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**OM NAMO VENKATESAYA**

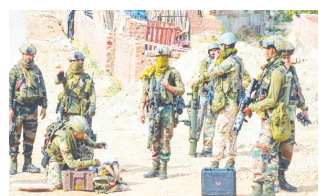
01-05-2026  
Total pilgrims: 71,008  
Tonsures: 36,544  
Hundi karuaku: 3.52 CR  
Waiting Compartments: Outside line at Bata Gangamma Temple.

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) - 24 H

**GOLD RATE 24K**

₹ 1,53,920/-

**3 DRG JAWANS KILLED IN IED BLAST DURING DEMINING OP IN CHHATTISGARH'S KANKER**



**Kanker (TSIT):** Three jawans of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) were killed when an improvised explosive device (IED), allegedly planted earlier by Maoists, detonated during a demining operation in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh on Saturday, police officials said. The incident occurred after a security team was deployed in the border areas of Kanker and Narayanpur districts to carry out demining, area domination and search operations, officials said. According to the police, the blast took place in a forested area under the jurisdiction of Chhote Bethiya police station, adjoining Narayanpur district, where a DRG unit was engaged in locating and defusing IEDs suspected to have been planted by Maoists in the past. During the

**CBI COORDINATES RETURN OF FUGITIVE AALOK KUMAR FROM UAE**

**New Delhi (TSIT):** Wanted criminal Aalok Kumar alias Yashpal Singh has been brought back to India from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) announced on Saturday. The extradition was carried out by the CBI, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Friday, officials said. According to the CBI, Aalok Kumar was wanted in connection with a case registered by Haryana Police for offences including cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy and use of forged documents for obtaining passports fraudulently. The accused was a key conspirator in a well-organised racket involved in procuring Indian passports on the basis of forged documents and false information, officials said. They further mentioned that several individuals with criminal antecedents were allegedly facilitated by the accused in obtaining passports using fabricated identities and addresses.

## Rahul slams BJP over alleged remark against Cong MP Geniben Thakor

New Delhi (TSIT)

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party, alleging that its Gujarat unit president made an "indecent remark" against Congress MP Geniben Thakor and accusing the party of exposing its "anti-women ideology."

In a post on X, Gandhi said, "The BJP's Gujarat president has made an indecent remark against our Congress woman MP, Geniben Thakor. The mask of 'Nari Vandan' has slipped." He added that the incident was "not just shameful—it is the real face of the BJP's regressive, anti-women ideology." Questioning the ruling party's commitment to women's empowerment, Gandhi asked, "Is this the BJP's idea of 'Nari Vandan'? Will they empower women like this? Will they grant them rights?" He further



alleged that women who challenge those in power are not tolerated, saying such instances quickly expose what he described as a "distorted mindset." The Congress leader also took aim at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming he had avoided scrutiny from women MPs in Parliament.

"The Prime Minister, already unnerved by questions from Congress women MPs, has even walked out of Parliament," Gandhi said.

Referring to a past remark attributed to Modi, Gandhi noted, "Modi himself says, 'A woman may forget everything, but she never forgets her insult.' Yet the BJP seems to have forgotten this." He further asserted that women across Gujarat and the country would respond strongly to such incidents, stating, "The anti-women BJP should remember—women across Gujarat and all of India will give a fitting reply to every insult."

The controversy comes amid ongoing political sparring between the Congress and the BJP over issues related to women's rights and representation, with both parties frequently accusing each other of failing to uphold commitments to gender equality.

## Inauguration of holy relics of Buddha in Leh offers opportunity to pay respects: PM Modi

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hailed the inauguration of the 'Sacred Exposition of the Holy Relics of the Tathagata' in Leh, and said it offers a valuable opportunity for people from across Ladakh to pay their respects. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday inaugurated a sacred holy relics exposition of Tathagata Buddha and the 2569th Buddha Purnima celebrations in Leh during his two-day visit to Ladakh.

"It is a matter of immense delight that yesterday, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, the 'Sacred Exposition of the Holy Relics of the Tathagata' was inaugurated in Leh," PM Modi said in a post on X. The prime minister said these revered relics are linked to the Piprahwa Stupa in Kapilavastu and were excavated in the closing years of the nineteenth century. They embody the enduring teachings of Lord Buddha, he said. PM Modi said this



exposition will continue until May 14 and in the coming days, it will also travel to Zaskar.

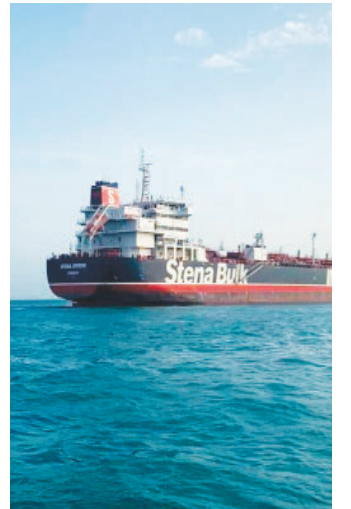
"It offers a valuable opportunity for people from across Ladakh to pay their respects. It will also boost spiritual and cultural tourism in Ladakh," he said. The revered Piprahwa relics of Tathagata Buddha – ancient sacred remains and associated objects linked to the lord discovered at Piprahwa, near the Nepal border in the present-day Uttar Pradesh – arrived in Leh on Wednesday.

## US believes naval blockade costs Iran \$4.8 billion in oil revenue

Washington (TSIT):

The Pentagon has estimated that Iran has suffered losses of around \$4.8 billion in oil revenue due to a blockade imposed by the United States Navy on its ports, according to a report by Axios, which cited unnamed officials.

The report noted that two tankers have been seized during the course of the blockade. In addition, officials said that as many as 31 tankers carrying approximately 53 million barrels of oil are currently "stuck in the Gulf," highlighting the scale of disruption caused to Iran's oil exports.



According to the same officials, some vessels are now opting for "a costlier and longer route to deliver oil to China for fear of US maritime interdiction," indicating that shipping patterns have been altered due to concerns over enforcement actions by US forces. The blockade was imposed by the United States on Iranian ports during a temporary truce, as part of efforts aimed at pressuring Iran to accept a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire that would permanently end the ongoing conflict involving Israel, the United States, and Iran.

## India should create strategic buffers to navigate 'most difficult' energy shock: CEA Nageswaran

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Saturday said India needs to create strategic buffers in the face of the "most difficult" energy shock that the country is facing amid the West Asia crisis. Nageswaran also said the rising prices of fertiliser and petroleum products globally due to the crisis will make it challenging to achieve the 4.3 per cent fiscal deficit target for the current fiscal, while below normal monsoon and pass-through of higher energy prices could lead to "potential inflation spike".

He also said India has employment challenge ema-



nating from AI, and there is a need to ensure that IT sector becomes more competitive and not lose jobs to AI, and instead create jobs that use AI within the IT sector or in other services.

## CM Revanth assures employees on PRC, retirement benefits

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

A. Revanth Reddy on Saturday assured government employees that their welfare remains a top priority and announced a series of key decisions during a meeting with employees' unions. Chief Minister said that employees have played a vital role in implementing government welfare schemes effectively. He noted that steps were taken to ensure salaries are credited on the first of every month, along with streamlined transfers and completion of long-pending teachers' transfers without disputes.

Providing clarity on major issues, Revanth Reddy announced that Rs.6,000 crore



will be released within 100 days towards employees' retirement benefits. He also directed officials to submit a report on the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) at the earliest, based on which a decision will be taken. The Chief Minister further stated that health security cards will be issued to employees by June 1, and instructed recognised

unions to meet once every two months and submit reports on key issues to the government.

Highlighting employment generation, he said the government has undertaken 67,760 recruitments over the past two years. Describing the administration as a "friendly government," Revanth Reddy assured that employees' concerns would be addressed promptly.

## Kavitha calls for free education healthcare vows to oust Govt in 1,000 days



Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, chief of Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS), on Saturday made strong remarks demanding free education and healthcare, stating that governments failing to provide these basic services should be held accountable by the public.

Speaking at a "Meet the Press" programme organised at the Press Club in Basheerbagh, Kavitha said her criticism of K. Chandrashekar Rao was purely political and not personal. "I have not criticised my father; I have only questioned him as the president of a political party," she clarified. Kavitha asserted that her party would work

towards achieving "Sarvodaya Telangana" and vowed to bring down the Congress government within 1,000 days. She alleged that the present government has failed to address key public issues and is causing hardship to people.

Highlighting her party's "Panchajanyam" agenda, she said the promises were made after detailed consultations with economic experts and are financially achievable if there is political will. She expressed concern that people in Telangana are spending nearly 60% of their income on education and healthcare, stressing the need for government intervention.

Referring to her differences

with KCR, Kavitha said she had raised concerns over policy decisions, including irrigation projects and employment issues. She alleged that opportunities were lost due to governance failures and said she would continue to question political mistakes in the future.

On her party's name change, she said it was done strategically after observing various developments and expressed satisfaction over adopting the TRS name. She dismissed criticism from political opponents, stating that public support would ultimately determine the party's success.

Kavitha also emphasised that her party would prioritise women's representation, promising 33% seats for women, and said the organisation would be run more effectively than male-dominated parties. She reiterated that her fight is against those who act against Telangana's interests, adding that development and social justice would be the twin pillars of her political journey. Telangana State Union of Working President K. Virahath Ali, General Secretary Ram Narayana, Sudhakar Reddy, H.U.J. President Shiga Shankar were present

## Bengal: Re-polling in 15 booths ends peacefully; turnout at 86.90 pc

Kolkata (TSIT):

The re-polling for 15 polling booths under two Assembly constituencies in South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, which started at 7 a.m. on Saturday, has concluded peacefully at 6 p.m. under blanket security coverage of central forces, assisted by personnel from the state police forces, with not a sin-



gle report or complaint of poll-related tension, violence, or disruption surfacing from anywhere.

The average polling percentage across all 15 polling booths combined stood at 86.90 till 5 p.m. The average polling percentage for the 11 polling booths under the Magrahat (Paschim) Assembly constituency stood at 86.11 till 5 p.m. On the other hand, the average polling percentage in the four polling booths under Diamond Harbour constituency had been 87.60 till the same period.

## War "likely" to resume as US non-committal to agreements: Iran

Tehran, May 2

Iran's military headquarters has issued a warning that the resumption of war between Iran and the United States is "likely," stating that available evidence suggests the US is not committed to any agreements or treaties. Military preparations are underway to respond if the war resumes. Iran's armed forces have also warned that renewed conflict with the United States and Israel remains possible, reiterating that "evidence shows the U.S. is not committed to any agreements or treaties."

Mohammad Jafar Asadi, deputy at the Khatam al-Anbeya Central Headquarters, made the remarks in a statement carried by Iran's Fars News Agency. He said recent US actions and statements indicate a lack of commitment to diplomatic understandings. Asadi added that Iran's military is fully prepared for any escalation, noting that strategic assessments suggest tensions could rise regardless of Washington's actions. He emphasized that Iran is ready to respond to any hostile move. Iranian officials believe

Iran warns that a renewed conflict with the United States is "likely," stating its military is fully prepared amid rising tensions and lack of trust in US commitments.

they showed sufficient flexibility during the first round of negotiations held in Islamabad and later during ceasefire discussions.

However, they argue that the United States has not shown a reciprocal approach. According to Iranian officials, each time Iran has softened its position, the U.S. has responded with increased pressure and more aggressive demands. There are also unconfirmed reports that Iran reduced some of its demands in a proposal that President Trump ultimately rejected, including provisions related to lifting the blockade. Instead, Iranian officials say the status of the Strait of Hormuz and sanctions relief must be addressed first before moving on to other major issues, such as the nuclear matter. Iranian officials suggest that US demands are not aimed at genuine negotiation but instead amount to a demand for surrender, something they describe as "unacceptable."

## Minister Sridhar Babu Honours Media Excellence; The South India Times Wins Top Award at Hybiz TV Event

Hyderabad: Hyderabad witnessed a proud and prestigious moment as Duddilla Sridhar Babu attended the Hybiz TV Media Awards as Chief Guest, celebrating excellence across media and business sectors. Serving as the Minister for Information Technology (IT), Electronics & Communications, Industries & Commerce, and Legislative Affairs in the Government of Telangana, Sri Sridhar Babu graced the event following full ministerial protocol. He was formally received by the organizing committee and accorded ceremonial honors on stage, reflecting the dignity of his office and the importance of the occasion.



roof to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions.

