HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

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Dubai Crown Prince's visit paves way for stronger ties: PM

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Akhil Akkineni returns with a bang IN LENIN

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QUOTE OF THE DAY
The Pioneer

The law is going to be amended to prevent double registrations. Complaints are being received regularly from the public every day that their properties are being double registered somewhere. Many states have already amended their laws regarding double registration, and steps are being taken to amend the law in Telangana as well. A new Section 22 be introduced in the Registration Act by amending Section 22-B



- Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Minister

DON'T MISS...

TG to start coding in 238 gurukuls

In a landmark move to integrate digital skills into mainstream education, the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) has announced that coding education will be introduced in all 238 gurukul schools across the state from the upcoming 2025-26 academic year. This expansion follows the success of a pilot programme held at the Moinabad Gurukul school last year. The initiative will be implemented in ...

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Indians want to conquer hearts: Prez

Indians do not want to conquer countries but want to conquer hearts, President Droupadi Murmu said while interacting with Indian researchers here on Tuesday. During an interactive session with Indian researchers at Champalimaud Centre for Unknowns, the president told them to be the best ambassadors of India as they are identified by the name of their country. "You will excel in education. You will excel in research. You will become a good scholar but you will contribute to the economy...

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Investors become richer by Rs 7.32L cr

Investors' wealth swelled by Rs 7.32 lakh crore on Tuesday as equity markets staged a strong comeback after crumbling in the previous trade. Snapping its three-day decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,089.18 points or 1.49 per cent to settle at 74,227.08. During the day, it climbed 1,721.49 points or 2.35 per cent to 74,859.39. Thanks to the positive trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 7,32,042.69 crore to Rs 3,96,57,703.44 crore (USD 4.62 trillion)...

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'Jasprit Bumrah in good nick'

India pacer Jasprit Bumrah is in "good nick" following a three-month-long injury lay-off and Mumbai Indians want to ease him into competition mode in the Indian Premier League, said head coach Mahela Jayawardene. Bumrah made his return to top flight cricket here on Monday in MI's IPL clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after another back-related trouble sidelining him in early January. While he was welcomed back with a six over mid-wicket by India teammate Virat Kohli ...

-SPORTS

Guvs cannot sit over bills passed by state legislature

In a first, SC fixes timeline to give assent to bills

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court on Tuesday held that governors cannot sit over bills passed by the state legislature and fixed a timeline of one to three months for their actions under the Constitution.

A bench of justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said the expression "as soon as possible" permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency, and does not allow the governor to "sit on the bills and exercise pocket veto over them".

"Similarly, by virtue of the first proviso intrinsically and inextricably attached to the option of withholding of assent, there is no scope for the governor to declare simpliciter withholding of assent meaning thereby absolute veto is also impermissible under Article 200," it said.

The bench also said there is no expressly specified time limit for the discharge of the functions by the governor under Article 200 of the Constitution.

"There is no expressly specified time limit for the discharge of the functions by the governor under Article 200 of the Constitution. Despite there being no prescribed time limit, Article 200 cannot be read in a manner which allows the governor to not take action upon bills which are presented to him for assent and thereby delay, and essentially

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A bench of justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said the expression "as soon as possible" permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency, and does not allow the governor to "sit on the bills and exercise pocket veto over them"



Major victory for Stalin government

In a major victory to DMK-led Tamil Nadu government, the Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared 10 bills which were stalled and reserved by Governor R N Ravi for President's consideration, and also set a timeline for all governors to act on the bills passed by state assemblies.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan held, "In the facts of the present case, the reservation of the 10 bills for the consideration of the President in the second round would be termed as illegal, erroneous in law and just liable to be set aside. As a result, any subsequent action taken upon the said bills by the President also does not survive and is thus set aside."

'Our Sardar': Congress asserts claim on Patel's legacy



PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Emphasising its claim on the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress on Tuesday vowed to follow the principles of the country's first home minister to defeat divisive forces and accused the BJP of "lying" as well as spreading "propaganda" that he and Jawaharlal Nehru had strained ties.

At an extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, the party passed a resolution to mark the 150th birth anniversary year of Patel and said it is determined to emulate the resoluteness of the 'Iron Man of India' by fighting the frenzy of religious polarisation.

"Today, the ideology of violence and communalism is pushing the country into an abyss of hatred, based on the divisions of religious polarisation," said the resolution titled "Flag-bearer of freedom movement- Our Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel".

The Congress is determined to follow the life principles of Sardar Patel to defeat the forces of animosity and division, as also exposing the fake news factory of these elements, it said.

"We are giving a strong message to national politics," Congress general secretary

Continued on Page 2

CM visits Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy visited the Sabarmati Ashram on Tuesday in Ahmedabad and paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

He enquired with the Ashram officials about Mahatma Gandhi's lifestyle in Sabarmati Ashram and the specialities of the Ashram. The Chief Minister moved the Charkha, which was used by Mahatma Gandhi. Later, the CM participated in special prayers at the Ashram.

It may be recalled that the CM, Dy CM, Ministers and other leaders went to Ahmedabad to attend the AICC's special meetings. On Tuesday, the AICC conducted a meeting of the CWC.





File photo

2013 HYDERABAD BOMB BLAST CASE

TG HC upholds death penalty to 5 convicts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday upheld a trial court's verdict handing out death penalty to five senior operatives of banned terror outfit, Indian Mujahideen, involved in a bomb blast that left 18 people killed in 2013.

A bench of Justice K Lakshman and Justice P Sree Sudha dismissed the criminal revision appeal filed by the IM operatives while upholding the NIA court's judgment.

"Confirming the judgment of the trial court," the bench said.

On December 13, 201,6 the NIA court convicted the five members, including IM co-founder Mohd Ahmed Sidibapa alias Yasin Bhatkal, Pakistani national Zia-ur-Rahman alias Waqas, Asadullah Akhtar alias Haddi, Tahaseen Akhtar alias Monu and Ajaz Shaikh.

Lawyer of one of the accused told reporters that they will appeal against the verdict in the Supreme Court.

Two deadly explosions in Dilsukhnagar, a crowded shopping area in the city, took place on February 21, 2013.

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604 new liquor brands seeking entry into Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Excise Department has announced that it has received applications from 604 new liquor brands seeking permission to supply alcohol in the state. Of these, 331 brands are indigenous, while 273 are foreign, indicating a balanced interest from both domestic and international liquor manufacturers.

Prohibition and Excise officials said 92 liquor supply companies had submitted applications in response to the notification issued on February 23 by the Telangana State Beverages Corporation Limited (TGBCL). The applications were open until April 2.

For the first time in the state, 47 new companies have entered the fray, applying to sell 386 different types of liquor brands. Meanwhile, 45 existing companies have also applied for permission to sell 218 new liquor brands.

All applications are being reviewed. The final nod will be given after government approval.

Officials said the move is part of a broader initiative to expand the range of available brands in the state and to maintain regulatory oversight and compliance with excise laws.

'Revanth is a failed CM following negative policies'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



BRS Working President KTR launched a blistering attack on both the Congress Government in Telangana and the BJP-led Centre, alleging a conspiracy to destabilise the state's economy, environment and identity.

In a wide-ranging conversation with journalists, KTR labelled the governing style of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy as "Anumula Intelligence" and said that this deceit is endangering Telangana.

"Revanth is the 'most powerful CM' in the country as he has 'united' the BJP and the Congress. He is the 'Joint Chief Minister' of both the parties. Revanth should be given the first rank for making the BJP and the Congress work together. The BJP is 'protecting' Congress and its corruption," he said.

KTR said the BRS silver jubilee public meeting in Warangal's Elkathurthy would be a grand, peaceful affair.

"We've chosen a location without traffic hassles. With 1200 acres of space, arrangements including parking are massive. Only two Telugu parties have completed 25 years successfully. They are

Continued on Page 2

Revanth shielding KTR from corruption cases: Sanjay



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, has accused Revanth Reddy of shielding KTR from corruption cases and demanded a CBI probe into the HCU land scam.

Sanjay said that the unholy alliance between the Congress and the BRS continues in Telangana and that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and BRS Working President KT Rama Rao have become close friends. Due to this, the Revanth Government is trying to dilute and dismiss the cases of corruption and irregularities committed during BRS rule to protect the KCR family from being arrested, he added.

He said that initially, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy himself openly spoke about the involvement of KCR's family in corruption involving Rs 1 lakh crore while executing the Kaleshwaram Project, irregularities in power purchases, the Dharani Portal land scam, phone-tapping scandals, the Formula-E race scam, farmhouse drug cases, etc. However, after joining hands with KTR, it is shameful that Revanth is now trying to water down these cases.

TG's bid to check double registrations

Slot booking system for registrations from April 10: Ponguleti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Revenue, Housing, I & PR Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said that no double registrations would be possible after the legislative amendment and that registration can be done within 10 to 15 minutes.

The Minister said the slot booking system for registration would be introduced from April 10 and the pilot project would be implemented in 22 sub-registrar offices.

He said that complaints are being received from the public every day that their property is being double registered somewhere. So the law is going to be amended to prevent double registrations, he added.

He said that some states have already amended laws regarding double registration, and steps are being taken to amend the law in Telangana as well, adding that a new Section 22 will be introduced in the Registration Act by amending Section 22-B.

Continued on Page 2

Will BJP announce its TG prez's name today?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A leak from Telangana BJP leaders said that the Malkajgiri MP, Eatala Rajender, is being appointed as the Telangana BJP President. The BJP's central office is going to announce it on Wednesday evening.

Telangana BJP leaders are saying that it is almost confirmed that Eatala is going to become the new President of the Telangana BJP. However, nobody knows when the BJP high command is going to announce it.

