

KAVITHA LAUNCHES NEW POLITICAL PITCH, SEEKS PUBLIC SUPPORT AFTER SPLIT FROM BRS

FORMER MLC POSITIONS HERSELF AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORCE AMID TELANGANA'S SHIFTING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

By M. Rajanikanth

Continued From Page-1 Her outreach campaign is now gaining visibility across the state, with messaging focused on seeking public trust and building a new political platform.



Political observers note that Kavitha enters the fray with a recognisable public image and a strong cultural connect, particularly through her earlier initiatives.

The BRS continues to be led by KCR, while senior leaders such as KT. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao remain an influential figure with significant organisational backing.

Analysts say Kavitha's immediate challenge will be to build a grassroots cadre and articulate a clear political agenda that distinguishes her from the BRS legacy.

difficult. At the same time, her positioning as an independent voice critical of internal party dynamics may resonate with sections of voters seeking alternatives in the state's political landscape.

Whether this new political initiative can translate into electoral strength remains to be seen, as Telangana heads into a phase of recalibration following recent election outcomes.

World Malaria Day Rally Held in Nagarkurnool

Nagarkurnool: An awareness rally was conducted on the occasion of World Malaria Day at the Old Collectorate premises on Saturday. The rally was flagged off by District Medical and Health Officer Dr. K. Ravikumar.



anyone with fever should immediately visit the nearest health centre and undergo a blood test. He noted that Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kits are available free of cost at government health facilities. He stressed the importance of preventing mosquito breeding by avoiding stagnant water and observing a "Dry Day" every Friday.

Ponguleti's Grievance Redressal Drive



Khammam (TSIT): Taking governance to the doorstep of people and resolving their grievances is the government's primary objective, said state revenue, housing and information & public relations minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy.

additional collectors Srija and P. Srinivasa Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said the government led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is committed to public welfare and is implementing the 99-day programme effectively across all villages.

TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud Meets Newly Appointed Protocol & Coordination Committee Members



Hyderabad TSIT: Mahesh Kumar Goud, President of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) and MLC, was courteously met by the newly appointed members of the TPCC Protocol & Coordination Committee at Gandhi Bhavan.

200 Crore Manjeera Water Scheme Proposed to Ensure Daily Supply



Hyderabad TSIT: A major proposal worth 200 crore has been prepared to strengthen the Manjeera water supply system in Sangareddy town, aiming to provide two hours of clean drinking water daily to residents.

MINISTER DAMODAR RAJA NARASIMHA PRESENTS 'BEST HR CONSULTING PARTNER' AWARD TO VERCH CONSULTING

Hyderabad, April 2026: Damodar Raja Narasimha Minister for Health, Medical and Family Welfare, and Science & Technology, Government of Telangana, presented the prestigious "Best HR Consulting Partner Pharma Industry" award to Verch Consulting LLP at the NextGen Pharma Summit and Awards held at Hitex, Hyderabad.



The award was received by Dr. Chikkala Venugopal Rao, Founder and CEO of Verch Consulting LLP, in recognition of the firm's significant contribution to strengthening talent ecosystems in the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors.

Consulting LLP has rapidly emerged as a trusted HR consulting partner for leading pharma companies. The firm offers a range of services including executive search, leadership hiring, compensation benchmarking, and strategic HR advisory, particularly in niche segments such as API, formulations, biotechnology, and life sciences.

Speaking on the occasion Minister highlighted the importance of strong human resource frameworks in advancing Telangana's pharmaceutical industry and appreciated the role of specialised HR firms like Verch Consulting in building skilled talent pipelines.

Founded in 2019 and headquartered in Hyderabad, Verch

BOTSIN LLC LAUNCHES HYDERABAD100 PLATFORM, TARGETS EXPANSION TO 100 CITIES IN 3 MONTHS

Hyderabad: BotsIn LLC has launched Hyderabad100.com, extending its hyperlocal city-intelligence network to Telangana's capital. The launch event was held in the presence of K. T. Rama Rao and Raja Narendar Reddy, with Founder and Managing Member Avinash Puli seeking their support as the platform scales across India and the United States.



The platform is powered by a patent-pending "City Pulse Engine," designed to forecast local service demand for the next 30 days using historical data, including festivals, academic calendars, weather patterns, and civic events. This innovation aims to help small businesses better plan operations, staffing, and promotions.

carpooling, local content, and community engagement tools. It is designed to support everyday service providers, including drivers, home-based businesses, technicians, tutors, and small shop owners by connecting them directly with local residents.

The initiative is further strengthened through a collaboration with Kakatiya Institute of Technology and Science (KITS Warangal), where students are actively contributing to the platform in areas like data analytics, AI automation, and marketing under the guidance of CIIRE. Former Rajya Sabha MP V. Lakshminantha Rao

SINGARENI AREA HOSPITAL IN BELLAMPALLI GETS A FACELIFT

Bellampalli, April 25, TSIT: Singareni Director Venkateswarlu on Saturday said that efforts are underway to restore the past glory of the Singareni Area Hospital in Bellampalli, with a focus on improving healthcare services for coal workers and the local population.



patient wards to ensure enhanced comfort and care. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Venkateswarlu noted that the hospital has been serving Singareni employees for several decades and emphasised the need to further strengthen its infrastructure and services.

Target to Provide 2 Hours of Clean Drinking Water Daily to Sangareddy Residents

Jaggareddy Directs Officials to Prepare Proposals for Rs.200 Crore Manjira Water Scheme Expansion

Sangareddy, April 25 (TSIT) Congress leader Torpu Jayaprakash Reddy (Jaggareddy) directed officials to prepare proposals for the expansion of the Manjira Water Scheme with an estimated cost of Rs.200 crore to ensure the supply of clean drinking water to the people of Sangareddy town for two hours every day.