Organized by Hybiz TV, the awards ceremony brought together eminent personalities, industry leaders, journalists, and entrepreneurs under one

A major highlight of the event was the recognition of Chiluka Venugopal Reddy, Managing Director and Chairman of The South India Times. He was conferred with the "Fastest Growing English Daily Newspaper in South India" award by Hybiz TV, which he received from the hands

of Minister Sridhar Babu. The South India Times has steadily emerged as a dynamic and influential English daily, known for its credible reporting, balanced editorial approach, and strong focus on regional as well as national issues. Under the leadership of Chiluka Venugopal Reddy, the publication has expanded its reach and readership across South

India, gaining recognition for its commitment to journalistic ethics, factual accuracy, and public interest reporting. The newspaper has carved a niche for itself by highlighting governance, socio-economic developments, business trends, and public policy matters, while also giving voice to grassroots concerns.

Its growing digital presence, coupled with consistent print circulation, has further strengthened its position in the competitive media landscape. The award reflects not only its rapid growth but also its increasing influence as a reliable platform for news, analysis, and informed public discourse. Receiving the award, Chiluka Venugopal Reddy expressed his gratitude and reaffirmed his dedication to responsible journalism and public service

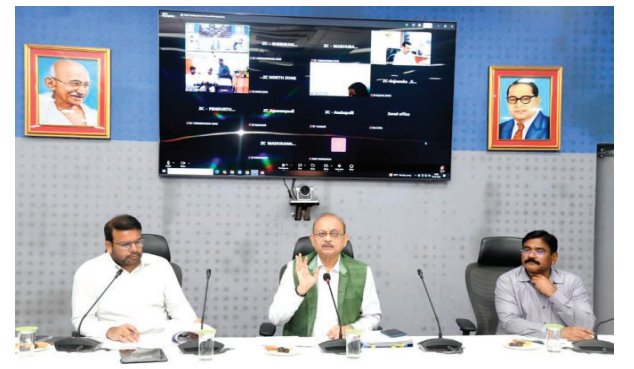
through media. On this significant occasion, all his well-wishers, colleagues, supporters, and admirers congratulated him for receiving the award, recognizing it as a milestone achievement in his distinguished media journey.

The presence of Minister Sridhar Babu added stature and credibility to the event, underlining the government's recognition of media excellence and professional integrity. His participation elevated the prestige of the ceremony and reinforced the importance of acknowledging contributions in the media and business sectors.

The Hybiz TV Media Awards once again stood as a distinguished platform that celebrates merit, honors excellence, and inspires professionals across industries to strive for greater achievements.

## Comprehensive BC Caste Survey Must Be Conducted Accurately: Rajiv Ranjan Mishra

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : The Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Dedicated Commission and retired IAS officer Rajiv Ranjan Mishra emphasized that a comprehensive survey of Backward Classes (BCs) must be conducted meticulously in accordance with Supreme Court guidelines. He made these remarks during a review meeting held at the GVMC headquarters on Saturday. GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg, AP BC Commission Secretary Chandrasekhara Raju, and other senior officials attended the meeting, while zonal commissioners video conference.



Mishra stated that a thorough empirical enquiry into the social and economic conditions of backward classes in the state is essential. He noted that an empirical assessment would be carried out in line with constitutional provisions and

Supreme Court judgments to determine the percentage of reservations for BCs in local bodies. He instructed officials to collect data related to BC communities within GVMC limits accurately, without discrepancies. He also stressed the need to properly verify the Unified Family Survey and conduct population surveys at the local body level. Detailed information on BC castes and sub-castes must be accurately recorded as part of Census 2027, he added. Mishra further stat-

ed that the Commission would conduct an in-depth study on BC communities and make appropriate recommendations. Public representations and suggestions would be examined carefully, and decisions would be taken in a legally sound manner. Speaking on the occasion, GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg said that there are currently 98 wards in GVMC and that plans are underway for the delimitation process in view of upcoming local body elections.

## Pay Ambedkar Open Degree Examination Fee

The South India Times Nagarkurnool : The notification for payment of examination fees for the 2nd, 4th, and 6th semester degree exams under Ambedkar Open Degree University has been released. Students appearing for the examinations are advised to pay the fee on or before May 19, said Principal Madan Mohan and Coordinator Anjaiah of the Ambedkar Study Centre in a statement. According to the schedule, the 6th semester examinations will be held from June 14 to June 19, the 4th semester examinations from June 21 to June 28, and the 2nd semester examinations from June 30 to July 6. They urged students to avoid last-minute delays and complete the fee payment at the earliest to prepare for the examinations. For further details, students are advised to contact the Government Science Degree College, Nellikonda.



## No Compromise on Quality and Hygiene: Collector Hemanth Keshav Patil

The South India Times Nagarkurnool: District Collector Hemanth Keshav Patil conducted a surprise inspection of the Indiramma Canteen operated by women self-help groups under the Indra Mahila Shakti initiative at the District Collectorate on Saturday. He reviewed the functioning of the canteen to ensure the government's objective of providing quality food at affordable prices to the public. During the visit, the Collector closely examined food preparation methods, hygiene standards, and the quality of food



items. He interacted with the canteen staff and enquired whether meals are being served on time and if there are any issues in supply or operations. The Collector stated that the State Government is committed to the economic empow-

erment of women through initiatives like Indra Mahila Shakti. These programmes are creating self-employment opportunities and helping women achieve financial independence, while also increasing their participation in vari-

ous sectors. He also interacted with visitors at the Collectorate who avail meals at the canteen and gathered their feedback on the taste and quality of food. He instructed the management to ensure that food is both tasty and of high quality. Emphasizing that hygiene in food preparation is of utmost importance, the Collector directed that there should be no compromise on quality under any circumstances. He instructed the management to maintain transparency in operations and strictly follow cleanliness at every stage, from cooking to serving.

## Sita Rama Kalyanam Held with Grandeur; Hanuman Pallaki Seva Draws Devotees

Siddipet, May 2: The celestial wedding of Sita and Rama was celebrated with great devotion and grandeur at the Chintala Hanuman Temple on Saturday under the patronage of Hanuman Diksha Parula.



The temple witnessed a huge turnout of devotees, with the air filled with chants of "Sri Rama Jaya Rama." The celebrations began in the morning with special pujas, homas, and archanas, creating a deeply spiritual atmosphere. In the afternoon, the Sita Rama Kalyanam was performed in a traditional and magnificent manner amidst Vedic chants, captivating the devotees. The rituals were conducted with religious fervor, symbolizing divine union and devotion.

Later, the Hanuman Pallaki Seva emerged as a major highlight of the event. A large number of devotees actively participated in the procession, offering prayers and showcasing their devotion. The concluded with anna prasadam distribution, where food was served to all devotees. Villagers and devotees from nearby areas attended in large numbers, making the a grand success. Overall, the celebrations spread spiritual enthusiasm and brought immense joy and devotion among the devotees.

## No Room for Delay or Corruption in Scheme Implementation: Collector

The South India Times // Nagarkurnool District Collector Hemanth Keshav Patil stated that public governance meetings are playing a crucial role in identifying people's needs and resolving them promptly. He was speaking as the chief guest at a constituency-level Public Governance meeting held at BK Palace in Achampet on Saturday, as part of the 99-day action plan under the Praja Palana Pragathi programme. The Collector said that the 99-day programme, being implemented as a prestigious initiative by the State Government, is progressing successfully in the district. The main objective is to accelerate development works in both rural and urban areas and improve essential infrastructure for the public. He emphasized that the programme focuses on rural development, transparent governance, and public welfare. These constituency-level meetings have become a direct platform for people to interact with the government. Special focus is being given to improving basic amenities such as drinking water, roads, sanitation, education, and healthcare in all villages under the Achampet constituency. Villagers brought various issues to the Collector's attention, including land disputes, pensions, ration cards, housing schemes, and employment opportunities.



## Md. Asad Khan Quadri to Continue as IHRC Telangana Vice President for Three More Years

Mr. Md. Asad Khan Quadri will continue to serve as the Vice President of the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC), Telangana State, for a further tenure of three years, as per an official appointment issued by the organization's international office. The continuation reflects the organization's confidence in his ongoing commitment and contributions toward the promotion of human rights, social justice, and humanitarian initiatives across the region.



During his tenure, Mr. Asad Khan Quadri has been actively involved in awareness campaigns, coordination of district-level activities, and advocacy efforts aimed at safeguarding fundamental rights. Sources within the organization noted his consistent engagement at the grassroots level

and his collaborative approach in working with civil society, authorities, and community stakehold-

ers to address key human rights concerns. In his role, Mr. Asad Khan Quadri will continue to focus on strengthening IHRC's presence in Telangana while expanding outreach and awareness initiatives across the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Asad Khan Quadri expressed gratitude to the leadership of the International Human Rights Commission for their continued trust and confidence. He reaffirmed his commitment to serving society with integrity, dedication, and a strong sense of responsibility. The development has been welcomed by members and supporters of the organization, who see his continued leadership as a positive step toward advancing human rights initiatives in Telangana.

## Free Quality Education and Healthcare Top Government Priority: Damodar Rajanarasimha

Sangareddy, May 2: State Medical and Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha stated that providing free and quality education and healthcare to every citizen remains the state government's foremost objective. He was addressing a constituency-level meeting under the Praja Palana - Pragathi Pranali programme held at Sri Rama Function Hall in Jogipet, Andole, on Saturday, where he attended as the chief guest. The Minister emphasized that all medical services are being offered free of cost in government hospitals to ensure that people are not burdened by healthcare expenses. He said the government is strengthening infrastructure so that nearly 90 percent of medical services are accessible at the district level. Efforts are also underway to enhance trauma and emergency care services and ensure comprehensive treatment facilities in all government hospitals.



Highlighting women's empowerment, he said the government is promoting financial independence by allocating resources such as Indiramma canteens, solar units, and petrol bunks to women. He also recalled earlier welfare initiatives, including subsidized and interest-free loans for women's groups. On the education front, Rajanarasimha said the government is focusing on improving standards through better infrastructure, nutritious food, and quality teaching in schools and colleges. He announced that a pharmacy college will soon be established in the Andole region and added that plans are in place to develop the constituency into

an education hub. The Minister further revealed that Singur Line works are being taken up with an investment of Rs.200 crore. Plans are also being prepared to develop the Singur region as a tourism destination, which is expected to generate employment opportunities for local youth. District Collector Prateek Jain noted significant progress in education and healthcare sectors, while District SP Paritosh Pankaj highlighted police awareness programmes on road safety, cybercrime, and women's safety. The programme was attended by Additional Collector Pandu, public representatives, district officials, and members of the public.

## Jasvinder Singh Assumes Charge as Director (Strategic Projects) at Hindustan Shipyard Limited

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : Jasvinder Singh (Retired Commodore), after rendering distinguished service for over three decades in the Indian Navy, assumed charge as Director (Strategic Projects) at Hindustan Shipyard Limited on May 1, 2026. He completed his B.Tech in Mechanical Engineering from Jawaharlal Nehru University, M.E in Marine Engineering from University of Pune, and M.Phil in Defence and Strategic Studies from University of Mumbai. In addition, he obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Management from Jammalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies. During his tenure in the Indian Navy, he held key responsibilities in ships, submarines, naval establishments, as well as in the Defence Research and Development Organisation and tri-services establishments. He has made significant contributions in the fields of marine engineering, naval operations management, and strategic shipbuilding. As Director (Strategic Projects) at Hindustan Shipyard Limited, he will oversee key strategic initiatives, particularly submarine projects.



## Ponnam Prabhakar Unveils Development Push for Husnabad, Assures Completion of Gouravelli Project

Siddipet, May 2: (The South India Times )On Saturday, the state government hosted a "Constituency-Level Public Governance Progress Planning Program" at Lakshmi Gardens in Husnabad. The event was inaugurated by the State Transport and BC Welfare Minister, Ponnam Prabhakar, who lit the ceremonial lamp as the chief guest. Following the opening, Husnabad RDO Rammurthy delivered a message from the Honorable Chief Minister and presented a comprehensive report on the development and welfare initiatives currently active within the constituency. During his address, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar attributed the successful implementation of various programs over the past two years and five months to the robust cooperation between Central and State governments. He detailed significant agricul-



tural milestones, noting that Rs.265 crores under Rythu Bharosa reached 2.56 lakh farmers, while Rs.49.96 crores in Rythu Bima claims were processed for 679 bereaved families. In the housing sector, Rs.147 crores has been sanctioned for 3,515 Indiramma houses, with Rs.73 crores already disbursed to beneficiaries. The Minister also highlighted the impact of energy and social safety nets: Subsidies: Over 52,000 households received LPG subsidies totaling Rs.6.51 crores, and

53,963 households benefited from the Gruha Jyothi electricity scheme. Pensions: While noting a decade-long stagnation in new approvals, he announced that the government is now prepared to sanction new pensions for more than the current 45,000 beneficiaries. Food Security: 13,000 new ration cards were issued, ensuring the distribution of 370 metric tons of fine rice monthly. Infrastructure and regional development were also central to his report. The

Minister confirmed that the four-lane road from Kothapalli to Husnabad is underway, with tenders invited for the Akkannapet stretch. He personally guaranteed the completion of the Gouravelli Project, promising imminent compensation for displaced persons. In education and healthcare, he noted the rapid construction of Young India Integrated Residential Schools, the establishment of Satavahana Engineering College, and the upgrading of the local hospital to a 250-bed facility attached to a new medical college.