However, BJP sources said that a party observer has come to the state to collect the nomination papers of all the hopefuls in the race for the post.

120 Miss World contestants expected from across the globe

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana is gearing up to host the 72nd edition of the Miss World pageant with grandeur, aiming to put the state's hospitality and tourism brand on the global map.

Tourism Secretary Smita Sabharwal held a review meeting on Tuesday with officials to ensure that all arrangements are in place for the international event scheduled between May 7 and 31.

Around 120 models representing various countries will arrive in Hyderabad on May 6 and 7. A heritage walk at the Charminar and a grand welcome dinner at the historic Chowmohalla Palace are planned to honour the guests.

Senior officials from the Tourism Department, the GHMC, the Heritage Wing and the police visited the palace to check out the arrangements on the ground.

Ms Smita asked officials to ensure that every detail of the welcome dinner reflects Telangana tourism's brand image. Along with the models, around 400 international delegates, photographers and media representatives are also expected in the city.

She emphasised that the events must highlight the unique tourism appeal of Telangana – from the opening day to the grand finale.

Plans include a cultural show lasting 20 minutes to showcase Telangana's vibrant traditions, with live music performances featuring Sufi, qawwali and folk genres. A dedicated photoshoot area with elegant seating will also be arranged inside the palace.



Brahma Kumaris head Rajyogini Dadi passes away at 101

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajyogini Dadi Ratanmohini, the head of Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya, died at a hospital in Ahmedabad on Tuesday.

She was 101 years old, according to the institute.

Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde and Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma have condoled the death.

Continued on Page 2

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No need for immediate delimitation of LS constituencies

PIN POINT

The issue of delimitation suddenly came up because of the political situation in Tamil Nadu, where Assembly elections are due in 2026. This time, it coincided with the schedule for the next delimitation process. Picking up the point, political parties in Tamil Nadu started arguments that southern states would be badly affected by the delimitation process based on the population statistics available now



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The political 'uncertainty' created by some political parties in the name of the delimitation of Lok Sabha seats across the country doesn't have enough substance to take it further. This doesn't mean that the possible impact of the delimitation would not affect the development of any state or Union Territory. The population of a state can indeed decide how many LS seats that particular state would have after the delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, which is expected to be completed by 2026.

The delimitation exercise has to be conducted once every 25 years. It's a gigantic exercise that takes years as it involves every part of the country, and the percentage of the population needs to be examined carefully. The population of a state is crucial in deciding a Lok Sabha constituency that has lakhs of voters. The alleged disparities over the number of voters in each constituency need to be looked at carefully so that no scope is given for having the highest and lowest numbers in the voters' list as was seen earlier.

The issue of delimitation suddenly came up because of the political situation in Tamil Nadu, where Assembly elections are due in 2026. This time, it coincided with the schedule for the next delimitation process. Picking up the point, political parties in Tamil Nadu started arguments that southern states would be badly affected by the delimitation process based on the population statistics available now. The increase in population in the Hindi belt is high due to the failure of the government machinery in strictly implementing the FP programme.

The delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies has made the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu insecure as their interests can be affected by delimitation. The devolution of funds to southern states by the Finance Commission may be badly affected as they have effectively controlled their population growth. This is interlinked with the overall development process. The 15th Finance Commission made the startling revelation that the FP programme for controlling population growth has not yielded the expected results. As a result, states which have controlled population growth received only a lesser share of funds.

In the context of the 15th Finance Commission's findings, the Centre will have to adopt a 'look and proceed' policy in the case of delimitation. Some people said that the population growth rate can be taken from the 1971 census for the delimitation process. If the same is applied to the 2001 census, those states with a good record of population control would be in danger when it comes devolution of funds by the Finance Commission.

The opposition has decided to take up the issue of delimitation to create awareness among the public. The opposition front in southern states held a meeting in Chennai recently under the leadership of the DMK supremo, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin. The ruling parties of all southern states except AP attended the meeting. Chief Ministers Pinarayi Vijayan (Kerala), A. Revanth Reddy (Telangana), Deputy Chief Minister DK Siva Kumar (Karnataka), and BRS Working President KT Rama Rao resolved to continue their protest against the alleged injustice to southern states through the delimitation process. Their main concern is the possible increase of Lok Sabha seats in North India if delimitation is based on the population criteria.

The ruling parties of southern states, except the NDA combine (TDP, JSP, & BJP) of AP, decided to hold such meetings in other states to create awareness both among parties and the public. Initially, the NDA combine brushed aside the apprehensions of opposition parties on the possible increase of Lok Sabha seats in the densely populated states. The 2011 census is available with the government, but the opposition parties' concern is also the same for taking up the delimitation process. The 2021 census was not taken up due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The census is conducted once in a decade, and it will take at least three years to complete the process.

Based on the 2011 census, the Delimitation Commission, headed by Justice Kuldeep Singh was appointed in 2004, and it took three years to complete its job. As population control has not been done properly, it is feared that inequalities may arise among states while the Finance Commission allocates funds. For that purpose and in the larger interests of the states, a Constitutional Amendment (84th) Bill was passed by Vajpayee's admin. As per the recommendations of the Justice Kuldeep Singh Commission, delimitation was implemented during the 2009 LS elections. The population of the state would be divided by the total seats in that particular constituency, and the same exercise will be done at the district level too. In that way, the correct figure of voters for every LS seat will be finalised.

The Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act–2014 said that there would be an increase of Assembly seats in both Telugu states. The numbers would be enhanced from 119 to 150 in Telangana and from 175 to 225 seats in Andhra Pradesh.

The proposed delimitation can be carried out only if a new commission is appointed by the Centre. The commission may be appointed only after the new census is over. Another option is to wait for the next census in 2031. If the Centre decides to wait till 2031, the recommendations for delimitation may be ready only by 2039.

So, there is no urgency to conduct delimitation immediately. Then there would be no basis for the argument that delimitation may be taken up by 2026 and no scope for linking the issue with the TN Assembly polls next year. But it's natural for ruling parties to get some political mileage from the delimitation process as they have power.

HCU protests just drama, BRS Govt wrecked environment: Sridhar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amid rising protests over the environmental destruction at the Hyderabad Central University (HCU), Telangana Industries and IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu's team hit back, accusing the BRS of orchestrating a false narrative to deflect public attention from its decade-long ecological misrule.

A strongly worded press note from the minister's office called the current uproar "selective outrage" and "theatre in the name of environmentalism."

The statement said that while student groups and political figures are now rallying behind the cause of HCU's green cover, the most egregious environmental damage in Telangana occurred during BRS rule.

"Between 2016 and 2019 alone, over 12.12 lakh trees were cut down, and 11,422 hectares of forest land were diverted for non-forest purposes. Where were these protestors then?" it asked.

Pointing to the massive Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, the statement said it destroyed around 8,000 acres of forest land and failed to meet its irrigation target.

"The environmental disaster of Kaleshwaram has been overshadowed by financial scandals, but the ecological loss has never been accounted for," it said, adding that no dharnas or hashtags trended then because the ruling party then was the BRS.

Sridhar also flagged the BRS government's real estate push through Neopolis and Kokapet land auctions, calling them "open ecological looting" of Hyderabad's commons.

"Land worth Rs 31,000 crore was sold through just 26 auctions, with one acre fetching Rs 100 crore. But not even a single protest was held," it said.

Further, the much-publicised Haritha Haaram afforestation campaign came under sharp scrutiny, with the statement citing satellite data that forest cover actually fell from 21,591 sq. km in 2014 to 21,213 sq. km by 2021.

"Where did the Rs 10,000 crore go? If 219 crore saplings were truly planted, why did the forest cover decrease?" it asked, accusing the BRS Government of staging PR events while the green cover vanished.

In Hyderabad city, the statement accused the BRS Government of cutting down 207 trees for the new secretariat without any public record of compensatory afforestation.

The Durgam Cheruvu Bridge, it claimed, was built at the cost of lakeside biodiversity. "But there was no environmental scrutiny then. No slogans. No protests," it said.

Commercial Taxes collection rises to Rs 75,149 cr, targets Rs 89,368 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a notable sign of financial recovery, the Commercial Taxes Department has reported a collection of Rs 75,149 crore for the financial year 2024–25, registering a 7.2 per cent growth over the previous year. The department credited the turnaround to a series of reform-oriented steps taken under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

Official data says the department recorded a collection of Rs 70,636 crore in 2022–23, with a marginal increase to Rs 70,721 crores in 2023–24. Officials admitted the stagnation in revenue had raised concerns, but said the trend has now been reversed decisively.

Harish slams govt as GST growth rate hits zero in March

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao expressed serious concern over Telangana's economic decline, highlighting that the state's GST growth rate in March 2025 has dropped to zero, a first since the COVID-19 lockdown period.

Citing official statistics, Harish said that during fiscal 2024–25, Telangana recorded a mere 5.1 per cent growth in GST collections, far below the national average of 10 per cent.

"This is a clear indication of this government's failure," Harish said in a press release on Tuesday.

Recalling Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka's statement in the Assembly that Telangana's GST growth stood at 12.3 per cent, Harish termed it as a "shocking misrepresentation." He added that official figures now completely expose the inaccuracy of the minister's claim.

"I had warned during the budget session that the state's GST growth rate would not exceed 5.5 per cent. But this government ignored all our warnings," Harish said.

He emphasised that the confirmed 5.1 percent growth rate was among the lowest in the state's history.

He attributed this sharp decline to the "reckless decisions" made by the Congress government over the last 15 months. "Lapses in welfare scheme implementation, especially the failure to release Rs 12,000 crore under the Rythu Bharosa scheme, reduced rural spending power," he said.