At that time, people had to spend between Rs.2,000 and Rs.3,000 for tap connections, but the municipality passed a special resolution and provided free Manjira water connections to 18,000 households, reducing the financial burden on the public. Jaggareddy said that after 2014, the Telangana government introduced Mission Bhagiratha, but claimed that the Manjira Water Scheme was weakened thereafter.

needs for the next 50 years. Jaggareddy clarified that this project has nothing to do with votes and said he is taking up the work purely for the welfare of Sangareddy people as a local resident. According to the proposals prepared by officials, the current project cost is estimated at Rs.175 crore, while an additional intake well near the Manjira dam would cost Rs.25 crore, taking the total project estimate to Rs.200 crore.

Jaggareddy directed officials to convene an emergency council meeting next Monday and seek the opinions of all 38 councillors, irrespective of party affiliation. He asked them to visit colonies, gather public feedback, and identify if any additional pipelines are required before finalizing proposals by the 5th of next month.

Telangana Delegation Participates in Chintan Shivir 2026

Hyderabad TSIT: Telangana Youth and Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari emphasized that sports development can be achieved comprehensively only through collective efforts of the Central and State Governments, along with public participation, sports associations, voluntary organizations, and corporate institutions.



The three-day Chintan Shivir 2026 commenced in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre with a yoga session on Saturday morning. Leading the Telangana delegation, Minister Srihari is accompanied by Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, Sports Advisor A. P. Jitender Reddy, Sports Authority Chairman Shivasesa Reddy, Managing Director Dr. A. Soni Bala Devi, Deputy Director Dr. Raviteja, and eminent sportspersons including Pulella Gopichand and Gagan Narang.

the Centre and States to build a strong sports ecosystem and enhance India's global sporting achievements.

Highlighting Telangana's progress, he stated that the state has successfully implemented Central Government schemes while also introducing innovative initiatives that have strengthened its reputation in the sports sector. In line with the vision of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to develop Hyderabad as a sports hub, the state has launched several grassroots-level programmes to identify and nurture talent.

The Minister added that Telangana continues to actively implement flagship programmes including Khelo India, National Sports Day celebrations, "Sunday on Cycling," and initiatives to honour Olympic medalists. Telangana delegation is actively participating in deliberations aimed at strengthening the country's sports ecosystem.

Illicit Affair Suspicion: Wife Killed, Husband Dies by Suicide

Sangareddy, April 25 (TSIT) A tragic incident took place in Sadashivpet town of Sangareddy district, where a man allegedly murdered his wife over suspicion of an illicit relationship and later died by suicide. The incident created panic and shock among local residents.



The shocking incident came to light in the 7th ward of Sadashivpet town. According to police, the husband, Raju (43), often quarrelled with his wife Rani (40) suspecting her character. During one such heated argument, Raju reportedly lost his temper and attacked Rani with a grinding stone at their house, hitting her on the head. She suffered severe bleeding and died on the spot.

Grand Success for Siddipet Police Job Mela: 65 Companies Recruit 624 Aspirants

Siddipet, Apr 25: (The South India Times Staff Reporter) Siddipet Police 'Udyoga Mitra' Job Mela a Grand Success: 624 Candidates Receive Appointment Letters from CP Rashmi Perumal, IPS.. The "Siddipet Police Udyoga Mitra - Mega Job Mela 2026," organized by the Siddipet Police Department to provide employment opportunities for local youth, concluded successfully on Saturday. Held at the local Police Convention Centre, the event saw an overwhelming response, with a large number of young aspirants participating from across the district.





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APCC condemns convening of Assembly session to blame Cong for Women Reservation Bill defeat

Vijayawada (TSIT) Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Shivaji vehemently condemned convening of Legislative Assembly's special session by the Chandrababu Naidu government especially to blame the Congress party for the defeat of Women Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha recently.

struction of Outer Ring Road and loss to the small and marginal farmers. Congress also demanded that Chandrababu Naidu prove his sincerity by passing a resolution in the special session of the Assembly, allocating 181 seats, which is 33 per cent of the 543 seats, under the 2023 Women's Reservation Act, which is in force throughout the country, by 2029.

BDL delivers indigenous heavyweight torpedo to NSTL, boosting naval capabilities

Visakhapatnam, April 25: Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), a premier defence public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defence, has achieved a major milestone in indigenous defence manufacturing with the delivery of a production-grade Wire Guided Heavy Weight Torpedo (WGHWT) to Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) at its Visakhapatnam unit on Thursday.

Varughese, along with teams from BDL, NSTL, and the Indian Navy, a BDL statement said late on Friday night. As the Development- cum-Production Partner (DePP), BDL collaborated closely with NSTL to successfully realise India's first indigenous production-grade wire-guided heavy weight torpedo. The system has been developed in both practice and combat configurations and formally handed over, marking a significant step in strengthening India's self-reliance in advanced naval weapon systems under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

along with sophisticated search, attack, and re-attack capabilities, substantially enhancing the operational readiness of the Indian Navy. Officials highlighted that the achievement reflects strong collaboration between DRDO and BDL, supported by a wide network of industrial partners, including MSMEs. The successful production of such a complex underwater weapon system underscores India's growing expertise in cutting-edge naval technologies.

SRM University-AP Marks 10th Research Day, Honours Scholars and Faculty for Excellence

Amaravati: SRM University-AP celebrated a significant milestone with the 10th edition of its Research Day, showcasing a decade of academic excellence and innovation. The event provided a vibrant platform for research scholars and students to present their work, exchange ideas, and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.



change. He also noted key energy trends for 2025, including rising gas demand, increased adoption of solar and wind energy, declining fossil fuel usage, and a shift toward advanced biofuels. He commended the university's initiatives in emerging technologies

and green hydrogen, calling it a leader in sustainable innovation. Prof. D. Narayana Rao, Executive Director (Research), SRM Group, emphasized the institution's commitment to building a strong research ecosystem aligned with national priorities in science and

technology. He also announced plans to establish a Centre for ANRF-Translational Research Innovation and Initiative (ATRI) to transform research into real-world applications. Vice Chancellor Prof. Ch. Satish Kumar highlighted the importance of strengthening research culture, while Prof. C.V. Tomy noted the overwhelming response with 574 research abstracts submitted across diverse fields.

