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INBRIFS

ECI HANDS MALDA JUDICIAL OFFICERS' HARASSMENT PROBE TO CBI



Kolkata, April 2 : The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday evening handed over the probe into the harassment of seven judicial adjudication officers at Kaliachak in minority-dominated Malda district to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Earlier in the day, a division bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Surya Kant, strongly denounced the incident, describing it as evidence of a complete law and order failure in West Bengal, and directed that the matter be probed either by the CBI or the National Investigation Agency (NIA). However, the apex court left the final decision to the ECI on whether to entrust the probe to the CBI or the NIA. The ECI subsequently chose the CBI to investigate the matter. The CBI is expected to submit its preliminary report to the Supreme Court on April 6. The apex court also issued notices to West Bengal Chief Secretary Dushyant Nariala, Director General of Police Sidh Nath Gupta, Home Secretary Sanghamitra Ghosh, and the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police of Malda.

TENSION IN NEEMUCH AFTER MINOR GIRL MOLESTED; PROTESTS TURN VIOLENT

Neemuch, April 2 : Tension gripped Parda village under the Manasa police station area in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district after an incident of molestation of a 13-year-old girl allegedly by a 55-year-old man. The accused, identified as Abdul Rahman, allegedly lured the minor girl to his house when she was alone and subjected her to inappropriate acts. Upon returning from a religious function around 10.30 p.m., the girl narrated the ordeal to her parents. She also alleged that the accused threatened her with dire consequences and tried to silence her by offering Rs 50.



Police registered a case based on the complaint and arrested Abdul Rahman from a friend's residence after he was found missing from his house. However, the arrest triggered outrage in the village.

On Thursday morning, as news of the incident spread, villagers along with activists from Hindu organisations staged a protest. The crowd blocked a major road intersection and raised slogans demanding the demolition of the accused's house. The situation escalated when some protesters entered the accused's house and began vandalising it, throwing household items onto the road. When police tried to intervene, the mob allegedly pelted stones at the officers. To bring the situation under control, police fired tear gas shells and used mild force. Additional Superintendent of Police Naval Singh Sisodia said, "Villagers were protesting against the molestation incident, but some anti-social elements took the law into their own hands and resorted to stone-pelting."

CM Revanth Challenges Opposition, Unveils UDF Manifesto in Kerala



Kochi (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday dared opposition leaders to visit Telangana and witness the implementation of the Congress government's "Six Guarantees," asserting that the state has emerged as a model for governance and welfare.

Releasing the United Democratic Front (UDF) manifesto for the Kerala Assembly elections in Kochi, he said he would personally demonstrate the schemes if Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his team visit Telangana.

Launching a sharp attack, Revanth Reddy alleged that the governments led by K. Chandrashekar Rao and Vijayan were marked by corruption and administrative failures. He expressed confidence that Kerala would soon witness political change similar to

Telangana. In a pointed remark, he referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vijayan as "Modi Brothers," criticizing their governance styles and asserting that central funds are the rightful share of the people, not charity.

Highlighting Telangana's initiatives, he said the Congress government implemented key guarantees from its first Cabinet meeting, including farm loan waivers, free bus travel for women, free electricity, job recruitment, and housing schemes.

The UDF manifesto outlines "Indira's Five Guarantees," promising free bus travel for women, Rs.1,000 monthly assistance to female students, Rs.3,000 pensions, Rs.25 lakh health insurance, and interest-free loans for youth.

Six Indian ships safely crossed Strait of Hormuz

INDIA REMAINS IN TOUCH WITH IRAN: MEA

New Delhi, April 2 : The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday said that six Indian ships carrying products like LPG, LNG, have safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz so far as New Delhi remains in touch with Iran and other countries for safe transit of Indian ships amid the ongoing conflict in the region.

Addressing a weekly media briefing in New Delhi, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal also confirmed India's participation in a meeting on Strait of Hormuz being hosted by the UK later on Thursday.

When asked whether Indian government is in talks with Iran and other nations for expediting the movement of 18 Indian-flagged vessels carrying crude oil and LPG that are stranded in the Persian Gulf, Jaiswal responded, "We are in touch with Iran and other countries there to see how best we can get unimpeded transit and safe transit for our ships which are carrying products, including LPG, LNG and other products. Through this conversation that we have had over the last several days, we have



had six Indian ships which have been able to safely cross Hormuz and we continue to be in touch with relevant parties on this matter."

In response to another question, he said, "The UK side has invited several countries, including India, for talks on the Strait of Hormuz. From our side, Foreign Secretary is attending the meeting this evening." The ongoing conflict in West Asia has raised concerns over regional stability and global energy markets, particularly due to the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil transit route.

When asked about certain

reports which mentioned that India is paying toll for transit of Indian ships through the Strait of Hormuz, Jaiswal responded, "We had clarified this issue earlier as well. There has been no discussion of this nature between us and Iran."

Last month, Iran announced that it will not impose restrictions on vessels belonging to five "friendly" countries, including India, allowing them to pass through the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz even as access remains limited for others. In an interview with Iranian state television, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi clarified that the Strait of Hormuz has not been completely shut and that certain countries with which Iran maintains friendly relations have been exempted from restrictions.

"There is no reason to allow the enemy to pass through the Strait. We have permitted certain countries that we consider friendly to pass through; we allowed China, Russia, India, Iraq, and Pakistan to transit," Araghchi was quoted as saying by Iran's official news agency.

India secures crude oil supplies for next 60 days amid global volatility : Govt

New Delhi (TSIT) India has secured crude oil supplies for the next 60 days and maintains adequate inventory levels, with refineries operating at maximum capacity, the government said on Thursday, underlining that there is no shortage of key inputs and no increase in domestic fuel prices despite global volatility.

Addressing a media briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said crude availability remains stable and sulphur supplies are sufficient. Retail fuel outlets across the country are functioning normally, she added. Sharma said the government has taken proactive steps to cushion consumers from global price fluctuations. "To keep prices stable, the Government of India has reduced excise duty, while a portion of the burden is also being absorbed by Oil Marketing Companies," she noted. She further assured that natural gas supply to domestic consumers remains fully secure, with availability maintained at 100 per cent. Separately, Aseem R Mahajan, Additional Secretary (Gulf), said the government is closely monitoring the evolving situation in the Gulf and West Asia, with the safety and welfare of Indian nationals as the top priority.

Historic Win for Andhra Pradesh: Amaravati Bill Gets Parliament Nod

AMARAVATI/NEW DELHI, April 2 (TSIT): In a landmark development, the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill-2026 was unanimously passed in Parliament, drawing strong reactions from across the political spectrum. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu welcomed the decision, describing it as a historic moment that fulfills the long-standing aspirations of the people of the state.

Expressing his happiness, the Chief Minister said the recognition of Amaravati as the capital city is a matter of pride for every Andhra citizen. He emphasized that the passage of the bill removes all uncertainties and firmly establishes Amaravati as the sole public capital of Andhra Pradesh.

Naidu extended his sincere thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his consistent support to the state. He



noted that from the foundation stone laying in 2015 to the reconstruction phase in 2025, the Prime Minister has played a crucial role in Amaravati's journey. He also acknowledged the cooperation of the Central Government, Union Home Minister Amit Shah,

and all political parties that supported the bill in Parliament, calling it a collective effort in the interest of the state.

Dedicating the achievement to the farmers of Amaravati, the Chief Minister said their sacrifices and resilience will always be remembered. "Their commitment to the capital city has made this moment possible," he remarked.

Highlighting the broader significance, Naidu said the decision marks the end of the uncertainty that followed state bifurcation and signals a fresh beginning for Andhra Pradesh's development. He expressed confidence that Amaravati will soon evolve into a world-class, sustainable city and a symbol of the state's growth. "With this, a new chapter begins for Andhra Pradesh. Amaravati is now unstoppable," the Chief Minister asserted.

Russia's Manturov calls on PM Modi, discusses further strengthening of strategic partnership

New Delhi, April 2 : Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, briefing him on the progress in various areas of bilateral cooperation, including trade and economic partnership, fertilizers, connectivity and people-to-people ties. During the meeting, PM Modi recalled Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India in December last year for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), PM Modi expressed satisfaction at the efforts made by the two nations towards implementation of the outcomes from the Annual Summit aimed to further strengthen the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic



Partnership. "PM extended warm greetings to President Putin and said that he looked forward to their continued exchanges," PMO stated. Earlier in the day, Manturov held a meeting with Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman, discussing strengthening of trade and investment ties besides issues of mutual interest.

"Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt.

Nirmala Sitharaman met Mr. Denis Manturov, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, in New Delhi today. The two leaders exchanged views on strengthening trade and investment ties and discussed issues of mutual interest," the Ministry of Finance posted on X.

Manturov arrived in New Delhi early on Thursday for high-level discussions covering defence, energy, trade and a range of other bilateral issues.

In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "A warm welcome to Mr Denis Manturov, First Deputy Chairman of the Russian Federation and co-Chair of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, to New Delhi."

Govt to roll out new measures to support exporters amid West Asia conflict: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, April 2: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said the government is preparing a fresh set of measures to help Indian exporters navigate disruptions in global trade caused by the ongoing conflict in West Asia. He indicated that several decisions are currently under consideration across ministries and are likely to be announced soon.

Addressing concerns over the impact of the conflict, Goyal said the war has adversely affected the global economy and trade flows, particularly due to the loss of lives and destruction of property. He also highlighted the challenges in the free movement of goods through open seas, expressing hope that the situation would stabilise quickly. Despite these global headwinds, the minister



asserted that India has remained resilient, especially in terms of food and energy security. "The country continues to be pretty much insulated and strong, with adequate availability of key energy supplies," he noted.

"Consumers are receiving uninterrupted LPG supplies, while industrial LNG availability has been restored to

around 80 per cent, with several sectors already receiving full supplies," he explained.

Goyal further emphasised that there is no shortage of petroleum products in the country, with refineries operating at full capacity.

"India has sufficient crude oil stocks, along with steady incoming shipments of crude, LPG, and LNG to ensure

future supply stability," he added.

On trade relations, the minister underscored India's strong and growing partnership with the United States. He said India is actively seeking preferential market access for its products in the US, describing bilateral ties as "very robust" across sectors such as technology, defence, trade, and investment.

He also claimed that India's interim trade arrangement with the US compares favourably with those of competing Southeast Asian nations. Providing an update on ongoing trade negotiations, Goyal said India is close to finalising multiple agreements. The proposed trade deal with New Zealand is expected to be signed by April, while the agreement with Oman could come into effect from May 1.

Iran vows 'crushing' retaliation after Trump's 'back to the Stone Age' warning

US warns of possible Baghdad attacks within 24-48 hours, asks citizens to leave Iraq.

Tehran (TSIT) Iran on Thursday, April 2, signalled an escalation in its military response against the United States and Israel, warning of broader and more destructive attacks after US President Donald Trump threatened to bomb the country "back to the Stone Age" in the coming weeks.

In a statement carried by state television, Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya central command said further operations were imminent, framing the conflict as one imposed on the country and vowing to continue until attacks against its territory cease.

Trump, speaking from the White House, said the US was nearing its military objectives but would intensify strikes over the next two to three



weeks. He warned that critical infrastructure, including energy facilities, could be targeted if no agreement is reached.

In a post on X, Iran in India said Iran would not be driven "back to the Stone Age" by bombings, asserting the country's long civilisational history while accusing its adversaries of committing crimes against humanity. Tehran's military messaging pointed to an expanded campaign, with officials indicating that future operations would be larger in scale and impact.

ODISHA DAY CELEBRATED AT KOTIA

Pottangi, April 2: The district administration Tuesday celebrated the 90th Odisha Day (Utkal Divas) in the disputed Kotia panchayat area of Koraput district, reaffirming the state's linguistic and cultural identity among border residents.

The event was held in front of the Kotia panchayat office, a region at the centre of an ongoing inter-state boundary dispute. Marking the occasion, the district information and public relations department organised a special photo exhibition highlighting Odisha's heritage and development.

Among those present were local MLA and Congress Leg-



Koraput marks statehood day

Koraput: Odisha Day (Utkal Divas) was celebrated with enthusiasm at Koraput district headquarters, showcasing the state's rich cultural heritage and history. Officials, students and residents participated in the district-level event. Floral tributes were paid to freedom fighters across the town. District Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan led the ceremonies and honoured Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev at his statue near the fire office. A colourful procession featuring students and traditional dance performances passed through the town and ended near the sub-collector's office, where tributes were paid to Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das and Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das. Zilla Parishad President Sasmita Meleka and other officials attended the programme. The collector urged people to take part in Odia Pakhya from April 1 to 14 and promote Odia language and culture. A cultural programme was held at Sanskruti Bhavan in the evening. Additional District Collector Naresh Chandra Sabar inaugurated the event. Speakers highlighted the significance of Odisha's formation and called for collective efforts towards development.

