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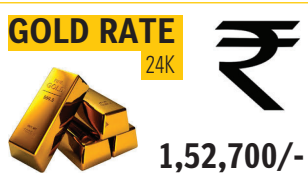
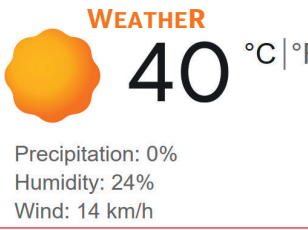
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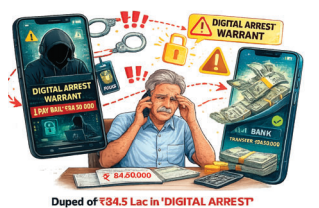
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OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



Elderly man duped of Rs 84.5 lac in 'digital arrest'



Lucknow: In a shocking case of cyber fraud, an 85-year-old man from Lucknow was allegedly duped of Rs 84.5 lakh by scammers posing as police and Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) officials, who kept him under a prolonged "digital arrest" through threats and intimidation. The victim, Badruddin Ansari, a resident of Janakipuram's Sector-G, approached cyber police after enduring weeks of psychological pressure and financial extortion. According to police, the ordeal began on March 7 when Ansari received a call from a fraudster posing as a senior inspector from Lucknow police headquarters. The caller claimed Ansari's name had surfaced in a money laundering case in Pune and alleged that a fake HDFC Bank account had been opened in his name for illegal transactions.

Major fire engulfs flats in Ghaziabad housing society, firefighting underway

Ghaziabad: A major fire broke out in a residential apartment at Gaur Green Avenue society in the Abhay Khand area of Indirapuram on Wednesday morning, triggering panic among residents. Thick plumes of smoke from the building as the blaze rapidly spread, with initial reports suggesting that multiple flats were affected. Fire department teams rushed to the spot soon after receiving the alert, and several fire tenders were deployed to bring the flames under control. A resident, identified as Rohit, said around 10 to 12 flats were gutted in the fire. He suspected a possible electrical issue.

NO HIKE IN PETROL, DIESEL PRICES: PIB fact-check unit debunks social media post



New Delhi (TSIT)

The fact-checking unit of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) on Wednesday dismissed as fake a viral message claiming that petrol and diesel prices have been hiked by up to Rs 12.50 per litre.

The Press Information Bureau's Fact Check unit clarified that no such order has been issued by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

(MoPNG). "An order circulating on social media claiming fuel price hikes is fake. The Government of India has not issued any such order," the PIB Fact Check said in a post on X.

It also urged citizens to verify such information only through official sources and avoid sharing unverified claims.

The clarification comes amid the circulation of a pur-

ported government notification on social media platforms suggesting a sharp increase in fuel prices. On Tuesday, a senior government official said that there is no proposal at present to increase retail fuel prices, seeking to calm concerns amid rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia that have impacted global energy markets. Addressing an inter-ministerial briefing here, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said petrol and diesel prices will remain unchanged for now, even as the government continues to monitor the evolving situation. She also reassured consumers about the adequate availability of essential fuels.

"LPG, petroleum and diesel are available in sufficient amounts, and the prices have not increased, so please do not panic," Sharma said. The government has ensured 100 per cent supply for domestic LPG and PNG consumers, as well as for CNG used in transportation, according to her. The government's reassurance comes at a time when global oil markets remain volatile due to uncertainty in West Asia, a key oil-producing region.

CM Naidu urges TDP cadres to increase vote share in next polls



Amaravati (TSIT)

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday urged party leaders and cadres to strengthen the TDP more at every polling booth level to increase its vote share in the next elections. "In the next elections, we must secure a higher number of votes than we did in the 2024 elections," he said while addressing the party leaders after administering an oath to the new politburo, national and state committees of the TDP at the party headquarters at Mangalagiri. He urged the party leaders to highlight the development works undertaken by the government in the upcoming local body elections. He exuded confidence of a landslide victory in the local body polls. "Remember that the next general elections will be held in just three years.

Exit polls predict BJP win in Assam, edge in Bengal; DMK to return in TN, UDF to take Kerala

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

Several exit polls on Wednesday predicted a thumping victory for the BJP in Assam and a clear edge for the party over the ruling TMC in West Bengal, while projecting a return of the DMK government in Tamil Nadu and a comeback by the Congress-led UDF in Kerala after 10 years. The pollsters also forecast a return to power for the ANRC-led NDA government in Puducherry.

Axis My India predicted a sweep for the BJP in Assam, forecasting 88-100 seats for the BJP and its allies and 24-36 seats for the Congress and its partners. People's Pulse predicted that the NDA would get 68-72 seats while the Congress plus would secure in the range of 22-26 seats.

Matrize said the NDA is likely to get between 85-95 seats and the Congress and its allies 25-32. The Assam assembly has 126 seats with the magic mark being 64. In Kerala, Axis My India forecast that the UDF would get 78-90 seats, LDF 49-62 and NDA 0-3. People's Pulse predicted that the Congress-led UDF would get 75-85 seats, the LDF 55-65 and the NDA 0-3. Matrize forecast 60-65 seats for the LDF, 70-75 seats for the UDF and 3-5 seats for the



NDA. Kerala Assembly has a total of 140 seats with the magic mark being 71. In West Bengal, the People's Pulse exit poll predicted that the TMC would get 177-187 seats, BJP 95-110, Left Front 0-1 and the Congress 1-3.

Matrize, however, predicted a BJP edge in the state, and said it is likely to get 146-161 seats. It said the TMC would get 125-140 seats. P-Marq predicted 150-175 for the BJP and 118-138 to the TMC. West Bengal has a total of 294 seats with the majority mark being 148. In Tamil Nadu, the People's Pulse predicted 125-145 for the DMK-led alliance, 65-80 for AIADMK-BJP and 18-24 for TVK. Matrize forecast that the DMK-Congress would get 122-132, NDA 87-100 and TVK 10-12. The Tamil Nadu has a total of 234 seats with the magic mark being 118. Most exit polls have had a chequered history and have been off the mark on several occasions in the past. In Puducherry, Axis My India predicted 16-20 seats for the NDA and 6-8 for the DMK-Congress.

Karnataka continues Jal Jeevan Yojana despite no central funds: Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru (TSIT)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday stated that the state has continued implementing the Jal Jeevan Yojana over the past two years despite not receiving any funds from the Central Government.

Addressing a video conference with Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil on Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, the Chief Minister highlighted that significant progress has been achieved in providing rural households with drinking water connections.

Out of 101.31 lakh rural families, 88.06 lakh households have been connected so far, achieving 86.93 percent coverage. He noted that of the 66,344 works undertaken under the scheme, around 48,789 have been physically completed. These include 28,809 works in villages and 19,980 projects in schools and Anganwadis, reflecting a strong focus on rural infrastructure development. Siddaramaiah also pointed out that several regions in the state face issues of arsenic and fluoride contamination in water.

To address this, the govern-



The Chief Minister emphasized Karnataka's efforts in strengthening institutional systems, including the implementation of an Operations and Maintenance policy and the formation of gender-balanced rural water committees.

ment has prioritized improving water sources and implementing large-scale supply systems to ensure safe drinking water. Despite the lack of central support, the state has invested Rs. 17,554.63 crore in the last two

years, including Rs. 8,880.71 crore spent in anticipation of the Centre's share. He termed the delay in fund release as unfortunate and urged the Centre to expedite pending grants. Digital tools such as the Jeeva Jal App, GIS-based asset management, and real-time monitoring are enhancing governance.

Additionally, over 1.51 lakh women have been trained in water quality testing, while independent verification is being carried out by Bureau Veritas. He added that 259 villages have already achieved 24/7 water supply, showcasing the mission's impact.

Next milestone South Asia league: CM Stalin

The Chief Minister said that the accomplishment was "just the beginning" and that more achievements would follow with people's support, hinting at winning a mandate in the April 23 election, with vote-counting on May 4.

CHENNAI (TSIT)

Chief Minister MK Stalin, on Tuesday, hailed Dravidian governance as the secret behind the State clocking 10.83 per cent growth in 2025-26 and setting a record by registering double-digit economic growth for the second year in a row, asserting that Tamil Nadu is now ready to compete with South Asian countries, not just other states in the nation.

The Chief Minister said that the accomplishment was "just the beginning" and that more achievements would follow with people's support, hinting at winning a mandate in the April 23 election, with vote-counting on May 4. Tamil Nadu was synony-

mous with "achievement," Stalin said. The Dravidian model was unique as it matched what it says with statistics, he added. "Having laid the foundation in the first three years (of DMK rule), we have now achieved a record of double-digit growth for two consecutive years. Thanks to the people of the State for supporting our excellent administration and hard work. This is just the beginning. With your support, we are sure to reach many more heights," the Chief Minister said on 'X'. In its pursuit of excellence, Tamil Nadu's competition was not with other Indian states, he said, asserting that "the State should rise as a leading state in South Asia."

CM REVANTH DIRECTS ACCELERATION OF TUMMIDIHATTI BARRAGE PLAN

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy has directed officials to expedite the action plan for the construction of the Tummidihatti Barrage. A high-level review meeting was held on Wednesday at MCRHRD, attended by



Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, irrigation engineers, and technical experts. Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, Rajya Sabha MP Vem Narendar Reddy, CMO Secretary Manik Raj, ENC Sridhar, and Finance Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania were also present. During the meeting, officials made a detailed PowerPoint presentation explaining the optimal height for the barrage and the corresponding irrigation water utilization capacity.

BENGAL POLLS: VOTING PICKS UP PACE, 39.97 PC RECORDED IN 1ST FOUR HOURS

Kolkata (TSIT)

The polling percentage in the first four hours till 11 a.m. on Wednesday in the second phase of West Bengal Assembly elections has been recorded at 39.97.

This is slightly lower than the 41.1 per cent recorded in the first four hours of April 23 voting in the first phase in 152 Assembly constituencies.

District-wise till 11 a.m. East Burdwan district recorded the highest polling percentage at 44.50, followed by Hooghly district at 43.12, Nadia at 40.34, Howrah at 39.45, North 24 Parganas at 38.43, the electoral dis-

trict of Kolkata (Uttar) at 38.39, South 24 Parganas at 37.92 and the electoral district of Kolkata (Dakshin) at 36.78. Incidentally, this polling percentage is substantially higher than the average percentage of 28.10 recorded in the seven-phase 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

On Wednesday, the Union Home Minister called up the Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, and enquired about the progress of polling in the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency in South Kolkata, which is witnessing a high-profile



contest between Adhikari and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Meanwhile, sporadic tension continues to prevail in the hyper-sen-

sitive Bhangar Assembly constituency in South 24 Parganas district. A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) reached

HIGHLIGHT POINT:

► Polling in West Bengal's second phase reached 39.97% by 11 a.m., slightly lower than the first phase but significantly higher than 2024 Lok Sabha early turnout.

► Voting marked by tensions and incidents, including clashes, arrest of a polling agent, BJP's repoll demand, and heightened security in sensitive constituencies like Bhangar.

the constituency in relation to the agency's investigation into two cases it is investigating, one related to an explosion and the other related to the recovery of crude bombs there just

before the second phase of polling. Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had demanded repolling at Falta Assembly constituency in South 24 Parganas district, which, during the last couple of days, witnessed a battle of dialogues between the Election Commission of India (ECI)-appointed police observer Ajay Pal Sharma and the Trinamool Congress candidate from Falta, Jahangir Khan.

At Kanchrapara in North 24 Parganas district, the Trinamool Congress councillor from Kanchrapara

Municipality, Kalyan Kar, got into an argument with an Independent candidate for standing within a hundred meters of the polling booth. Finally, the councillor got into a scuffle with an Independent candidate.

Later, the police arrived and brought the situation under control. A Trinamool Congress polling agent was arrested in Nadia's Chapra Assembly constituency by the central forces personnel deployed there. The agent of booth 54 of Chapra Assembly constituency was accused of influencing voters.

CM Mamata alleges voter harassment by central forces during Bengal polls

Kolkata, April 29 : West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday cast her vote around 4.30 p.m. at a polling booth at Mitra Institution under the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency in south Kolkata and alleged that central forces deployed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for the second phase of Assembly polls for 142 constituencies had harassed and beaten innocent voters, including women and children, in the name of ensuring free, fair and violence-free polling. She also accused the central forces of deliberately and selectively targeting Trinamool Congress leaders, workers and even polling agents throughout the day under the instructions of police officers appointed by the ECI.



"Is it really a free and fair poll? I have seen the central forces resorting to so many atrocities on polling day. But despite this, I am confident of Trinamool Congress's victory in the Assembly elections this year," the Chief Minister told mediapersons after casting her vote. She is the voter, sitting MLA and Trinamool Congress candidate from the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency, and this time she is pitted against

Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari. Apart from the central forces, officers-in-charge of some police stations under both Kolkata Police and West Bengal Police also came under attack from the Chief Minister. "Atrocities have been committed in various areas of Nadia district, as well as Arambagh,

Khanakul and Goghat areas in Hooghly district. There have been similar incidents in the Canning area of South 24 Parganas district. The atrocities have been going on since Tuesday night," the Chief Minister alleged. According to her, since the ECI had deployed police officers from other states, and none of them understood Bengali, there had been a communication gap. "Some of these police officers are instructing the central forces to crack down on innocent voters and even some of the Trinamool Congress candidates," the Chief Minister said. There were reports of sporadic tension in Bhabanipur through Wednesday, though there were no reports of casualties or major injuries. At times, central forces personnel had to resort to baton charge to disperse agitated crowds.