He also pointed out that abrupt policy changes like halting Pharma City, cancelling the Metro Rail Project, and instilling fear through demolitions using HYDRAA and the Musi Project damaged investor confidence.

TG's bid to check ...

Continued from page 1

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that sub-registrar offices are being modernised to provide better services to people across the state in an efficient, easy, fast, transparent and corruption-free manner. As part of this, a slot booking system is being introduced to complete the registration process in just 10 to 15 minutes instead of waiting for hours for registering documents.

He said the slot booking system will be implemented in 22 sub-registrar offices at first, on an experimental basis from April 10. There are 144 sub-registrar offices in the state.

He said the programme is being launched at 22 places in Hyderabad. They are Azampura, Chikkadapalli, Sadashivapet in Rangareddy district, Quthbullapur, Vallabh Nagar in Medchal district, Saroor Nagar, Champapet, Shamshabad in Rangareddy district, Ramagundam in Peddapalli district, Kusumanchi in Khammam district, Khammam (R.O), Medchal (R.O), Mahbubnagar (R.O), Jagtial, Nirmal, Warangal Fort, Warangal Rural, Kothagudem, Armur, Bhuvanagiri, Choutuppal, Nagarkurnool.

He said that to avoid congestion due to the submission of multiple documents for registration at the same time in the Sub-Registrar's office, the working hours of the Sub-Registrar's office have been divided into 48 slots.

People can book a slot directly through the website 'registration.telangana.gov.in' on a date and time convenient for them and come at the specified time on that day, complete the registration and leave immediately.

For those who have not booked a slot, five walk-in registrations will be allowed every day from 5 to 6 pm in case of emergency, and those who come directly to the office will receive documents on a first-come, first-served basis.

He said that to facilitate the slot booking process in the Sub-Registrar offices where work pressure is high and in offices where more than 48 slots are required, additional Sub-Registrars will be appointed in addition to the existing Sub-Registrars. On an experimental basis, two additional Sub-Registrars and a staff member have been appointed in the Qutbullapur office in Medchal Malkajgiri district, due to which 144 slots will be available there, he said.

He said the reorganisation of sub-registrar offices is being done keeping in mind the slot booking system, as part of which steps will be taken to equalise the workload by linking the areas of high and low-rush sub-registrar offices. This system was first implemented by merging the jurisdiction of the Champapet– Saroor Nagar Sub-Registrar offices in Rangareddy district, he said.

State facing danger from 'Anumula Intelligence': Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of misusing Artificial Intelligence to manufacture images in the Kanchagachibowli land case and attempting to file false cases. She said that in Telangana AI no longer means Artificial Intelligence but stands for 'Anumula Intelligence,' referring to the CM's surname, and claimed that 'Anumula Intelligence' is creating havoc in the state.

Kavitha warned that Telangana is facing a grave danger not from technology, but from the deceit and destruction driven by 'Anumula Intelligence.' "This intelligence is misleading people and pushing aside real issues like the caste census. Unless Anumula Intelligence is neutralised, the state cannot heal," she said.

Participating in a hunger strike at Indira Park demanding the installation of a statue of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on Assembly premises, Kavitha said the Congress government must announce its decision on this by April 11.

Thousands of BCs participated in the protest organised by the Telangana Jagruthi and 6the United Phule Front.

Guvs cannot sit ...

Continued from page 1

roadblock law-making machinery in the state," it said. The bench also said it is fixing a timeline of one to three months for the governors to decide the fate of bills cleared by the state assemblies, keeping in mind the constitutional significance of Article 200 and the role it plays in the federal polity of the country.

"Failure to comply with this timeline would make the inaction of the governors subject to judicial review by the courts," the bench cautioned.

"In case of either withholding of assent or reservation of the bills for the consideration of the president upon the aid and advice of the state council of ministers, the governor is expected to take such action forthwith subject to a maximum period of one month," the bench said.

The top court said that in case of withholding of assent, contrary to the advice of the state council of ministers, the governor must return the bills together with a message within a maximum period of three months. It said in case of reservation of bills for the consideration of the president, contrary to the advice of the state council of ministers, the governor shall make such reservation within a maximum period of three months.

"In case of presentation of bills after reconsideration in accordance with the first proviso (of Article 200), the governor must grant assent forthwith subject to a maximum period of one month," it said.

The use of the expression "as soon as possible" makes it clear that the Constitution infuses a sense of urgency upon the governor and expects him to act in expediency, the bench noted.

"If he decides to declare withholding of assent, the settled position of law is that when no time limit for the exercise of power is prescribed, the same must be exercised in a reasonable time period," it said.

The verdict holds importance as several opposition-ruled states such as Kerala, Punjab, Telangana and West Bengal have approached the apex court against delay in giving assent by governors to bills passed by the respective state assemblies.

Brahma Kumaris head ...

Continued from page 1

"The mind is deeply saddened to hear the news of the demise of Rajyogini Dadi Ratanmohini, the head of Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya. Her departure to heaven is an irreparable loss to the spiritual world," Chief Minister Sharma wrote on X.

"Dadi Ratanmohini Ji attained her angelic stage and left her mortal coil on 8th April 2025. She was 101 years old," Brahma Kumaris said in a statement. "As the administrative head of Brahma Kumaris, her life was a testament to divine dedication ... Dadiji's journey reflected a century of unwavering commitment to spreading peace, love and enlightenment," it stated. She will be cremated on April 10.

'Revanth is a...

Continued from page 1

the TDP and the BRS. That's why our year-long celebrations are not just symbolic but historic," he said.

"Investor confidence has declined due to the negative politics and policies of the Congress admin. The negative decisions are the airport, Pharma City, HYDRAA and the Musi demolitions. Targeting former sarpanchs and KCR is negative politics," KTR said.

He clarified that permission for the March 28 rally was sought from the police, and a personal representation was made to the DGP.

TG HC upholds ...

Continued from page 1

The first blast took place at a bus stop and the second near an eatery (A1 Mirchi Centre) in Dilsukhnagar.

A prosecution lawyer told reporters at the high court that the NIA took over investigation of the case as terrorist activity is involved, though it was initially probed by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the city police.

The prime accused Riyaz Bhatkal is hiding in Pakistan, he said.

The special court for NIA cases here awarded capital punishment to five convicts treating it as a rarest of the rare case, he said.

The high court, after conducting a detailed hearing in the appeals filed by the convicts, confirmed the death sentence of the five IM operatives, he said.

The NIA had filed a 4,000-page chargesheet.

Hailing the confirmation of the death sentence for the convicts, victims of the bomb blasts and local citizens distributed sweets at the eatery in Dilsukhnagar where the blast occurred.

"Instead of feeding them with public money, the convicts should be hung without delay," said Pandu, the owner of the eatery where the blast took place, speaking to media.

Noting that some of the blast victims even lost their limbs, he urged the government to provide financial assistance to all those who sustained injuries.

He recalled feeling terrified when the explosion happened, with pools of blood visible at the site. Around 10 to 12 people died on the spot.

Meanwhile, Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy welcomed the High Court verdict upholding the death penalty for the convicts.

"The High Court's confirmation of the death sentence makes it clear once again that violence has no place in a democracy," said Reddy, who is also the president of the BJP in Telangana.

He said justice has finally been served for the victims who have been haunted by the terror incident for the past 12 years and added that the BJP would continue to stand by them. Asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has "adopted a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism", Reddy claimed that the BJP's 11 years in power at the Centre have largely "remained free of major terror attacks".

He added that all political parties must remember not to "encourage appeasement politics" in a democracy.

The Union Minister also appreciated the police personnel who investigated the Dilsukhnagar blasts case.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	
Dwadasi:	Apr 08 09:13 PM to Apr 09 10:55 PM
Thrayodasi:	Apr 09 10:55 PM to Apr 11 01:00 AM
Nakshatram:	
Magha:	Apr 08 07:55 AM to Apr 09 09:57 AM
Purva Phalguni:	Apr 09 09:57 AM to Apr 10 12:24 PM
Rahukalam:	12:17 PM to 1:50 PM
Yamagandam:	7:40 AM to 9:12 AM
Varjyam:	06:46 PM to 08:32 PM
Gulika:	10:45 AM to 12:17 PM
Amritakalam:	07:35 AM to 09:19 AM, 05:20 AM to 07:06 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	Nil

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 36°c
Humidity: 53%
Sunrise: 6:05 AM
Sunset: 6:31 PM

Updated: April 8, 2025 5:00 PM

'Our Sardar': Congress ...

Continued from page 1

in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said after the meeting.

"The ideology of make-believe confrontation and mischievously professed division had led to the spreading of a deliberate web of lies of conflict between Sardar Patel and Pandit (Jawaharlal) Nehru. In reality, it was an attack on the very ethos of our freedom struggle and the inseparable leadership of Gandhi-Nehru-Patel," the resolution further said.

Therefore, "once again, the Congress is determined to emulate the resoluteness of 'Iron Man' Sardar Patel by fighting the frenzy of religious polarization," the resolution said.

"The cobweb of deceit and deception couldn't sustain, for Sardar Patel himself wrote to Pandit Nehru on 3 August 1947 and unequivocally stated, 'Our attachment and affection for each other and our comradeship for an unbroken period of nearly 30 years admit of no formalities... Our combination is unbreakable and therein lies our strength'," the resolution said.

Today, the forces of animosity and division seek to undermine this very spirit of camaraderie and bonhomie, said the resolution.

"Therefore, once again, Congress is determined to follow the life principles of Sardar Patel to defeat the forces of animosity and division, as also exposing the fake news factory of these elements," the resolution said.

Briefing reporters after the extended Congress Working Committee meeting at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Memorial here, Ramesh said the session is significant as it comes at a time when the country is celebrating the 150th birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabh Patel.