AP: 13 special courts being set up to try accused in ganja cases: DGP

Vijayawada, Apr 25 (TSIT) Andhra Pradesh State DGP Harish Kumar Gupta has revealed that 13 special courts will be set up in the state to try accused in ganja and drug cases. The DGP inaugurated the newly constructed EAGLE (Elite Anti-Narcotics Group for Law Enforcement) headquarters at Mangalagiri, near here on Saturday marking a significant step towards strengthening law enforcement infrastructure in the State.

GITAM Labs Join National I-STEM Network to Support Researchers Across India



The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : GITAM Deemed to be University has taken a significant step to support researchers, startups, and industry professionals across the country by making its advanced research facilities accessible through national integration with I-STEM (Indian Science, Technology and Engineering facilities Map), an initiative of the Government of India's Department of Science and Technology.

premier institutions across the country. To promote research, GITAM has established the Murthy Labs with an investment of several crores of rupees. The facility houses state-of-the-art instruments such as Laser Scanning Microscope, Physical Property Measurement System, FESEM, 500 MHz NMR, LC-HRMS, X-ray Diffraction systems, and advanced 3D printers.

GITAM representatives stated that the initiative aims to enhance transparency in the utilization of scientific resources and accelerate technological advancement in the country. The university's expert technical team will also assist external researchers in operating the equipment and collecting accurate analytical data.

KIMS Cuddles Doctors Give New Lease of Life to Newborn



Kurnool, April 25, 2026: In a rare and life-saving medical intervention, doctors at KIMS Cuddles, Kurnool, successfully performed a complex surgery on a newborn baby on the seventh day after birth, saving the infant's life. Sharing details of the case, Consultant Pediatric Urologist Dr. Sai Prasanna said that the baby, born to a couple from Gadwal district in Telangana, had not passed stools even two days after birth, causing concern among the parents.

symptoms such as abdominal swelling and greenish vomiting by the second day, indicating worsening of the condition. The medical team decided to perform surgery on the seventh day after birth. Traditionally, this condition required a two-stage surgical approach, involving an initial procedure to create a colostomy (external opening for stool passage), followed by a second corrective surgery later. However, the KIMS Cuddles team adopted an advanced Transanal Endorectal Pull-Through (TERPT) procedure, which allows surgeons to correct the defect in a single stage without any external incisions.

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KL University Admission Counseling from April 26 to 30

Vijayawada/Hyderabad: Admission counseling for engineering, degree, and postgraduate courses at KL University campuses in Vijayawada and Hyderabad will be held from April 26 to 30, announced Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Parthasaradhi Varma. Students who secured ranks in the university's



national-level engineering entrance exam, as well as those eligible through JEE percentile and intermediate (Class 12) marks, can attend the counseling and select their preferred courses. Dr. Varma stated that meritorious students participating in the counseling process will be eligible for special scholarships.

Admissions Director Dr. J. Srinivasa Rao said all arrangements have been completed smoothly. He added that the university has designed a scholarship scheme prioritizing talented students. Detailed information about the counseling process is available on the university's official website.

Minister Kandula Durgesh Pays Tributes to Former CM Nadendla Bhaskara Rao

Hyderabad/Amaravati, April 23: State Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh paid rich tributes to the mortal remains of former Chief Minister Nadendla Bhaskara Rao during his last rites. The minister visited the residence of Nadendla Manohar in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, where he offered floral homage to

the departed leader. Durgesh expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and consoled them in their moment of grief, praying for strength and courage to overcome the loss. Later, the minister participated in the funeral proceedings. Speaking on the occasion, Kandula Durgesh recalled

the invaluable contributions of Nadendla Bhaskara Rao as a public representative and as Chief Minister in the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh. He described Bhaskara Rao's services to the state's development as unforgettable and prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace. Durgesh also expressed

HSL RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD



The South India Times, Visakhapatnam: Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) has received prestigious recognition for its outstanding contribution to digital transformation in the maritime sector. The award was presented at the PSE Excellence Awards-2026

event held in Hyderabad on Saturday. On behalf of HSL, Deputy General Manager (IT & ERP) TVNB Suryanarayana received the award. The recognition was given in the Enterprise Applications category for the successful implementation of SAP

S/4 HANA and key digital reforms. The organization stated that HSL is taking significant steps to modernize its operations through the comprehensive use of digital systems, enhancement of operational efficiency, and data-driven decision-making. These initiatives have strengthened the organization's performance and positioned HSL as a forward-looking entity in the maritime sector. At the event, more than 30 public sector enterprises were recognized across various categories, with HSL being one among them. Officials stated that the organization continues to stay ahead in the use of technology, innovation, and in achieving the goals of Digital India.

GITAM SCHOLAR DR. KISHORE EARNS PH.D. WITH BREAKTHROUGH IN SOLAR CELL RESEARCH



Hyderabad (TSIT): GITAM Deemed to be University has congratulated Dr. Kishore M on successfully earning his Ph.D. in Chemistry under the guidance of Prof. Rambabu Gundla from the Department of Chemistry, School of Science. Dr. Kishore's research focused on the design and development of advanced hole transporting materials (HTMs) for perovskite solar cells, a rapidly emerging technology in the renewable energy sector. His work involved synthesizing novel benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene-based

organic materials aimed at addressing critical challenges related to efficiency and stability in solar cell performance. The study revealed that the newly developed HTMs offer excellent thermal stability, efficient charge transport, and favorable energy alignment. Significantly, dopant-free perovskite solar cells incorporating these materials achieved a power conversion efficiency of up to 21.14%, along with improved operational stability. The research highlights the importance of innovative molecular design in developing cost-effective and high-performance solar technologies, contributing to sustainable energy solutions. GITAM leadership, including Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. D. S. Rao, Resident Director D.V.V.S.R. Varma, School of Science Principal Dr. M. Reza, and Head of the Department Dr. Gousia Begum, congratulated Dr. Kishore for his notable academic achievement and valuable contribution to scientific research.