India thanks Azerbaijan for support in evacuating citizens from conflict zone

New Delhi/Baku April 2: India on Thursday expressed gratitude to the government of Azerbaijan for assisting in the evacuation of Indian nationals from Iran through its land border. Addressing a weekly media briefing in New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that around 204 Indian nationals have successfully crossed into Azerbaijan from Iran. He noted that several of those evacuated have already returned to India, while others are expected to arrive over the coming days.

"Azerbaijan, we have our ambassador there. He recently presented credentials. During the presentation of his credentials, he also discussed several issues of bilateral nature. Several of our Indian nationals, 204 to be precise, have been able to leave Iran for Azerbaijan through the land border. And from there, they will be coming back home. Several of them have returned; others will be returning in the course of the next few days or so," Jaiswal stated. "We are thankful to the government of Azerbaijan for the support that they've rendered for the exit of Indian nationals from Iran through the land border. We have consultations and regular exchange between both sides, and hopefully we will have more details," he added. On Wednesday India's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Abhay Kumar met Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and presented a copy of his Letter of Credence. Both held productive discussions on bilateral ties and regional developments. According to the Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan, the meeting reviewed the current state of relations between Azerbaijan and India and explored the prospects for further cooperation. The two sides also exchanged views on the ongoing tensions in the Middle East. The Indian Ambassador also expressed deep gratitude to the government of Azerbaijan for the support provided during the evacuation of Indian nationals from Iran, the Foreign Ministry mentioned. Last month, the MEA mentioned that at least 882 Indian nationals stranded in Iran, including students, business professionals and pilgrims, have made their way back home through Azerbaijan and Armenia. "Several individuals do not register themselves with the embassy. Therefore, our estimate was that there were 9,000 people. Of these, a significant number of students had returned before the hostilities began.

Youth dies in hospital; negligence alleged

Dhenkanal, April 2: An 18-year-old youth died due to alleged medical negligence at the district headquarters hospital here Wednesday morning, his family claimed.

The deceased, Alok Samal of Malpura village in Bhuban block, had sustained severe abdominal injuries Tuesday after falling into a latrine tank. He was admitted to the hospital in the evening. Family members alleged that after providing initial treatment, doctors attempted to discharge him. However, the family members insisted to keep him under observation as his condition remained critical.



When his condition worsened Wednesday morning, the family requested to shift him to Cuttack for advanced treatment. They alleged that hospital authorities did not cooperate and failed to provide proper care. They also claimed that a wrong injection was administered, leading to his death.

was formed as a separate state on a linguistic basis, giving a distinct identity to Odia-speaking people.

They also sought to create awareness among Kotia's border residents about the importance of preserving their linguistic and cultural heritage.

In a notable segment of the programme, educated women from the panchayat conveyed messages about Odisha's formation in the regional Kui language, promoting harmony with neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

The celebration also featured cultural performances by students from various schools, adding vibrancy to the event.

Pottangi block chairperson Kalpana Pangi, zilla parishad member Tikai Gemel, additional district magistrate Naresh Chandra Sabar, CDO Benudhar Sabar, retired collector and 'Ama Kotia' convener Gadadhar Parida, and other officials attended the event.

The dignitaries visited the exhibition and interacted with attendees, with many capturing moments at the display. Addressing the gathering later, speakers underlined the historical significance of April 1, 1936, when Odisha

The programme was coordinated by BDO Ramakrishna Nayak, tehsildar Debendra Bahadur Singh Dharua, additional tehsildar Swagatika Rout and other administrative officials, who ensured its smooth conduct.

KL University Students Secure Rs.81 LPA Top Package, 6,300+ Offers

Vijayawada April 2: KL University students have once again delivered exceptional results in campus placements, with a highest annual package of Rs.81 lakh secured in an international company, Nexpert.

According to Vice Chancellor Dr. Parthasaradhi Varma, several students also achieved top salary packages of Rs.52 lakh, Rs.44 lakh, Rs.40 lakh, and Rs.34 lakh per annum through placements in leading national and global firms. Highlighting the scale of success, he stated that around 150 students secured packages of Rs.25 lakh per annum, while 630 students received Rs.15 lakh



The university recorded

over 6,300 placement offers, with 4,750 students already placed. The placement process is still ongoing, with expectations of more high-value offers for meritorious students.

Dr. Varma expressed pride in the university's consistent record of providing 100% placements to eligible students for the past 16 years. He added that KL University continues to focus on skill development alongside quality education, enabling students to achieve outstanding placement outcomes.

Mining in Chikima hills triggers livelihood crisis in Koraput villages

Koraput, April 2: Serious concerns have been raised by villagers of Kankadaguda under Nandapur block in Koraput district over ongoing quarrying and mining activities in the nearby Chikima hills, which they allege are destroying both their homes and livelihoods amid administrative inaction.



Kankadaguda, located in the remote tribal belt of southern Odisha, is surrounded by dense forests, hills, and small settlements like Kumbharaguda and Kadamagura. The region is known for poor connectivity and heavy dependence on forest resources. For generations, villagers have relied on Chikima hills for collecting firewood, dry leaves, and wild fruits, which they sell at nearby markets such as Jayantigiri to sustain their families.

However, recent mining and blasting operations allegedly carried out by private companies in the area have severely impacted their interests in the forest. According to the villagers, nearly seven surrounding villages depend on these hills for their daily livelihood, making the issue one

of survival rather than mere inconvenience. Wednesday, Kamala Gathua, along with several villagers, approached the District Collector Manoj Satyaban Mahajan, highlighting their plight.

Villagers alleged that continuous blasting has led to visible cracks in their houses, creating fear and insecurity among residents. "We are unable to live peacefully due to the loud noise of machines and explosions. Pollution levels have also increased drastically," said Gathua during the submission of their grievance.

They further claimed that despite repeated appeals to stop the activities, neither the companies nor local officials paid attention to their concerns. The lack of timely intervention

from the administration has intensified public anger, with many accusing authorities of neglecting tribal communities.

The affected families also stated that they own agricultural land near the hills, which is now under threat due to ongoing excavation. With their primary source of income at risk and living conditions deteriorating, villagers are demanding immediate suspension of mining activities and a thorough investigation into the matter.

The incident once again highlights the ongoing conflict between development projects and the rights of indigenous communities in remote areas, where lack of governance continues to deepen public distress.

Water crisis grips Mohanpada village



Koraput, April 2: Mohanpada village in Koraput district is grappling with a severe drinking water crisis, exposing years of alleged administrative neglect and unfulfilled promises. Despite repeated assurances, nearly 1,400 residents continue to struggle to meet their basic water needs.

Many villagers wake as early as 3am to queue for water, often waiting until late morning, disrupting daily routines and livelihoods. Local resident Kanak Khillo said people are forced to forgo work hours to collect water, adding that the situation worsens in summer when the only functional tube well frequently produces muddy and unsafe water.

The crisis is particularly acute in Gauda Sahi, where two of the three tube wells have long been defunct, leaving residents dependent on a single

unreliable source. Villagers have demanded the immediate installation of a new tube well. With no alternative, residents also cross a busy highway to reach a nearby river for bathing and washing, putting their lives at risk.

Former councillor Narayan Chandra Bhatra criticised authorities for their inaction. He said two wells and a tube well were constructed during his tenure in 2000, but most have since become defunct. Repeated complaints, he alleged, have gone unanswered.

He added that a piped water supply system stopped functioning eight months ago after a transformer was stolen and has not been restored.

With villagers travelling nearly 2 km each day to fetch water, the crisis is taking a toll on health and livelihoods, particularly among daily wage earners.

Man threatens lady cop, arrested

Udala: Police arrested a youth for allegedly entering Kapitpada police station in Mayurbhanj district and issuing death threats to a woman officer. The accused was identified as Deepak Singh of Dharampur area under Berhampur police limits in Balasore district. A case-78/26 has been registered in this connection and further investigations are on. According to reports, Singh had come to the police station Tuesday evening as a mediator in an abduction case. While sitting inside the station in an inappropriate manner, he was asked by a woman assistant sub-inspector (ASI) to sit properly. This reportedly angered him, and he misbehaved with the officer. Hearing the commotion, Inspector-in-Charge Madhumita Mohanty reached the spot, but Singh allegedly abused her as well using obscene language. He also allegedly threatened to kill police personnel before being taken into custody, police said.

25 cattle die after drinking contaminated water

Nabarangpur, April 2: At least 25 cattle have died after allegedly consuming contaminated water discharged from a maize processing unit in Nabarangpur district, triggering tension and protests in the area.

Residents of Bamuni and Kusumpali villages under Rajoda panchayat of Kosagumuda block alleged that toxic effluents released from the Vijayanagar Biotech maize factory near their villages led to the deaths. Villagers claimed that more than 50 cattle have died over the past 15 days due to exposure to the polluted water.

Locals accused the factory authorities of releasing untreated waste and effluents into open areas instead of storing them safely, leading to the incident. The situation turned tense as villagers de-



manded immediate action against the unit.

On being informed, Nabarangpur MLA Gouri Shankar Majhi and District Collector Maheshwar Swain visited the site and took stock of the situation. When questioned by the Collector about the discharge of toxic water, factory officials

reportedly failed to provide any satisfactory answer. On the other hand, the factory authorities attempted to cover up the discharge point of the contaminated water with soil after learning about the visit of the Collector and MLA, the villagers alleged.

The Collector and MLA said

that water samples would be tested by the State Pollution Control Board and the Water Resources Department, and an inquiry would be conducted into the allegations.

The factory, set up by an Andhra Pradesh-based company, had initially faced local opposition before commencing operations with community support. However, villagers Dharamdas Bhatra, Mohan Chalan, Pradip Kumar Bhuyana, Pradip Kumar Bhuyana, Kusumpali, Bhaluguda, Kidripali, Kotniaguda and Chhelipadar, now allege severe problems due to air and water pollution from the unit.

Veterinary officials have conducted post-mortem examinations of the cattle carcass. Villagers have demanded compensation for the losses and immediate closure of the factory. Factory authorities could not be reached for comment.

6 get 3-year jail for leopard hide smuggling

Rayagada: A local court sentenced six persons to three years of rigorous imprisonment each after convicting them in a leopard hide smuggling case. The Chief Judicial Magistrate Aparna Mahapatra also slapped a fine of ₹25,000 on each of the convicts, apart from the punishment. They will have to undergo an additional eight months of rigorous imprisonment, in case of default in payment of the fine. The convicted persons were identified as Rabindra Bidika, Aksh-aya Kumar Odia, Simanchal Sabar, Nikhil Ganta, Haladhar Sabar and Sangana Kadra. During the trial, the court examined eight witnesses before pronouncing the verdict.

The prosecution was conducted by Additional Public Prosecutor Sitaram Panda and counsel Giribasa Rao. According to case records, Padmapur forester Majhi Mahapatra received information May 9, 2024, about the illegal trade of a leopard hide. Acting on the tip-off and informing the Rayagada Divisional Forest Officer, he seized the leopard hide and detained suspects involved in the smuggling. Based on further investigation, forest officials conducted a raid May 10, 2024, at an orchard near Bichikote Square under Padmapur circle and apprehended four accused while they were allegedly negotiating for trade of the hide. They were arrested and later produced before the Gunupur SDJM court.

Bharat Ratna demand for Madhusudan Das grows

Manguli/Jagatpur, April 2: A strong demand for conferring the Bharat Ratna on Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das, the chief architect of a separate Odisha state, gathered momentum on the occasion of Odisha Day.

Marking the celebrations, a large bike rally was organised by Madhupremi members from Tangi in Cuttack district to Satyabhamapur, the birth-place of Madhusudan Das, under Jagatpur police limits.

Across the state, Odisha Day was observed with enthusiasm, and the rally emerged as a key highlight in the Tangi region. Led by educationist and founder of Tetrahedron Group of Institutions, Tridev Behera, more than 600 youths participated in the procession.

The rally featured over 400 motorcycles and a secured four-wheeler, moving through key points including the block



man Temple square, Dreams square, Bhattimunda and Gopinathpur village before reaching Satyabhamapur.