"It was our duty to hold the CWC meeting at the Sardar Patel National Memorial and we are giving a message to national politics. The first line in the Constitution's Preamble talks about social, political and economic justice and the resolutions will reflect the Congress agenda related to that," he said.

Ramesh said the Working Committee meeting being held in Gujarat sends a strong message.

"The resolution makes it clear the relationship Patel and Nehru shared. There was a unique 'jugalbandi'. They were builders of modern India who fought for the independence of the country and laid the foundations of modern India. Those who say Nehru and Patel had strained ties are lying, speaking untruths and misleading people," he said.

"This is wrong propaganda. The truth is that in shaping the Constitution, in laying the foundation of modern India, and in the Indian freedom struggle, Vallabhbhai Patel ji and Nehru ji had a unique bond and this jugalbandi was beneficial for the country," Ramesh said.

He also said that the way farmers and their organisations are being treated and their demands related to MSP legal guarantee are being ignored is an "insult of Patel".

Earlier, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accused the BJP and RSS of trying to usurp Patel's legacy under a "well-planned conspiracy" against national heroes and said it is laughable as the Sangh Parivar had "no contribution" to the freedom struggle.

He alleged that the BJP and RSS conspired to show that Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were against each other even though the two leaders enjoyed cordial ties and were "two sides of the same coin".

He said that Patel's ideology was contrary to the ideas of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and he had even banned the organisation.

"But it is laughable that today the people of that organisation claim Sardar Patel's legacy," Kharge said attacking the BJP and RSS, which have often maintained that the Congress did not give Patel the respect he deserved.

In the resolution on Patel, the party said the inspiration for the battle of ideologies is Sardar Patel and the foundation lies in the thought process of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

"Drawing Inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel stepped into the thick of the freedom movement in the year 1918 by leading the farmers' agitation in Kheda, Gujarat against the tax extortion by the British

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City Pioneer

The Pioneer

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | APRIL 9, 2025

03



CITY EVENTS

Golden Leader Awards 2025

Leadbiz Legacy Awards

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi
April 9, (12:30 pm)

Be Zubani Se Zuban tak

Urdu Shayerat Ka Fikri Safar: Speech Ameena Tahseen

Venue

Lamakaan
April 9, (6 pm)

The Color Of Paradise

Farsi movie with English subtitles

Venue

Lamakaan
April 9, (7:30 pm)

HYDRAA CHIEF WARNS COMPANY OF ACTION

Ramky uses cremation ground as garbage dump

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ramky company is alleged to have encroached a Hindu cremation ground located near the Motukulakunta lake in Machabollaram, Alwal mandal.

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath has visited the Hindu cremation ground and said that the company has been instructed to immediately stop the ongoing constructions.

The visit came after the Machabollaram Residents' Welfare Association Joint Action Committee filed a complaint with HYDRAA, alleging that the Ramky company had encroached the cremation ground and was using it as a garbage dumping yard, leading to severe foul smell in the surrounding areas.

Out of a total of 15.19 acres in Survey Number 199 allocated for the Hindu cremation ground, Ramky was allegedly dumping waste and undertaking unauthorised constructions, which the Commissioner inspected during his site visit on Tuesday. A Large number of local residents participated in the Commissioner's visit. Many women came forward to explain the issues in detail.



HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath visits Hindu cremation ground located near Motukulakunta lake in Machabollaram

Commissioner Ranganath addressed the media when local MP Etela Rajender, MLA Rajasekhar Reddy and former MLA Mynampally Hanumantha Rao had all raised complaints about this issue.

In response, Minister Sridhar Babu instructed HYDRAA Commissioner and GHMC Commissioner Ilambarathi to look into the matter and find a solution.

He said it came to their notice that Ramky was officially allocated only two acres, but complaints were received that the company was illegally occupying and constructing on 3 to 4 acres of government land.

These complaints were examined during the visit.

The Commissioner stated that Ramky has been instructed to immediately halt all construction. He assured that the government land will be protected from encroachment. He also acknowledged the problems caused by operating a garbage dumping yard in a residential area.

GHMC reviews land acquisition for H-CITI and SRDP Projects

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a high-level review meeting held on Tuesday, senior officials from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) discussed the progress of land acquisition for key infrastructure projects under the H-CITI (Hyderabad Comprehensive Integrated Traffic Infrastructure) initiative and ongoing Strategic Road Development Programme (SRDP) works.

The meeting, chaired by S Bhaskar Reddy, Chief Engineer (Projects), and K Siva Kumar Naidu, Additional Commissioner (Land Acquisition), brought together officials from town planning, land acquisition and project departments.

All Superintending Engineers of Projects and Zonal City Planners also participated to ensure inter-departmental coordination and address bottlenecks.

The H-CITI Project, with an estimated cost of Rs 7,032 crore aims to decongest city roads and enhance traffic flow through a series of infrastructure developments.

With several projects in various preparatory stages, the focus remains on securing encumbrance-free sites to speed up execution.

Officials also reviewed the land acquisition status of major SRDP projects, including: Shilpa Layout Phase-2 Flyover, Nalgonda X Road Flyover, Aaramgarh Flyover (Ramp) and Shastripuram Road Under Bridge (RUB).



The officials of GHMC discuss about H-CITI Project in a review meeting



RS 2,752 CR RELEASED IN 1 YR BY GOVT

We are committed to GHMC's development, says Mayor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi stated that the State government has set a historic record in allocating funds to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). For the 2024-25 financial year, the State government allocated approximately Rs 6,045 crore to the GHMC, of which Rs 2,752 crore has already been released.

Out of the Rs 2,965.61 crore allocated in the budget, Rs 1,552.52 crore has been released so far. Additionally, Rs 1,150 crore has been released from stamp duty collections and Rs 49.36 crore through State Finance Commission grants.

In comparison, the previous government released only Rs 3,652 crore over a ten-year span (2014-2023). This included Rs 1,415.39 crore from the State Finance Commission, Rs 1,776.53 crore from stamp duty, and a mere Rs 460.79 crore from budget allocations. The current government's release of higher funds in just one year, compared to the entire decade under the previous government, is a significant indicator of its commitment to GHMC's development, she noted.

Mayor Vijayalakshmi said that the fund allocations and disbursements would substantially support city infrastructure, traffic management, various development projects, cleanliness and public safety. She stated that the Praja Palana government's allocation of the necessary resources to transform Hyderabad into a global city stands as clear evidence of its dedication.

TG CM and Guv mourn death of Brahma Kumaris chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Rajyogini Dadi Ratan Mohini, the chief administrative head of Brahma Kumaris, who passed away at the age of 101.

In his condolence message, Revanth Reddy said Dadi Ratan Mohini led a life of inspiration, embodying spiritual strength, purity and universal brotherhood. He described her as a towering symbol of Indian spiritual traditions who spread the message of peace and human values in over 140 countries. "Her life stands as a guiding light for all.

Her absence is an irreparable loss to the State, the country, and the world of spirituality," the Chief Minister said, praying for peace to her soul.

Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, in a statement issued from Raj Bhavan, recalled her as a luminous guide and a source of solace to countless people around the world. "Her serene presence, compassionate heart and unwavering commitment to higher ideals uplifted and transformed innumerable lives," the Governor said.

He added that her demise marks an immense loss to the realm of spiritual service and that her legacy would remain a guiding star for generations. Conveying his condolences to the Brahma Kumaris family and followers worldwide, the Governor hoped that her divine mission would stay alive in the hearts of all spiritual seekers.



C V Anand, Director General and Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad City, in a virtual meeting on Tuesday

Security arrangements for Veera Hanuman Vijaya Yatra reviewed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CV Anand, Director General and Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad City, held a video conference on Tuesday with officials to review security arrangements for the upcoming Veera Hanuman Vijaya Yatra on April 12, 2025.

During the meeting, Anand reviewed the incidents from last year's yatra and examined the proposed security plans in detail. He stressed the need for tight security to ensure a peaceful event.

Anand asked police to increase surveillance at points where smaller processions may join the main route. More special forces will be placed in sensitive areas, especially near religious places.

SHOs have been directed to check the Yatra route from Ram Mandir (Gauliguda) to Tad Bund Hanuman temple and report any issues.

Organizers will be advised not to use DJ systems during the event, as loud music could affect public health. Firecrackers, throwing gulal, or any unsafe behavior during the procession is not allowed. Participants are urged to stay calm, especially on their return journey.

The display of provocative banners and the use of too many vehicles are restricted. Only limited vehicles are allowed to prevent disruption.

Drone cameras are banned without prior permission. People are advised not to spread or believe fake messages on social media. The police will also focus on preventing petty crimes like pickpocketing and chain-snatching during the event.

Vikram Singh Mann Additional Commissioner of Police, Law and Order; S Chaitanya Kumar Deputy Commissioner of Police Special Branch; Pushpa Deputy Commissioner of Police, IT Cell along with Zonal DCPs, Inspectors, ACPs, and other officers participated.

TG to introduce coding in all 238 gurukuls from 2025-26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a landmark move to integrate digital skills into mainstream education, the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) has announced that coding education will be introduced in all 238 gurukul schools across the state from the upcoming 2025-26 academic year. This expansion follows the success of a pilot programme held at the Moinabad Gurukul school last year.

The initiative will be implemented in collaboration with the Raspberry Pi Foundation (RPF), UK, under a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). As per the agreement, RPF will support curriculum design, action plan execution, and teaching methodologies, ensuring alignment with international standards.

Speaking about the programme, Dr VS Alagu Varshini, Secretary of TGSWREIS, said, "Our goal is to equip students with future-ready skills. Coding, AI, and machine learning are not just add-ons - they're the new literacy. Through this initiative, we are creating a generation of confident, tech-savvy thinkers."