KTR slams CM Revanth Reddy for 'sadistic pleasure' remark

Hyderabad, April 29 : Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday condemned Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy over his reported remark that he derives "sadistic pleasure" when opposition parties criticise him. Addressing a gathering at Telangana Bhavan, KTR termed the reported statement as "shameful" and accused the Chief Minister of being insensitive to public suffering. He said that people across the state, distressed by what he described as failures of the Congress government over the past two-and-a-half years, are voicing their anger, but the Chief Minister appears to be celebrating such criticism instead of addressing issues. KTR questioned whether the Chief Minister feels no remorse over the reported deaths of 140



Gurukul students and alleged that the government has failed to ensure basic responsibilities, such as uninterrupted power supply and timely disbursal of Rythu Bandhu benefits. He also highlighted the plight of farmers, stating that paddy is lying exposed to the rains on roads while procurement remains stalled. "People from all sections are suffering. When the opposition raises these concerns, the Chief Minister, calling it a source of pleasure, reflects

a disturbing mindset," KTR said, adding that the public would ultimately judge such leadership. Earlier in the day, several leaders from different political parties in Kalwakurthy constituency joined the BRS in the presence of KTR. On the education front, KTR alleged that pending fee reimbursement dues have pushed students into uncertainty, with many colleges reportedly withholding certificates and restricting attendance. Referring to a recent High

Court direction permitting institutions to collect dues from parents, he said students' futures were being jeopardised. KTR noted that the fee reimbursement scheme, originally introduced during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, was continued effectively during the BRS government, but is now being neglected. He further alleged that crop procurement across the state has nearly come to a standstill, with farmers unable to sell paddy, maize and jowar. He accused the government of deliberately delaying procurement processes to avoid paying bonuses. Reaffirming the party's stance, KTR said BRS has consistently stood with the people for 25 years, both in power and in opposition, and will continue to fight for public issues and aspirations.

Special Pradosha rituals held at Sri Kalahasteswara temple



Srikalahasti, April 29: Special Pradosha rituals were performed with great devotion on the auspicious occasion of Trayodashi at the renowned Sri Kalahasteswara Swamy Vari Devasthanam on Wednesday. The temple witnessed a large turnout of devotees who participated in the sacred ceremonies. As part of the rituals, the processional deities of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, along with Nandeswara, were cere-

moniously anointed with fragrant and sacred substances. The abhishekam was conducted using various sugandha dravyas, symbolizing purification and divine grace. Following the abhishekam, priests performed elaborate pujas in accordance with temple traditions. Ritual offerings including Harathi, Dhoopta, Deepa, and Naivedyam were presented to the deities with devotion and adherence to Vedic customs.

Cooling system installed for traffic staff in Mahabubabad



Mahabubabad, April 29: In a relief measure for traffic personnel during the summer heat, a water mist sprinkler-based cooling system was installed at the Nehru Center Traffic Post in Mahabubabad district. The initiative was undertaken under the leadership of District SP Dr. Shabarish to support traffic staff working in extreme weather conditions. The cooling system releases fine water mist, providing immediate relief from the scorching heat and helping personnel carry out their duties more

comfortably. Along with the installation, Milton water flasks and cooling goggles were distributed to traffic personnel to help them stay hydrated and protected from heat-related issues. Speaking on the occasion, SP Dr. Shabarish said the police department considers it a responsibility to safeguard the health of its personnel who work tirelessly for public safety. He advised traffic staff to take necessary precautions to prevent heatstroke and dehydration during the summer season.

TELANGANA RELEASES RS 1,000 CRORE TOWARDS PENDING DUES FOR EMPLOYEES

Hyderabad, April 29 : Taking another significant step towards resolving long-pending issues of the government employees in Telangana, the state government has released Rs 1,000 crore towards pending dues. Acting on the directions of the Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, the funds were released on



Wednesday. Principal Secretary of the Finance Department, Sandeep Kumar Sultania, issued the orders for the release. With this, the Deputy CM has fulfilled the assurance given in the Assembly, said an official release. Last year, during discussions with employee unions, the government had promised to release Rs 700 crore per month.

Ensure transparency in procurement, says Collector

Nagarkurnool: District Collector Hemant Keshav Patil has directed officials to maintain complete transparency in paddy and maize procurement and ensure that farmers do not incur any losses. During a review meeting on Yasangi paddy procurement held at the Collectorate on Wednesday, the Collector instructed civil supplies officials and millers to carry out procurement in a systematic and farmer-friendly manner. He said paddy brought by farmers should be procured immediately as per quality standards without delay. Emphasizing maize safety, he direct-



ed millers to provide suitable storage spaces and take precautions to protect produce from moisture and rain. Adequate arrangements such as tarpaulins and covers must be ensured to maintain quality. The Collector stressed the need for quick transportation and proper coordination

among departments to avoid prolonged storage at procurement centers. He also directed officials to provide basic facilities including drinking water, shade, weighing machines, and gunny bags for farmers' convenience. He highlighted that transparency must be maintained in moisture testing, weighing, and quality checks. Records should be updated promptly and payments processed without delay. The Collector warned that strict action would be taken in case of negligence and reiterated that protecting farmers' interests remains the government's top priority.

Vengamamba jayanthi begins; Govindaraja Swamy utsavam on May 1



Tirupati: The 296th Jayanthi celebrations of saint-poetess Tarigonda Vengamamba commenced on a grand note at Annamacharya Kalamandiram in Tirupati, highlighting her literary contributions and message of women empowerment. Addressing the literary meet, scholar Amudala Murali noted that Vengamamba's devotional works reflected her deep faith in Lord Venkateswara while also inspiring social awareness and women's empowerment. Eminent speakers elaborated on her notable contributions, including Dhwipada Bhagavatam and Sri Venkatchala Mahatyam, which continue to hold spiritual and literary significance. The celebrations witnessed

participation from scholars, devotees, and cultural enthusiasts who paid tribute to the saint-poetess. Organisers announced that a cultural music programme will be held in the evening as part of the festivities, adding to the spiritual and cultural fervour of the event. Meanwhile, temple authorities have announced that the Ponnakalva Utsavam of Sri Govindaraja Swamy will be observed on May 1 on the auspicious occasion of Chitra Pournami. According to the schedule, the procession of the deity will commence at 6 AM from the temple and proceed to the Ponnakalva Mandapam. Special rituals including Snapana Tirumanjanam will be performed there with religious fervour.

Grand Worship Services Held at Christ Worship Centre

Hyderabad TSIT: Grand worship services were held with great devotion at the Christ Worship Centre (CWC) in Rajahmundry. Thousands of believers participated enthusiastically in the three services conducted during the day, offering prayers and praises to God. Prominent spiritual leaders including Apostle Joseph Vijay Kumar, Dr. Kumayi, and Dr. John Wesley delivered the Word of God, inspiring the congregation with their messages. The praise



and worship session led by Blessie Wesley, which is conducted every Sunday, filled the gathering with spiritual joy and devotion, drawing many closer in faith.

Following the services, the pastors personally met attendees and offered prayers for each individual, adding a personal and compassionate touch to the spiritual gathering. In addition to those physically, many devotees also joined the services online, glorifying God from different locations. Christ Worship Centres, which are being established in various regions, continue to play a significant role in spreading spiritual awareness and strengthening faith among people.

MULUGU DISTRICT TOPS THE STATE IN CLASS 10 RESULTS : DISTRICT COLLECTOR

Mulugu, April 29, TSIT : District Collector Bhorkade Hemant Sahadevarao said that it is a happy thing that Mulugu district stood first in the state in the tenth class results released on Wednesday. The reason for this success is the teacher's who wish the students well in advance and guide them in the right way to achieve the best results. He said that he wishes heartfelt wishes to the headmasters, mandal education department officials and district education department officer Siddhartha Reddy. A total of 3287 students in the district appeared for the exams and 3264 passed the exam, standing first in the state with 99.30 percent and it is a happy thing that the success rate is flying.

NERATI RAJU APPOINTED BSP SHADNAGAR CONSTITUENCY VICE PRESIDENT

RANGAREDDY : Nerati Raju has been appointed as the Assembly Vice President of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Shadnagar constituency. The decision was announced during a party meeting led by constituency president Abbi Jagan, in the presence of Ranga Reddy district president Doddi Srinivas. The meeting focused on strengthening the party structure, during which several positions were filled. Raju's appointment comes in recognition of his decade-long dedication and disciplined service to the party. Speaking at the event, Doddi Srinivas praised Raju's journey from a grassroots worker to a key constituency leader, highlighting his commitment to promoting Bahujan ideology.



Rainwater conservation works boost groundwater and irrigation in Tirupati

Tirupati, April 29: Efforts to conserve rainwater flowing through the Seshachalam forests are showing positive results in Tirupati district, with groundwater levels improving under the Jaladhara - Jala Harati programme. Water conservation works have been underway for the past week in Dodlamitta village of Karakambadi Gram Panchayat in Renigunta mandal. As part of the initiative, 30 works were identified in the mandal with an estimated cost of Rs.2.27 crore. District Collector Dr. S. Venkateswar has so far accorded administrative sanction for 15 works, which include water conservation ponds, fish ponds, and contour trenches. In Dodlamitta village, a



pond measuring 30x30 feet with a depth of two metres is currently under construction with the participation of local labourers. These structures are expected to recharge wells and borewells in nearby villages such as Dodlamitta,

Gollapalle, and BC Colony. The initiative is proving beneficial for agriculture and horticulture, supporting crops like paddy, mango, and groundnut, as well as jasmine, rose, and tulsi cultivation. Farmers say the improved water

availability is enhancing productivity and strengthening livelihoods. Local resident Tyagaraju said the ponds help store rainwater flowing from forest streams before it reaches the Mallimadugu project. As the stored water percolates, groundwater levels have risen, ensuring sufficient drinking and irrigation water. He added that increased workdays under MGNREGA to 125 days have provided steady employment, with workers earning Rs.305 per day. Another villager, Aruna, said local employment has reduced migration and enabled families to focus on education and welfare. She noted that the ponds also provide water for livestock, benefiting the entire rural community.

TGMREIS Achieves Record 98% Pass in SSC 2026

Hyderabad TSIT: Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society has recorded a remarkable 98% pass percentage in the SSC Results 2026, setting a new benchmark in academic excellence. Out of 204 schools, 126 schools achieved 100% results, reflecting the strong academic framework and consistent performance across institutions. As many as 197 schools recorded average scores above 500 marks, while 45 schools crossed an impressive 570 marks average, showcasing the high standards maintained by the society. Announcing the results, officials stated that the success was driven by quality teaching, continuous academic monitoring, focused mentoring, and student-centric learning practices. Students and parents

expressed gratitude to Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy for his support towards strengthening minority education in the State. Education leaders Mohammed Azharuddin and Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi congratulated students, teachers, and parents on the historic achievement, appreciating the collective efforts behind the success. Top performers included G. Mounya Sri (591 marks), Mohd. Rehan (589), M. Poojith (589), and others who secured top ranks across the State. TGMREIS officials stated that the institution will continue to focus on nurturing talent and providing quality education to minority students, while urging parents to take advantage of ongoing admissions in its schools and junior colleges.

Seven dead in Bengaluru rains; Kumaraswamy seeks permanent solutions

Bengaluru: Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has expressed deep shock over the death of seven people, including children, following heavy rains that lashed Bengaluru on Wednesday. He called on the State Government to implement permanent measures to prevent such tragedies in the future.

In a statement, the Minister said the incident involving the collapse of a compound wall at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital was deeply disturbing and heartbreaking. He extended his condolences to the families of the victims and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the



mishap. Kumaraswamy urged the authorities to ensure immediate and comprehensive medical treatment for the injured and provide necessary support to the affected families. He stressed that such incidents occurring repeatedly during heavy rains indicate a failure to learn from past experiences. Raising serious con-

cerns, he questioned how the compound wall collapsed and sought details regarding its construction and maintenance. He demanded a thorough investigation into the incident and called for strict action against those responsible for its negligence. The Union Minister emphasized that offering compensation alone is not

sufficient in cases involving loss of lives. He said the government must focus on long-term structural solutions and preventive measures to ensure public safety.

Highlighting the need for better preparedness, he noted that rain management should be a continuous and proactive process rather than a reactive response after disasters occur. He expressed concern that current efforts appear inadequate and delayed, likening the situation to preparations being made only after a crisis has struck. Kumaraswamy reiterated that effective planning, infrastructure maintenance, and accountability are essential to prevent the

KASARGOD: POLICE ARREST ONE IN CONNECTION WITH SEETHANGOLI YOUTH'S MURDER

Kasargod, Apr 29: The Kumbala police have arrested a 39-year-old man in connection with the brutal murder of a youth in Seethangoli. The arrested accused has been identified as Srinivas, a resident of Kotekar, Kumbala. The victim, Safayat (30), a resident of Bapalipona and a driver for a poultry transport vehicle, was found dead in a pool of blood in a deserted area near Seethangoli town on Tuesday afternoon. Preliminary investigations suggest that old enmity was the motive behind the crime.

