announced his withdrawal from the Madrid Masters on April 17, increasing concerns over whether he would be able to appear at the French Open. Alcaraz became the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam in January with his triumph at the Australian Open. He holds a 22-3



record this season and also won a title in Doha. Ranked second in the world, Alcaraz lost top spot following his defeat by Jannik Sinner in the Monte Carlo Masters final on April 12. The seven-time Grand Slam winner triumphed at Roland Garros in 2024 and 2025. He saved three championship points against Sinner last year in the longest French Open final in history.

IPL 2026: CSK Pacer Khaleel Ahmed Undergoes Successful Surgery After Quadriceps Injury



Chennai Super Kings (CSK) pacer Khaleel Ahmed has undergone successful surgery after suffering a quadriceps injury earlier in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, the franchise said in a statement on Saturday. Khaleel sustained an injury to his right quadriceps during his side's match against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at the Chepauk Stadium on April 16. In an X post on Saturday, CSK confirmed that Khaleel has undergone successful surgery. "Wishing him strength and a quick recovery," CSK said on X. The pacer has been ruled out of IPL 2026 after suffering a right quadriceps injury. The franchise confirmed that the injury will

take over 12 weeks to heal and wished him a speedy recovery. "OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT Khaleel Ahmed has been ruled out of IPL 2026 after sustaining a right quadriceps injury in the game against KKR. Wishing Khaleel a speedy recovery. #WhistlePodu." "The injury sustained will take more than 12 weeks to heal," CSK had said in the statement. In the five matches that Khaleel has played in the IPL 2026 season, he has taken just two wickets at an average of 73.00 and an economy rate of 8.67, with best figures of 1/24. In his previous season with CSK, Khaleel had taken 15 wickets in 14 matches at an average of 29.80, with best figures of 3/29 and an economy rate of 9.57.



LeBron James made a three-pointer to force overtime before the Los Angeles Lakers moved to the brink of a

James leads Lakers to brink of play-off series win

score with 13 seconds left against the Houston Rockets and almost clinched victory as he hit the rim with a three-pointer on the buzzer. But the Lakers went on to win 112-108 in overtime to claim a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven first round of the play-offs. James, 41, again stepped up in the absence of the injured Luka Doncic and Austin Reaves, claiming a team-high 29 points and 13 rebounds. Marcus Smart also recorded a double-double, scoring eight of his 21 points in overtime and adding a team-high 10 assists. "With two of our best players down, we've got to

play desperate," said Smart. "We've got to be the most desperate team." "That's how we've been playing, and that's how we're winning, right? The chemistry has been good, and you're starting to see guys' confidence go up because of that." An ankle sprain ruled out Houston's leading scorer Kevin Durant for the second time in the series. The Rockets also host game four on Sunday and must win to prevent the Lakers earning a sweep of the series and booking their place in the Western Conference semi-finals. Conference rivals San Antonio lead the

Portland Trail Blazers 2-1 after fighting back to claim a 120-108 win on the road. Stephen Castle scored 33 points for the Spurs while rookie reserve Dylan Harper added career bests of 27 points and 10 rebounds. Victor Wembanyama was on the Spurs bench but could not play as this season's defensive player of the year remained in concussion protocol after suffering a head injury in game two on Tuesday. The Boston Celtics took a 2-1 lead over Eastern Conference rivals Philadelphia as they claimed a 108-100 win at the 76ers.



RS Infotainment's MANDAADI Shoot Wrapped After an Intensive Schedule — Post-Production Work in Full Swing