Upon arrival at the birth-place of Madhusudan Das, Behera paid floral tributes to the statue of the legendary leader.

Several dignitaries, including a President's Award recipient and senior citizens, attended the event, with participants from 15 panchayats joining the rally.

Locals noted that this was the first such large-scale rally in the Tangi area pressing for Bharat Ratna status for Madhusudan Das.

In a separate programme, Itisha Foundation adviser Anusaya Mohanty offered floral tributes to Madhusudan Das, with the Itishree Mishra, president Shastri Bahadur Pradhan and other members in attendance.

KPCL Issues Posting Orders to 233 Candidates After Counselling: Additional Chief Secretary Energy Dept Gaurav Gupta

APPOINTMENT ORDERS ISSUED FOR 233 POSTS IN FIRST PHASE OUT OF 622 POSTING FOR REMAINING VACANCIES TO BE TAKEN UP IN SECOND PHASE

Bengaluru : Out of 622 posts being filled in Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), 233 appointment orders have been issued, with postings allotted through counselling.

During today's counselling, candidates selected for various posts were assigned their respective postings. These included 20 Assistant Engineers (Civil), 38 Assistant Engineers (Electrical), 20 Assistant Engineers (Mechanical), 27 Assistant Engineers (Instrumentation), 13 Junior Engineers (Civil), 61 Assistant Engineers (Electrical), 41



Junior Engineers (Mechanical), 2 Chemists, and 11 Chemical Supervisors. Verification of

documents for the remaining posts is currently underway; once completed, appointment

orders will be issued.

During the counselling session, the Additional Chief Secretary of the Energy Department and the KPCL Managing Director, Gaurav Gupta, spoke to the new recruits. He said, "With the support of the Chief Minister and the Energy Minister, we completed this recruitment process quickly. Posting for 233 posts has been done through counselling. Young engineers joining the corporation should enhance KPCL's reputation through their skills. Your entry should bring positive changes to the organisation."

He further added, "Do not work merely for a salary. You should strive to take the corporation to greater heights in

power generation. There are ample opportunities for growth for newly recruited candidates. More than what you gain from the corporation, it is important to focus on what you contribute to it."

KPCL Director (Finance) R. Nagaraj, Director (Technical) M.R. Gangadhar, Director (Human Resources) Rekha T., General Manager (HR) Dr Asha S., and others were present.

"Filling vacant posts and making KPCL more dynamic is a priority for our government. As part of this, recruitment is underway. The government is extending full support to further strengthen the corporation."

— K.J. George, Energy Minister

"Coaching is as much about understanding the person as it is about the skill," Dinesh Karthik on his coaching philosophy at RCB

Bengaluru : From one of the most accomplished finishers in T20 cricket to shaping one of the most dynamic batting units in the league, Dinesh Karthik's transition into a coaching role at Royal Challengers Bengaluru is yielding strong results as the side began their 2026 IPL campaign by scripting history, pulling off the fastest 200-plus chase in IPL history against Sunrisers Hyderabad, chasing down the target in just 15.4 overs, a performance that highlighted both preparation and execution under pressure.

"In our team, we have players at very different stages of their careers. All of them are eager to learn, and my role is to understand what each individual needs, while ultimately preparing them for match situations. Where they bat and the challenges they face are very different. For example, someone like Phil Salt will often deal with the new ball swinging, whereas for someone like Romario Shepherd, swing is rarely a factor at that stage. So, it's about helping them understand those scenarios, what positions to get into, what to look for and then observing and giving them feedback accordingly. Coaching is as much about understanding the person as it is about the skill," Karthik said reflecting on his coaching philosophy.

Drawing from both his playing days and time in broadcasting, Karthik has also emphasised clarity, brevity, and trust, allowing players to make informed decisions in high-pressure situations.

"DK is a mastermind. He's very detailed and excellent at gathering information along with Freddy (Wilde) and the rest of the coaching staff, and then simplifying it into something that's easy to take onto the pitch. That's probably his biggest strength. He brings a lot to the coaching setup, and it's even more valuable because he's played at the



highest level so recently. We're very fortunate to have him," Phil Salt commented on the batting coach.

"These are elite players who are already dominating world cricket, so you don't need to overcoach. It's about giving them the right inputs and trusting them to make the best decisions. My experience in broadcasting has been very helpful. You travel, watch different teams and players closely, and analyse both their strengths and weaknesses. As a commentator, you're constantly observing and breaking the game down, which helps later in coaching. It's also taught me to communicate clearly and concisely, and that really helps when working with players," Dinesh Karthik added. RCB's batting performances this season have reflected a clear sense of structure and adaptability across phases. And a key aspect of Karthik's work has been tailoring preparation to individual players, particularly in helping them anticipate and respond to specific match scenarios. "Tim David is working on specific scenarios that bowlers might target him with. It starts with understanding his strengths, he's a tall player with a unique range, and we figure out how to get him into positions where he can execute certain shots consistently. We try to simulate match situations in training, identify the shots he's most comfortable with, and also the areas where he feels he can improve. Then it's about designing drills around that," Karthik said.

Hit-and-run at Kambalapadavu leaves bike rider critically injured



Mangaluru, Apr 2: A 23-year-old bike rider sustained critical injuries after a truck rammed into his two-wheeler at Kambalapadavu under the Konaje police station limits on the evening of Thursday, April 2. The injured youth has been identified as Sushanth (23), son of Baby, a resident of Nadupadavu.

According to sources, the collision was so impactful that Sushanth was flung onto the road, sustaining severe head injuries.

Passersby and locals immediately rushed him to a private hospital in Deralakatte, where he is currently undergoing treatment.

The incident is being treated as a case of hit-and-run, as the truck driver sped away from the spot without stopping after hitting the motorcycle. The driver's reckless escape drew heavy flak and outrage from the local public who gathered at the site.

The Konaje police, who arrived at the scene shortly after the mishap, launched a search operation and managed to trace and seize the truck involved in the accident. Further investigations are underway to apprehend the driver and establish the exact sequence of events.



Sri Varasiddi Vinayaka Trust, Kumaraswamy layout has celebrated Lord Ayyappa Swamy birthday celebration Harivarasanam charitable trust Secretary Subramanya along with Chief Priest Srinath Sharma, Mr Siddaraju & Dr Srinivas were present at the event.



Demand for release of land acquisition compensation related to Bangalore Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) project: Dr. Manjunath

Bengaluru: Bangalore Rural MP Dr. Manjunath has requested Union Minister Amit Shah to take urgent intervention to release land acquisition compensation related to Bangalore Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) project. He met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and requested him to take urgent action to release land acquisition compensation related to Bangalore Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) project. He said that although the land acquisition process for the STRR project in Magadi, Ramanagara, Kanakapura, Harohalli and Anekal areas has been completed, the full compensation amount has not been distributed to the farmers yet. He said that due to this delay, farmers and landowners are facing financial hardship, which has led to public discontent. He said that the matter has already been brought to the notice of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari. Additionally, he said that former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda had discussed the matter with him.

Draft Notification Issued for Amendment of Building Bye-laws in GBA Jurisdiction: Maheshwar Rao

Opportunity to Submit Objections & Suggestions at Offices of 5 City Corporations

Bengaluru : A draft notification has been issued for amending the building bye-laws within the GBA jurisdiction. Objections and suggestions can be submitted to the respective City Corporations within 30 days from the date of notification, said Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao. Under the guidance of Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru City Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar, the State Government has brought encouraging news for builders in the Greater Bengaluru region.

Considering the hardships faced by many building owners in Greater Bengaluru, the government has taken an important and people-friendly decision to increase the permissible deviation limit in building constructions from the existing 5% to 15%.

Due to the high land prices in Bengaluru and various unavoidable reasons, it has been observed that many plot owners have constructed buildings with certain deviations from the sanctioned plan, often leaving reduced setbacks and facing difficulties. Under the current rules, only up to 5% deviation can be regularized.

However, in most cases, the deviation exceeds 5%. As a result, many such buildings are unable to obtain Occupancy Certificates from City Corporations, making it difficult to get water supply and electricity connections.

Taking these practical issues into account, the government has decided to amend Clause 6 of the Building Bye-laws, 2003, to increase the permissible deviation limit from 5% to 15%, allowing regularization upon payment of penalty.

Accordingly, on 01-04-2026, all five City Corporations have issued draft notifications to amend the building bye-laws

in Bengaluru.

This amendment is a significant and people-centric decision by the government for the building sector in Bengaluru. At the same time, stricter enforcement measures are also being considered for violations beyond the permitted limits.

Therefore, keeping in mind both the relief to citizens and the need to ensure adequate light, ventilation, and safety standards, the public is requested to positively consider the proposed 15% deviation relaxation and submit any suggestions or objections to the respective City Corporation Commissioners by 30-04-2026.

The notification can be viewed on the Greater Bengaluru Authority website: <https://updates.bbmgov.in/public>. The public is encouraged to provide constructive suggestions regarding the draft building bye-laws. All suggestions will be considered positively before finalizing and officially notifying the bye-laws in the interest of the public.

CM Lied About Rsv10,000 Crore GST Dues from the Centre: MP Basavaraj Bommai

"CM SHOULD CLARIFY UNDER WHICH HEAD RS.10,000 CRORE GST IS PENDING"

Bengaluru: Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is falsely claiming that Rs.10,000 crore in GST dues are pending from the Central Government. In fact, the state regularly receives its share of GST every month. The Congress to clarify whether it supports reducing GST rates for the benefit of the people or favors higher taxation.

Responding to allegations made by CM Siddaramaiah in Davanagere against the BJP, Bommai said that 50% comes from SGST and 40% from CGST, and questioned under which category Rs.10,000 crore remains unpaid. The CM must provide details, assuring that if such information is given, they would make efforts to ensure the state receives any legitimately due GST funds. The former CM said that while the Congress claims funds are due because GST rates were



reduced, the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has focused on reducing GST rates on goods for public benefit. The Congress to clarify whether it stands with the people or supports higher tax rates.

He also criticized Congress in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala for ignoring the fact that the Central Government has reduced

GST rates on certain goods from 18% to 5%, and from 5% to zero.

He termed these statements as election stunts. Bommai added that CM Siddaramaiah had borrowed a total of Rs.5.55 lakh crore during his previous tenure from 2013 to 2018 and in the current term, and clarified that this debt is not attributable to the BJP.

Karnataka Energy Dept inks MOU with University of New South Wales (UNSW), IIMB and IISc to launch Renewable Energy Incubation Centre to boost renewable energy start-ups

Bengaluru : Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL), the state's nodal agency for advancing renewable energy projects, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia, IIM Bangalore (NSRCEL), and IISc (FSID) to drive innovation, incubation, and commercialization of renewable energy technologies. The MOU was signed at BESCOM Corporate office on Thursday.

The initiative marks a strategic shift from capacity expansion to technology-driven growth, aiming to nurture around 20 startups annually across domains such as energy storage, solar, wind, green fuels, and emerging clean technologies. By integrating global research, entrepreneurship, and scientific expertise, the centre is expected to play a pivotal

role in strengthening Karnataka's clean energy innovation ecosystem.

Energy Minister K.J. George underscored the importance of the initiative, noting that it reinforces Karnataka's commitment to clean energy leadership and will significantly strengthen the state's renewable energy startup ecosystem while contributing to national energy transition goals.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Lisa Zamberlan, Pro Vice-Chancellor International at UNSW Sydney, and K.P. Rudrapaiah, Managing Director of KREDL, the nodal agency for the Government of Karnataka focused on promoting and developing renewable energy projects, witnessed by Hillary Mcgeachy, Australian Consul General in Bengaluru, and Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Energy



Department. This MoU was facilitated by the Australia India Business Council (AIBC), an organization focused on boosting trade and investment between Australia and India. Subsequently IIMB and IISc also inked MOUs with KREDL. Under this three-year partnership, KREDL will establish an Incubation and Technology

Innovation Centre in Bengaluru, focusing on supporting startups in solar, wind, bioenergy, and energy storage. KREDL will provide infrastructure and local funding, while UNSW, via its Founders program, will deliver capacity building, technical mentorship, and connect startups to global research and innovation networks.

The initiative will support up to 20 startups each year. KREDL will support the program's prototype development, investor readiness, and industry validation. UNSW will focus on mobilizing additional international funding and partnerships to expand the program's reach. High-potential ventures will receive advanced incubation, international exposure, and expanded market access through UNSW's global network.