Grand 10th Annual Convocation of IIM Visakhapatnam Held in Vizag



The South India Times, Visakhapatnam. The 10th Annual Convocation of the Indian Institute of Management Visakhapatnam was held in a grand manner. A total of 665 students received their degrees during the ceremony, which took place in the presence of distinguished guests, faculty members, and families of the students. The convocation was inaugurated by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Hari S. Bhartia. IIM Visakhapatnam Director, Professor M. Chandrasekhar, presented the Director's report, highlighting the institution's progress over the

past decade. He elaborated on significant advancements in academic programs, research development, industry collaboration, and international partnerships. Chairman Hari S. Bhartia congratulated the students and emphasized the importance of innovation, entrepreneurship, and emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence. He advised students to maintain quality in their thinking, courage in decision-making, and integrity in their actions. Chief Guest Zarin Daruwalla, CEO of PL Capital Group, in her congratulatory address, urged students to cultivate humility, ethical values,

and a problem-solving mindset. On this occasion, degrees were awarded to 342 MBA students, 163 EMBA students, 40 EPDPM students, 62 PGPMCI students, 57 PGP PMCI students, along with one PhD scholar. Among the top performers, Sanjay Pathak secured the first rank in the PGP program, while Samruddhi Mangrulkar secured the second rank. In EMBA, Mahabir Ghosh and Sonam Gupta emerged as toppers. The ceremony concluded on a proud note, with IIM Visakhapatnam reaffirming its commitment to shaping future leaders.

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EDITORIAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The mirror and the original

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Protest Origins To Major Rebellion: Story Of AAP So Far

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

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

INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS TODAY



PRIYANKA SAURABH

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

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

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

NO THIRD EXAM FOR K'TAKA BOARD SSLC THIS YEAR; REVALUATION APPLICATION DETAILS ANNOUNCED

Bengaluru, Apr 23: Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa has clarified that there will be no third examination for SSLC students this year, citing the satisfactory overall results, similar to the Second PUC outcomes. He further announced that the second examination (Exam-2) is scheduled to be held from May 18 to May 25. Following the announcement of results, the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has released the official schedule for students seeking scanned copies, re-counting, and re-evaluation of their answer scripts. Scanned copies and application window



Students who wish to verify their marks or check if any answers were left unvalued can apply for scanned copies of their answer scripts. General Application Period: April 23, 2026, to April 26, 2026. With Late Fee: April 27 to April 28 (A penalty of Rs 100 per day will be applicable). Online/Karnataka-One: The fee is fixed at Rs

410 per subject. Offline Centers: The cost may go up to Rs 420, including service charges. Direct Payments: At Bengaluru-One or Karnataka-One centers, students can pay directly. Including service charges, the amounts are specified as Rs 420 and Rs 820 respectively for relevant categories. Important instructions The board has emphasized that obtaining a scanned copy is mandatory before applying for re-evaluation. Students must ensure that their registration number and subject codes are entered correctly, as the board will not entertain any applications received after the deadline.

Fortis Hospitals Bengaluru Launches Preventive Genomics Clinic, Ushering a New Era in Precision Medicine



Bengaluru : Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru today announced the launch of its Preventive Genomics Clinic across its Bengaluru network, thus reinforcing its commitment to delivering patient-centric, preventive and precision-led care. The clinic was inaugurated by Prof. Padmanabhan Balam, Padma Shri & Padma Bhushan, Former Director of IISc, Bengaluru, in the presence of senior clinicians, hospital leadership and distinguished guests. This Preventive Genomics Clinic aims to offer advanced genetic testing, expert counselling and personalized treatment plans, enabling indi-

viduals to make informed healthcare decisions based on their genetic profile. By leveraging genomics, Fortis Clinicians seek to enable early detection of inherited conditions, accurate diagnosis of complex diseases, and more targeted, effective treatment strategies. Speaking at the launch, Prof. Padmanabhan

Balam, Padma Shri & Padma Bhushan, Former Director of IISc, Bengaluru, said, "I congratulate Fortis Hospitals on this important initiative. Genomics is playing an increasingly important role in shaping the future of healthcare by enabling deeper insights into disease mechanisms and individual risk profiles. Initiatives like this

are critical in bridging advanced science with clinical practice, helping move healthcare towards a more preventive and personalized approach." Dr. Niti Krishna Raizada, Principal Director, Medical Oncology & Hemato-Oncology, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru said, "Many serious conditions, especially cancers, have a genetic link that can be identified early to avert the disease and mortality risk. Through Preventive Genomics Clinic, we aim to empower patients with knowledge of their risks and enable early timely intervention, improving outcomes and supporting preventive care."

Dr Vivek Jawali, Chairman, Cardiac Sciences, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru said, "Genomics is transforming how we approach disease management, shifting from a one-size-fits-all approach to a personalized and precise care. This clinic, brings together multiple specialties to leverage genetic insights for better diagnosis and treatment outcomes." Dr. Ananth Rao, VP & Business Head, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru said, "With growing awareness around preventive healthcare, there is an increasing need for advanced diagnostics that help individuals understand their health risks early."

93.54% RESULT IN SSLC ANNUAL EXAMINATION IN BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION HIGH SCHOOLS

100% RESULT IN 3 HIGH SCHOOLS Bengaluru : In the academic year 2025-26, a total of 991 students from 10 high schools functioning under the Education Department of the Bengaluru West City Corporation appeared for the SSLC Annual Examination (I). Out of them, 927 students have passed, registering an overall result of 93.54%. Basavanagudi, Subramanyanagar, and Marappanapalya High Schools under the West city corporation of GBA have achieved 100% results, bringing pride to the city corporation. In the academic year 2025-26, a total of 74 students have secured more than 85% marks and passed with distinction. These students will be honored with an incentive of Rs.25,000 each by

98% RESULTS IN MINORITY DIRECTORATE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Bengaluru: The SSLC results in residential schools under the Directorate of Minorities have reached an impressive 98.06%. Out of 3,462 students who appeared for the examination across 84 residential schools, 3,395 students passed, recording a pass percentage of 98.06%. Last year, the pass percentage stood at 81%. Similarly, in 198 Maulana

Azad schools, 6,147 students appeared for the examination, of whom 5,541 students passed, achieving a pass percentage of 90.14%. In the previous year, the pass percentage was 51.01%, said Director Jilani Mokashi. In view of the excellent results, Minority Welfare Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan congratulated all the students who passed the examination.