Concluding his speech, Minister Prabhakar urged citizens to rise above political affiliations to focus on the collective growth of Husnabad. He emphasized environmental responsibility through tree planting and encouraged farmers to transition to oil palm cultivation to mitigate the local "monkey menace."

## Shilparamam, Tourism Hotel for Khammam



Khammam (TSIT): Khammam city is set to get a major boost in tourism and infrastructure with the proposed establishment of a Shilparamam and a tourism (Haritha) hotel. Government orders have been issued for the projects, which are expected to open new avenues for cultural promotion and tourism development in the city. Speaking at a media conference held at the site of the upcoming Shilparamam in the 21st division, corporators Saripudi Ramadevi Satish, Chirumamilla Lakshmi Nageswara Rao and Alla Nireesha Anji Reddy said that the initiatives

would transform Khammam into a prominent cultural and tourist destination. They noted that development works worth Rs.249 crore taken up under the leadership of minister Tummala stand as a testament to the city's rapid progress. The Shilparamam is being constructed over 5.4 acres in Survey No. 234 and is expected to serve as a hub for artisans and attract visitors. The corporators also highlighted that a comprehensive drinking water supply project worth Rs.220 crore is being implemented to ensure safe water for all residents in the municipal limits.

Don't Trust Exit Polls, INDIA Alliance Will Form Governments: DK Shivakumar



Guwahati, May 2: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar dismissed the credibility of exit polls and expressed confidence that the INDIA alliance will come to power in all states that went to polls last month.

actual voter sentiment. "Our calculations are different. I don't believe in exit polls from any state. I have come here to guide our legislators, protect them, and boost their morale," he said.

said the INDIA alliance has worked hard and that people are looking for change. "We have faith in the voters, and I am confident that change will come," he added.

Shivakumar's 'hotel politics' remark triggers Assam post-poll buzz

Bengaluru/Guwahati, May 2 (UNI) Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday hinted at possible "hotel politics" ahead of the Assam Assembly election results, while dismissing exit polls predicting a big win for the BJP in Assam.

was in Assam "to protect MLAs", despite the exit polls predicting a comfortable majority for the ruling BJP. Shivakumar argued that exit polls rely on small sample sizes and often fail to reflect ground realities.

Both leaders dismissed exit poll predictions that projected a decisive win for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The phrase "hotel politics" is commonly used in Indian political discourse to describe the practice of moving legislators to secure locations to prevent poaching or last-minute defections during government formation scenarios.

Wobble One Arrives in Bengaluru to Resounding Consumer and Influencer Excitement



Bengaluru : Wobble, the Indian consumer technology brand known for its bold design philosophy and performance-led engineering, today brought its flagship smartphone Wobble One to Bengaluru — marking the city's first-ever live unveiling of the device at Lulu Mall, Rajajinagar.

tions, delivering sharp, stable, and true-to-life results across environments. Alongside it sits an 8MP Ultra-Wide lens with Bokeh for expansive scene coverage, and a 2MP Macro lens for precise close-up detail work.

Parameshwara says Shivakumar's CM aspirations are natural

Bengaluru, May 2: Amid renewed buzz over a possible leadership transition in Karnataka, Home Minister G Parameshwara on Saturday said Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President DK Shivakumar's aspiration to become Chief Minister was "natural", even as he denied having any knowledge of discussions within the Congress high command on the issue.

cal developments and the evolving political situation in Karnataka. "We analysed what is going to happen at the national level and naturally also discussed our state political developments," he said, adding to the intrigue surrounding the Congress' internal political equations.

Babasaheb Ambedkar gave strength to every citizen and every community of the country: Ramalinga Reddy



Bengaluru: Babasaheb Ambedkar, who gave strength to every citizen and every community of the country, has enabled us to live with freedom today, said Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy.

Constitution, that the Constitution is the basic text for us to live in a democratic system, that Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution is immense for us to live as citizens through the Constitution and to stand as a force in our society using our freedom of speech.

become a profitable organization in recent times and the president and managing director of the organization, officers and workers should work harder to strengthen the organization in the future and all of them should work hard to take it to greater profitability, he said, adding that we should always remember Ambedkar's contribution.

Complete Asphalt Road Works by End of May: Maheshwar Rao

CREATE A PROJECT MONITORING DASHBOARD TO OVERSEE WORKS

Bengaluru : The Chief Commissioner, Maheshwar Rao, has instructed officials to complete the ongoing asphalt (road surfacing) works within the jurisdictions of Bengaluru West and South City Corporations by the end of May.



Create a Project Monitoring Dashboard: To ensure continuous monitoring of ongoing works, a Project Monitoring Dashboard should be developed. Officials have been directed to implement a system where RFIs, quality certificates, and photographs of the works are uploaded daily to the dashboard.

for Monsoon: At locations where works have not yet started or are ongoing, priority must be given to developing footpaths and drainage systems. Areas that experienced waterlogging during recent rains should be identified, and steps must be taken to prevent recurrence.

pleted within the next two days. Clear Fallen Trees and Branches: Due to recent heavy rains accompanied by strong winds, several trees and branches have fallen, and cut debris has been left on roadsides.

for Lake Development: Officials have been directed to identify lakes within the South City Corporations limits that can be developed and prepare a comprehensive action plan for their development.

Dr. K.V. Rajendra, Commissioner of the West City Corporation, stated that contractors have been instructed to promptly clear debris left after completion of road works. He also emphasized that proper signage boards and safety measures must be mandatorily installed at work sites.

REMOVE DILAPIDATED WALLS/BUILDINGS AT RISK OF COLLAPSE: MAHESHWAR RAO

Bengaluru: In a significant move to honor the legacy of former Karnataka Chief Minister S. M. Krishna, Higher Education Minister M. C. Sudhakar has directed the Vice-Chancellor of University of Mysore to submit a

formal proposal for establishing an "S.M. Krishna Study Chair." The directive comes in response to a request made by MLC Dinesh Gooligowda on the occasion of S.M. Krishna's birthday on May 1.

Officials must personally visit sites where road asphalt has already been completed to inspect the quality of work. They have also been instructed to closely monitor ongoing works and take appropriate measures to ensure timely completion.

Take Precautionary Measures

ALTIM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED POSSESSION NOTICE [RULE 8(1)] (FOR IMMovable PROPERTY) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Altium Credo Home Finance Private Limited (hereinafter referred to as "ACHFL") under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, had issued a Demand Notice to the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) as mentioned in the table below, calling upon them to repay the amount within the stipulated period.

## EDITORIAL

*Religion And Sabarimala:  
How Constitution  
Empowers Courts*

On a hill in Kerala, a centuries-old tradition recognised as a customary law barred women of menstruating age from entering a temple. In 2018, the Supreme Court struck it down. The country was convulsed. Review petitions soon flooded the Supreme Court. A nine-judge bench was constituted to look at larger questions of law and religion. Seven years later those nine judges are examining questions that reach far beyond one shrine, one community, and one set of beliefs. One of the critical questions that the court has framed for arguments is its own power of judicial review. It is a power that the Constitution gave to the judiciary and that no subsequent parliament has been able to take away. Understanding that power, what it is, why it exists, and why it is especially indispensable when religion is involved is essential to understanding what the nine-judge bench is truly doing.

### What Is Judicial Review?

Judicial review is the authority of the Supreme Court and high courts to examine whether a law enacted by parliament or a state legislature, or an action taken by the executive, is consistent with the Constitution. If it is not, the court may strike it down. The law ceases to exist, not because a new law was passed against it, but because the Constitution rendered it void. The phrase itself does not appear anywhere in the Constitution. It does not need to. It is embedded in the document's architecture. Article 13 declares that any law inconsistent with or in derogation of fundamental rights shall be void. Articles 32 and 226 give the Supreme Court and high courts the authority to enforce fundamental rights. The Supreme Court can exercise its special plenary powers under Article 142 to take any action to impart "complete justice" in any matter. In the decades after Independence, parliament and the Supreme Court were engaged in a sustained tug-of-war. Parliament repeatedly amended the Constitution to override court decisions, particularly on property rights and land reform. The court pushed back. In 1973, in *Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala*, a 13-judge bench settled the matter in terms that have never since been disturbed: Parliament may amend the Constitution, but it may not damage its basic structure. Judicial review, the court held, is part of that basic structure. No legislature can remove it. No executive can override it. That verdict is the floor beneath all of constitutional law. Everything that has followed: Shah Bano, Shayara Bano, Sabarimala, and now the nine-judge bench, adjudicates on the limits judicial review rests upon.

### Can Courts Interfere In Religion?

Ever since the nine-judge bench hearing began at the Supreme Court, we have heard it repeatedly from the Centre represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the court should not interfere in any matter that is to do with religion. In other words, he argued that there should be a hands-off approach by the judiciary when it comes to religions and religious practices. With that in mind, the Supreme Court would have never struck down "triple talaq" or given Shah Bano her right to maintenance in 1985, and with that approach Mary Roy as a Syrian Christian woman would have never got an equal share in inheritance. Many judges on the bench have argued that they cannot look at every religious practice with a judicial lens and religion must be understood by the eyes of a devotee. And one agrees, religion can only be judged, understood and reformed by a devotee or the state. But judicial review ought to be understood in its own context. There is already a line that the courts have drawn for themselves; it's called the Essential Religious Practices Test which originated in the famous case of *Shirur Mutt* and has been used ever since.

### The Essential Religious Practices Doctrine

The ERP doctrine was not born of a petition challenging discrimination or gender exclusion but from a dispute about money and management. When *Shirur Mutt* challenged a legislation regulating Hindu religious endowments in the early 1950s, the question before the court was whether that legislative intervention violated the denomination's rights under Article 26. It was the then Attorney General, defending the government's legislation, who introduced the ERP doctrine. His purpose then was to give the court a principled basis on which it could uphold what the state legislature had done and not to open a new avenue of judicial supervision over religious life. The test he proposed was simple and bounded: distinguish between the genuinely religious activities of a denomination and its essentially secular activities such as the administration of property and funds. The ERP doctrine was the line between those two categories. It was designed to save legislative reform from being challenged under Article 26. That was its purpose and its limit. The pattern across the post-Independence decades confirms this. In *Devaru*, the court upheld the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act, finding that the state's power of social reform under Article 25(2)(b) could override a denomination's claim to manage its own affairs. In *Ratilal*, careful lines were drawn between protected religious administration and regulable secular management. Across a dozen such disputes, the court consistently used the ERP test to uphold legislative intervention, not to resist it. What these cases share is a common structure. A religious institution challenged that action and the court adjudicated the boundary between what the state could and could not regulate. The individual devotee, the woman denied entry, the community member facing expulsion, was nowhere in this picture. The doctrine was forged in litigation between the state and religious institutions. Its application to claims brought by individuals against discriminatory practices is a later development, and one that requires far more justification than has typically been offered.

### The Drift And Its Consequences

Over time, the ERP test migrated from its original institutional context into a broader role. Courts began applying it as a threshold inquiry in all religious practice cases, not merely those involving legislative challenge. A practice found to be essential came to be treated, in some formulations, as though it were insulated from further fundamental rights scrutiny. The doctrine designed to protect reform gradually acquired the character of a defence against it.