Signing this Memorandum of Understanding is a major advance. Under its terms, KREDL and UNSW will build capacity and support technology startups accelerating clean energy adoption. This collaboration seeks to establish a global ecosystem leveraging Australian expertise, benefiting Karnataka's businesses, government, and citizens," said Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief

Secretary to the Ministry of Energy.

Through the MOU, KREDL, UNSW, IIMB (NSRCEL), and IISc (FSID) will work together to promote innovation and incubation within the clean and renewable energy startup ecosystem.

"The signing of this MoU reflects a shared commitment by UNSW and KREDL to advance clean energy innovation across Australia and India. The partnership aligns strongly with UNSW's Progress for All agenda, particularly our focus on sustainability and impact. Together, we aim to support clean energy startups and contribute to long-term outcomes for climate action, energy transition and sustainable development," said Professor Lisa Zamberlan, Pro Vice Chancellor International at UNSW Sydney. "The Memorandum of Understanding between Karnataka and the University of

New South Wales, (UNSW), IIMB (NSRCEL), and IISc (FSID) marks a milestone. This partnership will drive innovation and incubation in renewable energy technologies and startups, strengthening Karnataka's relationships with Australian institutions and creating new investment opportunities," stated Energy Minister K.J. George, Government of Karnataka. "Today, on behalf of Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited, we entered an MOU with the University of New South Wales, (UNSW), IIMB (NSRCEL), and IISc (FSID) to boost innovation and incubation for renewable energy technologies and startups. We aim to harness new technologies, build partnerships, and explore investment and commercialization opportunities, stated T.D. Raje Gowda, MLA & Chairman, KREDL, at the signing ceremony.

EDITORIAL

THE PROBLEM WITH TRUMP'S FANTASY OF A 'CRIPPLED' IRAN

On April 1, 2026, President Donald Trump addressed the American nation from the Cross Hall of the White House in what was clearly intended to be a moment of strategic reassurance and political signalling. Nearly five weeks into the ongoing US-Israel military campaign against Iran, codenamed 'Operation Epic Fury', the speech sought to consolidate a narrative of control, success, and inevitability. Yet, beneath the rhetorical certainty lay the familiar tensions that accompany modern warfare: contested outcomes, economic anxieties, and geopolitical unpredictability.

In his carefully choreographed address, Trump began with a brief, almost perfunctory, acknowledgement of domestic achievement, the Artemis II launch, before pivoting sharply to the war effort. This transition itself was telling: a juxtaposition of American technological prowess with military dominance, reinforcing a broader message of national supremacy. What followed was a sweeping declaration of battlefield success. Iran, he claimed, had suffered unprecedented losses in a matter of weeks - its navy dismantled, air force crippled, command structures decimated, and weapons infrastructure largely neutralised.

A Maximalist View

Such assertions, while not unusual in wartime rhetoric, reflected Trump's characteristic maximalism. His framing of the conflict as a near-total victory in progress leaves little room for ambiguity, even as independent verification remains elusive. More importantly, it underscored his longstanding strategic worldview: that overwhelming force, applied decisively, can reshape adversarial behaviour in compressed timeframes.

The justifications he offered were equally familiar. Iran's nuclear ambitions, its ideological hostility toward the United States and Israel, and its history of supporting militant proxies were presented not as discrete concerns but as part of a continuous, almost civilizational threat. Trump's reference to past decisions, particularly the killing of Qassem Soleimani and the withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, served to position the current conflict as the logical culmination of a policy trajectory he had set in motion years ago.

Yet, what stood out was not merely the articulation of threats, but the moral clarity with which they were framed. Iran was depicted as both aggressor and destabiliser, leaving little space for nuance or alternative interpretations. This binary framing, good versus evil, order versus chaos, has been a consistent feature of Trump's foreign policy discourse, and it was on full display here.

Behind All That Optimism

On the question of timelines, Trump struck an emphatically optimistic tone. He suggested that core strategic objectives were "nearing completion" and indicated that the most intense phase of military operations would conclude within two to three weeks. This is a bold claim, particularly in a conflict involving a regional power with asymmetric capabilities and a demonstrated willingness to absorb losses while prolonging engagement. His assertion that "we have all the cards" may resonate politically, but strategically it risks underestimating Iran's capacity for recalibration and indirect retaliation.

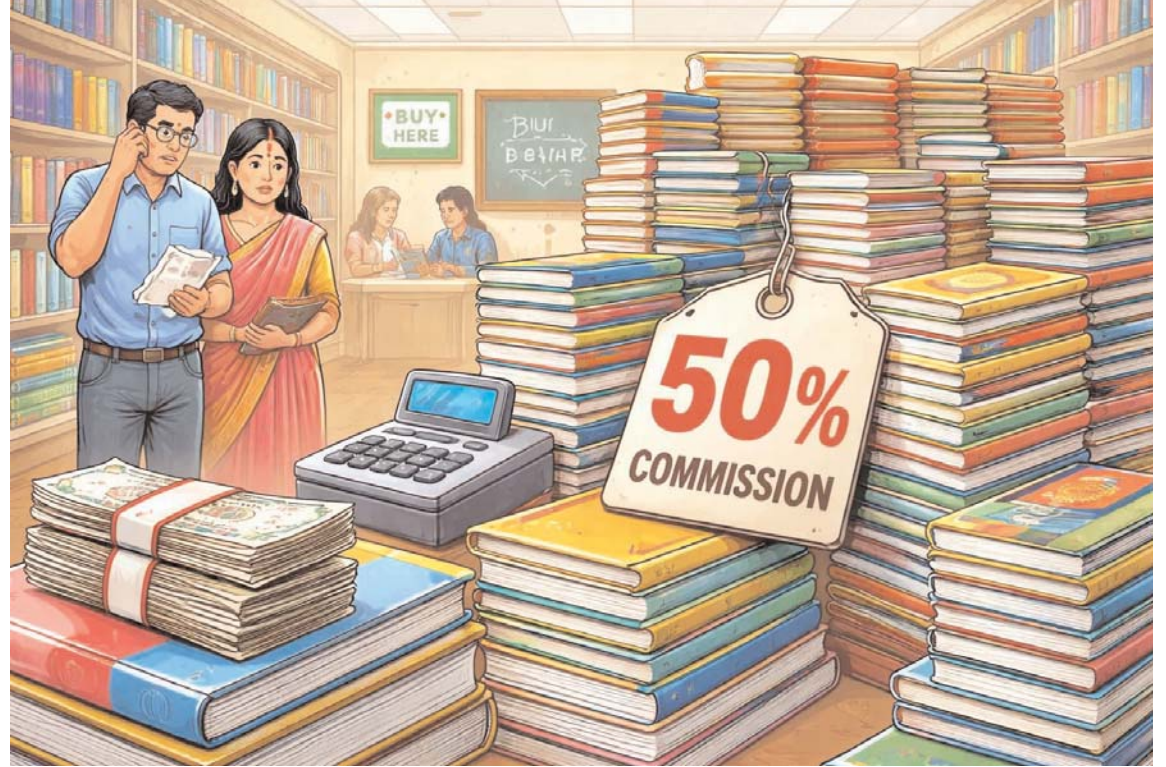
The economic dimension of the conflict received a more cautious treatment. Rising gas prices - always a politically sensitive issue in the United States - were acknowledged but dismissed as temporary disruptions caused by Iranian actions in the Strait of Hormuz. Trump's emphasis on American energy independence was meant to reassure domestic audiences, yet it glossed over the deeply interconnected nature of global energy markets. Even a relatively insulated US economy cannot entirely escape the ripple effects of sustained disruptions in one of the world's most critical energy corridors.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE SELLING BOOKS BY TAKING COMMISSION



Education has always been considered the soul of society, the foundation of development, and the bridge to equal opportunities. It is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a process of developing sensitive and responsible citizens. However, when this very education becomes a means of profit, it becomes not only a matter of concern but also a serious warning for social consciousness. Recent news that some private schools are selling books for up to 50 percent commission further deepens this concern. This is not merely an administrative irregularity, but a direct attack on the very essence of education.

Today, the nature of education is rapidly changing. The number of private schools has increased, competition has increased, and so has the cost of education. However, if this increased cost is supported by quality, improved facilities, and modern resources, it can be justified to some extent. The problem arises when, in the name of education, parents are burdened with unnecessary financial burdens. The hefty commissions charged on textbooks are an example of this trend. Many private schools instruct parents to purchase books only from school-designated stores or directly from the school premises. This creates a monopoly, leaving parents with no choice. They are denied the freedom to purchase cheaper or alternative books available on the open market. As a result, they are forced to pay higher prices, a significant portion of which is covered by commissions.



There's also a severe lack of transparency in this entire process. Parents are not informed about the criteria for selecting these books, their actual price, and the added bonuses. It's even been observed that books for the same subject are replaced every year, rendering the old books useless and forcing parents to purchase new ones. This practice not only encourages economic exploitation but also wastes resources unnecessarily. This situation is not only economical worrying, but it also undermines the very purpose of education. When schools become profit-generating tools rather than centers of knowledge, the value of education itself begins to decline. The relationship between teacher and student, once based on trust and guidance, gradually devolves into a formal transaction. The institution's financial gain becomes a priority over the holistic development of children.

Parents face the most dire situation in this entire scenario. They want the best education for their children's

future, but they face repeated financial pressures. This burden becomes even more severe for middle-class and lower-income families. They often have to cut back on other needs to meet these expenses. This situation also fuels social inequality, with quality education becoming increasingly inaccessible to those with financial means. Another important aspect of this whole issue is the frequent changes to the syllabus. Every year or two, minor changes are made to the curriculum, rendering older books irrelevant. These changes often seem driven more by commercial interests than academic necessity. If there are no major changes to the curriculum, simply changing editions of books and making new books mandatory raises suspicion. The most worrying aspect is the inaction of the Education Department. Rules clearly state that no school can force parents to purchase books from a particular shop. Despite this, this practice continues openly. This means that either the rules are not being followed, or there

is a lack of will to ensure their compliance. This silence seems to give tacit approval to this system. It's also essential that we not limit this problem to mere criticism, but instead take concrete steps toward resolving it. First, the Education Department must seriously investigate this matter and take strict action against institutions found guilty. Mere warnings or formal notices will not suffice; punitive action is also essential in such cases to send a clear message.

Second, transparency in book sales must be ensured. Schools should clearly explain which books they are prescribing and their prices. If possible, a catalog of all books should be made available online so that parents can purchase them from anywhere. This will also foster healthy competition and prevent unnecessary price increases. Third, frequent, unnecessary changes to the syllabus should be controlled. If there are no major changes to the curriculum, there should be no need to change textbooks frequently.

In Data: How US-Iran War Changed After First 48 Hours? What Strike Patterns Reveal

On the first day, it looked like a war of overwhelming force. Missiles and drones surged across the Gulf, with Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates absorbing hundreds of strikes in a matter of hours. The charts capturing those opening hours are stark: towering spikes that dwarf everything that follows. For many observers, the conclusion seemed obvious - Iran had unleashed a dramatic opening salvo, and then the intensity quickly faded.

But that reading depends on a single assumption: that Day 1 is the right benchmark. It isn't. Remove the first 48 hours from the data, and the war looks entirely different. What emerges instead is not a decline, but a pattern; a campaign that stabilises, repeats and adapts. The initial barrage, it turns out, was not the war itself, but the announcement.

The Illusions Of Decline

The charts below show a combined view of attacks across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain. Kuwait spikes to nearly 400 launches. The UAE follows close behind. Then the lines collapse. At a glance, it resembles a story of escalation followed by exhaustion. But this is a classic statistical distortion. When one extreme event dominates a dataset, everything else appears insignificant by comparison. In reality, the opening strike functions less as a baseline and more as an outlier; a deliberate shock designed to establish presence, disrupt defences, and shape perception. Once that outlier is removed, the rest of the campaign comes into focus.

A War That Settles, Not Ends

In the below adjusted view, where the first two days are excluded, the lines do not fall to zero. They oscillate. Attacks continue across all



four countries. The UAE remains consistently active, though at lower levels than its initial spike. Saudi Arabia, which appeared secondary in the opening phase, emerges as a major theatre in the middle of the campaign, with repeated peaks. Bahrain and Kuwait, while lower in volume, show periodic bursts rather than silence.

The key change is conceptual. The conflict shifts from looking like a single event to looking like a system. This is reinforced by the rolling-average chart, which smooths out daily volatility. After the opening drop, the trend stabilizes. It does not collapse. Instead, it settles into a band of sustained activity; a level of pressure that appears calibrated to be maintained over time.