According to the police, Safayat and his friends had consumed alcohol together on April 27, which had led to a minor scuffle. On Tuesday afternoon, Safayat and Srinivas reportedly pur-

chased alcohol from a beverages outlet in Seethangoli and headed to a secluded spot behind a nearby building to consume it. As they were drinking, a heated argument broke out between the two. While two other companions who were present earlier had already left the spot, the confrontation between Safayat and Srinivas turned violent. Srinivas allegedly pushed Safayat to the ground and bludgeoned his head with a wooden plank found at the site. Local residents, who rushed to the spot after hearing screams, found Safayat lying in a pool of blood. Srinivas had fled the scene by then. Although Safayat was rushed to the hospital in critical condition, he could not be saved.

Extension of Sarala Kaveri Scheme: Golden Opportunity for the Public to Get Water Connections via EMI



BENGALURU : With the objective of protecting public health by providing healthy and pure Cauvery water to all citizens of Bengaluru, as per the wishes of Deputy Chief Minister Shri D. K. Shivakumar, the 'Sarala Kaveri' scheme—introduced to easily provide water connections without placing a financial burden on citizens—has been extended until further orders, stated BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar.

He issued these instructions during a meeting with officials at the BWSSB head office today.

This significant decision has been taken to assist the poor, middle-class families, and apartment associations who find it difficult to pay the 'Prorata' charges in a single lump sum when securing a new Cauvery water connection. Originally launched in May 2025, this extension comes in the wake of the unprecedented positive response from the public toward the scheme.

Key Features of the Sarala Kaveri Scheme: Priority for Small Site Owners: Small site owners with a built-up area of 600 sq. ft. can secure a water connection by paying an initial amount of just Rs. 1,000. An option has been provided to pay the remaining balance in easy installments (EMI).

EMI Facility for Apartments: This is a major boon for apartment associations struggling to pay large Demand Notice (DN) amounts in a single payment. They can now secure a connection by initially paying just 20% of the total fee. A

12-month window is provided to pay the remaining 80% of the amount.

Facility for Non-Domestic Consumers: The EMI-based Sarala Kaveri facility has been extended beyond residential homes to include commercial buildings. Non-domestic consumers can now also take full advantage of this initiative. Pure Water to Every Home: Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar has made a firm resolve to protect public health by delivering healthy, pure Cauvery water to every home. The scheme has been extended against this specific backdrop.

Providing further information, BWSSB Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar appealed, "Under the leadership of Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Shri D. K. Shivakumar, the BWSSB has always prioritized pro-people programs. Much like the Sanchari Kaveri, the 3rd Generation Rainwater Harvesting system, and the SCADA technology we implemented earlier, 'Sarala Kaveri' is a highly consumer-friendly scheme. This EMI facility will offer massive financial relief to apartments and commercial buildings struggling to pool the full Demand Notice amount at once. The public should make the best use of this scheme. To ensure an adequate and equitable water supply across the city, the Water Board has already implemented several proactive measures, and the extension of this scheme will further benefit the citizens of Bengaluru.

Karnataka targets major milestones in Quantum City by 2028



Bengaluru (TSIT): Karnataka is set to achieve significant milestones in the development of its ambitious 'Quantum City' project by 2028, according to Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology N. S. Boseraju. After inspecting the 6.23 acres of land allotted for the project near Hesaraghatta, the Minister said the state is positioning itself as a global hub for quantum technology. He noted that Karnataka is already a leader in the quantum sector and is now moving towards large-scale implementation of advanced infrastructure.

The proposed Quantum City, also referred to as Q-City, is envisioned as a world-class ecosystem that will host pilot fabrication lines, common computing infrastructure, and cutting-edge research laboratories. The project will also provide dedicated workspaces for startups along with advanced incubation facilities aimed at supporting deep-tech innovation and entrepreneur-

ship. Boseraju stated that the government has already released a comprehensive quantum roadmap to promote research and technological growth. He added that discussions with the Quantum Task Force, led by Prof. Arindam Ghosh of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and other stakeholders will soon begin to finalize a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for the project.

Following the site visit, the Minister also toured the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) campus, where he interacted with scientists to assess future technological needs. He emphasized that ICTS will play a key role in shaping the scientific and research framework of Quantum City.

Senior officials including K-STEPS Managing Director Sadashiva Prabhu, Minister's Private Secretary Veerabhadra Hanchinal, ICTS Director Prof. Rajesh Gopakumar, and Project Head Prasanna were present during the visit.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, SINGAPORE! FARAH KHAN REVEALS A DIFFERENT SIDE OF THE CITY WITH KLOOK

Bengaluru : Klook India has announced its association with acclaimed filmmaker and personality Farah Khan for its new summer travel campaign, inviting Indian travellers to rediscover familiar destinations through fresh, unexpected experiences. Joining Klook's world of joy and discovery, Farah Khan returns to Singapore, a destination she has visited before but, as the video playfully reveals, never quite like this. She is accompanied by Dilip — her personal chef and trusted companion in all things adventurous, for whom the city is entirely new. It is a pairing that works precisely because of the contrast: Farah, the seasoned traveller who arrives with assumptions; and Dilip, who arrives with none.

The campaign taps into a travel truth that many Indian travellers will recognise. Even when visiting much-loved destinations, holidays often follow the same familiar routes, recommendations, and itineraries. With this campaign, Klook encourages travellers to look beyond the obvious and make room for experiences that are planned, spontaneous, iconic, local, expected, and unexpected — all in one place.

The digital-first campaign opens with a trailer now live on Klook India's Instagram handle, offering a first glimpse into Farah Khan's upcoming travel story, accompanied by her trusted chef Dilip. This will be followed by three short-form episodes, each capturing their travels through Singapore, with the full brand film to be released early May across Klook India's Instagram and YouTube handles.



As Asia's leading travel experiences platform, Klook enables travellers to book a wide range of experiences before and during their trips, making it easier to discover more of a destination — whether it is a popular attraction, a local hidden gem, a last-minute plan, or something entirely new.

"Indian travellers today are more informed and more inspired than ever, yet most holidays still end up looking remarkably similar. The algorithm recommends, the crowd follows, and the holiday becomes a copy of someone else's experience. We believe the most rewarding journeys begin where the top-ten list ends, and this campaign is our invitation to every traveller to trust their own curiosity," says Shivam Tyagi, Marketing Lead, Klook India & Middle East.

Tyagi adds, "Farah brings the eye of someone who has seen the

world and still finds wonder in it; and Dilip, the unbridled excitement of someone experiencing it all for the very first time. Together, they capture exactly what Klook stands for: no matter where you are on your travel journey, there is always something new, something unexpected, something that makes you feel alive. This campaign is for every traveller who has ever come home thinking - I wish I'd done more of that."

The Indian Traveller Has Moved On. Has Your Holiday?

Klook's latest Travel Pulse Study reveals that the way Indian travellers approach their holidays is shifting. Travellers are increasingly open to discovering activities while already at the destination, making spontaneous decisions on the go, and seeking local recommendations after they arrive.

Nearly 2 in 5 Indian travellers actively seek out lesser-known alternatives in addition to popular tourist spots regularly, with Gen Z leading the way. Nearly 1 in 2 Millennial travellers say they would rather spend longer in fewer places in order to truly connect with local culture.

These are travellers who have done the landmarks and are now asking what else a destination has to offer. Klook, with its breadth of planned highlights, hidden local gems, spontaneous bookings, and in-trip discoveries, is built to help travellers answer that question.

With the summer campaign now live, Klook India invites travellers to look again at the destinations they think they know — and discover how much more there is to experience.

Scientists Sequence Arabica Genome, Opening Doors to Climate-Resilient Coffee

The work makes it possible to tell the story of the fusion of genomes that gave rise to the world's most consumed species, as well as identifying genes responsible for resistance to rust and other diseases.

Coffee is one of the world's most traded commodities, and Coffea arabica is the most widely consumed of the 130 or so species that exist. It is the result of the fusion of two other species: Coffea canephora (known in Brazil as Conilon or Robusta coffee) and Coffea eugenioides. In the last decade, almost every major commodity in the world has had a reference genome sequenced, but coffee has only recently joined the list.

The reference genome is essential for developing varieties that are better adapted to climate change and resistant to disease. By sequencing the reference genome of Arabica coffee in an unprecedented endeavor, a consortium of scientists was able to select genes that may be responsible (candidate genes) for coffee's resistance to rust and other diseases. At the same time, they identified the expression of some genes related to the aroma of Arabica. The Power of Genomic Knowledge "With the knowledge of the genome, it is possible to obtain information that allows us to go in two directions: the development of varieties by directing crossbreeding, in other words, as a reference to guide us in future crossbreeding that produces new varieties; and more direct interventions, such as modifying a gene specifically," summarizes Douglas Domingues, currently a



researcher at the Plant Genomics and Transcriptomics Group of the Luiz de Queiroz School of Agriculture at the University of São Paulo (ESALQ-USP), in Brazil, and one of the authors of the paper (developed when he was still working at the Rio Claro campus of the São Paulo State University).

According to him, there was a bit of a race to sequence the genome. "The price of sequencing has come down a lot, and coffee was one of the few commodities that hadn't had its reference genome sequenced. There were other groups trying, and there was a paper published just before ours. But most of them used the standard strategy: choosing an interesting plant for cultivation and sequencing its genome," he reports.

Unique Approach to Sequencing

The group to which Domingues belongs has sequenced a plant that is not interesting from an agronomic point of view but has a lot to offer from a genetic point of view. "The advantage of our reference genome is that it's derived from a 'dihaploid' individual. This results in a homogeneous reference genome that will be a superior standard for future research," explains Patrick Descombes, coordinator of the work and senior expert in genomics at the Nestlé Institute of Food Safety & Analytical Sciences. He explains that Arabica coffee is a tetraploid: it has two genomes in one because it is the fusion of two other species.

By sequencing a dihaploid derived from Arabica coffee compared to a common tetraploid variety, scientists get a clearer and more simplified view of the

genome. This makes it possible to identify variations between similar genes with greater precision, facilitating the use of molecular information for improvement studies.

In this study, the group was able to determine more precisely when this fusion took place: no more than 600,000 years ago, C. canephora and C. eugenioides fused to form this tetraploid hybrid, which continued its evolutionary path. "We came to this conclusion using DNA information from Arabica, Robusta and Eugenioides: we were able to make a more accurate inference because previously this interval was dated at between 50,000 and 1 million years. We reduced that window to 350,000 to 600,000 years," reports Domingues. The article, published recently in Nature Genetics, was the result of a consortium of scientists from more than ten countries, including Brazil, which participated with more than one institution. In Domingues' case, his participation was partially funded by FAPESP through a Young Researcher project and a postdoctoral fellowship awarded to Suzana Tiemi Iwamoto-Suzuki, also an author of the article. "We used the reference sequence to understand the diversity that exists in wild Arabica coffees, from the African region of origin, and compare this with the Arabica coffees that are cultivated today," says the ESALQ-USP scientist, explaining that the group resequenced Arabica coffee varieties planted in different parts of the world, as well as wild specimens collected in the forests of Ethiopia, and managed to understand the difference between the wild and cultivated ones.

A Lunar Orbit That's Just Right for Humanity's First Space Station Around the Moon

A unique halo orbit is the road less traveled around the Moon. As NASA prepares for humanity's long-term return to the lunar surface through the Artemis missions, the agency is introducing novel concepts — backed up by science and decades of experience in human spaceflight — to blaze new trails on and around the Moon.

An international collaboration, Gateway is a human-tended, small station that will orbit the Moon. The lunar outpost is specially designed to enable deep space exploration with many capabilities for maintaining a sustained presence in space and conducting research in a deep space environment. Features like a human habitat, multiple docking ports for a variety of spacecraft, including Orion, and the ability to host experiments that will study space weather will all help contribute to future exploration efforts. Similarly, Gateway's unique near-rectilinear halo orbit, or NRHO, was specifically chosen to help ensure the success of future Artemis missions. There is no shortage of options for how a spacecraft could orbit the Moon, but two in particular — low lunar orbit and distant retrograde orbit — are helpful for understanding why NRHO is the right fit for Gateway. A spacecraft in low lunar orbit follows a circular or elliptical path very close to the lunar surface, completing an orbit every two



hours. Transit between Gateway and the lunar surface would be quite simple in a low lunar orbit given their proximity, but because of the Moon's gravity, more propellant is required to maintain the orbit. Therefore, low lunar orbit is not very efficient for Gateway's planned long-term presence at the Moon — at least 15 years. Meanwhile, a distant retrograde orbit provides a large, circular, and stable (or more fuel-efficient) orbit that circles the Moon every two weeks. However, what Gateway would gain in a stable orbit, it would lose in easy access to the Moon: the distant orbit would make it harder to get to the lunar surface. A third option, NRHO, is just right for Gateway, marrying the upsides of low lunar orbit (surface access) with the benefits of distant retrograde orbit (fuel efficiency).