Starting from Class 6 up to Intermediate, students will receive structured training in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Robotics, and Online Tools. Each week will feature two hours of classroom instruction and two hours of hands-on project work. Specially designed textbooks, created with RPF input, will follow a global curriculum to ensure quality education.

To ensure effective rollout, each Gurukul school will have five coding mentors, selected and trained through a rigorous process.

In total, 1,190 students will be trained as peer mentors, guiding more than 89,000 fellow students across the State. Additionally, Coding Clubs have been formed in every school, and each zone will have a boys' and girls' Coding Spoke School acting as resource centres.

These hubs will be manned by 42 trained coding instructors deployed across seven zones.

The programme will also provide select students the opportunity to work on real-world projects.

AI REVOLUTION IN TB DETECTION

KIMS study shows 88.7% sensitivity rate in adults

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant stride toward transforming medical diagnostics, KIMS Hospital, Minister Road, has unveiled the results of its largest-ever study using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) detection. The retrospective analysis involved 16,675 chest X-rays (CXRs) of adult patients, examined through the AI tool qXR, without direct input from clinicians.

The study set out to evaluate the diagnostic accuracy of AI in TB screening and measure how closely the AI's findings matched with those of experienced radiologists.

The results are promising that the AI tool achieved a sensitivity rate of 88.7 per cent, meaning it could accurately detect TB-positive cases in nearly nine out of ten patients. Additionally, the tool demonstrated a Negative Predictive Value (NPV) of 97 per cent, effectively ruling out non-TB cases with high confidence.

While the specificity - the ability to correctly identify TB-negative cases - stood at 69.1 per cent, it remains within the acceptable threshold for preliminary screening, as outlined by World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

Dr Latha Sarma, Head of Department and Senior Consultant Pulmonologist at KIMS Hospitals, highlighted the implications of the findings: "The ability of AI to assist in TB detection with such high accuracy is a game-changer, especially in resource-limited settings where expert radiologists may not always be available."

The study also found a high level of agreement between the AI outputs and interpretations made by radiologists, reinforcing the tool's potential to support clinical workflows.

Dr Chaithanya Isamalla, Senior Consultant Radiologist at KIMS, added, "While AI does not replace human expertise, it serves as a highly reliable tool for preliminary screenings, allowing clinicians to focus on complex cases requiring deeper evaluation."

West and South TG see scattered storms: IMD issues Yellow Alert

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

West and South Telangana saw intense scattered storms on Tuesday evening. The rain spread across parts of Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Khammam and Mahabubabad. According to Telangana weatherman, the rainfall was caused by a low-pressure system leading to strong moisture convergence.

While Hyderabad experienced cool, strong winds on Monday night, the weather remained dry and hot on Tuesday.

IMD Hyderabad has issued a Yellow Alert until April 10 for thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 km/ph. The rainfall is likely at isolated places in the districts of Mulugu, Bhadradri Kotha gudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Vikarabad, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet and Jogulamba Gadwal.

IIT Hyd and GSL sign MoU to improve shipbuilding using AI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad's IIT-H Centre for Geospatial AI and Digital Twins (CGDT) and Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to improve shipbuilding using artificial intelligence (AI) and digital twin technologies.

This important partnership, also involving Neer Interactive Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and Andhra Mahila Sabha (AMS) Arts and Science College, will use CGDT's expertise to make maritime operations more efficient, secure and eco-friendly.

The collaboration aims to boost innovation in shipbuilding by improving vessel design, increasing shipyard safety, and introducing advanced 360-degree surveillance using Geospatial AI and object detection AI. With the help of generative AI and digital twins, the project hopes to raise the standards of shipbuilding in India to a global level.

IIT-Hyderabad Director, Prof. BS Murty said that CGDT-IIT Hyderabad, along with Neer Interactive and AMS College, is building a complete Geospatial AI system focused on full-range maritime security. He added that this was the first project of its kind not just in India, but in all of Asia.



IIT-H Director Prof. BS Murty exchanging the MoU with the representative of Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) on Tuesday

Woman attempting suicide in Hussain Sagar rescued

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 36-year-old woman who attempted suicide by jumping into Hussain Sagar Lake was rescued by the Disaster Response Force (DRF) team of HYDRAA on Tuesday.

The woman, identified as Merry, a resident of Rajiv Gandhi Colony in Balanagar and wife of Srinivas, reportedly took the extreme step due to family disputes.

Alert locals who witnessed the incident immediately informed the HYDRAA control room.

Acting swiftly, the DRF team reached the spot and rescued the woman using safety ropes. She was later handed over to her family members.



HYDRAA DRF teams with the woman at Hussain Sagar

AIDSA pushes for dental depts in all govt medical colleges

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

The All India Dental Students and Surgeons Association (AIDSA) submitted a formal appeal to the Director of Medical Education, Government of Telangana, urging the immediate appointment of qualified dental professionals in all government medical colleges across the State.

In Telangana currently, Osmania Medical College, Gandhi Medical College and Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences have a Dental Department. However, this pushes the burden and daily 400-500 outpatient surge is recorded in the OGH and patients get appointment weekly once.

In the representation on Tuesday, AIDSA cited the need for establishing functional dental units in line with the Gazette of India notifications issued on July 3, 2015, and March 10, 2017, and as per staffing norms laid out by the National Medical Commission (NMC).



The Dental Doctors and Surgeons with their representation at the DME office

According to NMC guidelines, every medical college with 100 MBBS student intake must have a dedicated Department of Dentistry comprising: one Professor, one Associate Professor, one Assistant Professor, one Junior Resident and four Dental Technicians.

For institutions with a higher intake of 250 MBBS students, the number of dental faculty and support staff should be proportionally increased to maintain educational and healthcare quality, said the surgeons.

Currently, Telangana has 38 government medical colleges. AIDSA National President Dr MD Manzur Ahmed added that establishing dental departments in these colleges would not only ensure compliance with national standards but also enhance interdisciplinary education and access to oral healthcare, particularly in rural areas where people lack access to government dental treatment.

He added, "Integrating dental units will help future doctors identify and refer to oral health issues effectively. Moreover, these departments can address local oral healthcare needs, contributing to equitable and accessible healthcare."

Highlighting the employment impact, Dr Ahmed noted that Telangana has 14 dental colleges producing 1,400 graduates annually. A new Government Order could potentially create jobs for 200 dental doctors, benefitting the public and the professional community alike.



A three-year-old boy, who was injured in a knife attack, is being provided treatment at the government hospital in Sircilla on Tuesday

Three, including three-year-old boy, injured in knife attack

PNS ■ SIRCILLA

Three individuals, including a three-year-old boy, were injured in a knife attack here on Tuesday evening.

The injured were Kalikota Venkatesh, his wife Angela, and their three-year-old son Shivanetra. They are residents of Shanti Nagar here.

Venkatesh alleges that his elder brother's son, Prithvi, along with another person Sai and two other unidentified miscreants, attacked them with knives. Venkatesh and Angel were indiscriminately attacked with a knife.

Three-year-old Shivanetra was stabbed in the stomach, causing his intestines to come out. Local people rushed injured to the hospital on a two-wheeler. The miscreants stabbed the three-year-old boy Shivanetra too. Shivanetra's condition is stated to be critical, Angel has serious injuries, and Venkatesh has minor injuries.

Seven doctors came together to provide treatment at the government hospital.

Venkatesh told the media that a police complaint was previously filed against Prithvi, but was ignored.

Parched throats in Kamareddy town

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The heat beats down on Kamareddy. The water level in wells, ponds and drinking water sources has hit its nadir. The spectre of a tough time ahead looms large.

Due to a shortage of drinking water, people from several colonies and merged villages are struggling. Every summer, when the season arrives, water scarcity rears its ugly head. With groundwater levels depleting and borewells running dry, along with the unavailability of Godavari water, the residents of this town are forced to engage in a battle for water. What is the real cause of the water shortage in Kamareddy? Why are the authorities unable to quench the people's thirst? What is the permanent solution to address water scarcity?

Among the growing towns, Kamareddy is one of them. While the town is expanding rapidly, the living standards of the people are not improving. Particularly, when summer arrives, severe drinking water shortages arise in certain areas of the town. This year, the water crisis has worsened earlier than expected. The people are depending on water tankers to quench their thirst. Hence, water tankers have become a common sight in the town now.



People waiting for a water tanker in Kamareddy

Water scarcity has started in areas such as Vinayak Nagar, Kakatiya Nagar, NGO Colony, Vivekananda Colony, Srinivasa Nagar Colony, Indira Nagar Colony, and the seven merged villages. Now, water barrels are seen in front of every house in these areas. The Municipality has set up these barrels to collect water supplied by the water tankers. People have started waiting for the tankers to arrive, often abandoning their work. However, there is uncertainty about when the tankers will arrive, leading to disputes between the residents over who will get the water first. Some residents have attempted to dig their borewells, but they are finding little or no water even after drilling up to 1,500 feet deep, expressing their frustration.

When summer arrives, water scarcity has become a common issue, but this year, it has already intensified.

Kamareddy town has a population of over 1.5 lakh, with more than 30,000 families. The town requires 18.23 MLD of water daily, but only 10.59 MLD is being supplied. As a result, people in some colonies are struggling with extreme water scarcity.

Drinking water is supplied only twice a week through the pipeline system. To meet the remaining deficit, the Kamareddy Municipality relies on water tankers. Ten tankers make around 50 to 70 trips daily to supply water. The municipality is also attempting to provide water through borewells installed by it, and whenever information is provided to the service centre, tankers are dispatched. However, even this is insufficient, leading to further frustration among the residents.