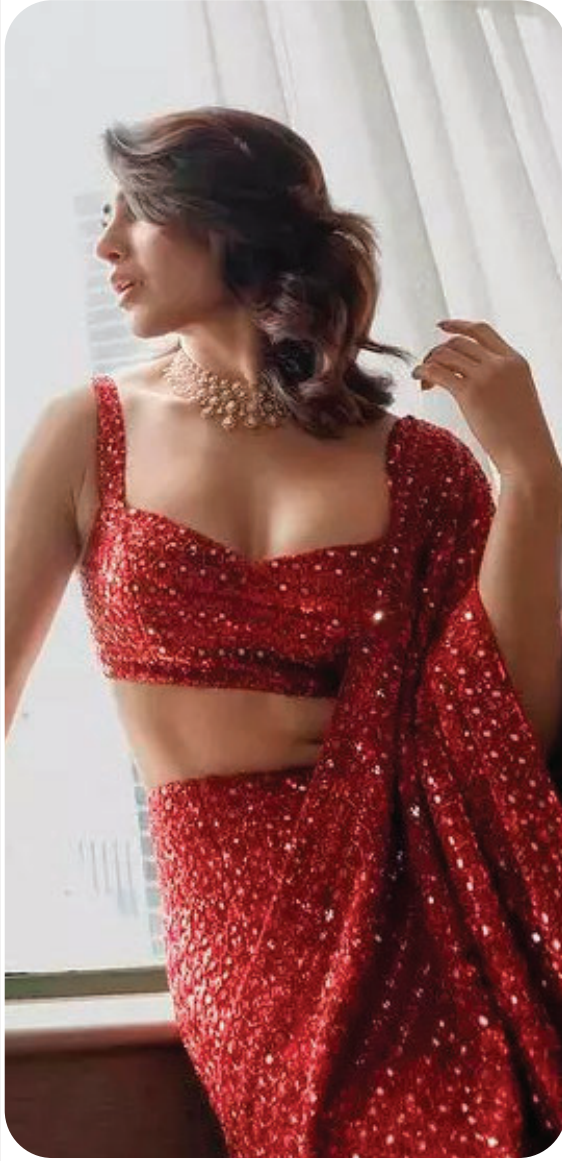
RS Infotainment, led by Elred Kumar, has officially wrapped up the shooting of its upcoming sports action drama MANDAADI. The film was shot over a long and challenging schedule, with a major portion filmed in the coastal regions of Ramanathapuram. The team worked in tough conditions to bring a realistic and powerful feel to the story. From intense action scenes to emotional moments and visually appealing sailboat race sequences, every part of the film was shot with great care and effort. Directed by Mathimaran Pugazhendhi, MANDAADI is set in a unique sports backdrop and tells a story that is deeply connected to its setting. With filming now finished, the movie has entered the post-production stage, and work is moving ahead quickly. Actor Soori plays the lead role and has put in a lot of hard work for the film, especially in terms of physical preparation. His performance is expected to be one of the main highlights. The film also marks the Tamil debut of Suhas, who steps into a strikingly different space with a negative-shaded role. Sporting a complete makeover, the actor put in intense preparation to convincingly portray the character. Demonstrating strong commitment, he dedicated nearly 100 days of call sheets to the project and is now looking to expand his



presence in the Tamil market with this film. Mahima Nambiar stars as the female lead, while seasoned performers Sathyaraj, Ravindra Vijay, Mithun, and Bala Saravanan play key supporting roles, further elevating the film's ensemble strength. The film has a strong technical team as well. Music is composed by GV Prakash Kumar, while SR Kathir handles the cinematography. The production design is by DRK Kiran, editing by Pradeep E Ragav, and action sequences are choreographed by Peter Hein, Dilip Subbarayan, and Mahesh Mathew. At present, the team is busy with

post-production work such as editing, sound design, visual effects, and music. They are working carefully to make sure the film turns out to be engaging and high in quality. MANDAADI is set in the world of coastal fishing communities. The title refers to a skilled leader who guides fishing trips using knowledge of the sea, winds, and waves. This idea of leadership, experience, and survival forms the heart of the story. After creating curiosity with its first look, the film is now moving ahead to its next stage, building excitement among audiences. More updates about MANDAADI are expected soon.

SAMANTHA'S BANGARAM SHOULDN'T SLOW DOWN



Samantha Ruth Prabhu's upcoming film Maa Inti Bangaram started its promotional journey on a promising note. The first trailer generated good buzz, and the initial single received a decent response from audiences. Adding to the momentum, a recent promotional event saw the song getting an even better reception, boosting expectations around the film. However, the momentum seems to have slowed down in the past few days.

'Kanna' Movie Teaser Grand Launch

Kanna is the latest film jointly produced by Madhuri Presents, Passionate Film Makers and Cinematic Visual Studio. The teaser launch event of the youth full entertainer film Kanna under the direction of SN Rajasekhara Reddy was held grandly. Hero Chaitanya Rao, hero Karthik Sivan, heroine Geetika Rathan, Manju Venkat, film actors, technicians and others participated in this program as the chief guest. The Kanna teaser released through Chaitanya Rao's hands has been released. The makers said that the film will be released in 2026. Hero Karthik Sivan, heroine Geetika Rathan, Kittayya, Rupesh, Prem Krishna, Suraj, Ram Patas, Venu, director Nani Kasaragadda, Ravindra, Venky, Murali, Bantu, Manju Venkat, Deva, Vrindavanam movie team, makers and others participated in this teaser launch event. On this occasion, actor Venky said... It may be a small film but it will be a film that will be remembered by all. He thanked director Rajasekhara Reddy for giving him a chance in this film. Heroine Geetika Rathan said that if you look at the teaser, it does not seem like a short film. He said that he



played the role of Satya in this movie. He said that after watching this movie, everyone will remember him as Satya. Thanks to director Rajasekhara Reddy for giving such a good opportunity. Everyone was asked to support the film. Hero Karthik Sivan said.. Thanks to hero Chaitanya Rao who came when called. Currently, he does not have any film back-ground. He said that his back-ground is his father who has guided him till now. Also, after watching the movie, he said that this movie will become a back-ground for him.