EDITORIAL

To Understand UAE's OPEC Exit, Go Back In Time - To A Leaked 'Cable'

Yesterday, the UAE announced that it was quitting the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the wider OPEC+, with effect from May 1. For a while, this announcement, so consequential as it is, shifted international focus away from the Iran war. The UAE has been a member of OPEC since 1967, first through Abu Dhabi, the most oil-producing Emirate, and then since 1971 as the seven-emirate federation it is today. The UAE's decision, while certain to trigger a chain reaction in the energy markets, will help keep oil prices down, as it will enable it to produce and export more crude, free from the cartel's constraints. For India, this is good news, as not only is it closely aligned with the UAE on many issues, including energy, but also because of its geographical proximity to the Emirates. One of the reasons for the UAE's decision is, apart from not being constrained in its crude production, to also find buyers closer to it geographically. India is the closest, largest oil importer.

The Saudi Factor Is Just One Of The Reasons

The UAE's decision is also demonstrative of its widening rift with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the founding member and leader of OPEC. Both in quantitative and in terms of trade routes and corridors, the decision will be a challenge to the Saudis, while giving a freer hand to the Emirates and making them less dependent on the former. The current war has battered its economy, with Iran directing more missiles and drones at it than at any other country - including Israel, which, together with the US, started the war. On a broader note, however, surprising as the UAE's decision is, it is also fully in keeping with its strong resolve to forge an independent path for itself, grounded in strategic autonomy. This also translates to breaking with regional, in particular, Arab consensus on many issues. The most recent case in point is the report by Axios that during the war, Israel moved an Iron Dome battery and operating personnel to the UAE's territory, which helped deflect many of the strikes launched on it by Iran.

That Leaked Cable

But to understand what drives the UAE's worldview, we need to step back in time. In 2005, according to a cable made public by WikiLeaks, Mohamed bin Zayed, or 'MBZ' as he is more commonly known, had told a United States ambassador, James Jeffrey, that his biggest concern was Wahhabism. It is this concern - coupled with, of course, geography - that has shaped much of the UAE's current policies. MBZ, now the UAE's President, is widely believed to have inherited his appreciation for diversity and religious tolerance from his father and the founder of the UAE, Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan. With time, he found political Islam - manifested best in the region through the 'Muslim Brotherhood' - to be incompatible both with that vision and with clan loyalty and leadership. Consequently, by 1994, the UAE became one of the first Arab countries to ban the Dubai branch of Islamist Jamiat-e-Islah, an Islamist group affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood; a total ban was imposed 20 years later in 2014. In due course, a string of events vindicated the UAE's view.

Iran Revolution, 9/11, Mumbai Attacks

First were the twin events of 1979 - the Islamic revolution in Iran, and then the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with the Afghan jihad that followed. Both upended the existing order, resulting in upheaval and chaos. The overthrow of the Shah put the Gulf monarchies on notice, leading to the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). On the other hand, the Afghan jihad plunged Afghanistan into chaos - something it has not recovered from even today, five decades later. Political mobilisation of any kind thus became anathema to the UAE. This was followed by the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq under Saddam Hussein, and the arrival of Hamas, the extended arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza, as well as Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy in Lebanon. The NATO wars in Afghanistan and Iraq followed, where the fall of the Saddam government paved the way for sectarian politics and greater Iranian influence there, extending into Syria. However, two incidents that really spooked the UAE were the September 11 attacks in New York and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. If New York could happen - went the thinking - then such attacks could happen inside the Emirates too. Moreover, two of the attackers in the 9/11 were from the UAE. Soon, a number of arrests took place across the country. The Mumbai attacks, where the attackers came by sea, were also a warning for the Emirates, which has a long coastline.

Here Comes The Arab Spring

A pivotal moment came with the Arab Spring. The UAE, which had aligned itself closely with the US by then, procuring weapons systems from it and housing US bases on its territory, was deeply disappointed when America, which had for years supported the Hosni Mubarak regime in Egypt, signalled its acceptance of Mohammed Morsi as President when his Muslim Brotherhood party won at the polls. Together with neighbouring Saudi Arabia, the UAE expended considerable effort in seeking the removal of the Morsi government and backing military man Abdel Fattah Al Sisi as President. This paved the way for the UAE's active involvement in other conflict zones, specifically those that threatened to elevate Islamists to power. One example is post-Gaddafi Syria, where the UAE backed the anti-Islamist faction of Khalifa Haftar.

The most decisive intervention, however, was in Yemen in 2015, when Houthi militias, sponsored by Iran, overran the internationally recognised government of President Abdur Hadi Mansour. This came at a time when the US was busy negotiating the nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) with Iran. The thought of a strong, emboldened, sanctions-free Iran, taking over yet another Arab country and jeopardising trade routes along the Gulf of Aden, was a nightmare the UAE did not want to see coming true. With Pakistan unwilling to intervene militarily, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, under a Saudi-led coalition, had to act. The UAE eventually withdrew from Yemen in 2019, after putting in place trained troops in Southern Yemen.

THE 'MARKET FOR LEMONS' IN HIGHER EDUCATION



PRIYANKA SAURABH

The rapid expansion of higher education in India has brought opportunities as well as serious challenges. While the number of universities, colleges, and private educational institutions has grown rapidly, questions about quality, transparency, and credibility are constantly being raised. At this time, economist George Akerloff's "Market for Lemons" theory appears highly relevant. According to this theory, when consumers lack accurate information about a product's actual quality, low-quality products dominate the market, and quality products are relegated. In higher education, students are consumers, and institutions are service providers. When students lack accurate information about the actual state of institutions, the quality of faculty, employment prospects, research work, and infrastructure, they are forced to enroll in weak institutions. The expansion of higher education in India has been driven primarily by policy initiatives. The new education policy emphasized increasing enrollment in higher education, encouraging distance learning, promoting online learning, and attracting private investment. This increased access to education and provided opportunities for more students, but the quality of institutions has not improved at



the same pace. Many private institutions attract students with attractive advertisements, grand campuses, and lofty claims, while in reality, they lack qualified faculty, a research environment, and employment-oriented education. Government data is also often delayed or available in complex forms beyond the understanding of the general public. As a result, students and parents are unable to make informed decisions. This situation gives rise to a low-quality education market. To address this problem, the Government of India launched the National Institutional Ranking System. Its purpose is to evaluate the country's higher education institutions based on specific criteria. It considers aspects such as teaching, resources, research, graduate outcomes, inclusion, and reputation. For the first time, this system provided students with a

platform to assess the relative standing of various institutions. This fostered healthy competition among institutions, and many colleges and universities began improving faculty recruitment, research publications, employment support centers, and infrastructure. The most significant achievement of this ranking system has been its ability to provide indicators of quality in the higher education sector. Students no longer rely solely on advertisements or promotional materials, but can make informed decisions based on information such as an institution's status, research performance, exam results, and inclusion. This has somewhat alleviated the problem of information gaps. It has also proven to be an important policy tool for the government, enabling comparative studies of the status of various institutions.

Nevertheless, this system is not a complete solution. Its biggest limitation is that it relies heavily on data provided by the institutions themselves. If an institution provides incorrect or exaggerated information, the credibility of the rankings is compromised. Second, the increased emphasis on research leaves colleges that focus primarily on teaching behind. Third, it becomes difficult for rural or newly established institutions to compete with larger, older urban institutions. Fourth, rankings are released once a year, while students require real-time information more frequently. Fifth, compared to the country's vast higher education infrastructure, only a limited number of institutions are highlighted, leaving many institutions outside of transparent evaluation. Globally, universities in various countries have adopted models for ranking that

also consider factors such as alumni satisfaction, international recognition, employer perceptions, research impact, and global collaboration. India can learn from these experiences by making its system more comprehensive and multifaceted. To protect students' interests, some concrete reforms are necessary. First, the data provided by institutions should be verified by independent agencies to eliminate the tendency to provide inaccurate information. Second, greater importance should be given to teaching quality, student-teacher ratio, employment availability, and profitability over fees. Third, instead of simply assigning rankings, a group-based ranking system should be adopted, so that even small and emerging institutions can receive respectable recognition. Fourth, a centralized digital platform should be developed where up-to-date information about each institution is available. Fifth, state and regional rankings should also be developed to provide local students with better options in their surrounding areas. Sixth, feedback from students and parents should also be included in the evaluation process. Ultimately, higher education isn't just a matter of increasing the number of institutions, but rather a question of quality, trust, and equal opportunity. A lack of transparency will leave students trapped in substandard institutions, jeopardizing their futures. The national ranking system has certainly made a positive beginning, but making it more independent, credible, and student-centric is the need of the hour. Only when accurate information, effective regulation, and quality institutions come together will India be able to move strongly toward becoming a truly knowledge-based, developed nation.

Uco Bank Posts Strong Q4 Growth With 23 % Profit Surge

KOLKATA, APR. 29: UCO Bank reported a robust financial performance for the fourth quarter of FY 2025-26, registering a 22.66 per cent year-on-year rise in net profit to Rs.801 crore, compared to Rs.653 crore in the corresponding period last year. The bank's total business rose by 14.95 per cent to Rs.5,90,314 crore as of March 31, 2026. Gross advances grew sharply by 19.44 per cent to Rs.2,62,752 crore, while total deposits increased by 11.59 per cent to Rs.3,27,563 crore. The lender also recorded steady improvement in asset quality, with gross non-performing assets declining by 52 basis points to 2.17 per cent and net NPA falling by 23 basis points to 0.27 per cent. The capital adequacy ratio stood at a healthy 18.61 per cent, including a Tier I capital ratio of 16.59 per cent. CASA deposits rose by 12.46 per cent to Rs.1,17,752 crore, improving the CASA ratio to 38.65 per cent. Savings deposits grew by 11.78 per cent, while current deposits saw a stronger growth of 16.77 per cent. Advances under the retail, agriculture and MSME segments registered a combined growth of 24.23 per cent to Rs.1,52,324 crore. Retail advances grew by 26.62 per cent, agriculture advances by 26.24 per cent and MSME advances by 19.36 per cent. For the full financial year, net profit increased by 13.21 per cent to Rs.2,768 crore, while operating profit rose by 6.49 per cent to Rs.6,429 crore. Net interest income grew by 5.89 per cent to Rs.10,197 crore. Operational efficiency improved, with business per employee rising to Rs.28.08 crore and business per branch increasing to Rs.172.91 crore. The bank's cost-to-income ratio improved significantly to 52.66 per cent. The provision coverage ratio stood at 97.79 per cent, reflecting strong risk management, while the slippage ratio was contained at 0.78 per cent. The bank has proposed a dividend of 4.40 per cent, equivalent to 44 paise per equity share, for FY 2025-26, subject to shareholder approval. As of March 31, 2026, the bank operated 3,412 domestic branches along with overseas branches in Hong Kong and Singapore, and a representative office in Iran. Notably, 61 per cent of its domestic branches are located in rural and semi-urban areas, supporting financial inclusion efforts.

ASHWANI KUMAR, UCO BANK'S MANAGING DIRECTOR



'On Verge Of Stopping': Inside The Panic That Led To Indian Airlines' SOS Call

In 1953, the Air Corporations Act nationalised commercial aviation in India. JRD Tata's airline, which had begun in October 1932 with a single de Havilland Puss Moth, carrying mail from Karachi to Bombay, was taken into state hands. The argument made at the time was that the carriers were small, fragmented, and financially unviable, and that aviation was too strategic to be left to the market. India then had two state airlines and no domestic competition for the next four decades. On April 26, 2026, three private airlines (Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet) wrote to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, through the Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), to say that they were on the verge of stopping operations. The argument from 1953 was, in a quiet way, older than they were. That, however, is not the interesting question.

Only 3 Groups Have Signalled For Help

The interesting question is comparative. The same shock has hit every airline in the world. Brent has gone from around \$85 a barrel in late February, before the war and the Strait of Hormuz blockade, to around \$150 a barrel. The crack spread - the refining margin between crude and Jet A-1 - has widened with it. The IATA monitor put jet fuel at \$179 a barrel for the week ending April 24, against \$80 in early March. Lufthansa has cancelled 20,000 flights for the summer and permanently retired 27 of its CityLine aircraft. Air France-KLM has raised long-haul fares by EUR 50 per round trip. Cathay Pacific has cut 2% of its scheduled passenger flights and raised its fuel surcharge by 34%. Qantas has delayed an A\$150 million share buyback. United expects to recover 85 to 100% of its fuel-



cost increase through fares by the fourth quarter. Of the world's serious carriers, only three groups have written to their governments to keep them flying: Spirit Airlines (asking the Trump administration for hundreds of millions to avoid liquidation), the Nigerian operators (who threatened a nationwide shutdown), and the Federation of Indian Aviation's three. India keeps an interesting kind of company. Why can the others absorb a shock that we cannot? The answer is in four pieces, and the cleanest way to see them is on the cost line.