BDA RECOVERS PROPERTY WORTH RS. 30 CRORES



Bengaluru : Bangalore Development Authority recovered its encroached property at Arkavathi Layout 11th Block in an operation conducted on Thursday. Unauthorized AC Sheet Sheds, RRC Buildings and compound wall on which had come up in Sy. No. 103/4 of Rachenahalli Village, K.R. Puram Hobli,

Bangalore East Taluk was demolished and an extent of 1 acre 1 gunta of land is recovered. The recovered property is estimated about Rs. 30 crores. The demolition

operation was carried out by the BDA Taskforce, Executive Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineer, North Division, BDA along with the local police.

Mangaluru Airport receives prestigious Zero Waste to Landfill certification from CII

Mangaluru, Apr 23: Mangaluru International Airport Limited (MgIAL) has achieved the prestigious Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWL) Certification from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), marking a significant milestone in its sustainability journey and reaffirming its commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. The airport has been awarded the Platinum - Class I Rating, the highest category under the certification, after demonstrating an exceptional landfill diversion rate of more than 99 per cent through robust waste management practices and strict adherence to sustainability benchmarks. The certification follows a comprehensive and rigorous audit conducted by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which evaluated the airport's waste segregation, handling, treatment, recycling, and compliance processes. The assessment recognised MgIAL's strong and consistent implementation of the 5R principles - Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle - across Airport operations.

Complete road works at the earliest: Dr. Rajendra K.V.



Bengaluru (TSIT): The Commissioner of Bengaluru West City Corporation, Dr. Rajendra K.V., instructed officials to expedite and complete the road work stretching 3.55 KM from Sadashivanagar Police Station to Outer Ring Road. During an inspection conducted this morning in the New BEL Road area under Mattikere Sub-Division of Malleshwaram Zone, he stated that the delay in asphaltting work was due to BWSSB pipeline works. He directed that the pipeline work be completed by May 10th, 2026, and that asphaltting be taken up immediately thereafter. Action against unauthorized commercial activities: He instructed officials to identify establishments operating without trade licenses and impose penalties while taking necessary action against them. Strict measures in solid waste management: Officials of the Solid Waste Management Department were directed to create awareness among the public to prevent dumping of waste into drains and to enforce strict action against violations. Key directions issued during inspection: • Directed to complete works from Chikkamaranahalli to Outer Ring Road at the earliest. • Ordered removal of encroachments on footpaths to ensure smooth pedestrian movement. • Directed removal of private tiles laid on footpaths and ensure proper maintenance. • Instructed action against bulk waste generators to prevent dumping of waste on footpaths. • Ordered removal of unauthorized cables. • Directed officials to take necessary steps to develop BEL Road as a model road. Chief Engineer Basavaraj Kabade, Superintendent Engineer Jayashankar, and Executive and Assistant Executive Engineers of the concerned divisions were present during the inspection.

Bike Taxi Riders Submit Representation to Karnataka CM, Seek Clarity Amid Policy Uncertainty

Bengaluru : The Bike Taxi Welfare Association (BTA), representing lakhs of bike taxi riders across Karnataka, has submitted a formal representation to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah seeking urgent clarity and intervention on the future of bike taxi operations in the state. The representation comes in the backdrop of recent media reports suggesting that the State may consider filing a Special Leave Petition (SLP) against the Karnataka High Court order per-

mitting bike taxi operations, which the Association said has created fresh uncertainty among riders. The BTA noted that such a move appears inconsistent with earlier assurances around enabling a policy-led solution. The issue has previously seen engagement at the highest levels, with Rahul Gandhi writing to the Chief Minister highlighting that lakhs of drivers had been without work for months and urging a timely resolution. In response, the Chief

Minister by way of an official communication to Rahul Gandhi's office, confirmed that the Government had initiated steps to develop a comprehensive and legally sound policy framework, aligned with High Court directions and public interest. The Association said these assurances had provided hope to thousands of riders looking towards a stable and dignified future through this sector. Highlighting the ground reality, the BTA emphasized that a

majority of bike taxi riders are local Kannadiga youth from modest socio-economic backgrounds, who rely on bike taxi services as a primary source of income in an increasingly competitive job market. "For many of us, bike taxi services are not just an occupation but our only source of income and survival. Continued uncertainty has left thousands of families anxious about their future," the Association said. The BTA has urged the Government to pri-

oritise a policy-based resolution over prolonged litigation, calling for the expedited rollout of a framework that is: Balanced and inclusive - Legally robust Aligned with public safety and regulatory compliance, Supportive of livelihoods and last-mile connectivity. The Association reiterated its confidence in the Chief Minister's leadership and expressed hope that a clear, consistent, and forward-looking decision will be taken at the earliest.

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



Bengaluru: An incident has come to light where officials engaged in the National Census-2027 work were obstructed and verbally abused while discharging their duties within the jurisdiction of Bengaluru North City Corporation. On April 20, Smt. Veena, an enumerator assigned to Ward No. 43, visited Peri Monarch Apartment located near Sultnapalya Main Road, R.T. Nagar, to collect census information. However, the concerned

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

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

Bengaluru : Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has announced the launch of an ambitious environmental initiative titled the '1.5 Million Native Plants Planting Initiative' on June 5, World Environment Day, aimed at significantly enhancing Bengaluru's green cover through large-scale native plantations across multiple locations in the city. Under the leadership of the Chairman, BDA, N. A. Haris MLA, this initiative marks a major step towards sustainable urban development and ecological restoration, reinforcing the Authority's commitment to building a greener and more climate-resilient Bengaluru. In the context of rising temperatures and the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect being experienced across Bengaluru, this initiative is designed as a strategic intervention to mitigate heat stress, improve



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

NGOs, volunteers, and active citizen participation, encouraging partnerships for long-term environmental stewardship. With 41 days of preparatory planning underway, BDA is putting in place robust mechanisms to ensure effective execution, monitoring and long-term sustainability of the plantations. As part of this initiative, BDA will also be seeking to achieve a Guinness World Record, reflecting the scale and collective effort envisioned for this drive. Speaking on the occasion, N A Haris, Chairman, BDA, stated: This initiative represents our commitment to securing Bengaluru's ecological future. By prioritizing native species and community participation, we are creating a model for sustainable urban greening that will benefit generations to come."