To address the drinking water shortage in Kamareddy, the Congress government in 2004 made large-scale plans. They took measures to bring Godavari water from the SRSP (Sriramsagar Project) to Kamareddy to solve the water crisis. A 110-kilometer-long pipeline was laid and a large pump house was built. However, the leakage in the pipelines and delays in repair work have led to water shortages.

The people of the town say that if the repair work is completed before the summer season starts, the water crisis could be averted. Additionally, if the works under the AMRUT scheme, approved by the central government, are completed, it may be possible to prevent water shortages.



A large number of monkeys clashing at Yellandu village in the Warangal district on Tuesday

Hundreds of monkeys clash at Yellandu village

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The brawl is not among humans but between two factions of monkeys. The fight was between two factions of monkeys. The clash was so intense that blood was spilled on the streets.

A scuffle broke out between two groups of monkeys in the Yellanda village under Wardhannapet mandal in Warangal district.

The CCTV footage showed that the two opposing sets of monkeys clashing in a street, possibly over territory.

The clash between two gangs of monkeys, one group of animals claimed that they were residents of Yellandu village and another outsiders, they fought bitterly with each other. It was so intense that blood was shed. As hundreds of monkey descended on the village, it created panic among people. They fought with each other so fiercely that the people scrambled to safety away from fight. They monkeys too, like dogs, seemed to have exhibited territorial behavior as a natural instinct.

Kadiam dares opponents to prove charges against him

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

In a rebuttal to accusations leveled against him, Station Ghanpur Congress MLA Kadiam Srihari has strongly denied claims of corruption and land encroachment made by MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and former MLA Tatikonda Rajaiah. Addressing the media at a Congress Party office in Hanamkonda on Monday, Srihari dismissed the allegations as false and malicious, challenging his accusers to prove their charges.



Srihari offered to resign from his MLA position if they could substantiate their claims and even dared them to produce evidence before the public. He went a step further, offering to work as a servant in their homes if the allegations were proven true.

The allegations against him centered around claims of encroaching on Devnoor lands, which Srihari vehemently denied. He accused the BRS MLA and former MLA of attempting to assassinate his character by spreading unfounded accusations. In his defense, he maintained that he had always worked towards protecting lands from encroachment, not engaging in any illegal activity.

Srihari demanded that his opponents, along with any media outlets or individuals in possession of evidence, make it public. He reiterated that, after a 30-year political career, he had never been involved in land encroachment and dared his accusers to demonstrate any evidence to the contrary. If the charges were proven true, he pledged to resign from his position; otherwise, he would take legal action.

15 passengers injured as RTC bus overturns

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

On Monday early morning the TGSRTC Lahari non- air-conditioned sleeper-cum-seater bus overturned near Chinthagattu Outer Ring Road Bridge at Hanamkonda.

In the incident, almost 15 passengers suffered injuries.

According to preliminary reports, the police said, the bus was en route from Ongole to Adilabad when the accident took place.

The bus driver lost control of the vehicle as the bus was going at high speed, causing it to overturn.

The police further said that the injured passengers were immediate shifted to nearby hospital for treatment.

Several passengers are reported to be in critical condition. The police have registered a case and an investigation is ongoing to know the exact cause of the accident.

Preliminary findings suggest speeding or driver fatigue may lead to the accident.



TGSRTC Lahari Bus which tuned turtle at Chinthagattu in Hanamkonda district on Tuesday

As we know in recent times the Warangal ORR has witnessed many road accidents, this bus accident has raised concerns once again about road safety measures and strict enforcement of transport regulations in Telangana. Meanwhile the authorities are expected to conduct a thorough inspection of the bus operator's safety standards.

Girl kidnapped in Nizamabad city

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

A girl was kidnapped in the limits of the One Town Police Station in Nizamabad city.

According to a complaint lodged with the police, Kotappa from Nagaram area had been begging in Gandhi Chowk with her three-year-old granddaughter Ramya by her side.

At 8 pm on Sunday night, while she was taking a nap, an unknown person came and kidnapped the girl. When she was woken up, her granddaughter was nowhere to be found.

She searched the surroundings but could not find her. The girl's mother Sirisha filed a complaint with the One Town police, following which the police registered a case and are investigating.

The CCTV camera footage showed that the girl was being taken by a strager.



CCTV footage showing miscreant taking away the girl in Nizmabad on Sunday night

The police are investigating whether the family disputes led to the incident or a miscreant took away the girl.

Class 9 student attempts suicide after alleged harassment

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

A class 9 student of Kasturba Gandhi School attempted suicide, alleging harassment by her teacher at school. She tried to cut her hand with a paring knife. The student claimed that the teacher had developed a grudge against her because she was on good terms with other teachers, and this led to harassment. Unable to bear the teacher's harassment, the student said she became mentally distressed and attempted suicide.



Yamini, daughter of Dhanunjaya from Antarim village in Nagar Kurnool district, is studying in the Class 9 at Kasturba Gandhi School. However, for the past few days, she had allegedly been facing harassment from her English teacher. On April 6, Yamini arrived late for study hour and the teacher punished her by making her stand for three hours without even allowing her to drink water or use the restroom, the student alleged.

After the study hour ended, Yamini attempted suicide by cutting her hand with a knife in the hostel. Fellow students noticed and immediately informed the hostel warden. She was rushed to the hospital and treated. Yamini revealed that she had decided to commit suicide due to the harassment from the English teacher. "The teacher is creating problems without understanding anything. She blow small issues out of proportion and causes trouble in various ways. I couldn't tell my parents about this, so I decided to end my life," the student said.

The teacher, however, denied the allegations.

Yamini's father, Dhanunjaya, filed a complaint with the authorities, demanding action against the teacher who harassed their daughter. Student organizations have also called for action against the teacher.

The MEO has initiated an investigation into the incident.

IKP official in ACB trap

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials arrested Jammikunta Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) community coordinator, Suresh, on Tuesday for allegedly accepting a bribe from one of his subordinates.

According to ACB officials, Suresh had demanded a bribe of Rs 10,000 to clear the salary of the employee. Unwilling to pay the bribe, the employee reported the matter to the ACB, who subsequently caught Suresh red-handed while accepting the money.



Suresh



Hanamkonda District Collector P Pravinya inspecting the construction work of Indiramma houses in Pembarthi village Hanamkonda district on Tuesday

Officials told to speed up construction of Indiramma houses

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

Hanamkonda District Collector P Pravinya stated that the construction work for the approved Indiramma houses should proceed vigorously. On Tuesday, the District Collector inspected the distribution of fine rice and the progress of the construction work of Indiramma houses at Pembarthi village under Hasanparti Mandal, Hanumkonda district.

The Collector personally inspected the Indiramma houses under construction in the village along with officials. On the occasion, the Collector spoke with the beneficiaries who are undertaking the construction of the houses and inquired about the details. Subsequently, the Collector stated that efforts should be made to complete the construction of the Indiramma houses speedily.

The Collector suggested that since payments would be made to the beneficiaries in stages related to the construction work, they should expedite the completion of the construction.

The Collector advised officials to submit records for the payment of bills related to the houses for which the basement construction has been completed.

Later, the Collector visited the fair price shop in the same village and inquired about how many beneficiaries received fine rice so far and how many more beneficiaries still need to receive it.

She suggested that fine rice should be distributed to every beneficiary.

The Collector was accompanied by District Housing Department officer Ravinder, local Tahsildar Challa Prasad, in-charge MPDO Karunakara Reddy, along with other officials and locals participated.

Maoists admit to planting bombs at Karegutta

PNS ■ MULUGU

The outlawed Communist Party of India- Maoists, better known as the Maoist Party, on Tuesday, cautioned people not to venture into Karregutta on the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border as bombs were planted there.

A statement by the Maoists Party's Vajedu-Venkatapuram area committee said that the bombs were planted to keep the security forces at bay. The statement, which was released in the name of Shanta, said the security forces launched an attack under Operation Kagar. "To protect ourselves, bombs were planted at Karregutta," it said.

The bombs planted by the Maoists for their protection are causing deaths and injuries to some people who step on them. The Maoists said that the police were offering money to lure the people into their fold and using them as informers.

Excise officials crack down on 'adulterated' toddy in Kamareddy

In all 62 people take ill after consuming toddy at various shops in the district on Monday. The condition of some of the patients is stated to be critical

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Officials of the Prohibition and Excise Department have launched an investigation into the alleged contaminated toddy incident in the district. As many as 62 people took ill after consuming the allegedly contaminated today at various shops in the district on Sunday and Monday.

In various villages of Kamareddy district, 62 people fell ill after consuming an alleged adulterated liquor. The locals immediately rushed all of them to the Banswada Hospital, where the condition of some was stated to be critical.

People from villages in Nasrullabad mandal, including Ankul Tanda, Durga Sangham, and Birkoor mandal, as well as labourers like Bande Boyi Raju, Parvayya, Gaini, Gangaram, Seetha, and Kashi Gangaram, fell ill. As usual, they consumed liquor from local shops in their villages. However, after returning home, they started experiencing severe symptoms of illness. Some of them even suffered seizures.



Officials of the Prohibition and Excise interviewing patients who fell ill after consuming "adulterated' toddy in Kamareddy district on Monday

They were quickly transported to the Banswada Area Hospital. After conducting medical tests, doctors confirmed that the ill effects were caused by the consumption of adulterated liquor. Ten of the victims, whose condition was critical, were transferred to the District Hospital (GH) in Nizamabad for further treatment.

Among them, the condition of Ravi Madhu Kumar from Ankul village is stated to be critical.

The Excise Police have registered a case and are investigating the incident. They are examining the possible reasons behind the adulteration, such as whether poisonous chemicals were used in the liquor production or if there were any other factors involved.