The Tax Layers

The first is the tax wedge. ATF sits outside the Goods and Services Tax. It bears central excise of 11% on the base price. State VAT is then charged on base-plus-excise (25% in Delhi, 29% in Tamil Nadu, 16 to 20% across most other major hubs). The cascade is multiplicative. At Tamil Nadu rates, every Re 1 of base-price increase lands on the airline as approximately Rs 1.43; at Delhi, Rs 1.39; at lower-VAT hubs, Rs 1.29. Six states still levy VAT of 18% or more, the Civil Aviation Ministry told the Lok Sabha in February. The taxes being ad valorem, the

absolute pass-through grows with the underlying. No other major aviation market layers tax this way on its single largest input. The second is the unhedged balance sheet. Michael O'Leary of Ryanair said this week that his airline had hedged 80% of its fuel through fixed-price swaps and called itself "the best insulated, most hedged airline in Europe". EasyJet has hedged 70% of summer fuel at \$706 a tonne. Singapore Airlines runs a continuous rolling hedge combining swaps and collars two to three quarters out. Indian carriers, with brief and abandoned exceptions, do not. They also lease most of their fleet under sale-and-leaseback contracts (IndiGo's lessor share is among the highest in the global top ten) with monthly rentals denominated in dollars, alongside dollar-denominated maintenance reserves and a fuel input priced in dollars. Roughly 60 to 65% of operating cost is USD-linked; over 90% of revenue is in rupees, with the fare ceiling on competitive routes set by the marginal entrant. The exchange-rate exposure is unhedged in any scaled, board-approved sense. This is not, in a strict definition, an airline. It is a leveraged

short position on the rupee, written against the price of crude.

Caught Unprepared

The third is the missing war chest. IndiGo posted its two most profitable years on record in FY24 and FY25, operating margins in the high teens. Air India, under Tata, narrowed losses sharply and was, by its own reporting, on its strongest financial footing since the acquisition. Where did the surplus go? Into fleet-expansion orders (IndiGo's 500-aircraft Airbus order in June 2023, Air India's 470-aircraft order across Airbus and Boeing the same year), not into balance-sheet buffers. The relevant liquidity ratio for a carrier is fuel-burn days. Cash and equivalents divided by daily fuel-and-lease outflow. Singapore Airlines and Ryanair have, in recent years, run buffers equivalent to several hundred days of operating outflow. Indian carriers, even after their best two years, run at well under a hundred. Decomposed on cost-per-available-seat-kilometre, Indian non-fuel-non-lease CASK is competitive with Ryanair's and below most European legacy carriers'. The fragility is not in operations. It rather sits one line above operations.

DOB CHECK INEFFECTIVE:

Meta Gets EU Rap For Failing To Keep Kids Away From Facebook, Instagram

The European Commission (EC) has ruled that Meta has failed to find, address and minimise the risk its social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook) pose to minors under the age of 13, according to a press release from the organisation on Wednesday.

The executive branch of the European Union (EU) found Meta's safeguards and related measures to enforce restrictions on usage for minors to be inadequate.

"The measures do not adequately prevent minors under the age of 13 from accessing their services nor promptly identify and remove them, if they already gained access," the release said. The EC stated that minors could easily circumvent its age verification policy by putting in a false birthdate that affirms that they are at least 13 years old.

The Commission called Meta's tool for reporting minors under 13 "difficult to use and not effective", with users having to make an average of seven clicks in order to access its



reporting form. The process becomes more arduous with users having to manually enter information, with it not being filled automatically. It also stated that Meta does not follow up on cases where minors are reported for being under 13, which leads to minors being able to continue using the platform without facing action. The EU body also found Meta's risk assessment of the dangers its platforms posed to exposing minors to inappropriate content to be lacking, calling it

"incomplete and arbitrary". It stated that the assessment contradicts large swathes of evidence from the EU that found 10-12% of children below the age of 13 accessing Instagram or Facebook. "Meta seems to have disregarded readily available scientific evidence indicating that younger children are more vulnerable to potential harms caused by services like Facebook and Instagram," the release said. Meta Layoffs: Which

Departments Will Be Affected, What Amount Will Laid Off Employees Receive The EC has stated that Meta must overhaul its risk assessment methodology and safeguarding measures. "Meta must effectively counter and mitigate risks that minors under the age of 13 could experience on the platforms, which must ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors," the release stated. The EC will also consult with the European

Highlights

The European Commission (EC) has ruled that Meta has failed to find, address and minimise the risk its social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook) pose to minors under the age of 13, according to a press release from the organisation on Wednesday.

Board for Digital Services for further clarification, if its findings are validated, Meta is liable to pay a fine equal to a minimum of 6% of the total worldwide annual turnover. "The Commission can also impose periodic penalty payments to compel a platform to comply," the release said. Instagram and Facebook are now free to examine the documents in connection to the EC's investigation files and reply in writing to the EU body's preliminary findings.

Trump's Pick Kevin Warsh Set To Head Fed As Nomination Clears Key Senate Panel Hurdle

The Senate Banking Committee on Wednesday voted to advance the nomination of Kevin Warsh, President Donald Trump's next chair of the Federal Reserve. The panel voted 13-11 along party lines to send Warsh's nomination to the full Senate, this puts him on track to be confirmed by the full Senate before Jerome Powell's term ends on May 15. The Senate Banking Committee vote coincides with the US Federal Reserve's meeting, during which Fed officials are expected to keep the benchmark interest rate steady. Warsh's confirmation was in a limbo for over two months, as the Powell probe had complicated the path ahead for President Trump's pick to replace the outgoing Fed chair. Warsh's confirmation was in a limbo for over two months, as the Powell probe had complicated the path ahead for President Trump's pick to replace the outgoing Fed chair. Warsh's nomination had been held up by Republican Senator Thom Tillis, who sits on the Senate Banking Committee as the investi-



gation into Powell's handling of Fed renovations were ongoing. However, last week the Department of Justice agreed to drop a criminal probe into the cost overruns in the renovation of the Fed's Washington headquarters. In a post on X he said, "I have been clear from the start: the U.S. Attorney's Office criminal investigation into Chair Powell was a serious threat to the Fed's independence, and it needed to end before I could support Kevin Warsh's confirmation." Who Is Kevin Warsh? A Fed veteran, Warsh earlier served during the critical period from 2006 to 2011, spanning the global financial crisis as well as the Central bank's efforts to

stabilise the economy. Appointed by President George W Bush, Warsh was among the youngest individuals ever to serve on the Fed's Board of Governors. Warsh completed his graduation from Stanford University. He then earned a law degree from Harvard. Before becoming a part of Fed, he was in investment banking at Morgan Stanley. He served in the White House during the Bush administration as a special assistant to the President on economic policy. Notably, this is not the first time when he has been linked to the position of Federal Reserve chairman. He had come close to being nominated back in 2017, when he lost the race to Powell.

Zepto Strengthens Food Safety Commitment with Hyderabad Edition of 'Zepto Sankalp'

Hyderabad April 29, 2026: Zepto Limited organised a mass food safety awareness training programme for its food handlers in Hyderabad as part of Zepto Sankalp, the company's flagship food safety initiative. Building on the success of its previous edition held in Mumbai, marks the continued expansion of the Sankalp Programme. This reinforces Zepto's commitment towards embedding food safety practices across its growing network. The session, held at FTCCI, Hyderabad, brought together hundreds of food handlers, including last-mile delivery partners and pickers. Led by Food Safety Works, the training sensitised trainees on key food safety practices such as hygiene protocols, appropriate food storage temperatures, and compliance standards critical to ensuring the safe delivery of essentials to consumers. The event was attended by senior officials from the Office of the Commissioner of Food Safety, Government of Telangana, including Shri



P. Murthy Raju, Assistant Food Controller, GHMC; Shri B. Laxmi Kanth, Gazetted Food Inspector; and Dr. Srivenaka, Food Safety Officer. Speaking on the initiative, Srinivas Reddy, Senior Director, Zonal Operations, Zepto, said, "At Zepto, a user's trust is built on the assurance of quality and safety in every order delivered. As we expand the Zepto Sankalp Programme to Hyderabad, we remain committed to equipping our food handlers with the right knowledge and practices. We are grateful to the

Commissioner of Food Safety, Government of Telangana for their continued support and helping us strengthen our vision of a safer food ecosystem. Shri P. Murthy Raju, Assistant Food Controller, GHMC added "Ensuring food safety is a shared responsibility that rests on awareness, consistent on-ground practices, and strong compliance. Initiatives like Zepto Sankalp that build capacity, improve hygiene standards, and enhance accountability across the ecosystem are essential to delivering safe food at scale." Sarika

Agarwal, Managing Director, Food Safety Works said "Every safe meal is supported by food handlers who understand the importance of hygiene and compliance. Training initiatives like these help strengthen awareness, encourage accountability, and create safer food systems at scale." The programme is part of Zepto's ongoing efforts to build a strong culture of compliance and responsibility across operations. Supported by internal audits, regular inspections, and close engagement with regulatory authorities, Zepto continues to embed food safety across sourcing, storage, and last-mile delivery. To date, Zepto has trained nearly 60,000+ food handlers nationwide, with over 4,000+ FOSTAC-certified partners, reflecting its commitment to raising food safety standards in quick commerce. Through initiatives like Zepto Sankalp, Zepto continues to strengthen trust, compliance, and experiences while setting new benchmarks for food safety in the sector.

Lights, camera, Singapore! Farah Khan reveals a different side of the city with klook

Mumbai, 29th April 2026: Klook India has announced its association with acclaimed filmmaker and personality Farah Khan for its new summer travel campaign, inviting Indian travellers to rediscover familiar destinations through fresh, unexpected experiences. Joining Klook's world of joy and discovery, Farah Khan returns to Singapore, a destination she has visited before but, as the video playfully reveals, never quite like this. She is accompanied by Dilip — her personal chef and trusted companion in all things adventurous, for whom the city is entirely new. It is a pairing that works precisely because of the contrast: Farah, the seasoned traveller who arrives with assumptions; and Dilip, who arrives with none. The campaign taps into a travel truth that many Indian travellers will recognise. Even when visiting much-loved destinations, holidays often follow the same familiar routes, recommendations, and itineraries. With this campaign,



Klook encourages travellers to look beyond the obvious and make room for experiences that are planned, spontaneous, iconic, local, expected, and unexpected - all in one place. The digital-first campaign opens with a trailer now live on Klook India's Instagram handle, offering a first glimpse into Farah Khan's upcoming travel story, accompanied by her trusted chef Dilip. This will be followed by three short-form episodes, each capturing their travels

through Singapore, with the full brand film to be released early May across Klook India's Instagram and YouTube handles. As Asia's leading travel experiences platform, Klook enables travellers to book a wide range of experiences before and during their trips, making it easier to discover more of a destination — whether it is a popular attraction, a local hidden gem, a last-minute plan, or something entirely new. "Indian travellers today are

more informed and more inspired than ever, yet most holidays still end up looking remarkably similar. The algorithm recommends, the crowd follows, and the holiday becomes a copy of someone else's experience. We believe the most rewarding journeys begin where the top-ten list ends, and this campaign is our invitation to every traveller to trust their own curiosity," says Shivam Tyagi, Marketing Lead, Klook India & Middle East. Tyagi adds, "Farah brings the eye of someone who has seen the world and still finds wonder in it; and Dilip, the unbridled excitement of someone experiencing it all for the very first time. Together, they capture exactly what Klook stands for: no matter where you are on your travel journey, there is always something new, something unexpected, something that makes you feel alive. This campaign is for every traveller who has ever come home thinking - I wish I'd done more of that." The Indian Traveller Has Moved On.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2 SEES STRONG ADVANCE BOOKING IN INDIA AHEAD OF RELEASE

The countdown has begun for The Devil Wears Prada 2, which is set to arrive in the theatres on May 1, 2026. Even before its release, the sequel is showing encouraging signs in India, with advance bookings picking up pace and audience interest steadily growing. Early ticket sales indicate that the film has already sold close to 23,000 tickets across major national chains. Around 18,000 of these have been booked through PVR Inox, while Cinepolis has contributed roughly 5,000 tickets. The demand is strongest in metro cities, which usually drive business for Hollywood titles. With a few days still left, the numbers are expected to rise further as the release date approaches. Expected Opening Collection Based on current trends, trade experts estimate that the film could open at around Rs 7 crore in India, including paid previews. This would place it alongside recent Hollywood



releases that have seen a strong box office response in India. If the current pace continues, the film is likely to take a steady opening and could emerge as one of the stronger Hollywood performers of the year in India. Reason Behind The Buzz A big reason behind the growing buzz is the return of Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway and Emily Blunt, who reprise their iconic roles. The film brings back the high-stakes fashion world that made the original so memorable, while also introducing fresh challenges within that space. The pres-

ence of Miranda Priestly once again remains a key highlight, with the character continuing to hold strong recall among audiences. Adding to the buzz, filmmaker Karan Johar's recent Instagram post about meeting the cast in Japan also made headlines, and now he is set to host an exclusive watch party for the sequel in Mumbai, which further fuelled conversations around the film. Right Timing The film is releasing at a time when Hollywood titles are performing well in India. With a positive trend already in place.