Ashwini Vaishnav Inaugurates 'Aditya' Complex at BEML, Bengaluru

ENVISIONS SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY FOR SOUTHERN METRO CITIES

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



like extended urban clusters. He cited the example of travel between Chennai and

Bengaluru, which is expected to reduce to just 73 minutes, effectively integrating the two cit-

ies. On rail expansion, the Minister announced improved connectivity between Mumbai and Bengaluru, including a new Mail Express with LHB coaches via Hubli and the upcoming Vande Bharat Sleeper Express service. He also confirmed that a Vande Bharat Express service between Mangaluru and Bengaluru will be launched soon, with key technical upgrades such as electrification of the Hassan-Mangaluru section and installation of Automated Emergency Braking systems. Praising engineers at the Tippasandra facility, the Minister said their work on next-generation rolling stock is crucial to India's vision of becoming a developed nation. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding infrastructure while ensuring environmental sustainability and public awareness.

Migrant workers in Tirupur emerge as key players in assembly polls

COIMBATORE: Far from their native homes but firmly rooted in Tirupur, migrant workers are set to play a defining role in shaping the electoral future of this textile hub in the assembly polls.

Thousands of workers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand have made Tirupur their home and are now part of the electorate. Their growing presence is particularly significant in Tirupur North and South constituencies. According to AITUC Banian Factory Labour Union general secretary N. Sekar, Tirupur North alone has around 20,000 migrant voters, while Tirupur South has approximately 16,000. "Their preference for a political party varies between Lok Sabha and Assembly elections," Sekar noted, adding that



one of their primary concerns is improving train connectivity to their native states. Recognizing their electoral significance, political parties, both regional and national, had their campaigns strategize in Hindi to connect more

effectively with the migrant workforce. A DMK functionary involved in supervising such a Hindi outreach campaign among the migrants said, "We are highlighting welfare measures, especially free bus travel for women, which

resonates strongly among migrant families." At the fag end of the campaign, several Union ministers also visited Tirupur to interact directly with migrant workers. During one such visit, Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal even sang devotional songs in Hindi while canvassing for support. Workers used the opportunity to submit petitions demanding more train services to northern states. However, beneath the heightened political activity lies a deepening economic distress. Over the past month, many migrant workers have faced job losses due to a slowdown in the textile sector, exacerbated by global factors such as the Iran-Israel conflict. A shortage of LPG, essential for certain textile processes like t-shirt printing,

Tamil Nadu: Make kids part of SMC in new academic year, urge stakeholders

CHENNAI: With the School Management Committee (SMC) actively operating in all state-run schools, stakeholders' urge for children's participation in SMC. The Directorate of School Education restructured SMC in August 2024 with newly elected members. Following the formation, the department directed a monthly meeting to be



held in all schools, actively discussing the concerns and development of the school, both academic and otherwise. The department had introduced SMC to get the issues of the

school, students and teachers addressed so that no concern causes hindrance to education in the government and aided school of the State. In July 2024, it also notified that the new committee members will be formed for two academic years (2024-2026), and that the SMC was mandatory in all government and aided schools of the state.

Passengers stranded amid bus shortage on election day in Tamil Nadu



CHENNAI: Several passengers travelling from Chennai to their hometowns to cast their votes were left stranded due to a shortage of buses, raising concerns over voter turnout, according to a Daily Thanthi report. Passengers bound for southern districts were the worst affected, with many unable to find buses from key terminals including Kilambakkam, Koyambedu and Madhavaram. Some even staged sit-in protests inside bus stands late at night as they struggled to secure transport.

Those who managed to board buses were caught in heavy traffic congestion and took several hours to cross Tambaram. Many passengers who started their journey on Wednesday night had only reached Tindivanam or Villupuram by Thursday morning, leaving them uncertain about reach-

ing their hometowns before polling ends. The situation comes even as the Election Commission has made elaborate arrangements for polling across the state. Voting is being held in a single phase across all 234 Assembly constituencies from 7 am to 6 pm.

Tamil Nadu has around 5.73 crore registered voters, and a total of 75,064 polling stations have been set up. As many as 4,023 candidates are in the fray, and for the first time, colour photographs of candidates have been displayed on Electronic Voting Machines.

To ensure security, about 1.4 lakh police personnel and 300 companies of paramilitary forces have been deployed, with CCTV cameras installed at polling stations. Despite these measures, the transport issues have left many voters anxious about missing the chance to cast their vote.

20 international observers to learn Election Commission's practices



CHENNAI: In a first, a team of 20 international observers from 10 countries arrived in Chennai to study the election-related activities on the penultimate day before polling. The observers were given a detailed brief of the polling activities at the NKD National Girls Higher Secondary School under the Chepauk-Triplicane assembly constituency on Wednesday. The Election

Commission has extended an invitation to the representatives of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and heads of diplomatic missions from various countries to participate in the international election visitors programme scheduled from April 20 to 24.

As part of this programme, 20 delegates from election management bodies and diplomatic officials from Bhutan, Egypt, Mauritius, Moldova, Indonesia, Benin, Sri Lanka, Peru, Ghana, and Namibia arrived in Chennai to witness the Tamil Nadu Assembly election process.