SS RAJAMOULI PRESENTS VARANASI AT MEXICO CCXP, SHOOTING UPDATES



SS Rajamouli's upcoming film, Varanasi, starring Mahesh Babu, Priyanka Chopra, and Prithviraj Sukumaran, began its global promotions this week at CCXP in Mexico, one of the biggest pop culture events in the world. The film's producer, SS Karthikeya, spoke on stage about the scale and vision of the project and unveiled never-before-seen footage from the film.

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS AND AUDIENCE REACTIONS
The panel, moderated by ScreenRant's Liam Crowley, included a video message from Rajamouli, where he shared his thoughts on Mexican influences in Baahubali and the global success of

RRR. The event also featured exclusive behind-the-scenes footage of Varanasi. Some visuals from the panel showed empty seats and viewers walking out, leading to discussions online about the reception of the film among international audiences. However, many fans defended the panel, pointing out that images showing empty seats did not reflect the entire audience. Photos of SS Karthikeya interacting with attendees after the panel showed a lively crowd seated and standing behind him. Others noted that empty seats were common across panels at CCXP, not just for Varanasi. Varanasi is a time-travel adventure blending Indian mythology and history with science fiction.

Kiara Advani's cross pendant sparks conversion buzz

Kiara Advani has found herself at the centre of an unexpected conversation, and this time it has little to do with a film. At the GQ Most Influential Young Indians Awards 2026, Kiara stepped out in a black leather dress, styled with layered pearls and a delicate cross pendant. While the look aligned with global red carpet trends, it didn't take long for social media to zoom in on the cross, especially given that Kiara is widely known to come from a Hindu background. That is where the speculation began. Sections of the internet started drawing conclusions, with some questioning whether the accessory hinted at a religious shift. In a country where identity

and symbolism carry weight, even a small detail like jewellery can quickly turn into a larger narrative. However, the reality may not be as dramatic. Kiara's family background is not one dimensional. Some reports suggest that her maternal grandmother was Christian, adding context many online reactions seem to overlook. At the same time, cross motifs are extremely common in global luxury fashion. Brands like Chrome Hearts have long used such symbols as part of their design language, often detached from religious meaning. With no official comment from Kiara or her team, everything remains speculative. It could simply be a case of global fashion meeting an

audience that tends to read deeper into symbols. Sometimes, what looks like a styling choice, let us know your opinion in the comments. Kiara's family background is not one dimensional. Some reports suggest that her maternal grandmother was Christian. The discussion quickly gained traction online, with some users referencing her Sindhi roots and her 2023 wedding to Sidharth Malhotra. However, several fans and fashion observers defended Kiara, pointing out that cross motifs are commonly used in high-end fashion for their gothic aesthetic rather than religious symbolism. Interestingly, this comes shortly after actor Trisha Krishnan was seen with a

cross in her car. On the professional front, Kiara is gradually returning to public appearances after taking a six-month break following the birth of her child. She has been actively attending events and making fashion statements. Kiara is also gearing up for her upcoming film



"Toxic," where she stars alongside Yash. The film is expected to release in June.

TOO MUCH AI FOR MYTHOLOGY IS NOT A GOOD SIGN!

The upcoming Hindi film Dronacharya is making headlines as one of the latest AI-driven projects in Indian cinema. Presented by Vibhu Agarwal and Kanhiya Mittal, and produced by Bharat NextGen Digital Pvt Ltd, the film is gearing up for a theatrical release in June 2026. The trailer, which dropped recently, offers a glimpse into a technologically advanced retelling, with the tagline hinting at the legendary guru who "didn't just train warriors, but created legends."

While the concept has generated curiosity, it has also sparked debate. The increasing number of AI-based films in the industry is raising concerns among cinema lovers.



Concept Poster Released on the Occasion of Hero Keshava Kalavapalli's Birthday

Bajarangi Creations and RR Creative Creations, jointly producing a new-age romantic entertainer, have unveiled the concept poster of their upcoming film on the occasion of lead actor Keshava Kalavapalli's birthday. The film is being produced by Papireddy Kalavapalli and Ramireddy Alluri, and is set against the rustic backdrop of Rayalaseema, particularly Kadapa. The project promises to present a refreshing love story rooted in regional flavor and emotions. Director U. Hemareddy, who earned appreciation for his previous film AP04 Ramapuram, is helping this project and is introducing Keshava Kalavapalli as the male



lead. Music for the film is composed by Vinod Vaila. The makers have officially announced that the shooting of the film will commence in the first week of June. Further details regarding the rest of the cast and technical crew will be revealed soon.