Gokula Education Foundation (Medical) Launches RISM, a Globally Aligned STEM and Management University Focused on AI, Aerospace and Future-Ready Skills

Bengaluru, 29th April 2026: In a decisive move to bridge academia with real-world relevance and future skills, the Gokula Education Foundation (Medical), which manages the Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Ramaiah Medical College, and the Ramaiah Memorial Hospital has now partnered with University at Albany, State University of New York, a premier public research university, to launch Ramaiah Institute of Science and Management (RISM), a deemed-to-be university in Bangalore. Envisioned as a next-generation STEM and Management institution, RISM will deliver globally benchmarked, industry-aligned education with a strong emphasis on research and real-world application preparing students for a rapidly evolving global landscape. The university will commence its first academic session in August 2026. Building on over six decades of excellence in education, research, and healthcare, the Gokula Education Foundation (Medical) is extending its experience through RISM, reimagining higher education with a global-first, industry-aligned approach. The university will offer



undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programmes across the engineering, business, and science disciplines, with the initial programmes including B. Tech in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, Aerospace Engineering, and Electrical Sciences, alongside BBA and MBA programmes. Its academic model is anchored in a co-created curriculum developed with industry and academic partners, integrating interdisciplinary learn-

ing, industry-sponsored Centres of Excellence, and hands-on exposure through internships, live projects, and capstone assignments to build real-world capabilities. At RISM, "Relevance" will be designed into the foundation through an integrated business and management-led approach across programs. Each course will embed real industry exposure from the outset, ensuring learning stays applied and outcome driven. Students will also engage

with 'Mentor Professors,' 'Professors of Practice from amongst senior industry leaders embedded within each department in formal faculty roles, a first-of-its-kind model. Complementing this, translational research anchors the university's academic framework, shaping both curriculum design and tangible impact. With this integrated approach, RISM aims to build a learning ecosystem where industry context, academic rigor, and translational research converge seamlessly. Speaking on the launch, Mr. Gurucharan Gollerkeri, Executive Director and Chief Strategy Officer, Gokula Education Foundation (Medical) said, "We are operating in a fast-changing, deeply interconnected global environment where the boundaries between disciplines, industries, and geographies are rapidly dissolving. Traditional education models are no longer sufficient to prepare students for this new reality. With RISM, we are addressing this shift by building an ecosystem that integrates technology, business, and applied learning in a way that mirrors how the real-world functions and is evolving."

Israeli 'double-tap' strike kills three rescue workers in Lebanon, officials say

Two successive Israeli air strikes on a building in southern Lebanon have killed five people, including three emergency workers, Lebanese officials say, in what the country's prime minister has described as a "war crime". The Lebanese health ministry said the three members of the Lebanese Civil Defense, a state-run emergency service, had been sent to rescue those wounded in the first strike in the town of Majdal Zoun on Tuesday. They were trapped under rubble caused by the second strike and later confirmed dead. The ministry did not identify the two other fatalities. Two Lebanese army soldiers were also wounded in the attack. The Israeli military has been approached for comment. It has previously failed to explain attacks on health professionals while they were on rescue missions. The tactic, known as "double tap", sees an initial



attack followed by a second or more - often hitting civilians and rescuers. It has been used by Israel in Lebanon and Gaza. Human rights groups say deliberate attacks on health workers could constitute a war crime. The latest conflict between Israel and Hezbollah - the Lebanese militia and political party

that is funded and armed by Iran - started on 2 March after the group fired rockets into Israel, which responded with widespread air strikes and a ground invasion of southern Lebanon. Since then, more than 2,500 people have been killed in Lebanon, including 103 health professionals, according to the Lebanese health

ministry. It does not distinguish between combatants and civilians but says the number includes at least 270 women and more than 170 children. Two civilians have been killed by Hezbollah attacks in Israel, while 16 Israeli soldiers and one civilian have been killed in Lebanon, Israeli authorities say. Last month, the BBC

spent several days with the Tyre-based Lebanese Civil Defense team that was attacked on Tuesday to report on the risks emergency teams in Lebanon face amid constant Israeli attacks. The three rescue workers killed on Tuesday were Hussein Ghadbouni, Hussein Sati and Hadi Daher. The strike happened amid a US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon that has led to a reduction in the hostilities but has failed to completely stop the war, particularly in southern Lebanon. Israel says its actions in Lebanon are in response to what it describes as violations of the deal by Hezbollah, which was not involved in the agreement but had indicated it would abide by its terms if the ceasefire was respected by Israel. The text of the deal gives the Israeli military the "right to take all necessary measures in self-defence, at any time, against

planned, imminent, or ongoing attacks" - phrasing that is broad enough to justify any action it takes. Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the "targeting" of the rescuers was a "war crime perpetrated by Israel", condemning Israel's "ongoing violations of the ceasefire". A 5 to 10km-deep strip along the border, amounting to about 5% of Lebanon's territory, remains under Israeli occupation, with Israeli officials saying they aim to create a security buffer zone to protect the country's northern communities. The Israeli military has also continued its air strikes and said it had hit Hezbollah infrastructure sites in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, killing "three Hezbollah terrorists" who had attacked its soldiers. A day earlier, it also hit the eastern Bekaa Valley, where Hezbollah has a strong presence and part of its arsenal is located.

Irish government announces further fuel supports after protests



The Irish government has announced further fuel supports for some workers and businesses, after nationwide protests in recent weeks. Irish government ministers are insisting the package of supports was being worked on by the government before the protests, which saw many major motorways, as well as the main street in the nation's capital, brought to effective standstill. Before nationwide protests kicked off, excise duty had already been cut on petrol and diesel. But since the protests there have been further cuts to diesel and petrol and a package of sup-

ports for farmers, hauliers and coach drivers has been promised. The details of this package were laid out by Irish government ministers on Wednesday at Government buildings in Dublin. The Road Transporters Supports Scheme is worth 120m (€104m) and is for hauliers and bus and coach operators. This scheme will be backdated to March and will apply from when average national diesel prices exceeded 1.90 per litre (€1.65) which is being benchmarked at the point at which fuel costs become unsustainable for commercial transport operators.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE KING'S HISTORIC ADDRESS TO CONGRESS



King Charles III's visit to the US was meant to be a celebration - of America's 250th anniversary, of enduring Anglo-American ties and of the "special relationship". But it has also been billed as a rescue mission. The current state of US-UK relations is strained - a reflection of British reluctance to fully back the joint US-Israeli war against Iran. So the King's goal has been to ease those tensions with a royal charm offensive, most notably with his joint address to Congress on Tuesday afternoon. The King spoke of the "reconciliation and renewal" that he said characterised the centuries of interactions between the two nations, a theme he returned to later at the White House state banquet. But there were also some lines in his speech, the first royal address to Congress since Queen Elizabeth II spoke at the Capitol in 1991, that may have buoyed Democrats - and raised eyebrows in the White House. Admitting you have a problem is the first step of recovery, as the saying goes. And so King Charles started his speech by diving right into the "times of great uncertainty" that confront both the US and the UK.

He ticked through conflicts in the Middle East and Europe - sources of recent contention between the US and the UK - while also noting the threat to democracy presented by the kind of political violence that upended Saturday night's White House Correspondents' Dinner. From there, the King pivoted to talking about the fact that the US and the UK haven't always seen eye to eye. "With the spirit of 1776 in our minds," he said, "we can perhaps agree that we do not always agree". That was all a set-up, however, for his conclusion that the two nations, when in alignment, can do great things "not just for the benefit of our peoples, but of all peoples". When King Charles noted that executive power "subject to checks and balances" was a British legal tradition, enshrined in the Magna Carta, which became a bedrock principle in the US Constitution, he received another standing ovation - with a twist. The cheers started on the Democratic side of the chamber, before spreading across the entire room. Donald Trump's critics on the left have frequently denounced the president for what they see as his abuse of power.

TWO DEAD AFTER SMALL PLANE CRASHES INTO AUSTRALIA AIRPORT HANGAR



Two people have died after a small plane crashed into a hangar at an airport in South Australia, authorities say. The aircraft burst into flames at Parafield Airport in Adelaide after it crashed on Wednesday afternoon local time. South Australian premier Peter Malinauskas wrote on social media that a "number of others" have been injured. The plane involved was a twin-engine

Diamond DA42, according to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB), which has launched an investigation into the accident. According to the manufacturer's website, each Diamond DA42 aircraft can seat up to four people. The South Australian police said in a statement that "the immediate area has been evacuated as emergency services deal with the incident".

Former US officials criticise Pentagon silence on deadly Iran school attack

Five former US officials, including a former top military lawyer, have criticised the Pentagon for not acknowledging potential American involvement in a deadly strike on an Iranian school earlier this year. Some of those officials said it was highly unusual not to release even basic details of the strike after such a length of time. A missile hit a primary school in Minab during the opening salvos of the US-Israeli war on February 28, killing 168 people including around 110 children according to Iranian officials. In the two months since then the Pentagon has said only that the incident is under investigation. US media reported in early March that US military investigators believed American forces were likely responsible



for hitting the school unintentionally but had not reached a final conclusion. Asked a series of questions by the BBC about the strike and the accusations of a lack of transparency, a Pentagon official said "this incident is currently under investigation," adding that more details would be provided when they became available. The BBC has reviewed three historical

cases in which civilians were killed during US military operations and in each case significantly more information had been released by the Pentagon within less than a month. The current US position "strikingly departs from the standard response," said Lt Col Rachel E VanLandingham, a retired Judge Advocate General in the US Air Force and former

senior legal adviser at US Central Command during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Administrations in the past at least demonstrated fidelity, a commitment to the law of war," said VanLandingham, who argued what was "missing" from the administration's statements was a commitment to accountability and "importantly to ensure this doesn't happen again". President Trump said on 7 March that in his "opinion" Iran was to blame for the Minab strike, without providing evidence. Days later, when asked about video showing a US Tomahawk hitting the military base next to the school, he said: "I haven't seen it" and claimed without evidence that Iran had Tomahawk missiles.

COMEY CHARGED WITH THREATENING TRUMP'S LIFE IN INSTAGRAM POST

Former FBI Director James Comey has been charged with threatening the life of US President Donald Trump, a formal accusation that stems from an image he briefly shared on social media. The image posted on Instagram last year showed seashells forming the numbers "86 47". "Eighty-six" is a slang term used to mean "eject" or "remove". Comey has insisted he did not know what the numbers on the image meant, but Trump and other administration officials have said the post was a threat against the 47th president. Responding to the charges on Tuesday, Comey said: "I'm still innocent, I'm still not afraid, and I still

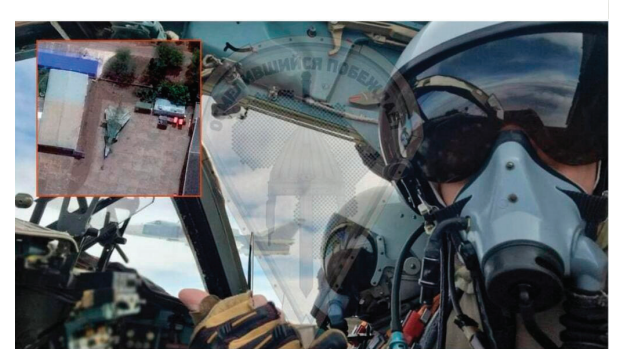


believe in the independent federal judiciary." At a press conference to announce the indictment, FBI Director Kash Patel said that as the former director of the agency, Comey "knew full well the attention and consequences of making such a post". "James Comey disgracefully

encouraged a threat on President Trump's life and posted it on Instagram for the world to see," Kash Patel said on Tuesday. Comey was fired by Trump during his first term, after the former FBI director opened an investigation into Russian interference in the US 2016 presiden-

tial election. Since then, Trump has repeatedly called for his prosecution - Tuesday's charges are the administration's second attempt to do so. "Well, they're back. This time about a picture of sea shells on a North Carolina beach a year ago. And this won't be the end of it, but nothing has changed with me," Comey said in a statement. Comey faces charges of making a threat against the president and transmitting a threat in interstate commerce, according to court documents. Each charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The criminal charges were filed in the Eastern District of North Carolina.

RUSSIAN PARAMILITARY CARRIED OUT AIR STRIKES IN MALI AS REBELS ADVANCED, FOOTAGE SHOWS



A Russian paramilitary launched air strikes against rebel forces near Mali's capital Bamako, video footage shows, following a shock offensive against the ruling military government. Jihadist and Tuareg separatist forces on Saturday carried out attacks across Mali and killed the country's Defence Minister Sadio Camara. Russian forces claimed up to 12,000 fighters took part in the offensive. The Kremlin-controlled Africa Corps, which supports Malian military operations, has posted several videos since Saturday showing air strikes and attack helicopters engaging with rebel troops. BBC Verify located the clips to the town of Kati, around 20km (12 miles) from Bamako. Despite the show of force, the mercenaries confirmed that they have pulled out of Kidal in northern Mali, which housed significant numbers of troops and was at the core of the military's operations in the region. Verified footage now shows rebels roaming the base. Mali has

fought a long-running conflict against a broad array of rebel groups for more than a decade. Military leaders seized power in 2020 after accusing the civilian administration of failing to properly manage the security situation. Since then the military has had limited success targeting the al-Qaeda linked Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) group and the separatist Azawad Liberation Front (FLA), with Bamako coming under a blockade late last year. But the latest attacks mark a "major escalation in the conflict" between the military government and the rebels, said Jean-Hervé Jezequel, Sahel director with the International Crisis Group. Fighting has been recorded across the country, with BBC Verify confirming 22 videos showing rebel movements in seven locations since Saturday. "Whereas JNIM's strategy initially relied primarily on conquering rural or peripheral areas, it now also targets major cities," Jezequel said.