Sub-Collector Kiranmayi K visited the hospital to review the condition of the patients and gather more details.

The Excise Circle Inspector Yadireddy also inspected the liquor shop in Ankul village, where the liquor was sold. Samples of the liquor were taken and sent to the lab for testing to determine whether any intoxicating substances or harmful chemicals were used in the adulteration. The adulterated liquor was destroyed, and a thorough investigation is underway.

NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
CIN No.U40109TG2000SGC034119

Tender Notice No. 01/2025-26 with Specification No. 110 to 113 of SE/OP/BKGM
Sealed Tenders are invited from TGNPDCL registered contractors of Bhadradri Kothagudem District for carrying-out of erection of 33KV interlinking line for providing of alternate supply to 33/11 KV Sub-Station |Old Kothagudem & Civil works of renovation & modernization of existing 33/11KV Sub-Stations in Bhadradri Kothagudem Circle. The details of works and other information can be obtained from our website **www.tgnpdcl.in**
Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
Operation Circle, TGNPDCL, Bhadradri Kothagudem.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 14/2025-26 OF SE/OP/JANGAON WITH SPECIFICATION Nos. 01/ 2025-26.
The sealed tenders are invited by the undersigned from the registered and valid contractors of TGNPDCL for various works in Operation circle Jangaon as per terms and conditions prescribed in detailed tender schedule. The details such as cost of tender schedule, date of sale of tender schedule, eligibility criteria etc. can be had from TGNPDCL website **www.tgnpdcl.in.**
Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
Operation Circle, Jangaon.

Short Tender Notice No. 01/2025-26 of SE/OP/ASIFABAD Specification Nos. 01/2025-26 of SE/OP/ASIFABAD
Sealed Tenders are invited by the TGNPDCL registered contractors of KB Asifabad District for electrical work in details of the works and other information can he obtained from our website **www.tgnpdcl.in.** **Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Operation Circle, KB, Asifabad**

DIPR R.O. No.: 148-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26, Dt. 08-04-2025

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | APRIL 9, 2025

ACROSS THE STATES



Court releases Medha Patkar on probation

In a reprieve to social activist Medha Patkar, facing a five-month imprisonment, a Delhi court on Tuesday released her on "probation of good conduct" in a defamation case filed by Delhi LG V K Saxena, when he headed an NGO in Gujarat. The court, however, imposed a precondition on 70-year-old Patkar of depositing Rs 1 lakh as fine. Probation is a method of non-institutional treatment of offenders and a conditional suspension of sentence in which the offender, after conviction, is released on bond of good behaviour instead of being sent to prison. Hearing an appeal filed by Patkar against her conviction and sentence in the case filed in 2000, additional sessions judge Vishal Singh said, "Following the doctrine of proportionality of punishment, it is observed that punishment must be commensurate to gravity of offence." In the present case, the court said, the offence was not such that the sentence of imprisonment was warranted.



MP: Five-day police custody for 'fake' cardiologist

A court in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh on Tuesday remanded alleged fake cardiologist, Narendra John Camm, linked to the death of seven patients, to police custody for five days. A day earlier, he was arrested in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. "Chief Judicial Magistrate Sneha Singh remanded Camm to police custody for five days on our request," Public Prosecutor Satish Kapasya told PTI. Police had registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Camm amid allegations that he possesses a bogus medical degree on charges of forgery and dishonest misappropriation on a complaint lodged by Damoh district's Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) MK Jain. Damoh Superintendent of Police (SP) Shrut Kirti Somwanshi had said the accused would be interrogated on questions raised by the CMHO in his complaint. "In the original complaint (submitted to NHRC), there was a mention of the death of seven patients at Mission Hospital.



NHRC seeks reports over issues faced by prisoners

Taking suo motu cognisance of difficulties being faced by prisoners including women inmates in various jails across the country, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to chief secretaries of all the states and Union Territories, seeking reports within four weeks. These problems include overcrowding, lack of basic amenities and healthcare facilities in jails, the NHRC said in a statement. "The issues have been brought to its notice by its Special Monitors and Rapporteurs, through their reports after visiting various jails across the country, as well as the complaints," it said .The Commission said it has issued notices to the chief secretaries of all the states and Union Territories (UTs) seeking a report from them in four weeks, which should include various details.

Dubai Crown Prince's visit paves way for stronger ties: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Dubai Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's "special" visit to India paved the way for a stronger bilateral collaboration, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday after meeting the influential leader from the United Arab Emirates.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also held a separate meeting with the visiting dignitary and later said India is eager to work closely with the Gulf nation in the defence sector, including in co-production and co-development projects.

Both India and the UAE are committed to working towards peace and prosperity in the region, he said.

In a social media post, Modi said Dubai has played a key role in advancing the India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership.

Al Maktoum arrived in the national capital this morning on a two-day India visit. He is travelling to Mumbai after concluding his engagements in Delhi.

"Glad to meet HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai. Dubai has played a key role in advancing the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Modi said.

"This special visit reaffirms our deep-rooted friendship and paves the way for even stronger collaboration in the future," he said.

The India-UAE bilateral ties have been on an upswing in the last few years.

Following the landmark visit of Prime Minister Modi to the UAE in August 2015, bilateral relations between the two countries were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

The bilateral trade and investment ties witnessed a major expansion after the two sides inked a comprehensive economic partnership agreement in 2022.

Defence Minister Singh described his meeting with Al Maktoum as "productive".

"Had a productive meeting with the Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy PM and Minister of Defence of UAE Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in New Delhi. For India, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with the UAE is of immense priority," he said.

"In the coming years, we are eager to work closely in areas such as defence cooperation, co-production and co-development projects, innovation and technology," Singh said.

He also said that both India and the UAE are committed to working towards peace and prosperity in the region.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar too met the Dubai Crown Prince.

"Delighted to welcome Crown Prince of Dubai and DPM and Minister of Defence of UAE HH @HamdanMohamme at the start of his first official visit to India," Jaishankar posted on 'X'.

"Value his positive sentiments for our wide-ranging cooperation and vibrant ties," he added



Committed to modernising maritime education: Sonowal

PNS ■ KOCHI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday said the central government was committed to modernising maritime education in the country to ensure quality manpower, as India forges ahead to become one of the global leaders in shipbuilding and repairs.

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways was speaking after virtually inaugurating 17 development projects across six campuses of the Indian Maritime University (IMU) aimed at upgrading maritime education and infrastructure.

Sonowal said the union government was dedicated to transforming maritime education in India by providing world-class infrastructure and training environments.

"These 17 projects mark a significant step in our mission to strengthen India's maritime education landscape. With modern infrastructure and advanced facilities, we are enabling students to excel and meet global maritime standards," he said.

He noted that in the last 10 years, the number of Indian seafarers has more than doubled to 3.17 lakh, attributing the growth to the priority given to the maritime industry by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Sonowal said the government has set a target for India to become one of the top 10 global leaders in shipbuilding and repairs by 2030 and among the top 5 in the next 25 years.

"India is growing faster under the dynamic leadership of Narendra Modi," he added.

Sonowal also said the Centre was planning to make Kochi a global hub for shipbuilding and repairs.

He laid the foundation stone for a new girls' hostel at IMU Kochi, developed at Rs 13.11 crore, which will significantly improve residential facilities for female maritime students.

Employees can now generate EPFO UAN through face authentication

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Employees subscribing to social security schemes of the retirement fund body EPFO can now generate universal provident fund account number (UAN) and related services through face authentication, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Tuesday.

The minister also announced full notification of six districts of Bihar – Araria, Saharsa, Aurangabad, Banka, East Champaran and Gopalganj -- under Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), which will bring about 24,000 additional insured persons under the ambit of social security schemes of ESIC.

Talking to media persons, the Mandaviya stated that Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced enhanced digital services for UAN allotment and activation using face authentication, marking a significant step towards contactless, secure, and fully digital service delivery for crores of members. He stated that now the employee can directly generate UAN using Aadhaar Face Authentication Technology (FAT) using the Umang Mobile App.

Any Employer can also use the same Umang App to generate UAN using Aadhaar Face Authentication Technology (FAT) for any new employee.

To generate UAN, an employee will have to open the UMANG App and follow steps on UAN Allotment and Activation through Face Authentication. After Aadhaar-based verification, UAN will be generated and sent by SMS to the mobile number mentioned in the Aadhaar database.

After generating UAN, the Employee can download the UAN card from the UMANG App or Member Portal. The advantages of the new process are 100 per cent validation of Aadhaar and user using Face Authentication.

Indians do not want to conquer countries, want to conquer hearts: Murmu

PNS ■ LISBON



Indians do not want to conquer countries but want to conquer hearts, President Droupadi Murmu said while interacting with Indian researchers here on Tuesday.

During an interactive session with Indian researchers at Champalimaud Centre for Unknowns, the president told them to be the best ambassadors of India as they are identified by the name of their country.

"You will excel in education. You will excel in research. You will become a good scholar but you will contribute to the economy and society, and follow rules and regulations here. Move ahead and make India proud," Murmu said in response to a question from a researcher.

The president could not hold back the teacher in herself as she stood up from her seat to respond to every question directed at her by the researchers.

"I had gone to a country where a senior leader asked me if Indians want to conquer the world. I said Indians do not want to conquer countries, they want to conquer hearts," she said.

When asked about the strides of women in India, Murmu said it is in Indian culture to say Sita Ram, Laxmi Narayan and address a gathering as "deviyon (ladies) and sajjano (gentlemen)".

Murmu said she feels proud seeing women medalists, senior women officers, and women leading in various fields.

She said Portugal is a good friend of India, its people are friendly and generous, and the country is endowed with natural beauty.