In military terms, this is the difference between a blitz and a campaign. The Rhythm of the Strikes The next layer of analysis: Autocorrelation. This indicated whether something happening today is likely to happen again after a few days - in other words, whether there's a repeating pattern over time. Thus, it asks a simple question. Do these attacks follow a pattern? The answer is yes.

The data shows that high-activity days are likely to be followed by other high-activity days. More importantly, it reveals repeating signals roughly every two to four days. In practical terms, that suggests a cycle. A burst of attacks, a brief pause, and then another burst. For a lay observer, the pattern might feel intuitive. For analysts, it is significant. It indicates that the campaign is not reactive or random, but structured. Each wave likely reflects a sequence: targeting, execution, assessment and recalibration, before the next wave begins. This is not how a force behaves when it is losing momentum. It is how a force behaves when it is managing it.

Measuring The Tempo Of The War

The War Tempo Index compresses multiple variables: volume, momentum and geographic spread into a single line. If the war had truly faded after the first strike, the index would show a sharp peak followed by a steady decline. Instead, it shows multiple peaks. There is the initial shock, but also renewed surges in early March, another set of peaks in mid-March, and contin-

ued activity into the final week of the month. The intensity fluctuates, but it repeatedly returns. This is the defining feature of the campaign, persistence. Not constant escalation, but sustained presence.

A Regional Pattern, Not Isolated Strikes

Perhaps the most revealing insight comes from examining how these peaks align across countries. On some days, multiple countries experience peak activity simultaneously. On others, peaks occur within a 24-hour window of each other. The coordination matrices show that while exact same-day alignment is inconsistent, near-synchronous activity is common. This suggests a campaign that is coordinated but not rigidly synchronised. Instead of launching identical strikes across all theatres at once, the pattern appears staggered, a rolling wave moving across the region. It is a subtle distinction, but an important one. Perfect simultaneity is not always operationally optimal. Staggering allows for flexibility, reduces predictability and maintains continuous pressure across multiple fronts.

Rs 30 Petrol Hike To Currency Crisis, What Oil At \$150 Can Really Do To The World

In 1979, the Iranian Revolution removed between 2 and 3 million barrels per day from the global oil supply. Prices roughly doubled within a year, from around \$13 per barrel to \$34. The world called it the Second Oil Shock and waited for prices to correct. They did not. They stayed elevated until 1986, when Saudi Arabia, tired of bearing the burden of production cuts alone, flooded the market, crashing prices to below \$10. The recovery from a supply shock, in other words, took seven years. And that was a demand-side solution, one country choosing to overproduce. No one had to rebuild the infrastructure. The taps were simply turned back on. In the Gulf today, the taps cannot simply be turned back on. This is the distinction that gets lost in the daily movement of Brent crude prices, and it matters more than almost anything else in this story. A demand shock (the 2008 variety, when booming Chinese and American consumption strained global capacity) corrects when demand falls. A financial crisis, a recession, a change in driving habits, all of these reduce consumption, and prices fall accordingly. A supply shock caused by physical destruction of infrastructure is a different animal. It corrects only when the infrastructure is rebuilt. And infrastructure, unlike demand, does not respond to policy announcements or diplomatic signals. In 1979, the Iranian Revolution removed between 2 and 3 million barrels per day from the global oil supply. Prices roughly doubled within a year, from around \$13 per barrel to \$34. The world called it the Second Oil Shock and waited for prices to correct. They did not. They stayed elevated until 1986, when Saudi Arabia, tired of bearing the burden of production cuts alone, flooded the market,



crashing prices to below \$10. The recovery from a supply shock, in other words, took seven years. And that was a demand-side solution, one country choosing to overproduce. No one had to rebuild the infrastructure. The taps were simply turned back on. In the Gulf today, the taps cannot simply be turned back on. This is the distinction that gets lost in the daily movement of Brent crude prices, and it matters more than almost anything else in this story. A demand shock (the 2008 variety, when booming Chinese and American consumption strained global capacity) corrects when demand falls. A financial crisis, a recession, a change in driving habits, all of these reduce consumption, and prices fall accordingly. A supply shock caused by physical destruction of infrastructure is a different animal. It corrects only when the infrastructure is rebuilt. And infrastructure, unlike demand, does not respond to policy announcements or diplomatic signals. Advertisement - Scroll to continue Calculating The Damage Rystad Energy's damage assessment, released on March 23, gives some idea. The headline figure is \$25 billion: the mini-

mum cost to repair and rebuild Middle East energy infrastructure damaged in the US-Israel-Iran conflict. Engineering and construction will account for roughly half of that. At least 40 energy-producing assets across nine countries have been "severely or very severely" damaged: oil and gas fields, refineries, pipelines. The International Energy Agency's (IEA) Fatih Birol described the conflict as "worse than the two oil shocks of the 1970s, as well as the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on gas, put together". The facility numbers are worth sifting with. Qatar's Ras Laffan complex, the world's largest LNG supplier, lost two trains to missile strikes: a 17% capacity reduction totalling 12.8 million metric tonnes per year. QatarEnergy declared force majeure on March 4 and has extended it to June. A \$4-billion contract awarded to Saipem and China Offshore Oil Engineering for North Field development is now suspended. The Ras Laffan Pearl gas-to-liquids plant, jointly owned by QatarEnergy, Shell, and ExxonMobil, is still assessing its losses. Iran's South Pars offshore gas field has sustained heavy damage. Iraq's Zubair oilfield, operat-

ed by Eni, has had output cut by 70,000 barrels per day from its normal 330,000-bpd level, a 21% reduction in a field that accounts for a meaningful share of Iraq's export revenue. Bahrain's BAPCO Sitra Refinery, just commissioned in December after a \$7-billion modernisation programme designed to increase capacity from 2.67 lakh to 4 lakh barrels per day, built under a \$4.2-billion contract by TechnipEnergies, Samsung Engineering, and Técnicas Reunidas, was struck twice. Two crude distillation units and a tank farm are confirmed damaged. The facility had been in commercial operation for approximately three months. A Long, Long Recovery Rystad's prognosis for the worst-affected assets: "full recovery could take up to five years". Large-frame gas turbines, the equipment required to power LNG main refrigeration compressors, are manufactured by exactly three original equipment manufacturers globally: GE Vernova (US), Siemens (Germany), and one other. All three began 2026 carrying production backlogs of two to four years, driven by demand from data centre electrification and coal plant retirements.

ELON MUSK'S SPACEX SET TO GO PUBLIC IN \$1 TRILLION SHARE LISTING

Elon Musk's SpaceX is poised to become one of the most valuable publicly traded companies in the world. The firm, which makes rockets, space exploration technology and Starlink satellites, is privately held, but on Wednesday it made a confidential filing with authorities for an initial public offering (IPO), which would allow its shares to be traded on the stock market. The value of SpaceX expected to surpass \$1tn (£751bn) once it goes public. Musk's own holding in SpaceX would put the billionaire on track to become the world's first trillionaire. The BBC has contacted SpaceX for comment. The company is aiming to officially go public sometime in June, according to reports in Bloomberg, Reuters and the New York Times. A confidential IPO filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission allows a company to avoid immediately revealing information to the public while it requests feedback from the regulator. The next step will be for the firm's executives to hold "roadshows", which are meetings with big investors to con-

vince them to buy shares. By making shares of SpaceX available for purchase by the public, the company is looking to raise \$50bn or more, according to reports. Earlier this year, SpaceX took over xAI, Musk's artificial intelligence venture. After that all-stock merger, SpaceX is believed to have become the most valuable private company in the world, with an internal valuation of \$1.25tn. Recently, Musk's various companies have been becoming increasingly intertwined. Last year, xAI, best known for its chatbot

Grok, took over X, the social media platform previously known as Twitter that Musk bought in 2022. Emily Zheng, a senior analyst at Pitchbook, told the BBC that by bringing xAI under SpaceX, Musk could show potential investors that he

was consolidating costs and able to easily share resources between his companies. With its large-scale ambitions, SpaceX is in need of a massive cash infusion that going public can provide, Zheng added. The company is racing to keep up with the "sheer cost of compute, infrastructure, and energy" needed to expand, she said. Earlier this year, Tesla, Musk's electric vehicle company, revealed it had invested more than \$2bn in xAI. The billionaire said a significant share of Tesla's manufacturing would begin to shift toward building robots, which would make use of xAI technology like Grok. Grok is already included in some

Teslas as an AI assistant. SpaceX would also partner with Tesla and xAI in the



THINK GAS SWIFTLY RESTORES CITY GAS SUPPLY AFTER PIPELINE DAMAGE

Anantapur 2026: A city gas pipeline laid by THINK Gas (formerly AG&P Pratham) was damaged during un-intimated JCB excavation work carried out for Jio fibre Pipe Joint Near Vidyanarya Nagar, Anantapur. The THINK Gas emergency response team acted promptly by isolating the affected section and restoring the gas supply within a short time, ensuring public safety and minimizing inconvenience to residents. THINK Gas has established a robust pipeline infrastructure in Anantapur district to supply Piped Natural Gas (PNG) for

households and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) for transport users. Despite the presence of visible route markers, cautionary signage, and emergency contact boards along the pipeline route, the contractor involved in the excavation failed to notify THINK Gas before starting work and did not submit any post-incident report. As per government regulations, any third-party planning to carry out excavation work must inform the City Municipal authorities or the City Gas Distribution company through the 'Dial Before You

Dig' contact number. The incident occurred without prior intimation to the company, prompting THINK Gas to file an official complaint against the party responsible. As per the current legal provisions under IPC Sections 285 and 336, such unauthorized damage constitutes an offense punishable by imprisonment of up to 3 years and a fine of up to 25 crores. THINK Gas urges all contractors, agencies, and individuals to comply with this safety requirement. The toll-free number to contact THINK Gas before any digging activity is 1800 2022 999.

Silver futures slump 6 pc as Iran tensions rise, dollar strengthens



TRAI Assesses Network Quality Across Kadapa City and their adjoining areas in a Andhra Pradesh State (under Andhra Pradesh Licensed Service Area)

Tirupati, April 2026: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released its Independent Drive Test (IDT) findings for the Andhra Pradesh Licensed Service Area (LSA), covering extensive city of Kadapa surrounding areas in the month of February 2026. The drive tests conducted under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office, Hyderabad, were designed to capture real-world mobile network performance across diverse usage environments- Urban Zones, Institutional Hotspots, rural residential



areas etc. Between 17th February 2026 to 19th February 2026, TRAI teams conducted detailed tests for 395.6 Kms Kadapa City drive test, 5.1Kms Walk Test and 8 Hotspot locations.

Technologies evaluated included 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G, reflecting the service experience of users across multiple handset capabilities. The findings of the IDT have been intimated to all the TSPs con-

cerned. **Key Parameters Assessed:** a) Voice Services: Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), Drop Call Rate (DCR), Call Setup Time, Call Silence Rate, Speech Quality (MOS), Coverage. The overall mobile network performance in Kadapa city is summarized below: Call Setup Success Rate: Airtel, BSNL, RJIL and VIL have 99.59%, 93.74%, 99.17% and 96.36% call setup success rate respectively in Auto-selection mode (5G/4G/3G/2G).

Škoda Auto India continues surge; records highest-ever quarterly sales in Q1 2026

Mumbai, April 01, 2026 – Škoda Auto India continues its strong growth trajectory into 2026, recording its highest-ever quarterly sales in Q1 (January–March) with 20,028 units sold. This is a growth of 17% over the 17,138 cars sold in the same period last year. Building on a landmark 2025, Škoda Auto India has sustained its growth surge and is continuing to break its own records, further accelerating its momentum in the Indian market. Škoda Auto India's performance has been led by the strong and consistent demand for the Kodiaq, which recently crossed the 50,000 sales milestone, the introduction of the new Kushaq, steady contribution from the Slavia, and the continued demand for the Kodiaq in the premium SUV segment. Commenting on the milestone, Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Škoda Auto India, said, "Continuing our growth surge into 2026 with our biggest-ever quarter is a strong validation of the momentum we have built over the past year. After achieving a record in 2025, it is encouraging to see that we



are sustaining this trajectory while also setting new benchmarks for ourselves. This growth is driven by a combination of a stronger and more accessible product portfolio, deeper market reach, and a sharper focus on customer-centric initiatives. The Kodiaq continues to take the brand to newer customers and regions, and the new Kushaq that was recently introduced has made its mark. Meanwhile, the Slavia and Kodiaq continue to drive consistent demand in their segments. As we move ahead, we remain focused on maintaining this momentum with

consistent execution by launching relevant products, expanding our network, and enhancing the overall ownership experience." Building Trust Škoda Auto India continues to strengthen customer confidence through a sharper focus on ownership experience and aftersales support. The introduction of Škoda Super Care has set a new benchmark by offering a standard 4-year warranty, 4 years of roadside assistance, and 4 labour-free services across the range, ensuring complete peace of mind and predictable maintenance costs for customers. This cus-

tomers-first approach is complemented by continuous enhancements in service processes, transparency, and accessibility. With a growing network of 330 Customer Touchpoints in over 180 cities, Škoda Auto India is expanding its reach while ensuring a seamless and reliable ownership journey across both established and emerging markets. Delivering Excellence Škoda Auto India's performance in the first quarter of 2026 is underpinned by a strong and evolving product portfolio that continues to resonate with changing customer expectations.