FRANCE URGES CITIZENS TO LEAVE MALI AFTER REBEL ATTACKS

France has urged its citizens to leave Mali "as soon as possible", after a weekend of coordinated attacks by separatist fighters and Islamist militants. In an update on Wednesday, the advice also warned French citizens not to travel to the West African nation, describing the situation as "extremely volatile". Explosions and sustained gunfire were reported across the country, including the capital, Bamako on Saturday. In Kati, the defence leader Sadio Camara was killed in an apparent suicide bombing by militants, while in the north, separatist forces have taken control of the city of Kidal. Mali's military leader Gen Assimi Goïta said the security situation in the country was under control. Speaking in public for

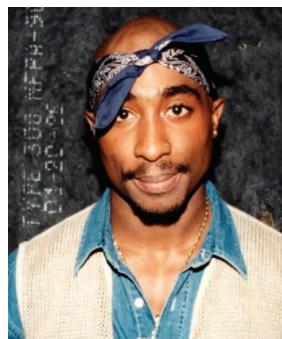


the first time on Tuesday evening, he said the army had dealt a "violent blow" to the attackers, and signalled operations were still ongoing. The foreign ministry of France, Mali's former colonial power, said: "French nationals are advised to make arrangements to leave Mali temporarily as soon as possible on the commercial flights that are still avail-

able." Pending their departure, they should stay at home, limit their movements and follow instructions from local authorities, it said, adding that they should also keep their relatives informed. "Travel to Mali is still strongly discouraged, regardless of the reason." The UK has also advised "against all travel to Mali due to the unpredictable security

conditions", and asked its citizens to leave. The travel guidelines - which have been in place since the weekend - told British citizens in Mali to "leave immediately by commercial flight if you judge it safe to do so". It also warned them not to travel by land to neighbouring countries, deeming it "too dangerous" due to what it called "terrorist attacks along national highways". "If you choose to remain in Mali, you do so at your own risk. You should have a personal emergency plan that does not rely on the UK government," the foreign office added. Bamako International Airport is currently open, but travellers have been warned to check the latest information in case of delays or cancellations.

TUPAC'S FAMILY FILES WRONGFUL DEATH LAWSUIT IN LA



The family of the late rapper Tupac Shakur has filed a wrongful death lawsuit in Los Angeles, seeking unspecified damages tied to the artist's murder in 1996. The suit names former gang leader Duane "Keefe D" Davis, who is currently awaiting trial for his alleged role in the shooting, as the main defendant, alongside additional unnamed co-conspirators.

Davis is the only person ever charged in connection with Tupac's death, after years of investigations. He has pleaded not guilty. The new lawsuit, reported by several US media outlets, alleges there was a "complex conspiracy" to murder the star, and says its aim is to uncover the identity of the "individuals who were involved" through discovery. Shakur was one of the most prominent rappers of the early 1990s, selling more than 75 million records, including hit singles Hit Em Up and California Love. He also had a burgeoning acting career, with roles in Juice, Above the Rim and Poetic Justice. But his career came to an abrupt halt when he was shot four times in a drive-by attack in Las Vegas in September 1996.



IPL 2026: Mumbai Indians Set 343/5 Target for Sunrisers Hyderabad

Ryan Rickelton slammed his maiden IPL century as Mumbai Indians posted a massive total of 243 for 5 in 20 overs against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their IPL 2026 game at the Wankhede Stadium tonight. Rickelton brought up his ton in 44 balls, becoming the fastest MI batter to reach the mark. He and Will Jacks added 93 runs off 43 balls for the opening wicket. Jacks was dismissed for 46 off 22, while Rickelton carried his bat on 123 off 55, the highest score by an MI batter. Earlier, MI captain Hardik Pandya won the toss and opted to bat first. Rohit Sharma was not part of the Mumbai Indians' playing XI during their IPL 2026 encounter against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Mumbai on Wednesday. Rohit, who missed the last three matches for MI due to a hamstring injury, was not fully cleared to play against SRH. Rohit picked up the injury during the game against Royal



Challengers Bengaluru on April 12, where he showed signs of hamstring discomfort and had to receive treatment on the field. At the toss on Wednesday, MI captain Hardik Pandya said that Rohit will need a couple more games to come back, adding that he has been trying to get match-fit. "Ro is going to take a couple more games. He has been trying,

but he is not exactly where he would want to be. So, he is not available for this game. I just want to come out and play my best cricket. That will definitely help the group and the team." Mumbai Indians won the toss and elected to bat against Sunrisers Hyderabad. Mumbai Indians made multiple changes to their lineup, bringing in Ryan Rickelton,

Will Jacks, Robin Minz, and Trent Boult, while Quinton de Kock, Sherfane Rutherford, Shardul Thakur, and Krish Bhagat missed out. Meanwhile, Sunrisers Hyderabad drafted in Travis Head and Harsh Dube in place of Aniket Verma and Shivang Kumar as they tweaked their combination for the clash. Playing XIs: Sunrisers Hyderabad:

Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head, Ishan Kishan (wk), Heinrich Klaasen, Salil Arora, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Pat Cummins (c), Harsh Dube, Sakib Hussain, Praful Hinge, Eshan Malinga. Impact substitutes: Smaran Ravichandran, Aniket Verma, Harshal Patel, Shivang Kumar, Liam Livingstone. Mumbai Indians: Ryan Rickelton (wk), Will Jacks, Naman Dhir, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya (c), Robin Minz, Trent Boult, Jasprit Bumrah, Allah Mohammad Ghazanfar, Ashwani Kumar. Impact substitutes: Raj Anag Bawa, Shardul Thakur, Raghu Sharma, Mayank Rawat, Krish Bhagat. 6, 4 - Ryan Rickelton finishes the Mumbai Indians innings on a high. The side has posted 243 on the board, with the southpaw carrying his bat on 123 not out off 55 balls. His innings was laced with 10 fours and eight sixes.

'Joshua warm-up defeat would scupper Fury fight'



Tyson Fury could take an interim fight before facing Anthony Joshua, but the long-awaited heavyweight showdown will not happen if Joshua loses his warm-up bout in July, says promoter Frank Warren. Britons Fury and Joshua - both two-time world champions - have signed a deal to fight this year. But Joshua, 36, must first get past little-known Albanian Kristian Prenga on 25 July in Saudi Arabia. "If he loses to this guy, it kills the fight," Warren told. The head of Queensberry Promotions, which represents 37-year-old Fury, said the 'Gypsy King' will earn a career-high payday against Joshua, surpassing the reported £80m he earned against Oleksandr Usyk in 2024.

Question Of Privacy Was Raised By IPL Captains Before Riyan Parag Was Caught On Video Vaping In Dressing Room

After Riyan Parag's vaping row, in which the Rajasthan Royals captain was video-graphed indulging in the act in the dressing room during a match against Punjab Kings, a report by news agency PTI said that IPL and BCCI officials involved in the conduct of the tournament termed it a careless act in the age of social media and intrusive television cameras. A "well-placed IPL source" added: "A lot of players consume e-cigarettes, but they don't do it in the dressing room. It is too risky and careless to be doing that with so many cameras around. With Parag caught vaping so openly, the BCCI might be forced to act," said the source. Another IPL source told PTI that the issue of players' privacy in the



dressing room was raised at the captains' meeting in Mumbai ahead of IPL 2026. Some of the captains had objected to cameras panning to the dressing room during live broadcasts. "It was not specifically related to the use of e-cigarettes in the dressing room. It was broadly about players' privacy. There are times when play-

ers are not fully dressed in the dressing room or may want to avoid cameras. "They were told that it is up to the broadcaster, and not the BCCI, to decide whether cameras show feeds from the dressing room. After this incident, it may perhaps be reviewed." Having said that, it was careless of Parag, and it is difficult to defend some-

thing like this. An elite athlete being caught smoking like this does not set a good example for the public," said the source. As per the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), 2019, "no person shall, directly or indirectly, (i) produce or manufacture or import or export or transport or sell or distribute electronic cigarettes, whether as a complete product or any part thereof; and (ii) advertise electronic cigarettes or take part in any advertisement that directly or indirectly promotes the use of electronic cigarettes. "...no person, being the owner, occupier, or having control or use of any place, shall knowingly permit it to be used for storage of any stock of electronic cigarettes."

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi "Might Just Leave For Mumbai Indians"? England Great Throws 'Player Retention' Possibility

When Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was picked by Rajasthan Royals at the IPL 2025 auction for Rs 1.1 crore, many said it was a wild bet. RR's Director of Cricket, Zubin Bharucha, however, recently revealed that he had told the franchise to keep up to Rs 10 crore aside just for Sooryavanshi. Bharucha added that his first impression of the youngster had left him in awe. The 15-year-old has repaid that faith this season. His scores so far in IPL 2026 are 52, 31, 39, 78, 0, 46, 8, 103 and 43. He currently sits atop the run-getters' list with 400 runs in nine innings at an average of 44.44 and a strike rate of 238.09. He is the first player in IPL 2026 to reach the 400-run mark. Stuart Broad, the



former England fast bowler, presented an interesting perspective while lauding Rajasthan Royals' scouting system. "Fair play to Rajasthan Royals' scouting system or academy system whatever they have done. I remember when they signed him at the auction - he was 14, maybe even 13 - and I thought it was a bit

odd for top-flight domestic cricket to bring in someone so young. That's a lot of pressure, just having him around the squad for three years. What's the point of that? It's not as if you can sign him on a 10-year contract; he might just leave for the Mumbai Indians or something if given an opportunity," Broad told

former England teammate Jos Buttler on the For the Love of Cricket podcast. "I mean, to be fair, when he walks into his next player retention, he can go into the auction, if he wants, 'you have to give me some sort of numbers.'" Former RR batter Buttler, who is currently playing for Gujarat Titans, was full of praise for Sooryavanshi, particularly for hitting bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins for first-ball sixes. "He is only 15, and he is playing with the fearlessness of peak Chris Gayle or Virender Sehwag-except those guys were 30 or 35 when they were doing it. He is just consistently wrecking bowlers around the park. It's outrageous.

Zinc Football Academy Finishes As Runners-Up In AIFF U-18 Elite League 2025/26

Zinc Football Academy's historic campaign in the AIFF U-18 Elite League 2025-26 concluded with a 0-3 loss in the final against defending champions Punjab FC in Mahilpur, Punjab. Making their debut in the final, ZFA knew the challenge ahead would be immense... facing an experienced Punjab FC side in their home state. But true to their journey so far, the young boys stepped up and showed their mettle once again. The first half was a closely contested affair. ZFA matched the defending champions stride for stride, going neck-to-neck in an intense battle. Both teams played positive football, and the crowd witnessed a high-quality contest with chances at both ends. However, the turning point came midway

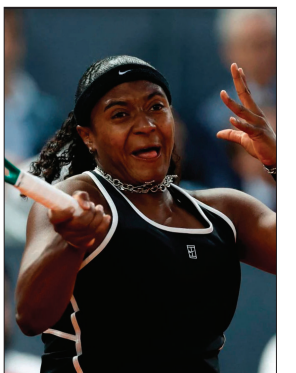


through the second half. Punjab FC struck twice in quick succession, scoring two goals in the span of just two minutes to take control of the match. The sudden shift in momentum proved decisive, and despite ZFA's efforts to respond, Punjab FC added a third goal later to seal the result. The final whistle confirmed a 3-0 victory

for Punjab FC. ZFA finish as runners-up. Deservedly, the second best Under-18 team in India. While the result didn't go their way, this campaign will be remembered as a landmark in the ZFA's journey. From reaching their first-ever semi-final to making it all the way to the final.

Hailey Baptiste Ends Aryna Sabalenka's Madrid Open Title Defence

Hailey Baptiste ended Aryna Sabalenka's title defence in Madrid on Tuesday and halted the world number one's 15-match winning streak with a 2-6, 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) quarter-final victory to deliver the biggest shock of the tournament so far. The American saved five match points at 4-5 in the decider and a sixth in the tiebreak before she handed Sabalenka just her second defeat of the year, and her first since the Australian Open final three months ago. Sabalenka is a three-time champion in Madrid and reached the final in the Spanish capital in each of the last three editions of the event but was unable to shake off the 30th-seeded Baptiste, who prepared her with huge serves



and ultra-aggressive groundstrokes to reach a maiden WTA 1000 semi-final. Baptiste came up with huge serves in several crucial moments - finishing the duel with a total of 12 aces and 10 double faults - and even saved a match point with a bold serve-and-volley approach on her way to a memorable two-hour

30-minute triumph. "I feel incredible... It was a super tight match, 7-6 in the third, I had to fight off some match points," Baptiste said. "It just shows me where my game lies, and I've always believed it. And I feel like now I'm starting to put it into action, and the world is seeing it as well. So I'm very confident right now." Next up for the 24-year-old Baptiste is ninth-seeded Mirra Andreeva, who gave herself an early birthday gift by defeating Canadian Leylah Fernandez 7-6(7/1), 6-3 to reach her first Madrid semi-final. The Russian teenager, who turns 19 on Wednesday, was a recent champion in Linz and improved her clay-court record to 11-1 this season.