The contemporary economy of the United States is often praised for its technological innovation, financial dominance, and entrepreneurial dynamism. The social dynamic is based on unbridled individualism, atomic lifestyles and utilitarian theses. However, a parallel perspective highlights the embedded role of militarisation, arms production, and violence-linked industries - commonly conceptualised as a "war economy." This framework does not claim that violence is the sole organising principle of the US system, but rather that economic, political, and cultural forces interact in ways that can sustain both internal violence and external military engagement. At the core of this structure lies the scale of defence expenditure. The United States allocates approximately \$900 billion annually to its military, accounting for roughly 35-40% of global military spending. This persistent high level of spending - regardless of wartime conditions - reflects what experts describe as a deeply institutionalised military-industrial complex. Defence contracts, technological innovation, and global deployments together create an ecosystem where military expenditure is not only a matter of national security but also a driver of economic growth and employment. Parallel to this is the domestic gun economy. The United States hosts one of the largest civilian firearms markets in the world, generating over \$90 billion in total economic activity annually. While constitutionally protected, this widespread availability of firearms creates a unique socio-economic condition where the production and circulation of weapons are normalised within civilian life. Critics argue that this normalisation increases the probability of violence, particu-



larly when combined with social stressors and institutional gaps. The consequences are visible in the recurring phenomenon of mass shootings, including those in schools which are very common. These incidents reveal a troubling contradiction: a highly developed society facing persistent challenges in safeguarding public spaces. While it would be simplistic to attribute such violence solely to economic structures, the intersection of accessibility to firearms, psychological vulnerabilities, and social fragmentation creates an environment where such tragedies can occur with alarming frequency. Political dynamics further reinforce this system. Organisations such as the National Rifle Association exert significant influence over policy through lobbying and public mobilisation. This reflects a broader fea-

ture of democratic capitalism, where concentrated economic interests can shape legislative outcomes. As a result, regulatory reforms - especially those related to gun control - often encounter sustained resistance. Beyond economics and politics, deeper socio-cultural dimensions must be considered. American society is frequently characterised by strong individualism. While this fosters personal freedom and innovation, it can also lead to social atomisation - weakening collective bonds and increasing isolation. In such a context, mental health challenges, though not inherently linked to violence, may interact with structural conditions to produce extreme outcomes. Cultural representation also plays a subtle yet important role. The global reach of Hollywood has contributed to the normalisation of violence in

popular media. Although empirical evidence does not establish a direct causal link between media and violent behaviour, the repeated portrayal of violence can shape perceptions and desensitise audiences over time. Externally, the same economic and institutional structures manifest in global military engagement. The United States maintains hundreds of military bases worldwide and is a leading exporter of arms. This global presence reinforces its geopolitical influence but also situates it at the centre of international conflict dynamics. Thus, the internal normalisation of militarisation is mirrored in its external projection of power. At the same time, systemic vulnerabilities persist. Events such as the September 11 attacks exposed significant gaps in national security despite vast mili-

tary expenditure. Such incidents highlight the limits of a system heavily orientated toward military solutions while underlying social issues remain insufficiently addressed. Finally, structural inequalities, including racial tensions and historical discrimination, add another layer of complexity. These factors contribute to social fragmentation and can intensify cycles of alienation and conflict. The internal societal problems are manifesting at the political and world levels. In conclusion, the concept of a "war economy" in the United States captures a complex interplay between defence spending, the gun industry, political lobbying, and socio-cultural dynamics. While these elements can contribute to both internal violence and external conflict, it is essential to approach the issue with nuance.

## Manipur Violence: Three Years on, the Periphery Implodes

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has never come across as a person who can silently reflect on issues that affect every part of the country. His visits to different states are carefully choreographed events and are usually to inaugurate projects or for election campaigns. He travelled to Assam on several occasions prior to the state assembly election held on April 9, this year. He has also travelled extensively to West Bengal where the first phase of the elections were held on April 23 and the second and final on April 29. Modi's leadership style is performative. His speeches are laced with rhetoric and divisive; he uses political messaging to divide rather than unite the state. One cannot therefore expect Modi to have the time or inclination to invite warring parties and sit with them to quietly work out conflict resolution strategies. For Modi political messaging scores over conflict management. The people of Manipur have been in the eye of the storm since May 3, 2023. The third year anniversary of the conflict is here already but there's no end to the trauma of over 65,000 people still living in relief camps, both in the Imphal valley and the Kuki-Zo inhabited hill districts of Churachandpur and Kangpokpi. The prime minister prefers to leave the nitty gritty of conflict management to his deputy Amit Shah - the Union home minister - a man whose track record is not that of a strategist for consensus building. Do we recall the 2002 Gujarat riots and his role there? The BJP comes across as a party of bullies, and bullies cannot be expected to

understand the language of negotiations. Manipur is a state inhabited by three major communities - the Meitei, Naga and Kuki-Zo tribes. At present the Nagas are encroaching the Kuki-Zo of encroaching into their territories. Of course, the two communities have a sad history of conflict dating back to 1992-97, which resulted in the death of 470 people from the Kuki-Zo community and 207 from the Naga community. Even then, thousands of houses were burnt on both sides. The conflict did not end with any agreement. It ended because of battle fatigue and because a fresh conflict between the Kuki and Paite ensued. Conflicts in Manipur often centre around land and the claims and counter-claims about boundaries. It's not as if the Congress government in the past handled these conflicts any better. The strategy seems to be - if the tribes are engaged in internecine clashes, the state will maintain a sort of detached, wait and watch policy. True, the Indian army was deployed to end the Naga-Kuki conflict but there were also civil society peace missions and church initiatives that put a temporary halt to the killings then. Kukis still observe September 13 as a Black Day (Sahmit Ni), as it saw the massacre of Kuki villagers by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Isak-Muivah. Sadly, the Naga-Kuki conflict has resumed and claimed three lives while some are injured in the clashes. From a distance, all these conflicts are mere news reports that we read with a certain amount of indifference as it does not affect us directly.

## Dinner Shooting To 'Hellhole' Row To Immigration, US Has Never Been More Divided Than Now

The spewing of racial abuse from the President of the United States and his ministers continues, even as he came under threat from a would-be assassin from his own country, who himself seemed to be a victim of the polarisation unleashed by the present administration. What links the two otherwise disparate incidents together is hate. When domestic policy is framed by hate against the 'other' and foreign policy operates on another level of discrimination and violence, it's all likely to come together at a point. That time could be now. And not just in the firing of a few bullets by seemingly educated men. The tendency of the President to use social media for anything and everything, including military diplomacy, is now well known. He chose to endorse a post by an appropriately named podcaster, Michael Savage, who then repeated his statements after the reaction of the Indian government, stressing that Indians were not loyal to the US, had taken away jobs from Americans, and more in that vein. All of which shows his absolute ignorance of India - which might be forgiven - but also his total lack of knowledge of his own country. Indian Americans have created immense wealth in the country, with taxes alone to the tune of \$300 billion and indirectly creating 11-12 million jobs. More comes from students, and it would be fair to say that most prominent universities survive on tuition fees by foreign students. Such talk from right-wingers is not unusual, but the point is that it is being endorsed by a US President who came to power promising the largest deportations in

American history'. That is an unfortunate political choice for a country that once stood for freedom and liberty.

### A Country Divided

What is even more unprecedented was the execution of this stated aim, with at least two US citizens killed in less than two weeks, for protesting against this, even while immigrants were being picked up at random with no connection to criminal activities, to fulfil the administration's unethical focus on meeting 'quotas' for total immigrant apprehensions. The irony. That's just part of the story, with the reports of abuse and violations bringing disgrace to America's reputation for fair trial and judgment. Even more divisive has been the President's tendency to bypass Congress, with some 140-plus executive orders, his absolute disregard for international law in Venezuela and now in Iran, and now a rapid rise in inflation apparent in dropping opinion polls with households expenses on grocery rising; all this amid perceptions of Trump's cabinet of billionaires and their buddies benefiting hugely from tariff wars and protectionism. Add to all this the suspicions about the Epstein Files, with images of Trump and Epstein projected onto the Hilton Hotel just before the Washington correspondents dinner. Never has a country been more divided.

### And The Attack

The available data on the attack indicates that Cole Tomas Allen had no previous criminal record, or belonged to any hostile interest group. In fact, a

letter from him tragically speaks of total disenchantment, referring not only to the Epstein files but also to abuse in immigrant detention camps, the recent lethal attacks on boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean and the bombing of an elementary school in Iran, among other things. "Turning the other cheek when someone else is oppressed is not Christian behavior," the writing reads. "It is complicity in the oppressor's crimes."

### A Break In Security

The second aspect is that what seems like a breach in security. While the Secret Service reacted with immense promptness, the fact that Allen had booked into the hotel a day or so earlier, with two guns and several knives, is astonishing. Even a cursory examination of luggage may have overlooked the guns - given Americans' passionate love of weapons - but knives were something else. Reports now indicate that he was a known hater of the Trump administration on social media, which would have rung alarm bells, if the level of divisiveness had not been so high across the country. While it is always easy to blame security agencies, some explanation will be demanded. That leads directly to the DHS (Department of Homeland Security) which has faced the largest shutdown in history as the Congress has been against funding ICE and Border Patrol without more oversight. The shutdown had led to major furloughs, and the Department being left without basic logistics, from software licenses to toilet paper. The shooting has predictably led to core Trump supporters' implor-

ing Congress to fully fund the DHS. That, and a \$400 million ballroom in the White House, which Trump has also backed to ensure 'security', may be the immediate beneficiaries.

### The Fires Being Lit Abroad

But again, all of the above are domestic issues. What is worrisome for the rest of the world is the spewing of hate from America. Former allies like France, whose President was the target of Trump's mockery for being 'slapped' by his wife, to Italy and almost all of Europe, have been insulted by not just the President but also by his officials. Then is the flip side of all this. Apart from the diatribe against Europe for not helping the US in Iran, the more concerning issue is the consistent lecturing from people like Vice-President JD Vance, who controversially spent much of his time accusing European governments of retreating from their values, and ignoring voter concerns on migration and free speech, basically giving a boost to extremist right-wing groups. That included a lecture against Europe's liberal abortion policies. Then came Secretary Rubio who invited Europeans to join American efforts to restore a glorious world of Western dominance. Mathias Risse from Harvard University, correctly called it out as "civilizational panic". Take all that, and the recent patronising speech in New Delhi where a US official said his country would not make the mistake of helping India as it had done with China, to become another rival, is almost not surprising anymore.

# Commercial LPG Prices Hiked By Rs 993 Amid War

Commercial LPG Price Hike: Despite mounting pressure to raise fuel prices amid the Iran war disruption, the central government has decided to keep the domestic LPG rates unchanged. However, the price of commercial LPG (19 kg) has been increased by Rs 993 (on average). Commercial LPG cylinder prices in Delhi are now at Rs 3,071.50 (from Rs 2,078.50 earlier). Similarly, commercial LPG cylinder prices in Mumbai have been raised from Rs 2,031 to Rs 3,024. Significantly, the price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder has been increased thrice since February 28 when the Iran war began. It was first increased by Rs 144 in March, followed by another hike of nearly Rs 200 on April 1. The triple hike is expected to hit restaurants, eateries, and other businesses hard, since they rely on cooking fuel for their day-to-day operations. The restaurants are likely to pass on the burden to the consumers, making outside dining and food delivery a bit more expensive. Speaking on the pressure on energy prices India is facing due to the Iran war disruption, Vikas Prakash Singh, Program



Director - PGPM, Professor - Economics, said, "It would be naive to assume India staying insulated and unscathed from this war. Some pain had to come. More pain inflicted on two categories of people. First, people like my neighbor who are crying over inflated Restaurant bills and second, people like my maid, worrying about how to get her mini cylinder refilled. Wonder if people could cut the discretionary spending of eating out and let the commercial LPG supplies flow to poor's kitchen." Petrol, Diesel Prices Remain Unchanged Meanwhile, the retail prices of petrol and

diesel also remain unchanged. Separately, in a big relief for the aviation sector, the government has also made no change in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices for domestic airlines (scheduled operations). While the decision has been welcomed by households, oil marketing companies (OMCs) will have to continue bleeding money to shield consumers. As NDTV reported earlier, OMCs are losing Rs 16,000 crore (approximately) every day as they are buying crude oil at an elevated rate (over \$120 per barrel), but selling at the same price. With voting in states concluded,

OMCs were pushing for an increase in petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel and LPG prices, according to media reports. The government is also walking a tight rope. While raising prices would ease OMC finances, it could risk stoking inflation and weigh on country's growth. Also, the government is already bearing the increased cost of LPG and fertiliser subsidies. However, OMCs, as per reports, may reach out to the Centre for some compensation to absorb petrol and diesel under-recoveries. The initial bet after the war-driven price surge was that OMCs could

absorb losses. These companies recorded strong profits in recent years. However, with no end to the Middle East crisis in sight, absorbing further losses can become unsustainable. So far, OMCs have selectively raised prices. Prices of premium petrol, bulk diesel and ATF for international flights have been increased in line with global trends. In contrast, regular pump prices for petrol and diesel remain unchanged. ATF for domestic airlines has been only partially raised. New LPG Cylinder Rules From May 1 While the price of domestic LPG remains unchanged, households in cities will now be able to book cylinder only after 25 days (as opposed to 21 days earlier). India's three major oil marketing companies - Indian Oil Corporation (Indane), Bharat Petroleum (Bharat Gas), and Hindustan Petroleum (HP Gas) - have finalised new rules (effective May 1). Starting May 1, the interval between LPG bookings has been increased from 21 to 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas. The system will automatically block any booking attempt made before the permitted gap has elapsed.