A press release from the Chief Electoral Officer said, "During this visit, the delegates saw the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and polling materials dispatch centre at the Chepauk-Triplicane Assembly Constituency. Further, they visited district-level integrated election control rooms and media monitoring centres. The delegates' team also had interaction with the Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer and the team."

Will release I-T raid proof on April 24: TNCC chief Selvaperunthagai

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) President K Selvaperunthagai on Wednesday stood by his charges that he was targeted through "planned Income Tax department raids" ahead of key campaign events, declaring that he would release all the proofs on April 24, one day after the polling day. In a statement, Selvaperunthagai claimed that sudden searches were carried out at places where he was staying, his office, and premises linked to alliance leaders, at a time when election campaigning had peaked. He claimed he had all the proof, denying the I-T department's claims that the Congress leader was fabricating the raid.

He reaffirmed that he possesses evidence related to the incident and would reveal it at a press meet in Chennai on April 24 after the completion of polling. "The truth must come out before the people," he said, expressing confidence in democratic institutions. Meanwhile, Selvaperunthagai appealed to voters to exercise their franchise carefully, highlighting the achievements of Chief Minister MK Stalin. He said the DMK government fulfilled over 400 of its 2021 poll promises and introduced several welfare measures despite alleged non-cooperation from the Union government.

Late-night eating may worsen stress-related bowel problems



New Delhi, Apr 23: Chronic stress can disrupt bowel function, and eating late at night may further aggravate the problem, with possible effects on digestive health and the gut microbiome, a new study has suggested. Researchers analysed data from more than 11,000 participants in the US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and found that people with high chronic stress levels who consumed more than 25 per cent of their daily calories after 9 pm were 1.7 times more likely to experience constipation and diarrhoea.

The study linked the risk to high allostatic load — a measure of cumulative physiological stress reflected through indicators such as body mass index, cholesterol levels and blood pressure. The study further found that these individuals had significantly lower gut micro-

biome diversity, suggesting meal timing may intensify the impact of stress on the microbiome through the gut-brain axis — the communication network involving nerves, hormones and gut bacteria. "It's not just what you eat, but when you eat it," said Harika Dadigiri, resident physician at New York Medical College at Saint Mary's and Saint Clare's Hospital, and lead author of the study.

"And when we're already under stress, that timing may deliver a double hit to gut health," she added. Researchers also examined data from over 4,000 participants in the American Gut Project and found that individuals with both high stress levels and late-night eating habits were 2.5 times more likely to report bowel-related problems. The study further found that these individ-

uals had significantly lower gut microbiome diversity, suggesting meal timing may intensify the impact of stress on the microbiome through the gut-brain axis — the communication network involving nerves, hormones and gut bacteria.

While the findings point to strong associations, researchers clarified that they do not establish a direct cause-and-effect relationship and called for further studies to better understand how stress, eating patterns and gut health interact. Dr Dadigiri said maintaining structured meal routines and small consistent habits may help support digestive function over time. "Small, consistent habits, like maintaining a structured meal routine, may help promote more regular eating patterns and support digestive function over time," she said.

Madras HC commutes death sentence of man convicted of raping minor daughter; orders life till death

CHENNAI: The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has commuted the death sentence of a man convicted of repeatedly raping his minor daughter and causing her pregnancy, sentencing him instead to imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life. A division bench of Justices N Anand Venkatesh and KK Ramakrishnan passed the order, according to Bar and Bench.

The court observed that "life imprisonment until death is a more enduring



retributive measure than the finality of the gallows," adding that such a sentence would force the convict into a "lifelong dialogue with his own conscience." It also noted that the convict, Murugan, shall not be eligible for premature release, remission or further commutation. The court had upheld the conviction under the Protection of

Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and sentenced him to death on January 5, 2026. Murugan was the sole accused in the case of repeated aggravated penetrative sexual assault on his 14-year-old daughter. The victim said that she was subjected to sexual assault on more than 20 occasions. The abuse came to light when the victim's mother noticed changes and took her for medical evaluation on February 5, 2025. Upon the medical examination, it was found that she was approximately 5 months pregnant.

Police personnel barred from entering polling stations without authorization, reminds HoPF

CHENNAI: The Director General of Police (DGP), Tamil Nadu, has issued strict instructions prohibiting police personnel from entering polling stations during elections unless explicitly permitted by the Presiding Officer. According to an official communication dated on Thursday instances have been reported where police officers entered polling stations, an act deemed impermissible and contrary to existing election guidelines.

The directive has been circulated to all Commissioners of Police



in cities, Zonal Inspectors General (IGs), Range Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs), and Superintendents of Police (SPs) in districts. They have been instructed to reiterate to all personnel that police must remain outside polling station premises and perform their duties strictly in accordance with prescribed procedures.

Rajasthan flags seven substandard medicines, orders immediate recall after lab tests

The Commissionerate of Food Safety and Drug Control, Rajasthan has issued a public alert after laboratory testing identified seven pharmaceutical products as "Not of Standard Quality," triggering a statewide recall and enforcement action.

The tests, conducted between April 1 and April 15, 2026, found multiple batches of medicines failing to meet required safety and efficacy standards. Acting on the findings, the Drug Controller has directed all district drug control officers to immediately remove the affected batches from circulation under provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Commissioner Dr. T. Shubhamangala said routine inspections and quality surveillance are carried out to ensure only safe and effective medicines reach patients. She noted that the latest testing cycle revealed serious deviations in composition and performance across several drugs, raising concerns about their therapeutic reliability. Among the flagged products



is Cefixime oral suspension (LORAXIM Dry Syrup), which failed assay standards due to incorrect active ingredient levels. Albendazole tablets were found to be non-compliant in dissolution testing, indicating improper release of the drug in the

body. Other medicines on the list include combinations used for respiratory conditions, such as Ambroxol, Levosalbutamol, and Guaiphenesin drops, which failed assay requirements, as well as Methylprednisolone tablets, which showed multi-

ple quality failures in both assay and dissolution tests.