Babar Azam Equals Virat Kohli, Abhishek Sharma's Big T20 Feat With Blistering Ton In PSL



Babar Azam smashed yet another century as Peshawar Zalmi defeated Islamabad United in the Qualifier of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2026 on Tuesday. Batting first, Peshawar posted an imposing total of 221/7, with Babar leading the charge by scoring a brilliant 103 off just 59 balls. In reply, Islamabad United were bowled out for 151, suffering a heavy 70-run defeat. With this comprehensive win, Peshawar Zalmi sealed their place in the final of PSL 2026, scheduled to be played on May 3. Apart from guiding his team into the final, it was a memorable night for Babar, who also etched his name into the record books. The knock marked Babar's ninth T20 century as captain, the most by any skipper in the format. He went past South Africa's Faf du Plessis, who previously held the record with eight hundreds. The elite list also includes India's Virat Kohli, who is fourth with five centuries as captain. Babar also drew level with Kohli and Abhishek Sharma for the most T20 centuries in a single country. While Kohli and

Abhishek have eight T20 hundreds in India, Babar now has eight T20 centuries in Pakistan. In PSL history, this was Babar's fourth century, joint-most in the tournament alongside Usman Khan. He has now amassed 588 runs in PSL 2026, equalling Fakhar Zaman's record for the most runs in a single PSL season, set in 2022. "I'm starting to feel like I'm getting back to my best. I'm trying to keep things simple, trust my skills, and play according to the situation - what the pitch demands, how to handle different bowlers, and when to attack. The hard work I put in before the PSL is helping now. Things weren't the same earlier, but they're starting to come back, and I want to keep this consistency going," Babar said after the match. "When you get a good start in the first six overs, it gives you a cushion to play your natural game and maintain the run rate. The way Haris plays and puts pressure on the opposition helps, and then I just try to play my role and carry that momentum forward," he added.

A record-breaking semi-final - the antidote to modern football?

Every once in a while a match comes along that reminds us all why football is referred to as the beautiful game. Paris St-Germain's record-breaking 5-4 Champions League semi-final first-leg victory over Bayern Munich was one such occasion. It was the highest scoring semi-final since Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers 6-3 in the 1959-60 European Cup - and will live long in the memory. Not for its tactical genius or calculated gameplans, but for two sides with remarkable attacking quality throwing everything at it in the hope of securing a place in next month's final in Budapest. In a campaign where set-pieces



have become king, defensive interventions are celebrated like goals and the long throw-in has made a comeback, this was a refreshing reminder that simply scoring more goals than your opponent

can be the key to success. Bayern opened the scoring in a breathless first half, but defending European champions PSG came back in thrilling style to gain a three-goal advantage at 5-2 and

surely put one foot in the showpiece. But the German champions showed their tenacity and talent to reduce the deficit to one and ensure they remain in the tie for next week's return leg in

Munich. As pundits and fans celebrated an extraordinary advert for the game, PSG boss Luis Enrique enjoyed it too. "It was amazing. I think it was the best match I have ever managed as a coach," he said. "It had amazing rhythm, trying to play offensive football, trying to show their quality. I think everybody had fun watching the match. I'm happy because we won." This is the way to play football! The tone was set for a dazzling European encounter when both sets of fans unfurled giant tifos before kick-off - PSG's was emblazoned with the words 'the conquest of Europe', while the visitors' banner urged their side to 'give everything'. In a chaotic

opening 45 minutes at the Parc des Princes, both sides did just that. It was fitting the two top-scoring sides in the Champions League this season put five goals on the scoreboard in a mesmerising, end-to-end opening period. Harry Kane's penalty was cancelled out by Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's clinical finish, before Joao Neves' glancing header and Michael Olise's moment of individual brilliance left the sides level. Many will suggest the PSG penalty, awarded after Bayern defender Alphonso Davies was deemed to have handled an Ousmane Dembele cross in the box, was harsh. Dembele calmly converted to give PSG a 3-2 lead at the break.

Kara Is a Solid Family Drama with Strong Emotional and Thrilling Elements” – CH Satish Kumar

With Kara gearing up for its theatrical release on April 30, 2026, the film is steadily building momentum in the Telugu market. Starring Dhanush and directed by Vignesh Raja, the film is being presented in Telugu by CH Satish Kumar under Vigneshwara Entertainments, marking a focused push into the region. Vigneshwara Entertainments has built a steady presence in Telugu distribution over the years, backing films such as Kabali, Singham 3, Arjun Reddy, Khakee and Salaar. With a mix of large-scale commercial releases and content-driven films, the banner now brings Kara to Telugu audiences. In a recent interaction, CH Satish Kumar spoke about acquiring the film, its content strength, and expectations for the Telugu release.

Q: What's your background?

Satish: I hail from Visakhapatnam. I started slowly with small film distribution. Over the years I became capable of handling big films too. For Uttarandhra, I distributed Arjun Reddy, Kabali, and Singham 3. I also handled Dharmayogi (Dhanush's Kodi in Telugu), which did good business and received a good reception. I also distributed Khakee in Telugu. Since then, I've wanted to get into production.

Q: Going solo? Or do you have partners?

Satish: Solo.

Q: Since no one is purchasing the movie after seeing it, did you make the choice based on Dhanush's market?

Satish: No entirely. More than stars, content is driving the market. So based on the content and Dhanush sir's following, I made the choice.

Q: Kubera is a straight film, while Idli Kottu and Tere Ishq Mein are dubbed ones. Based on their performances in Telugu, don't you think this film is a bit risky?

Satish: Raayan was a success in Telugu too, while Idli Kottu had great content, somehow they couldn't take the film to the audience's doorstep. So, I took proper measures not to



repeat it with my film.

Q: The producer mentioned that you chased him for quite some time?

Satish: See, for any good content film, even big producers try to acquire it quite early. But I was more persistent with the producer to bag the film, and he saw that and gave me confidence that he would sell the film to me only.

Q: Where do you stand on the business aspect?

Satish: We've already covered 80% of the film.

Q: The trailer shows many things, including a bank robbery. What would you say about the movie?

Satish: Well, I can't reveal much about the film, but I'd say it's the story of a man who is caught up in some dire situations and pulls himself up from them. Bank robbery is also a part of it, but this is not a heist film. The film has many strong elements of family.

Jetlee is a comedy thriller that will entertain everyone. Along with comedy, it also has a good story. It will definitely be a workout: Producer Cherry

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

• What elements did you like when director Ritesh told this story?

This is a completely different subject. Almost 80 percent of the film takes place in a flight. That is a very interesting point. So far, no film in the Telugu film industry has taken place entirely in a flight. Ritesh always comes up with different stories. I really liked it when he told the story. We have a good relationship. I treat him like my son. I am grateful to him. I like most of the stories he tells. Working with him is very comfortable.

• Mythri Movie Makers makes big movies. You are



making concept-based movies, right? What is your plan?

-Mythri Movie Makers is the biggest banner in India. It is a source of pride for the Telugu film industry. I am proud to see production under that banner. Movies are coming out with big combinations under Mythri. I am interested in making short films and experimental films. We chose stories that were less risky from a production point of view and made films like 'Mathu Vadalara', 'Happy Birthday', 'Meter' and 'Jetli'. Although 'Happy Birthday' and 'Meter' did not perform as well as expected in theatres, they gave good results commercially.

EPIC - FIRST SEMESTER TEASER SCORES FULL MARKS

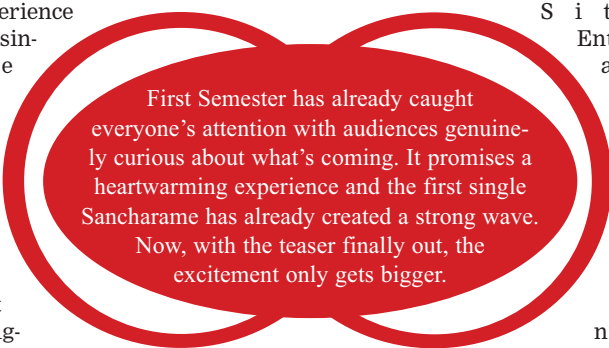


EPIC - First Semester has already caught everyone's attention with audiences genuinely curious about what's coming. It promises a heartwarming experience and the first single

feels like a winner. Music is composed by Hesham Abdul Wahab, first single of EPIC, Sancharame has struck a chord with audiences trending

character and Vaishnavi bringing alive an extroverted, expressive role.

Produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under



First Semester has already caught everyone's attention with audiences genuinely curious about what's coming. It promises a heartwarming experience and the first single Sancharame has already created a strong wave. Now, with the teaser finally out, the excitement only gets bigger.

Sancharame has already created a strong wave. Now, with the teaser finally out, the excitement only gets bigger.

And it delivers nothing short of a beautiful experience with Anand Deverakonda and Vaishnavi Chaitanya at its heart. After Baby, this pair already holds a cult following and here they return with a completely fresh and evolved dynamic. Directed by debutant Aditya Haasan, known for the 90's web series, the film marks his entry onto the big screen and it already

across platforms and further amplifying the film's growing anticipation.

With a vibrant London backdrop, this one comes across as a relatable and engaging love story.

The film appears to explore contemporary relationships and the evolving dynamics of love, presenting a contrast in personalities. With Anand portraying an introverted

Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Cinemas and presented by Sri Kar Studios, the film boasts strong technical backing with cinematography by Azeem Mohammad,

production design by Avinash Kolla and editing by Navin Nooli.

With the teaser now out and Sancharame already emerging as a musical hit, EPIC - FIRST SEMESTER is gearing up for a grand release with more exciting updates expected soon.

'Doordarshini', Inspired by a True Incident, Will Touch Every Heart: Hero Suvikshit

A feel-good romantic entertainer titled 'Doordarshini', starring Suvikshit and Geethika Ratan in the lead roles, is being ed based on a real-life incident. Carrying the tagline "Kalipindi Iddarini" (It United Two Hearts), the film is directed by Karthikeya Kommi and produced by Jaya Shankar Reddy M and Patimeedi Santosh under the Varaha Movie Makers banner. Having completed all formalities, the film is set for release on May 15. Ahead of the release, the team organized a promotional meet in Hyderabad on Wednesday. Speaking at the event, Gemini Suresh said, "After overcoming several hurdles, the film has finally locked its release date. On May 15, tune



your 'heart's antenna' towards 'Doordarshini'. This is a film that will deeply move audiences and bring a good name to everyone involved. I was given a

unique role, and I'm confident that my character, along with others, will be appreciated. This film feels like homemade comfort food—it gives you the experience of

revisiting village life and brings back fond memories." Director Karthikeya Kommi shared, "Many think this is just a love story, but it has elements that will appeal to parents, youth, and society at large. It brings back memories of the 1990s, especially the days when people eagerly waited for programs like 'Chitralahari'. The film is rich in emotion and will touch every heart. It will take audiences back to their golden days. This film will earn Suvikshit a good name as a hero. We are delighted that notable personalities are supporting our film. I request everyone to watch and support 'Doordarshini' on May 15. The climax will leave audiences thinking, and the emotional impact will linger long after the film ends.

"First Time" movie Trailer launched grandly by actress Payal Rajput - Releasing on 22nd May



Though it is a low-budget film, First Time is being made as one of the biggest VFX-based movies in India. The film is written, directed, and produced by Hemant Ippalappalli. The trailer was launched on the 28th in a grand manner with the hands of Payal Rajput as the chief guest. The movie introduces Saurabh Dhingra as the hero.

Akhil Sarthak plays the second lead, and Anicka Vikraman is the heroine. Other actors include Mime Gopi, Shiva, Bhuoopal Raju, Gayatri Gupta, Annapurnamma, Ajay Rathnam, and Dhee Pandu. Music is composed by Sri Venkat and Sooraj S. Kurup, while cinematography is handled by Venu Muralidhar and Ram. Even it is a small budget.

the director has not compromised on quality. The movie is being made with high-quality visuals and graphics using human intelligence (HI), without using AI. Many guests attended the event, including senior producer-director Bellam Ramakrishna Reddy, BJP spokesperson Prabha Goud, Zee Chief Editor Bharath Kumar, and actor Abhinav Shaurva. Actor

'Abhinav Shaurva' says: He is a big fan of Payal Rajput and praised the trailer, calling it was shot as Hollywood-level. He wished the movie to be a great success. BJP spokesperson 'Prabha Goud' says: The trailer reminded her of Indian culture, roots, and values. He believes the film will connect well with today's youth. ZEE Chief Editor 'Bharath Kumar' says: he had heard the story earlier and appreciated the director's talent. He mentioned that making such a film with limited resources is very difficult and wished the team success. Actress 'Gayatri Gupta' says: she was selected without an audition and appreciated the director's vision. She felt connected to the film because of its theme related to Sanatana Dharma. Hero 'Saurabh Dhingra' says: That he worked hard for many years to reach this stage and thanked Payal Rajput for being there for him in all ways and thanked the team for their support.

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