# Government Notifies 100% FDI In Insurance Companies Via Automatic Route, 20% Limit In LIC

The government on Saturday notified 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in insurance companies under the automatic route, allowing greater participation from foreign investors. "Foreign investment in this sector shall be subject to compliance with the provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938(4 of 1938), and the condition that Companies receiving FDI shall obtain necessary licence or approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India for undertaking insurance and related activities," reads the notification. However, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will remain under a separate framework, with foreign investment capped at 20% under the automatic route. "Foreign investment in LIC shall be subject to compliance with the provisions of the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956 (31 of 1956), and such other provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938 (4 of 1938), as are applicable to LIC as per the provisions of section 43 of the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956 (31 of 1956)." The rules also mandate that in any Indian insurance company with foreign invest-



ment, at least one of the chairperson of the board, managing director, or chief executive officer must be an Indian resident citizen. 100% foreign investment under the automatic route has also been notified for insurance intermediaries including insurance brokers, reinsurance brokers, insurance consultants, corporate agents, third party administrator, Surveyors and Loss Assessors, managing general agents, insurance repositories and such other entities, as may be notified by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India from time to time. Earlier, in February, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Commerce and Industry Ministry had already notified 100% FDI in the insur-

ance sector. In December 2025, Parliament passed the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025, which brought key changes to the insurance framework. ALSO READ: India Permits Automatic FDI Approval Up to 10% From China and Border Nations The legislation amended three major laws governing the sector - the Insurance Act, 1938, the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999. The bill amends three Acts related to insurance sector, namely, The Insurance Act, 1938, The Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956 and The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999.

## Kotak Mahindra Bank Q4 Results:

### PROFIT BEATS ESTIMATES ON LOWER PROVISIONS; DIVIDEND DECLARED

Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. reported a 13% rise in standalone net profit for the March quarter, exceeding estimates, as provisions declined and asset quality improved. The lender also announced a dividend for FY26, subject to shareholder approval. Profit to Rs 4,027 crore in Q4 FY26 from Rs 3,552 crore a year earlier., the lender said in an exchange filing on Saturday. Net interest income or the bank's core income rose 8% to Rs 7,875 crore from Rs 7,284 crore. Operating profit increased 7% to Rs 5,855 crore. The results indicate lower credit costs and stable income growth, while asset quality improved on a sequential basis. Estimates Beat The bank's performance came in above Bloomberg estimates on key metrics. Net profit stood higher than the estimate of Rs 3,782 crore, while net interest income exceeded the estimate of Rs 7,634 crore.



Gross non-performing assets ratio was 1.20%, lower than the estimate of 1.25%. Net non-performing assets ratio came at 0.25%, below the estimate of 0.30%. Operating profit was marginally below the estimate of Rs 5,887 crore. Asset Quality Improves Asset quality improved from the previous quarter. Gross NPA ratio declined to 1.20% from 1.30%, while net NPA ratio fell to 0.25% from 0.31%. Provisions dropped 43% year-on-year to Rs 516 crore from Rs 909 crore, supporting earnings growth. Dividend Declared The board pro-

posed a dividend of Rs 0.65 per share of face value Re 1 for FY26. This compares with Rs 2.50 per share of face value Rs 5 in the previous year. The dividend is subject to approval at the annual general meeting. Outlook And Management Commentary Management said net interest margin may moderate gradually in FY27. The bank is monitoring potential second- and third-order impacts from the West Asia conflict, including supply chain disruptions, though it said current business numbers remain unaffected. "We

have stepped up monitoring across portfolios and are assessing any change in customer behaviour," management said. On microfinance, management said the segment saw an adverse cycle and the bank has strengthened underwriting. "We feel good about the MFI book and expect to grow the book in FY27," it said. The bank said competition in the home loan market remains high but expects long-term growth. It added that it continues to evaluate inorganic opportunities but said IDBI Bank Ltd valuation was high and not a strategic fit. Management said the credit card business is expected to grow steadily, with a higher share of transactors after Covid-19. It said expected credit loss impact is less than 2% of net worth and that the bank is increasing investment in systems to address cyber risks and artificial intelligence-related threats.

# Spirit Airlines shutting down after rescue talks collapse

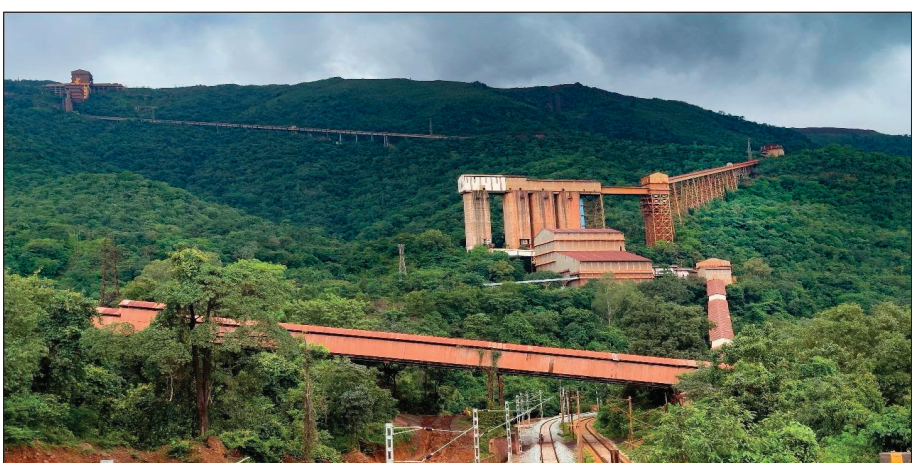
Spirit Airlines is shutting down as a business after failing to secure a \$500m (£368m) bailout from the Trump administration. The budget airline was in talks with the US government about a rescue deal which would have saved it from collapse. But discussions collapsed and the carrier said in an announcement on its website on Saturday that with "great disappointment" the airline had "started an orderly wind-down of our operations, effective immediately". Spirit was emerging from its second bankruptcy filing in recent years before the US-Israel war in Iran, but the resulting surge in jet fuel costs pushed it over the brink. All upcoming flights with Spirit have been cancelled. In Saturday's statement, the airline said it would automatically process refunds for any flights purchased through Spirit with a credit or debit card to the original form of payment. Guests who booked flights via a travel agent should contact the travel agent directly to request a refund.



Compensation for those who booked flights using a voucher, credit, airline points or any other method will be determined at a later date through the bankruptcy court process. The airline said it was unfortunately not able to reimburse guests for other related costs such as emergency hotel stays or replacement flights associated with cancelled trips. Spirit's customer service is no longer available, the airline said early on Saturday, but customers with questions can contact the carrier's claims agent. The airline's demise was so abrupt that it has left some ticket holders in the lurch. One

wake of the Iran war had proved "the final nail in the coffin" for Spirit. Speaking to the BBC, Syth said the operator had shied away from the radical overhaul it needed during a 2024 bankruptcy procedure. Spirit had been in the process of making the changes it needed in its current bankruptcy process, scaling back the number of flights it was offering and aircraft it owned, she said. But its ability to survive the year was in question even before the Iran war, Syth added. "If it wasn't for the fuel scenario, they would have been okay through the summer, beyond the summer I would have said it was still precarious." Some have been cutting flights and others have hiked fares to cope with the cost increases. At the same time, the head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) has warned Europe could run out of jet fuel in as little as six weeks. At the end of April, Spirit had been confident its rescue deal with the Trump administration was to be finalised imminently.

# NMDC REVVED UP FY27 WITH A 16% GROWTH



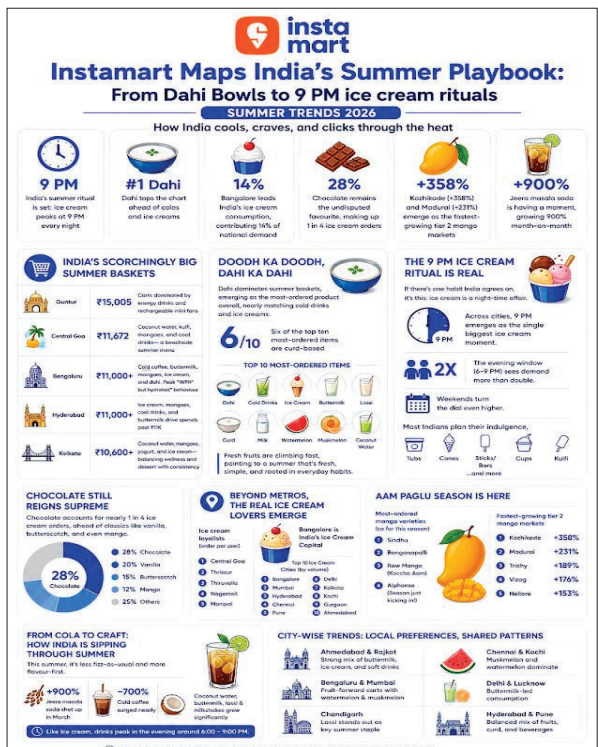
Hyderabad, 2 May 2026: Mining powerhouse, NMDC produced 46.4 lakh tonnes and sold 36.8 lakh tonnes of iron ore in April 2026. The largest iron ore miner in the country has recorded a 16% growth in production in the first month of FY27 over the corresponding period last year. Riding on its best-ever mining performance at the Bailadila iron ore projects, production in April 2026 is the highest ever achieved by NMDC in April on the com-

pany's timeline. Tracking iron ore production over the recent four-year period reveals a steady CAGR of 3.9% for India. Within this backdrop, NMDC delivered a stronger 6.8% CAGR, outperforming industry growth and thereby increasing its share of incremental output. "The expansion of capacities and capabilities of NMDC is in full swing. We have laid the necessary groundwork across logistics, infrastructure, technol-

ogy, and supply chain integration to enable our strategic leap forward. Starting at 4.6 million tonnes in April, NMDC has its heart set on 60+ million tonnes for this financial year. The team is ready, aligned, and confident to rise to the next level of growth!" said Shri Amitava Mukherjee, CMD, NMDC. 53+ million tonnes in FY26 and a positive early cycle update from NMDC boost optimism in India's iron and steel sector.

# Hyderabad's Summer Carts Are Full of Ice Cream, Mangoes, and Cold Drinks: Instamart Summer Trends 2026

Hyderabad, 2026: Hyderabad is leaning fully into indulgent summer cravings this season. Instamart's Summer Trends 2026 report shows the city emerging as a key market for high-value summer baskets, with top carts crossing 11,000 powered by ice cream, mangoes, cool drinks, and buttermilk. As temperatures climb, Hyderabad's ordering patterns point to a city balancing comfort, hydration, and dessert-first indulgence through the heat. Instamart's Summer Trends 2026 report captures exactly how India orders its way through the heat, not just what's trending, but what's ritual. The first real heatwave, and suddenly it's dahi with every meal, mangoes by the kilo, and a quiet but consistent 9 PM ice cream craving. Nationwide, top products grew up to 300% week-over-week, with fruits, cold coffee, fizzy drinks, and popsicles seeing rapid spikes. Cooling appliances like fans grew over 280%, while sun-



glasses recorded a staggering 650% YoY growth. India's Scorchingly Big Summer Baskets Hyderabad's biggest sum-

mer cart crossed 11K with ice cream, mangoes, cool drinks, and buttermilk Bengaluru's top summer spender crossed 11K on cold

coffee, buttermilk, mangoes, ice cream, and dahi Guntur's summer superfan spent 15,005, powered by energy drinks and rechargeable mini fans A Central Goa user spent 11,672 stocking up on coconut water, kulfi, mangoes, and cool drinks Kolkata's top summer shopper spent over 10,600 on coconut water, mangoes, yogurt, and ice cream Summer 2026 trends in quick commerce: Doodh ka Doodh, Dahi ka Dahi: Dahi is dominating summer baskets, nearly matching cold drinks and ice cream. Six of the top 10 items are curd-based, while watermelon, muskmelon, and other fresh produce continue to surge. The 9 PM Ice Cream Ritual: 9 PM is India's biggest ice cream moment, with demand more than doubling between 6-9 PM and rising further on weekends. Family-sized tubs lead the category, while chocolate accounts for nearly 1 in 4 ice

cream orders. Beyond Metros, the Real Ice Cream Lovers Emerge: Bengaluru leads national ice cream consumption, followed by Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Pune. Smaller cities like Central Goa, Thrissur, Thiruvalla, Nagercoil, and Manipal are seeing some of the highest orders per user. Aam Paglu Season Is Here: Sindhu is currently India's most-ordered mango variety, ahead of Banganapalli and raw mangoes. Fastest growth is coming from Kozhikode, Madurai, Trichy, Vizag, and Nellore, while Bengaluru leads overall mango demand. From Cola to Craft: Jeera masala soda, cold coffee, and café-style coolers are moving mainstream. Jeera soda grew 900% in March, while cold coffee rose nearly 700%. Coconut water, buttermilk, lassi, and milkshakes also saw strong growth, with beverage demand peaking between 6-9 PM.