Cough syrup formulations and antibiotics were also affected. Dextromethorphan-based syrup showed reduced chlorpheniramine content, while antibiotics such as Cefuroxime Axetil tablets and Ciprofloxacin tablets failed key quality parameters, including assay and dissolution benchmarks.

Ajay Phatak, Drug Controller of Rajasthan, confirmed that instructions have been issued to all hospitals, pharmacies, and distributors—both government and private—to immediately halt the sale and use of the affected batches.

He also ordered enhanced scrutiny of other batches manufactured by the same companies to prevent further public health risks.

Authorities warned that any violation of the recall order will invite strict legal action under drug safety regulations, as the state intensifies efforts to ensure pharmaceutical quality and patient safety.

Shipping Firms Pay Record Premiums To Bypass Hormuz Chaos

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



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

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

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

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

China car giant BYD says it can thrive without US

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

RELIANCE INDUSTRIES Q4 REVIEW:

Brokerages Stay Bullish Despite Weak Results, Energy Pressure

Reliance Industries' March quarter earnings missed Street estimates, with the drag coming largely from its energy businesses and softer retail margins. Macquarie called it a "soft print," pointing to weakness in oil-to-chemicals and upstream operations. It also flagged a more structural concern - upstream gas EBITDA appears to be in decline, and the brokerage sees incremental downside risk if energy weakness lingers, especially after recent cuts to consensus earnings forecasts. Reliance Industries Q4 Results Key Highlights (Consolidated, QoQ) Revenue up 11% to Rs 2,94,059 crore versus Rs 2,64,905 crore (Bloomberg Estimate: Rs 2,82,748 crore) Ebitda down 4% to Rs 44,141 crore versus Rs 46,018 crore (Estimate: Rs 47,343 crore) Margin contracts 240 basis points to 15.0% versus 17.4% (Estimate: 16.7%) Profit down 9% to Rs 16,971 crore versus Rs 18,645 crore (Estimate: Rs 16,944 crore)



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

THIRTY-ONE SLOTHS DIE IN FLORIDA BEFORE OPENING OF ATTRACTION



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

Seven dead in major Russian attack on Ukraine

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



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

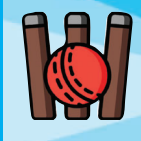
vast majority of the more than 600 Russian drones, which appears to have been the largest attack in several days. Zelensky wrote on social media: "The Russians' tactics have not changed: strike drones, cruise missiles, and a significant amount of ballistics." Most of the targets are ordinary infrastructure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

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

US JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DROPS PROBE INTO FED CHAIRMAN JEROME POWELL

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

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



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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Defending Champion Carlos Alcaraz To Miss French Open With Wrist Injury

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



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

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



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

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



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

James leads Lakers to brink of play-off series win

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

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

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

series victory in the NBA play-offs. The NBA's four-time Most Valuable Player levelled the

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

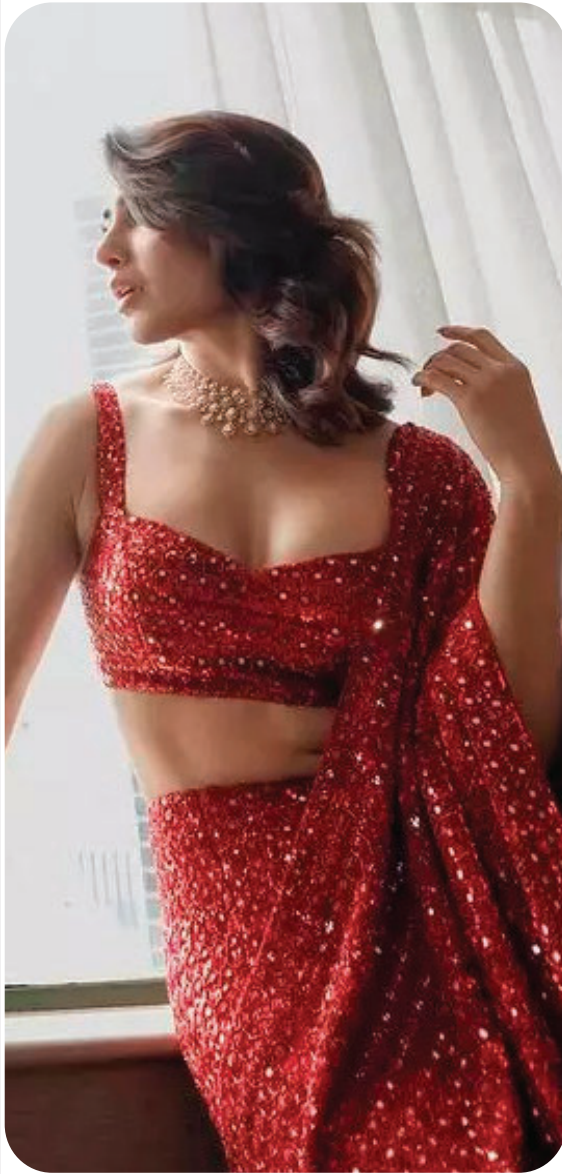
RS Infotainment, led by Elred Kumar, has officially wrapped up the shooting of its upcoming sports action drama MANDAADI. The film was shot over a long and challenging schedule, with a major portion filmed in the coastal regions of Ramanathapuram. The team worked in tough conditions to bring a realistic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



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

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

SAMANTHA'S BANGARAM SHOULDN'T SLOW DOWN



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

'Kanna' Movie Teaser Grand Launch

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



played the role of Satya in this movie. He said that after watching this movie, everyone will remember him as Satya. Thanks to director Rajasekhar Reddy for giving such a good oppor-

tunity. Everyone was asked to support the film. Hero Karthik Sivan said. Thanks to hero Chaitanya Rao who came when called. Currently, he does not have any film



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

SS RAJAMOULI PRESENTS VARANASI AT MEXICO CCXP, SHOOTING UPDATES



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

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

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

Kiara Advani's cross pendant sparks conversion buzz

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

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

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

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

TOO MUCH AI FOR MYTHOLOGY IS NOT A GOOD SIGN!

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

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



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

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



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