STOCK MARKETS DECLINE 2 PC IN EARLY TRADE AMID RISING TENSIONS IN WEST ASIA

Tirupati, April 2026: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released its Independent Drive Test (IDT) findings for the Andhra Pradesh Licensed Service Area (LSA), covering extensive city of Kadapa surrounding areas in the month of

February 2026. The drive tests conducted under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office, Hyderabad, were designed to capture real-world mobile network performance across diverse usage environments- Urban Zones, Institutional Hotspots, rural residential



areas etc. Between 17th February 2026 to 19th February 2026, TRAI teams

conducted detailed tests for 395.6 Kms Kadapa City drive test.

Shri Anurag Kapil takes charge as Director (Finance), NMDC

Hyderabad, 2nd April 2026: Shri Anurag Kapil, a 1998 batch officer of the Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS), has assumed charge as Director (Finance) at NMDC Limited, India's largest iron ore producer, on Tuesday. In a career spanning over 26 years across Indian Railways and CPSUs, Shri Kapil brings a blend of operational expertise and strategic vision in financial management and public sector governance. He has held key positions in Indian Railways including Senior Divisional Finance Manager, FA&CAO (Traffic), FA&CAO (Finance & General) and Deputy Chief Vigilance Officer, and has also served as Director in the Ministry of Coal, handling critical policy and sectoral assignments. Prior to joining NMDC, he was serving as Executive Director, Finance (Expenditure) at the Railway Board, where he was responsible for financial policy matters, expenditure management, planning, project monitoring and produc-



tivity analysis for Indian Railways. He has also played a key role in strengthening PSU governance, including initiatives related to capital restructuring, MoUs, disinvestment proposals and financial approvals across Railway CPSEs. In his years of service, Shri Kapil has demonstrated strong leadership in financial oversight, policy formulation and strategic planning. His experience spans government accounting, project evaluation, PPP frameworks, contract management and arbitration, supported by expertise in budgetary control, cost-benefit analysis and program

evaluation. He has contributed to formulation of key national policies in the coal sector and has been associated with major disinvestment initiatives and establishment of regulatory frameworks. He has also held additional charge as Director (Finance), CONCOR, where he strengthened financial performance and led strategic initiatives in diversification, multimodal logistics and sustainable growth. He has represented India at various international forums and engagements, including missions on mining, clean coal technology, disinvestment roadshows and energy collaborations, including initiatives aligned with net zero goals. Shri Kapil has served as Government Nominee Director on the Boards of several CPSEs including Singareni Collieries Company Limited, Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited, Railway Energy Management Company Limited and Konkan Railway Corporation Limited.

Seagram's Royal Stag Packaged Drinking Water Launches Its New 'Live It Large' Campaign Featuring Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Badshah, Sidharth Malhotra, Naga Chaitanya, and Payal Dhare

New Delhi: Seagram's Royal Stag Packaged Drinking Water announced the launch of its new brand campaign, Live it Large. Marking a significant evolution in the brand's journey, this campaign brings alive the fearless and expressive attitude of today's generation — Generation Large — that strives to re-define the paths to success. Featuring an eclectic mix of icons across genres — Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Badshah, Sidharth Malhotra, Naga Chaitanya, and Payal Dhare, each exemplifying the fearless attitude and confident spirit of the brand's Live It Large philosophy. Set in the 'Land of Large'—a vibrant celebration of modern India—the campaign film journeys across regions to showcase how every part of India Lives It Large through its own cultural lens: from the Tashan of North India to South's vibrant blend of tech and celebration, the music of the



East, and the rustic vibrance of the West. Each moment embodies the bold belief that out here, large is the only way to live. The film captures the essence of modern India through a fresh, vibrant, and culturally nuanced lens, reinforcing Royal Stag's position as a brand that continues to inspire the nation to dream big and Live It Large. Through these diverse

regional celebrations, the campaign film brings to life the brand's ethos — "yahan, bus large chalta hai!" — encapsulating the unstoppable energy and optimism of India's New Generation - Generation Large, where ambition takes many forms and success is no longer defined by a single path. Royal Stag reinforces its role as a catalyst for inspiration, encouraging millions to

embrace who they are, where they come from, and the dreams they choose to chase. The campaign will be amplified through a high-impact, 360-degree rollout across TV, digital, print and OOH to ensure the campaign reaches and resonates with Generation Large. Debasree Dasgupta, Chief Marketing Officer, Pernod Ricard India shared "Royal Stag has always celebrated

the spirit of dreaming, achieving, and Living It Large. With our new campaign, we are taking this philosophy a step further— capturing the energy, passion, and cultural vibrancy of today's Generation and embodies the ethos of this new generation, Generation Large. By bringing together six icons from different fields and regions, we're showing that Living It Large isn't about conforming to one definition—it's about owning your journey. This campaign captures how every corner of India celebrates ambition through its own cultural lens. It will give further impetus to the brand's transformational journey as it transcends from being a category leader to a cultural icon continues to inspire India to think large, dream large, and Live It Large." Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma, exclusively managed by RISE Worldwide said, "Live It Large isn't just a tagline — it's a philosophy."

Iranian city 'hit hard' by strikes, say residents, while video shows huge blasts at missile base

The UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) has confirmed that military planners will meet next week at the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters to discuss the Strait of Hormuz. It comes after Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper revealed that today's summit between foreign ministers across the globe will be followed up with a meeting between military planners. Next week's meeting will cover the "viable options to make the Strait of Hormuz accessible and safe for navigation", says the MoD in an update shared on X. It adds that, overnight, Britain's RAF Regiment gunners "successfully downed multiple Iranian drones" operating in a "high-threat area" overnight. UN Secretary General António Guterres just spoke to reporters in New York, where he called for an immediate end to the war and cessation of hostilities on all sides. "We are on the edge of a wider war that would



engulf the whole Middle East with dramatic impacts around the globe," he says. He cited rising costs, saying people are already struggling from rising energy and food prices. "When the Strait of Hormuz is strangled, the world's poorest and most vulnerable cannot breathe," he says. He calls for disputes to be settled "peacefully" and says that civilian infrastructure "including nuclear installations" should be

"respected and protected". He goes on to say: "My message is clear, to the United States and Israel, it is high time to stop the war that is inflicting immense human suffering and already triggering devastating economic consequences. To Iran, to stop attacking their neighbours." Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of Iran's parliament, says seven million Iranians have volunteered for military service

since the start of the war with Israel and the US. He says "a powerful national campaign" has led to the millions of Iranians declaring that they are "ready to pick up arms and stand in defense of our nation". "We've done it before, and we're ready to do it again. You come for our home...you're gonna meet the whole family," he said, adding: "Bring it on." The verified clip was first shared this morning and was filmed

from a vehicle driving near Mashhad International Airport. We were able to confirm it was moving along a major highway near Mashhad by identifying landmarks and matching them to street view imagery. Iranian media reports say fuel storage tanks and a warehouse may have been targeted. The airport also hosts one of the air bases of Iran's air force, but it is not possible to identify what was hit from the video. We've just brought you some footage of explosions near a major Iranian missile base, and we're now seeing images of the aftermath of strikes in another part of the Middle East. In Lebanon, Israel is still carrying out an extensive bombing campaign targeting Hezbollah strongholds in the south of the country. Thousands of people have left their homes and set up tents on the streets and beaches to escape the attacks. The base is located

on the edge of a mountain range in the south of Isfahan in central Iran. Another clip, filmed to the north of the base, shows smoke rising over the mountains from fires and several subsequent large secondary explosions. This suggests other explosive material has detonated following a US or Israeli strike. A third video from the nearby town of Baharestan shows the base burning for several minutes. Several secondary explosions are visible in this clip as well, which shows debris repeatedly thrown into the air towards the town or landing in the mountains. Renewed threats to escalate the war: Iran has warned of "crushing, broader and destructive" attacks to come, hours after President Trump warned that the US would hit Iran "extremely hard" in the next few weeks. Fresh strikes in Iran: Sources tell BBC Persian's Ghoncheh Habibi that Karaj, a city west of Tehran, has been "hit hard".

Man dies in storm as Saharan dust shrouds Crete



A man has died near Athens as a storm hits parts of Greece with gale-force winds and flooding, while a Saharan dust storm enveloped the island of Crete. The man was found under a car in the Nea Makri rural area early on Thursday, according to the fire department. Storm Erminio has flooded streets, closed some schools and moored ferries. Meanwhile, some flights were disrupted on Crete on Wednesday after dust from an African storm filled the air, turning the sky red-orange. The weather is expected to be bad on Thursday in most areas of the country "with long-lasting and intense rains and storms and possibly with

local hail", according to the national meteorological service. A red warning is in place in Crete, mainly in the west and south, from midday until late at night on Thursday. The fire department received 674 calls for assistance from Wednesday through the early hours of Thursday. The majority were in the Attica region that encompasses Athens, with most calls for fallen trees. High winds have kept ferries moored in ports, with Greek media reporting some departures may resume on Thursday, weather permitting. Streets as well as the basement of the local police station in Nea Makri were flooded.

Iranian Nobel laureate suffered suspected heart attack in prison, family says



The brother of Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi says he fears her life is in imminent danger after she suffered a suspected heart attack in prison in north-western Iran. Hamidreza Mohammadi, who is based in Norway, told the BBC that the 53-year-old human rights activist was found unconscious in her bed by fellow inmates at Zanjan Prison last week. She was taken to the prison infirmary but officials refused to transfer her to a hospital despite her history of heart and lung problems, he said. She also suffers from severe blood pressure fluctuations. He demanded that she be released immediately for a thorough medical examination. He also warned that strikes and explosions near the prison since the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran a month ago had only added to her stress. "This war has had a terrible effect on prisoners in Iran. If the prison gets hit, if the prisoners need immediate medical attention, they will not get anything and their lives are in danger," he told the BBC's Newsday programme. "It's been really difficult for her family... Her children have gone

through a lot. Now they experience very uncertain time when they don't know even if in the future there will be any peace or if their mother is going to live or die," he added. Narges Mohammadi, the vice-president of the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Iran, was awarded the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize for her activism against female oppression in Iran and promoting human rights. She has spent more than a decade of her life in prison. In 2021, she began serving a 13-year sentence on charges of committing "propaganda activity against the state" and "collusion against state security", which she denied. In December 2024, she was given a temporary release from Tehran's notorious Evin prison on medical grounds. She continued campaigning while undergoing treatment and was arrested in the north-eastern city of Mashhad last December after giving a speech at the memorial ceremony of a fellow human rights activist. Her family said she was taken to hospital after being beaten on the head and neck during the arrest. A few weeks later protests against Iran's clerical establishment swept across the country.

New Brazil law allows separated couples joint custody over pets



Courts in Brazil will be able to determine shared custody arrangements for the pets of separating couples, under new laws. Lawmakers in the Brazilian Congress on Tuesday viewed the law change as a reflection on the importance people place on their pets. The legislation means that if a couple separates without reaching an agreement regarding their pet, "a judge will determine the shared custody arrange-

ment and the equitable distribution of the animal's maintenance expenses between the parties". Currently, the country of 213 million people has about 160 million pets, according to the Instituto Pet Brasil. For the law to apply to separating couples, the animal must have spent the majority of its life with the pair. Shared custody will not be granted in cases of prior criminal records or a history or risk of domestic violence.