# US to cut troop levels in Germany by 5,000 amid Trump spat with Merz

The US Defence Department plans to withdraw 5,000 troops from Germany, amid a spat between President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz over the war with Iran. The decision comes a day after Trump criticised Merz, who suggested the US had been "humiliated" by Iranian negotiators. The US has a significant military presence in Germany, with more than 36,000 active duty troops assigned to bases across the country as of last December. Defence Minister Boris Pistorius told the German Press Agency in Berlin that "the presence of American soldiers in Europe, and particularly in Germany, is in our interest and in the interest of the US". At the same time, he made it clear that the decision did not come as a surprise. The fact that the US would withdraw troops from Europe and also from Germany "was foreseeable", he said. In social media posts



on Thursday, Trump said Merz was "doing a terrible job" and had "problems of all kinds", including on immigration and energy. Trump has also suggested pulling US troops from Italy and Spain. In a statement, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said the order about US troops in Germany had come from Defence Secretary Pete

Hegseth. "This decision follows a thorough review of the Department's force posture in Europe and is in recognition of theatre requirements and conditions on the ground," he said. "We expect the withdrawal to be completed over the next six to twelve months." Trump, a longtime critic of the Nato alliance, has been lashing out at allies over

their refusal to participate in operations to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Asked on Thursday whether he would also consider pulling US troops from Italy and Spain, Trump responded: "I probably will - look, why shouldn't I?" Italy has not been of any help to us and Spain has been horrible," he added, criticising them for their response to

the war in Iran. "In all cases they said, 'I don't want to get involved.'" Merz told university students earlier this week that "the Americans clearly have no strategy" and he could not see "what strategic exit" they might choose. "The Iranians are obviously very skilled at negotiating, or rather, very skilful at not negotiating, letting the Americans travel to Islamabad and then leave again without any result," he said. He added that the "entire nation" was being "humiliated" by the Iranian leadership. In response, Trump took to his platform Truth Social, where he said Merz thought it was "OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon" and "doesn't know what he's talking about". "No wonder Germany is doing so poorly, both Economically, and otherwise!" the post read. The BBC has contacted the German embassy in Washington for comment. The US military deployment

in Germany is by far its biggest in Europe, with about 12,000 troops in Italy and a further 10,000 in the UK. Many are stationed at Ramstein Air Base outside the south-western German city of Kaiserslautern. Trump has previously proposed US troop reductions in Germany, but they have so far not come in to effect. Only Japan hosts a larger US troop presence. In 2020, a proposal to move 12,000 US troops from Germany either to other Nato countries in Europe or back to the US was blocked by Congress and then reversed by President Joe Biden. At the time, Trump had accused Germany of being "delinquent" because its military spending was well below Nato's target of 2% of economic output (GDP). But that has changed dramatically under the Merz government. Germany is projected to spend 105.8bn (€91bn) in 2027 - with total defence expenditure next year set to reach 3.1% of GDP.

## There was one way we'd agree to do Devil Wears Prada 2, says Meryl Streep

When a Devil Wears Prada sequel was announced, 20 years after the release of the original, the one question on many people's lips was "why?". For Meryl Streep, who plays the Anna Wintour-inspired Miranda Priestly, editor-in-chief of Runway Magazine, there was a key condition for taking part. "There was one way that we would sign on to do a sequel," she tells BBC News. "If it spoke to the moment." Indeed, the film mirrors real-life developments in the world of journalism - staffing cuts, dwindling print numbers and digital domination. "Everything has to have its own necessity for being - even the frothiest sort of fun movie," Streep says. Co-star Stanley Tucci, who plays Miranda's creative director, Nigel Kipling, adds that the film is "dealing with the issues of today - the loss of control that journalists have because of social media and AI". It was always going to be difficult trying to replicate the success of the original 2006 film, which is still regularly quoted in popular culture and

has recently become a West End musical. But rather than replicating the original, is the new film more a reflection of changing times? "One of the things I think the film does really well is show you have to participate in the world you want to live," says Anne Hathaway, who plays Runway's new features editor Andy Sachs. "I hope people realise the fate of journalism really rests on them and if you believe in it, you believe it's important - I personally do." Three-time Oscar winner Streep "absolutely hopes that people do take hope from this". "It sounds like we've made [the 2015 film] Spotlight or something but no, we've made The Devil Wears Prada - there's a lot of fun and fashion," she jokes. This is echoed by Tucci, who calls the film "a nice bit of escapism" at a time when "the world is in a very chaotic place". Emily Blunt who also stars in the second film, is able to call Tucci family thanks to the first instalment (she introduced her sister to Tucci at the original film's premiere - they've now been married for 14 years).

## Thousands of 'lost Canadians' have applied for dual citizenship - is Canada ready?



As the youngest of five children, Joe Boucher learned a lot from his older brothers and sister - how to ride a bike, how to navigate the miles of forest behind their house and how to skate and play hockey. But one thing he didn't really pick up from them is how to speak French. Although both of Boucher's parents were of French-Canadian descent and spoke French with each other, it was once illegal to teach French in school in the US state of Maine, where the Bouchers lived. And so his siblings, amongst themselves, defaulted to English. "Shame was heaped upon French speakers as being second-class citizens," he recalls. More than a million French-Canadians moved from Canada to the New England region of the US in the 19th and 20th Century, mostly to seek jobs in mills or on farms. At the time, the law made it difficult for Canadians to pass on citizenship to their children born in the US. And so, generations of so-called "lost Canadians" were born. A new law, which came into force in December, aims to correct that historical inequity, by allowing not just the children of Canadians to

claim citizenship, but anyone who can prove an ancestral tie. Between 15 December 2025 and 31 January 2026, Canadian immigration officials received 12,430 applications, of which 6,280 applications were processed, and 1,480 were granted. Coming into force at the tail end of President Donald Trump's first year of his second term, the law has struck some as fortuitously timed. "We sort of feel the ground shifting under our feet a little bit these days," Boucher told the BBC. "It's nice to know that the connectivity to the home country, as it were, is there." Boucher is now in the process of applying for "proof" of Citizenship - under the new law, descendants are automatically considered Canadian, so the application is not to become Canadian, but to prove one's Canadian-ness. The application only costs C\$75 (\$55, £40), but the cost of genealogists, records fees and lawyers can push the total cost into the thousands. To prove their ties to Canada - however far back they may go - many have had to look up historic records like census reports, baptismal records and birth certificates.

## BRIGHT IDEA? UK FIRM PIONEERS DATA CENTRES USING LAMPPOSTS



There have been many attempts to put data centres in unusual places over the years - Microsoft put a data centre under the sea, Elon Musk has suggested putting them in space. Now a UK firm is betting on data centres using thousands of connected smart lampposts, and has signed a formal agreement with a Nigerian state to deploy 50,000 of them. Warwickshire-based Conflow Power Group

Limited (CPG) says networked together its solar-powered iLamp units "double as a revenue-generating distributed AI data centre". However, some experts have told the BBC the tech isn't a substitute for the powerful data centres needed to run the toughest AI tasks, although they could be useful for less demanding work. Each iLamp has batteries which are charged by a cylindrical solar panel.

## US THREATENS SHIPPING FIRMS WITH SANCTIONS IF THEY PAY IRAN TOLLS

The US has warned shipping companies they could face sanctions if they pay Iran for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. An alert on Friday by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) warned US persons and companies were generally banned from paying Iranian government entities, and non-US persons may risk exposure to sanctions if they pay. "Maritime industry participants involved with vessels calling at Iranian ports face significant sanctions risk under multiple sanctions authorities targeting Iran's shipping sector and ports", OFAC said. Iran has severely limited traffic through the strait since the war began in February. The US has also enforced a naval blockade on Iranian ports. Iran has called the US interception of ships



entering and leaving Iranian ports under the blockade "piracy". Tehran says it has collected tolls from ships in order to navigate freely through the strait, with Hamidreza Haji Bababei, deputy speaker of Iran's Parliament, last week claiming the first toll revenue had been deposited with the country's Central Bank. No further detail was provided on the amount of the toll, the method of collection nor who

paid it. The BBC could not independently verify this claim. OFAC's alert said payments could involve cash as well as "digital assets, offsets, informal swaps, or other in-kind payments," including charitable donations and payments at Iranian embassies. The agency warned that non-US persons who pay could also face civil and criminal enforcement liability if payments cause US persons, such as

insurers and financial institutions, to violate sanctions. OFAC said it "will continue to aggressively target Iran's main revenue-generating sectors, in particular its petroleum and petrochemical sectors". The US Treasury also announced sanctions on three Iranian foreign currency exchange houses on Friday, saying they have converted oil revenue into more usable currencies. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said his agency would "relentlessly target the regime's ability to generate, move and repatriate funds, and pursue anyone enabling Tehran's attempts to evade sanctions". After the US and Israel attacked Iran on 28 February, Iran has been targeting and striking ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, including seizing two of them.

## Thirteen killed in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, health ministry says

At least 13 people, including four women and a child, have been killed in Israeli air strikes on southern Lebanon, the Lebanese health ministry said. Two women and a child were among eight killed in Haboush in Nabatieh district, where the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had issued an evacuation order. Four people, including two women, were killed in Zrariah in Sidon district, while another person was killed in Ain Baal in Tyre district. In total, 32 people were injured on Friday. Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has continued despite an ongoing three-week ceasefire extension. On



Saturday, Iran-backed group Hezbollah said it had targeted Israeli soldiers and military vehicles in Lebanon. The Israeli military said one of its soldiers was killed during combat in southern Lebanon on Thursday, bringing the number of Israeli troop deaths since

early March to 17. An initial 10-day pause in hostilities had been announced on 16 April following ambassador talks in Washington between Israel and Lebanon. The two countries have no diplomatic relations and the first meeting in Washington was the first high-level set of talks

between them since 1993. A three-week extension to the ceasefire was announced by US President Donald Trump on 23 April, who said the second meeting between the two countries "went very well" and the US would be working with Lebanon "to help it protect itself from Hezbollah". The Iran-backed group was not involved in the ceasefire agreement but had indicated it would abide by its terms if it was also respected by Israel. While the truce largely halted strikes on the capital city Beirut and its southern suburbs, fighting has persisted elsewhere in the south, with continued air raids and repeated evacuation orders.

## 'If we sleep, they bite': Rats and weasels infest camps for displaced Gazans



"We woke up to the sound of her screaming at 2am," Samah al-Daaba, the mother of four-year-old Mayaseen, tells the BBC. "When my husband turned on the torch, the weasel ran away. I looked at my daughter's hand, and it was all blood. Everything was bloody." In the Gaza Strip, left devastated by war, the daily battles are now with rats, urban weasels and other pests spreading diseases. Aid workers are calling for urgent steps to counter a public health crisis. Cogat, the Israeli defence body that controls Gaza's crossings, says it is working with international organisations "to address sanitation needs". Mayaseen was given a tetanus injection in a Gaza City hospital but suffered from days of fever and vomiting. She is now recovering in her family's tent. Social media feeds have recently shown footage of rats running amok in camps for displaced families, and of newborn babies, the sick and elderly after rodents have attacked them. One grandmother with nerve damage to her feet caused by diabetes has spoken of having parts of her toes bitten off. In a recent survey, cited by

UN agencies, rodents or pests were frequently visible in 80% of sites where displaced families are now living, affecting some 1.45 million people. Rodents can harm people through bites and scratches as well as their urine, droppings and fleas. These can cause respiratory and skin diseases, blood infections and food poisoning. The local World Health Organization (WHO) representative, Dr Reinhilde Van De Weert, says the new infestations are "unfortunately, the predictable consequence of a collapsed living environment". More than six months after the US brokered a Gaza ceasefire deal, it has failed to deliver hoped-for improvements in the humanitarian situation and progress appears to be stuck. There are still regular deadly airstrikes in which Israel says it is targeting Hamas. Hamas, which triggered the Gaza war with its deadly assault on Israel and mass hostage taking in October 2023, has not committed to disarming. No reconstruction has taken place. Gazans do not yet have any of the 200,000 caravans which Palestinian officials say they need as temporary homes.

## Trump tells Congress ceasefire means he does not need their approval for Iran war

President Donald Trump has told Congress that US hostilities with Iran have "terminated" during an ongoing ceasefire, as he argued he did not need to meet a deadline for legislative approval of the war. By law, a US president must receive Congress' approval within 60 days of notifying lawmakers of military action, or else cease hostilities. But in a letter to congressional leaders, Trump said he does not have to comply with that war powers act as the ceasefire agreed with Iran last month had paused the clock on any such obligation. The US and Iran have not yet reached a longer-term peace deal via talks, though Iranian media reported a new proposal from Tehran sent via



Pakistan on Friday. On the 60th day since he formally notified Congress of strikes against Iran, Trump wrote to congressional leaders on Friday: "There has been no exchange of fire between the United States Forces and Iran since April 7, 2026." "The hostilities that began on February 28, 2026 have terminated." According to Iranian state news agency

IRNA, a proposal from Tehran for negotiations with the US was sent to Pakistan intermediaries. The news agency did not publish the details, and it's unclear if the proposal has reached the US. But Trump told reporters: "We just had a conversation with Iran. Let's see what happens. But, I would say that I am not happy." He said a deal has been hard to reach

in part because Iranian leadership was "very confused", after a number of its top military officials were killed in the war. Trump said he was briefed with options by US Central Command on Thursday, ranging from "blast the hell out of them and finish them forever" to "make a deal". Later on Friday, Trump said: "they're not coming through with the kind of deal that we have to have. And we're going to get this thing done properly. We're not going to leave early and then have the problem arise in three more years." Meanwhile, the US Treasury has issued a notice warning that any individual or company that pays Iran a "toll" for passage through the Strait of Hormuz was at risk of violating US sanctions.

## OSCARS SAYS AI ACTORS AND WRITING CANNOT WIN AWARDS



The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has clarified that only acting and writing for films done by humans will be considered eligible to win an Oscar. The academy, which controls the US film industry's most prestigious award, on Friday issued updated rules for what kind of work in movies and documen-

taries would be considered eligible for an Oscar as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology grows. In updated eligibility requirements, the Academy specified that only acting "demonstrably performed by humans" and that writing "must be human-authored" in order to be nominated for an award.



## IPL 2026: Mumbai Indians sets a target of 159/7 for Chennai Super Kings

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) put up an impressive bowling performance to restrict Mumbai Indians (MI) to 159/7 in 20 overs in their must-win IPL 2026 clash in Chennai on Saturday. MI captain Hardik Pandya won the toss and opted to bat, but his struggles mirrored his team's problems. Anshul Kamboj took three wickets and Noor Ahmad scalped two, as CSK choked MI in the middle overs. CSK debutant Ramakrishna Ghosh dismissed Suryakumar Yadav to take his first IPL wicket. Naman Dhir's half-century was the only innings of note for MI. CSK and MI sit seventh and ninth in the points table respectively, and need a victory to keep their playoff hopes intact. The Board of Control for Cricket in India is yet to announce the venues to host the playoffs of the Indian Premier League 2026. A total of four matches take place in the IPL play-



offs. These games include Qualifier 1, the Eliminator, Qualifier 2, and the final. While speaking to reporters on Saturday, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said that the board will announce the venues in two days' time. "We are going to announce the venues in two days' time. We are working on, which all can be our appropriate venues for the

IPL playoffs and the finals. So, we'll take another two days' time," he said. The Impact Player rule has been a talking point ever since it was introduced in the IPL in 2023. The BCCI has already stated that the rule will continue to exist until 2027 before it is reviewed. "Some low scoring matches are also there. All the fans are enjoying the matches.

The bowlers are getting good wickets (as well). Some teams are scoring very low scores too if you look at the overall scorecards and some teams are chasing 260 also," said Saikia while talking about the rule. "Everything is happening... it is a full bouquet in one package," he added. The BCCI official said IPL teams are comfort-

able with the Impact Player rule and that no complaints have been made from their side so far. He said the Impact Player rule will be reviewed after IPL 2026. "This (discussion on the rule) has been going on for the last two years. We are reviewing it after this tournament is over, and in the middle of the tournament, we cannot take any call," Saikia said. "There is no official request that we should revisit this particular impact player proposition. It is in the media (that) I sometimes read it. But if it comes from the teams, then we'll have to take a call. But till now, no such situation has arisen." Mumbai Indians star Suryakumar Yadav was unable to convert his brisk start into a big score against Chennai Super Kings as he was dismissed by debutant Ramakrishna Ghosh for 21 on Saturday.

## James stars as Lakers set up Thunder showdown



LeBron James scored 28 points as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Houston Rockets to set up a Western Conference semi-final play-off against reigning NBA champions Oklahoma City Thunder. James also added seven rebounds and eight assists to help the Lakers to a 98-78 victory, which secured a 4-2 series win against the Rockets. The Lakers had led the series 3-0 and finally closed out the best-of-seven contest in convincing style away at Houston, whose top scorer was Amen Thompson with 18 points. "A lot of our guys, quite frankly, have not been in this position, have not been in a close-out situation, especially on the road, so it was important for me to go out and set the tone."

## Who Is Nandani Sharma? WPL 2026 Star Handed First India Call-Up For Women's T20 World Cup 2026

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Saturday announced a 15-member squad for the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup, starting June 12. Harmanpreet Kaur, who led India to a maiden ODI World Cup title last year, was named captain with Smriti Mandhana as her deputy for the marquee event. The BCCI also drafted in uncapped pacer Nandani Sharma for the tournament in England and Wales, following her breakout season during the Women's Premier League earlier this year. Who is Nandani Sharma? Born in Chandigarh on September 20, 2001, Nandani played 10 matches for Delhi Capitals in WPL 2026. Roped in for just Rs 20 lakh during the auction, Nandani bagged 17 wickets in 10 matches. She became the



first Indian bowler to register both a five-wicket haul and a hat-trick during the tournament for DC. She was also part of the India squad that played in the Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars tournament in Bangkok in February this year. Meanwhile, the squad picked for World Cup will also compete in the preceding three-match T20I series

against hosts England, starting May 28. Harmanpreet will be supported in the batting lineup by key players in Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh, while the bowling responsibilities will largely rest on the shoulders of Deepti Sharma and Renuka Singh. Kashvee Gautam and Amanjot Kaur were not avail-

able for selection owing to injuries. There was no place in the team for Pratika Rawal. India squad for England T20Is and T20 World Cup: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Bharti Fulmali, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (wk), Sree Charani, Yastika Bhatia (2nd wk), Nandani Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Kranti Gaud, Shreyanka Patil, Radha Yadav. India squad for one-off Test against England: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Pratika Rawal, Richa Ghosh, Sree Charani, Yastika Bhatia, Nandani Sharma, Harleen Deol, Renuka Singh, Kranti Gaud, Sayali Satghare, Sneha Rana.

## Pakistan Captain Salman Agha Says "Went To India's Room" After Handshake Row, Shares Full Story

In the high-stakes arena of international cricket, the rivalry between India and Pakistan often transcends the boundary ropes. However, last year's Asia Cup saw certain episodes unfold that are still fresh in the minds of fans. While Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav and his squad maintained a principled stance in line with national sentiment following the Pahalagam attacks, Pakistan's Salman Ali Agha has now provided a detailed account of how the "handshake row" unfolded from his perspective. The atmosphere surrounding the fixture was charged long before the players took the field. While the Indian camp, backed by the BCCI, had made it clear that "business as usual" was not an option,



Agha described how the information regarding the lack of a handshake between the two captains was passed on to him right before the toss took place. "I went for the toss. Before that, there was a press conference. There was a shake-hand, trophy shoot, there was a handshake," Agha recalled in a video shared on social

media. "When I was going for the toss, I was pretty normal. Obviously, I had an idea that it wouldn't be that normal, but I didn't know there would be no handshake. I didn't have that idea." "I went for the toss with our media manager, Naem Bhai," Agha explained. "The match referee, I don't remember his name, he took me aside and

said, 'We're going to do it like this. There won't be a handshake.' So, please look at that. I said, 'It's fine if there's not going to be a handshake. I am not too keen either.' So, this is what happened. He told me beforehand that there won't be a handshake." Salman Ali Agha relieved about India vs Pakistan handshake controversy: Before the match, there was a press conference and a trophy shoot, and there was a handshake there too. So when I was going for the toss, I was pretty normal. I said, 'The match ended in a comfortable victory for the Indian side. While the pre-match 'no-handshake' rule was understood by Agha, he believed a post-match handshake would still occur between the two teams.

## "He's A Sweet Misunderstood Kid": Ex-India Star On Riyan Parag Amid Vaping Row

Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag returned to form with a blazing 90-run knock off 50 balls during his side's IPL 2026 match against Delhi Capitals in Jaipur on Friday. His innings was laced with eight fours and five sixes, and it helped RR post a massive total of 225 for 6 after the team was reduced to 12 for 2 in 1.5 overs. RR lost their star openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi on single-digit scores and found themselves struggling in the game before Parag's sensational knock bailed them out of trouble. Reacting to his performance, a fan on social media said that Parag has a sound technique, good captaincy skills, and an attacking



mindset, but that "he needs to find consistency and be more polite and humble". Reacting to the comment, former India all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin said that Parag is a "sweet, misunderstood kid". Parag found himself in the middle of controversy after being caught on camera vaping in the dressing room during RR's IPL 2026 match against

Punjab Kings in Mullanpur. Following the incident, RR captain Riyan Parag was on Thursday fined 25 per cent of his match fee for bringing the game into "disrepute". "Riyan Parag, captain of Rajasthan Royals, has been fined 25% of his match fee and has also accumulated one demerit point for breaching Level 1 of the IPL's Code of Conduct for Players and Team Officials during Match No. 40 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 against Punjab Kings," the BCCI said in a statement. "Riyan was found to have breached Article 2.21 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which relates to conduct that brings the game into disrepute.

## A NEW PACE STAR IS BORN IN PAKISTAN: UNCAPPED 22-YEAR-OLD DEFENDS 5 RUNS IN FINAL OVER OF PSL THRILLER



A dramatic Eliminator 2 of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2026 saw the emergence of a potential star for Pakistan cricket. Pacer Hunain Shah - brother of Pakistan star Naseem Shah - defended just 5 runs in the final over to seal the win for Hyderabad Kingsmen over Islamabad United. Hunain, 22, delivered a string of excellent yorkers, leaving Faheem Ashraf and Chris Green with little chance. He gave away just 3 runs in the over to help Hyderabad Kingsmen clinch victory from the jaws of defeat. Islamabad United needed to chase down a target of 187 to reach the PSL 2026 final, and looked to have the game in the bag as they reached 181/6 at the end of the 19th over. With the opposition needing just 6 runs off the final over, Hunain Shah had to pull off the improbable. And so he did. The 22-year-old even got seasoned Pakistan international Faheem Ashraf out.

## LEEDS BEAT BURNLEY TO VIRTUALLY SECURE PREMIER LEAGUE SURVIVAL



Leeds all but secured their place in the Premier League next season with a 3-1 win over already-relegated Burnley on Friday. Goals from Anton Stach, Noah Okafor and Dominic Calvert-Lewin took Daniel Farke's side nine points clear of the relegation zone with just four games remaining for those below them. Leeds failed to reach a first FA Cup final since 1973 in a 1-0 defeat to Chelsea at Wembley last weekend. But they are now up to 14th in an impressive first season back in the top flight, along with Sunderland, buck the trend of promoted sides falling straight back to the second tier. "The three points are massive for us," said Farke. "The job is not done yet. We will celebrate proper when it's mathematically done. But 43 points is good." Staying up would also

be huge for Farke in his bid to silence his doubters at Premier League level. Twice the German led Norwich to the English top-flight but was unable to keep the Canaries in the top flight. "Of course, it was a massive step for us tonight," he added. "To deliver 10 points out of the last four games in a nervy period, as a newly-promoted side, is second to none." Burnley were only pipped to the Championship title by Leeds on goal difference last season. But the Clarets have struggled much more with the step up as they have been relegated for the third time in as many seasons in the Premier League. Burnley parted company with manager Scott Parker on Thursday despite his exceptional record of achieving promotion from the Championship with three different clubs.



## Charles Leclerc On Top For Ferrari Ahead Of Max Verstappen And Oscar Piastri

Charles Leclerc topped the times for Ferrari ahead of Red Bull's revitalised four-time champion Max Verstappen and McLaren's Oscar Piastri in Friday's sole practice session at the Miami Grand Prix. The Monegasque driver clocked a best time in one minute and 29.310 seconds to outpace his Dutch rival by 0.164 seconds and finish four-tenths clear of Piastri as championship leaders Mercedes were pushed aside. Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was fourth in the second Ferrari ahead of Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes, the youngest leader of the title race in F1 history, with George Russell sixth in the second Mercedes. World champion Lando Norris was seventh in the second McLaren

ahead of Alpine's Pierre Gasly, Isack Hadjar in the second Red Bull and Carlos Sainz of Williams as the teams with most upgrades appeared to gain from their improvements. Mercedes, with no significant changes to the cars that had won the first three races before the cancellations of events in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, were unable to exert their usual authority. After a five-week hiatus due to the conflict in the Middle East, Sainz was the first man out ahead of the two Ferraris, all of them seeking early feedback on their extensive upgrades on a warm morning in the Sunshine State. Engine rules issues it had emerged overnight that F1's engine rules for 2027 were expected to be decided

within two weeks and ahead of the Canadian Grand Prix, introducing speculation about a move away from 50/50 to a 60/40 split between engine and electrical power. This was an issue sure to provoke more discussion and perhaps decide the futures of some drivers, including four-time champion Max Verstappen and two-time champion Fernando Alonso. Verstappen has criticised the new hybrid era cars for producing artificial racing and said he was considering ending his F1 career. Alonso, at 44, had also said he was ready to decide on his future with struggling Aston Martin. Hamilton said he welcomed the recent dialogue between drivers and ruling bodies, but wanted to see the drivers offered a

permanent voice when future rule changes are discussed. "The drivers all work together," he said. "We meet and talk, but we don't have a seat at the table, which I think needs to change." On track, Norris soon showed McLaren's speed to take control while Russell complained his car's turbo sounded like a steam train and Gasly reported a curious smell from his Alpine. After 46 minutes, Leclerc grabbed the initiative in 1:29.885 ahead of Antonelli with Hamilton, also in a Ferrari, going third. It appeared that the heavily revised Ferrari, sporting 11 new parts, was responding well to the team's investment - the most of any team, ahead of McLaren, while Aston Martin had none and Haas just one.