'Be serious... don't speak every day': Macron criticises Trump approach to Iran war

The Iran war requires a "serious" approach that does not change every day, Emmanuel Macron has said, in an apparent reference to US President Donald Trump's seemingly contradictory remarks about the conflict. "This is not a show. We are talking about war and peace and the lives of men and women," the French president told journalists upon arrival in South Korea for a state visit. "When you want to be serious you don't say every day the opposite of what you said the day before," Macron added. "And maybe you shouldn't be speaking every day. You should just let things quieten down." Macron was answering questions on the US-Israel war in Iran, which has now entered its



second month. France and other European countries have supported some of the US operations in the region, but have so far resisted getting dragged into the war. Trump and his administration have so far offered mixed messages on the conflict, at various times suggesting that a ceasefire was near, that the war had already been won or that the US was going to fight on.

Macron also addressed Trump's recent comments in which the US president said he was reconsidering his country's membership of Nato. "Alliances like Nato are valuable because of what is unspoken - meaning the trust behind them," Macron said, arguing that casting doubt on one's commitment to the organisation emptied it of its substance. Partners sign agreements

and show up if issues arise, Macron added, "rather than commenting on them every day to say that you will or will not respect them". "I feel like there is too much chatter, it's all over the place," he said. He added he was unwilling to comment on an operation that the US and the Israelis "decided on by themselves", Macron said. "They then lament that they are alone in an operation they decided on alone. It's not our operation." Macron also mentioned the US strikes on Iran in June 2025, which Trump said had "obliterated" Iranian nuclear facilities. However, in the wake of the February 2026 war the US president said it was the "last best chance to strike at Iran's nuclear weapons programme".

ANCIENT GOLDEN HELMET RECOVERED MORE THAN A YEAR AFTER DUTCH HEIST

A 2,500-year-old golden helmet considered one of Romania's greatest treasures has been recovered more than a year after it was stolen during a raid on a Dutch museum. It and two golden bracelets dating back to about 450BC were unveiled as having been returned to the museum on Thursday, secured behind a glass case with two armed police guarding them. A third bracelet has not yet been found. The theft of the Coşofeni helmet and bracelets by an armed gang who broke into the Drents Museum in Assen caused outrage in Romania and raised questions about security for



priceless artefacts on loan to other countries. "It's a long-awaited result," Romanian prosecutor Daniela Buruiana told journalists. "We are happy that we are now witnessing here the recovery of the Romanian artefacts," she added. The treasures,

which date from the Dacian era - an Iron Age civilisation that existed roughly where Romania is now - had been on loan from Romania's national history museum when they had been stolen. Their theft prompted a spat between the two governments that

led to the Dutch government paying a reported 5.7m (£5m; \$6.5m) in insurance compensation. Romanian officials refused to discuss what would happen to that money now. Robert van Langh, director of the Drents Museum in the northern Netherlands, said the helmet had been slightly dented but could be restored. The bracelets remained in perfect condition, he said. Romanian prosecutor Rareş-Petru Stan spoke of the "major impact" that the theft had had in his home country, and praised his Dutch colleagues for their "hard work and keeping the faith".

US lifts sanctions on Venezuelan interim leader Delcy Rodríguez



The United States has lifted sanctions on Venezuela's interim president, Delcy Rodríguez. The move comes less than three months after US forces seized the country's previous leader, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife in a military raid in Caracas and took them to New York to face drug trafficking charges. Rodríguez, a close ally of Maduro who served as his vice-president, had been placed on the sanctions list in 2018, with the US accusing her of undermining democracy. She was sworn in as interim president by Venezuela's National Assembly, which is dominated by Maduro loyalists, days after the US raid and has been described by Trump as "a terrific person". Rodríguez welcomed her removal from the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List. Those named on the list have their assets in the United States blocked and US nationals are barred from doing business from them. In a post on X,

Rodríguez called it "a significant step in the right direction to normalise and strengthen relations between our countries". White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said the move showed the progress that had been made "between our two countries to promote stability, support economic recovery, and advance political reconciliation in Venezuela". "As President Trump has said, Delcy Rodríguez is doing a great job and is working with the United States very well," Kelly added. Opposition activists in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, however, were critical of the move, arguing that the US should exert pressure on Rodríguez to release all political prisoners still held in the country's jails. The release of political prisoners had been one of the key demands US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had made of Rodríguez in the wake of Maduro's removal.



Astronauts in awe of Earth as they prepare for next phase of Moon mission

BABY SHOT DEAD IN PRAM IN NEW YORK CITY, POLICE SAY

A seven-month-old girl was shot and killed in her pushchair in "broad daylight" in New York City's borough of Brooklyn, police have said. Police believe the baby was the unintended victim of a suspected gang-related shooting. Footage from the scene shows two men driving against the flow of traffic through the Williamsburg neighbourhood when a man sitting on the back of the motorbike takes out a gun and fires "at least two rounds", New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch told a news conference. The bike then crashed and the suspected shooter was apprehended, but a "massive" manhunt was under way



for the driver, she said. "A life that had barely begun was taken in an instant," New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said. "Today is a devastating reminder of how much more work there is to be done to combat gun violence across this city." Several adults and children, two of whom were in buggies, had been on a street corner when the shooting occurred.

MS DHONI BACK FOR CSK IN IPL 2026 SOONER THAN EXPECTED?

Chennai Super Kings fans were left thrilled as MS Dhoni started practice ahead of the IPL 2026 encounter against Punjab Kings. Dhoni did not play their first game against Rajasthan Royals and was expected to miss two weeks of the competition due to a calf strain. "MS Dhoni is currently undergoing rehabilitation for a calf strain," CSK said in a statement. However, in a video on social media, he was seen walking out with his kitbag during a net session and playing a few deliveries. While there was no official update on his fitness, Dhoni's presence in the training session was good news for CSK and their fans. Chennai Super Kings will need to improve significantly in all departments of the game to trouble a potent Punjab Kings in

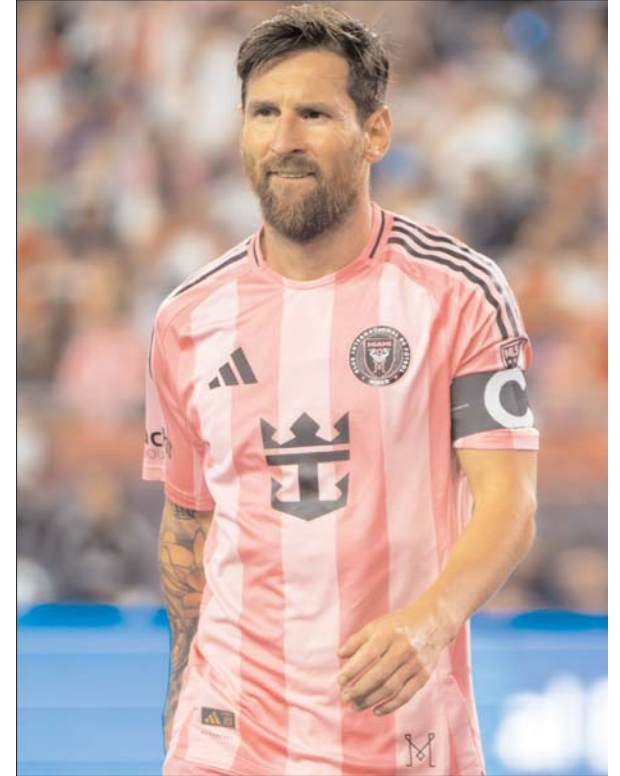
their first home game of the Indian Premier League on Friday. It was a uninspiring start for CSK in their opener against Rajasthan Royals. CSK, now a team full of youngsters, did not get anything right in Guwahati and would simply like to leave that comprehensive defeat behind in a long tournament such as the IPL. Considering how the Chennai surface played in the recent T20 World Cup, it should be a good batting wicket for the game on Friday. While the injured MS Dhoni did not travel to Guwahati, he could be back in the dugout as a sounding board to captain Rituraj Gaikwad while he nurses a calf strain. Sanju Samson, their biggest signing for the season, did not last long on his CSK debut and would be looking to make a big impact in front of home

fans. CSK did not have the services of their key batter Dewald Brevis against Royals and there is still no clarity over his recovery from a side strain. Sarfaraz Khan was brought into the field as an impact player following the batting collapse. He did not last long but looked comfortable in the middle in his first IPL game since 2023 season. More will be expected from youngsters like Kartik Sharma as the tournament progresses. On the bowling front, the likes of Matt Henry and Noor Ahmad were made to look ordinary by the sheer belligerence of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. They would be itching to bounce back from that pasting. CSK take on last year's finalists Punjab Kings, who have



"CHEATED US": Lionel Messi, Argentina Football Team Slammed By Kerala Minister

Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurahiman on Thursday said that the Argentina football team allegedly deceived the state by not coming to play a match even after receiving money for it. Abdurahiman said that he had really wanted the Argentina football team and Lionel Messi to come to Kerala and play a match in the state. "For that, I had held several discussions. It was also not an easy task to find sponsors to arrange the Rs 250 crore to be paid to the international football team. "But, after receiving the money, the Argentine football team cheated us. We did not expect such a betrayal from them. Not coming after promising to do so," the minister told a TV channel. He said that when he enquired, he found out that Argentina had done this to five other countries. "They took money from those coun-



tries, but never went there to play. It is a situation where a case will have to be filed against the Argentine football team, and they will have to pay us compensation," Abdurahiman said.

Ugly Brawl Breaks Out Between IPL Fans During Lucknow Super Giants vs Delhi Capitals Clash

The IPL 2026 encounter between Lucknow Super Giants and Delhi Capitals at the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow witnessed shocking scenes as a physical fight broke out among the spectators. Videos of the altercation have already gone viral on social media, showing fans involved in a heated spat that escalated into a full-blown fight inside the stadium. The reason for the physical altercation was not immediately clear, but police personnel stepped in to separate those involved. Coming to the match, Lucknow Super Giants were bundled out for just 141; in reply, Tristan Stubbs and Sameer Rizvi guided Delhi



Capitals to victory with more than two overs to spare. Meanwhile, former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen disagreed with Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) skipper Rishabh Pant's decision to open the innings in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 after the skipper's brief outing at the top order

against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday. Pant promoted himself to the opening slot against Delhi Capitals, but his stay at the crease was cut short due to an unfortunate run-out at the non-striker's end. The dismissal came after a drive from Mitchell Marsh ricocheted off the bowler's hand and deflect-

ed onto the stumps. According to Pietersen, Pant, who struggled for runs in the last season, has increased the pressure on himself after deciding to open the innings for the team. He believes that Pant should not force himself at the top and focus on enjoying the position that he bats in. "When you look at the strength and depth of LSG's batting, is Rishabh Pant really an opening batter? I think he might have gone a little too far ahead of where he was in the line-up compared to last year. Last year, he moved down the order, and now suddenly it's, I'm going to come up to the top," Pietersen told Jio Hotstar.

Heated Words Exchanged Between Tristan Stubbs And LSG's Prince Yadav During IPL 2026 Match

The Lucknow Super Giants vs Delhi Capitals IPL 2026 match at the Ekana Cricket Stadium saw heated words being exchanged between Delhi Capitals' Tristan Stubbs and Lucknow Super Giants pacer Prince Yadav. The incident happened in the fifth over. After the fifth ball of the over, Prince Yadav went all the way to Tristan Stubbs and stared at the South African batter. Stubbs did not hold back and returned the gesture. Earlier, Lucknow Super Giants put up an embarrassing batting display with some questionable tactical calls, getting shot out for 141 in 18.4 overs in their IPL match against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday. Delhi Capitals skipper Axar Patel opted to bowl first, and even



though the Ekana Stadium wicket wasn't a belter, there could be no tangible excuse for the LSG unit for its pathetic batting display. A fit-again T. Natarajan (3/29 in 4 overs), Kuldeep Yadav (2/31 in 4 overs) and the brilliant Lungi Ngidi (3/27 in 3.4 overs), who bowled perhaps a contender for the 'ball of the tournament', made life

miserable for the home team, which looked as bad on paper as per pre-tournament predictions. Captain Rishabh Pant, in a surprising move from the team's perspective, broke the successful opening pair of Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh and promoted himself to the top of the order. Pant (7 off 9 balls) started with a nice back-drive off Mukesh Kumar, but in the next over was run out at the non-striker's end when the bowler got a fingertip to a smashing straight hit from Marsh. But, to be frank, Pant didn't look comfortable once, despite that opening boundary, and it seemed more like a desperate attempt to get his India T20 slot back. Aiden Markram (11) hit a six and a four, but DC skipper Axar Patel's wicket-to-wicket delivery breached his defence. The highly rated Ayush Badoni (0) edged one from T. Natarajan that was angled across, but it was Ngidi's newfound confidence in executing slower deliveries that became the standout moment of the first half.