## 'Police Complaint' starring Varalaxmi Sarathkumar and Naveen Chandra to hit theatres on May 22



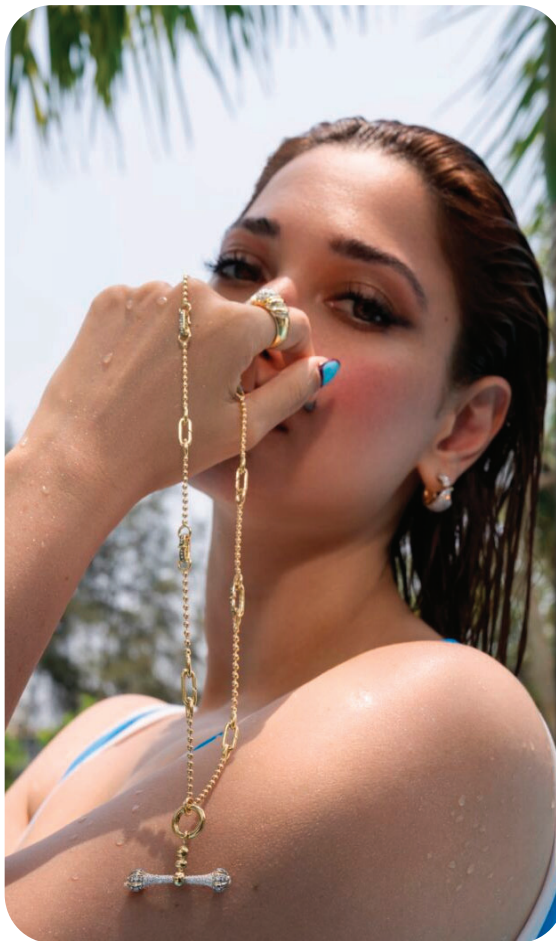
The upcoming horror-action thriller *Police Complaint*, starring Varalaxmi Sarathkumar and Naveen Chandra in lead roles, is all set for a grand theatrical release on May 22. Directed by Sanjeev Megoti and produced by Balakrishna Maharana under the MSK Pramidha Shree Films banner, the film is already creating strong buzz in the industry. Known for her powerful performances in both villainous and charac-

ter-driven roles, Varalaxmi Sarathkumar will be seen in a new shade in this film, while Naveen Chandra appears in a versatile and intense role. Their combination is expected to be one of the major highlights of the movie. On the occasion of actor Krishna Sai's birthday, the makers released a special song dedicated to his favorite actor, Superstar Krishna, which has attracted attention from fans and movie lovers. Speaking about the film, director Sanjeev Megoti said that

*Police Complaint* is based on the concept of the "chain reaction of karma." He described it as an out-and-out action entertainer blended with horror thriller elements, promising audiences a never-before-seen cinematic experience. He expressed confidence that the film's unique storyline and powerful characterizations will impress viewers and requested audiences to support the movie upon its release. Sanjeev Megoti, known for films like *Aghora*, *Pourusham*, *Apta*, *Dandu*, *Raghava Reddy*, and *Adiparvam*, has earned recognition as a creative filmmaker. With a strong storyline, thrilling elements, and a cast of 52 senior artists, *Police Complaint* has generated significant expectations even before release.

Legendary filmmaker M. S. Raju, the man behind cult films like *Devi*, *Satruvu*, *Okkadu*, *Varsham*, *Manasantha Nuvve*, *Nuvvosthanante Nenoddantana* and others is coming up with another super interesting film.

## TAMANNAAH'S BLUE SWIMSUIT RAISED TEMPERATURE BY THOUSAND



Tamannaah Bhatia is not just a superstar actress, she is now a serious businesswoman and brand builder too. In her stunning new photos, she is seen promoting her own jewellery brand in the most glamorous way possible. With a fresh summer vibe, tropical palms in the background, and a bold blue and white swimsuit, Tamannaah is making sure every single eye stays on the jewellery, and on her. The jewellery itself is absolutely gorgeous, layered gold chains with a stunning diamond-encrusted dumbbell pendant, sparkling hoop earrings, and a chunky gold ring with blue nail art adding a playful pop of colour.

## Thanks to Ram Charan garu for releasing the 'Sathi Leelavathi' trailer.. Lavanya Tripathi at the trailer launch event



The film 'Sathi Leelavathi' has been made with Lavanya Tripathi Konidela and Dev Mohan in lead roles. Presented by the renowned production house Anandi Arts, the film is produced by Naga Mohan under the banner Durgadevi Pictures banner. It is directed by Tatineni Satya, who is known for *Bheemili Kabaddi Jattu* and *S.M.S (Shiva Manasulo Shruti)*. The makers are releasing this film worldwide on a grand scale on May 8. Mega Power Star Ram Charan released the movie trailer on Saturday. At the trailer launch event held in this regard... Lavanya Tripathi said, "The hard work, love, and effort we put in for 'Sathi Leelavathi' will be seen on screen by the audience. Satya garu and Uday garu brought a good story to me. 'Sathi Leelavathi' has come out wonderfully.

Naga Mohan garu worked very hard for this film. After it was known that I was pregnant during the shoot, the entire team supported me. Dev garu dubbed for himself. Thanks to my brother in law Ram Charan for releasing our trailer. Because of him, the reach of our trailer and our film has increased. Please watch our trailer and support us. Watch and support our film on May 8," she said. Dev Mohan said, "I'm happy to be coming before the Telugu audience again. I also watched the trailer along with all of you. I liked the trailer a lot. Thanks to Ram Charan garu for releasing our trailer. This movie, and the character I played in it, are very new and different. Thanks to the director and producers who gave me this opportunity. It was a pleasure to act with Lavanya garu. Our film is coming on May 8. I hope everyone will defi-

nately watch and make it a success." Tatineni Satya said.. "Thanks to Ram Charan garu for launching our 'Sathi Leelavathi' trailer. Thanks to everyone who supported us during the shoot. Thanks to Uday garu who supported in writing, and to Venu garu, Ramesh garu, Srikanth garu, and Sai garu in my direction team. Our film is coming on May 8. It's a very good film. I request everyone to come to the theatre and watch and support this film." Naga Mohan said.. "The film 'Sathi Leelavathi' is coming on May 8. I hope everyone will watch and enjoy it. Thanks to everyone who supported us in this journey. Thanks to Lavanya madam and Dev sir. We were able to bring the film this far only with the support they gave. Thanks to Ram Charan garu who launched our trailer. Our film will impress everyone."

## MALAVIKA MOHANAN KILLED HER DENIM DAY IN STYLE



Malavika Mohanan is one of South India's most stylish and talented actresses, and her new pictures prove she is only getting better with time. Currently busy filming two highly anticipated projects, *Sardar 2* and *Pocket Novel*, both Tamil films, Malavika is keeping fans excited on every front. While the cameras roll on set, she is also setting fire to the internet with her stunning off-screen looks. In these bold new photos, Malavika stepped out in a powerful

street-style look, a washed denim jacket thrown over a sleek black corset top, paired with a rugged cargo mini skirt, dark pointed heels, and a chic croc-print handbag. Her auburn-highlighted hair blowing freely in the wind and minimal makeup gave the entire look a raw, effortless, and dangerously cool energy. The close-up shot with golden sunlight wrapping around her face is simply breathtaking, no heavy styling, just pure natural beauty and magnetic screen presence.

## Telugu ZEE5 Announces Its Upcoming Original Series 'MEMU COP'ULAM'

Telugu ZEE5 has announced its upcoming original series *MEMU COP'ULAM*, set to stream soon on the platform. The series promises a unique blend of humour and mystery, rooted in a vibrant rural setting where everyday life, local politics, and unexpected chaos collide. The team unveiled the series title through a specially crafted video featuring Getup Srinu and Jaffar, a move that quickly went viral and successfully captured audience attention across platform. *MEMU COP'ULAM* is produced by B.V.S. Ravi and Kaumudi K. Nemani under the banner RAW Entertainments, in association with Pradeep Maddali Creative. The series is directed by Pradeep Maddali, best known for his earlier work *Vikkatakavi*, and story penned by Shoban Chittuprolu. The show boasts a strong ensemble cast led by Naga Babu



Konidela, alongside Getup Srinu and Ravi Teja Nannimala in lead roles, delivering grounded performances complemented by sharp comic timing. Set in a lively village in the

Godavari districts during Sankranti, two police officers get their first big case. They have big confidence but little sense. They follow funny clues, doubt everyone, and create full

confusion. A small issue turns into a big, fun, laugh-filled village adventure. With its strong local flavour, character-driven narrative and satirical tone, *MEMU COP'ULAM* adds another compelling title to Telugu ZEE5's growing slate of originals that spotlight rooted storytelling with contemporary appeal. Naga Babu Konidela on returning to ZEE5 says, "I'm very happy to return to ZEE5 after *Paruvu*. *MEMU COP'ULAM* is a project that immediately connected with me because of its setting, characters and honest storytelling. Working with this team has been a rewarding experience, and I'm glad to be part of a series that balances humour with meaningful local narratives. I'm looking forward to audiences watching it on Telugu ZEE5 very soon." Stay tuned to Telugu Zee5 for more updates on the *Memu Cop'ulam*!

## PAK ACTRESS DUREFISHAN SALEEM 'EXPOSED'? CO-STAR DROPS EXPLOSIVE CLAIMS



Pakistani actress Durefishan Saleem, who is currently one of the most celebrated faces in the entertainment industry, has found herself in the middle of controversy. After winning hearts with her performance in *Ishq Murshid*, her popularity skyrocketed, but this time, she is making headlines for reasons beyond her on-screen work. Erum Akhtar's controversial statements on Durefishan Saleem The discussion began after senior Pakistani actress Erum Akhtar made some strong remarks about Durefishan during an appearance on *Nadia Khan's* show. Interestingly, Erum had previously worked with her in the drama *Saanwal Yaar Piya*, where she played the step

and adoptive mother of Durefishan's character, *Piya*. During the interview, Erum Akhtar opened up about her experience on set, calling it "painful" and alleging that the production faced major delays due to unprofessional behavior from the lead actors. According to her, what was initially planned as a four to five-month shoot extended to nearly a year. She revealed that her own 40-day schedule stretched across months, affecting her ability to take on other projects. Erum further claimed that repeated disruptions occurred for various reasons from Durefishan, including schedule cancellations, religious commitments like *Umrah*, and even external circumstances such as *Ramzan*.

## Soul-Stirring "Amma Ammega" Song from Vijay Antony's 'Vanda Devullu' Released

The emotional impact of the Vijay Antony-Sasi collaboration in 'Bichagadu' is still deeply etched in audience memory, especially the iconic "Amma" song, which continues to resonate as one of the most beloved mother sentiment tracks in recent times. Once again, the duo returns with a powerful emotional offering, aiming to recreate that same magic with their upcoming film 'Vanda Devullu'. Following the strong buzz created by its posters, glimpse, and teaser, expectations around the film have already soared. Now, the makers have unveiled a deeply moving track titled "Amma Ammega", a heartfelt tribute to the greatness of motherhood. The song beautifully carries forward the emotional legacy associated with Vijay Antony's earlier works.

What elevates the track is its well-balanced creative collaboration. The lyrics penned by Bhashyasree bring out profound emotional depth, capturing the essence of a mother's unconditional love with poetic sensitivity. The composition by Balaji Sriram is understated yet powerful, built on a gentle melodic base that slowly grows into an emotionally immersive experience without overwhelming the listener. His music leans into simplicity, allowing the emotion to take center stage rather than instrumentation. Vocally, Srikanth Hariharan delivers a moving performance, infusing the soul-stirring song with sincerity and warmth. His voice carries a natural emotional weight that aligns perfectly with the song's theme, making each line feel personal and lived-in rather than performed.