Fakhar Zaman Challenges Two-Match Ban For Ball-tampering In Pakistan Super League

Veteran Pakistan player Fakhar Zaman was on Tuesday suspended for two matches of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) for breaching the code of conduct pertaining to altering the condition of the ball. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced that the match referee found Fakhar guilty of a Level 3 offence, breaching Article 2.14 of the applicable Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel during the PSL match between Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings here on Sunday. According to a report in Geo News, quoting sources, "Fakhar Zaman has challenged his two-match suspension over ball-tampering charges during his PSL match against Karachi



Kings." The suspected ball-tampering incident occurred just before the start of the final over, when the on-field umpires penalised Lahore Qalandars five runs and changed the ball before the last over of Karachi Kings' batting innings. On-field umpires Shahid Saikat and Faisal Khan Aafreedi, TV

umpire Asif Yaqoob, and fourth umpire Tariq Rasheed levelled the charge. Fakhar denied the offence and contested the charge at a full disciplinary hearing in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Match referee Roshan Mahanama conducted the disciplinary hearing and made the determination after reviewing all evidence and providing an opportunity for a personal hearing to Fakhar. Lahore Qalandars captain Shaheen Shah Afridi, team director Sameen Rana, and team manager Farooq Anwar were also present during the hearing. Lahore Qalandars are next scheduled to face Multan Sultans on April 3 at the Gaddafi Stadium and Islamabad United on April 9 at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi.

India Gear Up For Billie Jean King Cup, Target Another Playoff Berth

India have begun their preparations for the upcoming Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Group I tournament in the national capital, with captain Vishal Uppal expressing confidence in a balanced squad that blends experience and youth. The team assembled in Delhi earlier this week to acclimatise to the conditions ahead of the April 7-11 tournament, with Uppal stressing the importance of early preparation. "We've just got here to Delhi... and come the 7th of April, we'll be ready to come out and fight for India. We really hope the people of Delhi come out in large numbers and support Team India," Uppal told PTI Videos. Reflecting on last year's campaign, where



India made the playoffs but fell short of advancing further, Uppal highlighted the need for collective effort. "Tennis is an individual sport, but here it has to be a team effort. This year, all of us have to play our role and give our heart and soul day in and day out," he added. India's recent performances underline steady progress in

women's tennis. The team has qualified for the World Group playoffs twice in the last six years after a 42-year drought before 2020. "Everyone wants to live in a penthouse, but you have to build the floors first. We are in the process of building women's tennis in India," Uppal explained, underlining the long-term vision.

R Pragnanandhaa Draws, Divya Deshmukh Suffers Defeat In Candidates



Indian Grandmaster R Pragnanandhaa played out a draw against Matthias Bluebaum of Germany in the fourth round in the open section of the FIDE Candidates Tournament on Wednesday. But Divya Deshmukh lost to Zhu Jiner of China, while R Vaishali drew with Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia in the women's event. Meanwhile, Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan scored his third win of the tournament, taking a major step toward winning the FIDE Candidates after defeating Fabiano Caruana of the USA with impressive opening preparation. In the FIDE Women's Candidates, Zhu Jiner and Anna Muzychuk regained momentum with important victories, while Muzychuk now shares the lead with Bibisara Assaubayeva.

On Tuesday, Pragnanandhaa had suffered a major setback in his campaign, going down to Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan in the third round. Pragnanandhaa had begun his campaign on a high by defeating Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri. In the FIDE Women's Candidates, Zhu Jiner and Anna Muzychuk regained momentum with important victories, while Muzychuk now shares the lead with Bibisara Assaubayeva. On Tuesday, Pragnanandhaa had suffered a major setback in his campaign, going down to Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan in the third round. Pragnanandhaa had begun his campaign on a high by defeating Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri.

Davies back in Wales squad but Clark misses out

Manchester City teenager Mayzee Davies is back in the Wales squad for this month's World Cup qualifying double-header against Albania, but there is no place for injured goalkeeper Olivia Clark. Defender Davies has not appeared for her country since suffering an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury while on Wales duty 11 months ago. The 19-year-old has been recalled after returning to action for Manchester City's under-21 side this week, though Wales head coach Rhian Wilkinson says she is unlikely to play in this camp as

a result of her long lay-off. "We don't want to put that pressure on at this point but to have her back with the squad I think is really important," Wilkinson said. Wales will have to cope without Leicester City's Clark, who has not played since picking up a lower leg injury while training with her country last month. In the absence of 35-cap Clark, Wilkinson has handed a first senior call-up to Llantrisant-born Lucy Farrell-Shrouder, 22, who is on loan at Stoke City from Burnley. Wales face Albania at Wrexham's Stoke Cae Ras on Tuesday, 14 April (19:15 BST) before travelling for the return

fixture at the Elbasan Arena in Elbasan four days later (17:00 BST). Wilkinson says Clark's injury is not serious, though it does leave Manchester United's Safia Middleton-Patel as the only goalkeeper in this Wales squad who has played a senior international. Wilkinson has regularly rotated her two senior keepers, but says eight-cap Middleton-Patel will feature in both Albania games. "She will come in as our number one and that's an opportunity for her," Wilkinson said. "Liv's not here and that does not mean she's out sight of mind. She is absolutely still in there in the

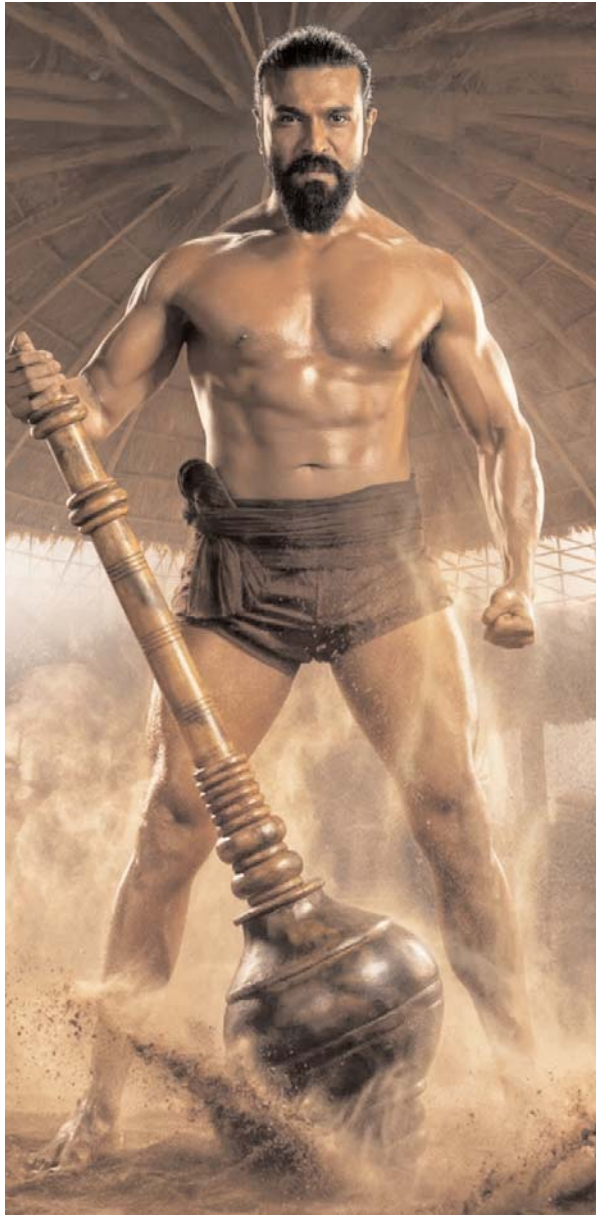
running [to be first-choice keeper], but I am looking forward to seeing what Saf can do for us. Farrell-Shrouder, Poppy Soper, Annie Wilding and Phoebe Poole are the four uncapped players in the squad, while Gwen Zimmerman, Olivia Francis and Mary McAteer are not included having been involved in the previous camp. Wilkinson's side began their bid to secure a place at the 2027 World Cup with an away draw against the Czech Republic - who are expected to be their main rivals to top Group B1 - and a comprehensive home victory over Montenegro.



Mega Power Star Ram Charan's Striking Pehalwan Avatar With Gada, Poster Unveiled on Hanuman Jayanthi

Mega Power Star Ram Charan's upcoming pan-India action drama Peddi continues to build massive hype nationwide, following the roaring response to its first two songs and the two glimpses revealed so far. The birthday special glimpse, in particular, left a strong impression. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana and produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under the Vriddhi Cinemas banner, with Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings presenting, the film is moving steadily toward release.

On the sacred occasion of Hanuman Jayanthi, the makers unveiled a powerful new poster, showcasing Ram Charan in his most intense and spiritually charged avatar yet. The poster places Charan at the center of a dusty rural akhada, his commanding presence instantly drawing focus. Sporting a chiselled pehalwan-like physique, he exudes raw strength, enhanced by a rugged beard, tied-back hair, and an earthy langot that reinforces the rustic authenticity. Gripping a massive wooden gada embedded deep into the ground, Ram Charan embodies an energy unmistakably reminiscent of Lord Hanuman. The dust erupting around him intensifies the moment's force, while wrestlers practicing in the background add to the poster's fierce atmosphere. Janhvi Kapoor plays



the leading lady, with Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyennadu, and Boman Irani taking on other significant roles. Backed by top-tier talent like cinematographer R. Rathnavelu, editor Navin Nooli, and production designer Avinash Kolla, Peddi promises a grand and immersive visual experience.

"AMBA'S REVENGE" – First AI-Based Telugu Feature Film Announced



Marking a technological milestone in the Telugu film industry, "Amba's Revenge" is set to become the first full-length Telugu feature film created with the support of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The title poster of the film was unveiled on the occasion of Hanuman Vijayotsavam. Produced by Srikanth Reddy Kunduru and co-produced by Rani Madison, the film is being developed under the creative direction of Jayavardhan Madi. The project draws inspiration from the powerful character Amba from the Mahabharata and presents her story through a fresh and innovative mythological narrative using advanced AI technology. The film is being jointly produced by Sri Lalitakala Chitralu and Nakka Thoka Films. Speaking on the occasion,

producer Srikanth Reddy Kunduru and creative director Jayavardhan Madi said that the project marks the beginning of a new experimental phase in Telugu cinema. They explained that cutting-edge AI tools are being used in visual design, character creation, and narrative development to present the story in a unique cinematic style. The title poster release on Hanuman Vijayotsavam is the first step in introducing the project to audiences, and more details will be announced soon. The film is being seen as a significant step toward AI-driven storytelling in Telugu cinema. By blending mythology with modern technology, "Amba's Revenge" has already generated curiosity and interest among movie lovers and industry observers alike.

"Our film Rakasa is designed to be an entertaining experience that the whole family can watch together and enjoy a hearty laugh," said Niharika Konidela at the Pre-Release Madness event



Niharika Konidela, in collaboration with Umesh Kumar Bansal, produced the film Rakasa under the Pink Elephant Pictures banner, presented by Zee Studios. Directed by Manasa Sharma, the film stars Sangeeth Shobhan and Nayan Sarika in the lead roles. The movie is set for release on April 3. Ahead of its release, a grand Pre-Release Madness event was held on Tuesday. "Niharika Konidela said", "We focused even more on promotions than on the actual shooting of Rakasa. We made a quality film and wanted to ensure it reaches a wide audience, which is why we are promoting it on such a large scale. From the first glimpse itself, the film has created strong buzz.

From beginning to end, Rakasa offers clean comedy and wholesome entertainment for the entire family. It's not just a horror or thriller; it's a unique blend of comedy, fantasy, and adventure. We completed the film within our planned budget, though we faced some scheduling challenges due to artists' availability and industry strikes. When I learned that even my brother Ram Charan who usually isn't active on social media, had heard about Rakasa, I felt our film had truly reached people. I've always wanted to explore different genres, but I strongly believe entertainment is essential in any film. Rakasa delivers that in abundance." *Sangeeth Shobhan said*, "Ram

Charan garu appreciated Rakasa a lot. When Niharika told me we were going to meet him, I thought it was a prank! Within our resources, we tried to create an adventurous film in the spirit of Indiana Jones, but not on that scale. Our aim is pure entertainment. Manasa first narrated this story to me, and I immediately said yes without listening to other scripts. After finalizing the script, we approached Niharika, and things progressed smoothly from there. I share a great bond with both Niharika and Manasa, and I feel very comfortable working with them. I'm confident Rakasa will entertain everyone." *Director Manasa Sharma said*, "The story of Rakasa is fresh and unique."