The president was received at the Champalimaud Centre by Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and President of the Champalimaud Foundation Dr. Leonor Beleza.

In a tour of the facility, both presidents were briefed about the working of a robot delivering medicines from the pharmacy to cancer patients.

Murmu also planted a 'camellia japonica' tree on the campus.

The Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown, designed by Indian Architect Charles Mark Correa, shines as a striking symbol of contemporary architectural elegance.

Correa is credited with some iconic architectural works like the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, the Jawahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur, the Kanchanjunga apartment tower in Mumbai, and the new city "Navi Mumbai".

Congress to have massive organisational reshuffle: Venugopal

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD



The Congress is going to have a "massive organisational reshuffle", AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said on Tuesday as the party's top leaders met here and vowed to embark on the "path of social justice" espoused by Sardar Patel.

Briefing reporters after the extended Congress Working Committee meeting at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Memorial here, Venugopal noted that the Congress has dedicated this year to a complete restructuring of the party organisation and the issue was discussed at length at the meeting.

"We are going to have a massive organisational reshuffle, and there will be guidelines for the same. Our general secretaries and in-charges are on it," he said. Venugopal also stressed that measures to empower the party's district unit chiefs will be rolled out soon.

"We have already decided on that issue, empowering the DCC presidents and duties and powers of the DCCs has been discussed in various forums, already general secretaries and in-charges have approved the proposals and we are going to roll out that proposal in the near future," he said while replying to queries.

Venugopal said the Extended CWC passed a resolution that "our party will walk on the path showed to us by Sardar Patel ji".

"He stood up against the oppression of the British, fighting for the rights of workers and farmers. He rejected communal forces after Bapu's assassination. He fought for an India where everyone had fundamental rights and freedoms.

"Today, as we embark on the path of social justice, our Nyay Path follows the same principles laid down by Sardar Patel," he said.

In his opening address at the meeting, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also asserted the party's claim to Sardar Patel's legacy and accused the BJP and RSS of trying to usurp it under a "well-planned conspiracy" against national heroes.

Kharge stressed that the Congress is taking forward the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Patel.

"Sardar Patel Saheb lives in our hearts, lives in our thoughts. We are taking his legacy forward.

Congress's Ahmedabad meet is a return to the roots

The two-day Congress conclave from April 8 to 9 in Ahmedabad marks a return to its roots for the party. The extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting is on April 8, and the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting is on April 9. The other AICC sessions in Gujarat were the ones held in Haripura near Bardoli in 1938 and in Bhavnagar in 1961.

Two of the tallest Congress leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel, hailed from Gujarat. While the Mahatma led the country to freedom, Sardar Patel unified India.

This is also a memorable time for the Congress and the country. This year marks the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi presiding, the only time, over the AICC session held at Belagavi on December 26 to 27, 1924, and the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution on January 26, 1950.

This AICC session marks 110 years since the Sabarmati Ashram was started in 1915. Gandhiji started the Sabarmati Ashram as a centre for promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, khadi, nai taalim, etc. Along with Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar in 1917 and the Ahmedabad Mill Strike, the Kheda Satyagraha in Gujarat in 1918 heralded the emergence of Gandhiji as the undisputed leader during the freedom struggle.

Convened against such a backdrop, the Congress conclave is an occasion for the party to draw inspiration from the glorious heritage it inherited from Gujarat. The Congress will also ready a roadmap for overcoming its political challenges.

This is also a memorable time for the Congress and the country. This year marks the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi presiding, the only time, over the AICC session held at Belagavi on December 26 to 27, 1924.

The Congress is working on a blueprint to revive the party. The convening of a meeting of DCC Presidents in New Delhi recently is a step in that direction.

Starting with Assembly elections in Bihar later this year, there are Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in 2026, in Punjab, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh in 2027 and in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in 2028. The Congress must regain lost ground in these Assembly elections before the 2029 general election.



GIDUGU RUDRA RAJU

The Congress is proud of the heritage it inherited from Gujarat. Gandhiji established that politics is not all about pursuing power but is service.

This was best exemplified by Sonia Gandhi in our times, by politely declining the post of Prime Minister in 2004. She dedicated her life to the development of the country through the National Advisory Council (NAC) she headed during the tenure of the Congress-led UPA Government from 2004-2014.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge will preside over the extended CWC on April 8 and the AICC session on April 9. Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Congress-ruled state Chief Ministers and party office-bearers will all be present. The decision to hold the AICC session in Gujarat, the land of the Mahatma, was taken at the extended CWC meeting in Belagavi on December 26, 2024.

For the Congress, it is also the home State of Sardar Patel. The Bardoli Satyagraha was a protest against the increased taxes on farmers by the British. It demanded a cancellation of the 22 per cent tax hike. The movement began on February 12, 1928, and it successfully concluded by August. Impressed by his organisational abilities during the Bardoli Satyagraha, Gandhiji bestowed upon Patel the title, Sardar.

At the dawn of Indian Independence on August 15, 1947, the Indian subcontinent comprised not only British-ruled territories but also 562 princely states, each with its ruler and internal autonomy. These States were given the choice to join either India or Pakistan or remain independent. With a combination of diplomacy and force, Sardar Patel achieved the goal of a united India.

The Congress is convinced that there are only two ideologies. It is Gandhi Vaad versus Godse Vaad. Gandhi Vaad of the Congress is opposed by Godse Vaad. It's time for all right-thinking people to stand up and be counted.

(The writer is a special invitee to the CWC and is a former APCC President. The views are personal.)

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Editor's TAKE

Trump tariffs: World economy on the edge

The full impact of Trump's tariffs is yet to be realised, but the outlook is already murky

US President Donald Trump is facing backlash both globally and domestically, but at this point, he appears in no mood to withdraw his reciprocal tariffs. The world economy is already showing signs of wilting.

The high drama began last week when Trump announced a sweeping range of tariffs between 10 per cent and 50 per cent targeting multiple trading partners, including China, the European Union, and Taiwan.

China, the main target of Trump's ire, was hit with a 34 per cent tariff on imports to the US, in addition to a previous 20 per cent duty. Beijing wasted no time in retaliating, slapping a reciprocal 34 per cent tariff on American goods, escalating the tariff war even further.

In a scathing response, China's commerce ministry accused the US of "blackmail" and said it would "fight to the end" if Washington insisted on continuing "down the wrong path." A blistering editorial in Xinhua called the Trump administration's approach "naked extortion," accusing it of turning diplomacy into blunt coercion. Chinese officials have also strategically leaned into public diplomacy, circulating a 1987 speech by then-President Ronald Reagan warning against the dangers of tariffs.

Experts see the current situation as a dangerous game of brinkmanship. Markets across the globe have reflected the uncertainty. On Monday, US indices touched their lowest point in over a year, with volatility gripping investors worldwide. The Nikkei in Japan rebounded 6 per cent Tuesday after plummeting to an 18-month low. Hong Kong's Hang Seng, reeling from its worst day since 1997, bounced back 2 per cent. Even Chinese blue-chip stocks recouped some losses, gaining 0.7 per cent after a bruising 7 per cent fall the previous day. However, this rebound is seen by many as temporary optimism amid broader fears. Billionaire investor Bill Ackman — once a vocal Trump supporter — has called for a temporary halt to the tariff war to stabilise markets.

The ripple effects of Trump's tariffs extend beyond China. The EU, also targeted by the Trump tariffs, has proposed retaliatory measures of its own, including a 25 per cent tariff on US exports such as soybeans and sausages. Similarly, Taiwan, facing a punishing 32 per cent reciprocal tariff, has already expressed its willingness to negotiate. President Lai Ching-te proposed a "zero-tariffs" pact and deeper investment ties with the US, while noting that Taiwan's trade surplus is primarily driven by US demand for tech.

Amid the rising global tensions, India is playing the role of mediator and strategic partner. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his US counterpart held high-level talks on Tuesday, advocating for an "early trade deal" to safeguard economic stability between the two democracies. New Delhi is also pushing for tariff exemptions on critical Indian exports while laying the groundwork for long-term supply chain cooperation with the US.

India's proactive diplomacy signals its desire to maintain a balanced relationship with both Washington and Beijing. By positioning itself as a pragmatic partner, India hopes to shield its economy from the worst effects of the trade war and emerge as a stabilising force in the Indo-Pacific.

As the clock ticks toward Trump's Wednesday deadline for more tariffs, the world braces for what could be a new chapter in economic conflict. While the US and China hunker down in a war of words and tariffs, other nations like India are racing to keep the doors of diplomacy open. Whether cooler heads will prevail remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: the world economy is now on edge!

Leaderspeak



If China does not withdraw its 34 per cent increase above their already long term trading abuses by tomorrow, April 8th, 2025, the United States will impose additional Tariffs on China of 50 per cent, effective April 9th, Additionally, all talks with China concerning their requested meetings with us will be terminated!

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

Bangladesh's strategic pivot

Coupled with new agreements like the Mongla Port expansion, Yunus' China visit signals a deeper geopolitical realignment that threatens to reshape regional dynamics and compromise India's core security interests



Bangladesh's recent diplomatic overtures, particularly the four-day first state visit of its interim government head, Mohammad Yunus to China, from March 26 to March 29, 2025, have raised significant concerns in New Delhi. His provocative statements about India's northeastern region, coupled with the agreements signed during the visit, have far-reaching strategic implications.

"We are the 'only' guardian of the ocean in the region," Yunus declared, attempting to strategically downplay India's maritime role and challenge its pivotal position in the region. These kinds of statements from top Bangladeshi authorities should not be taken at face value but analysed more seriously, as they reveal deeper, ill-intended motives toward India. Moreover, he added, "The seven states of India, the eastern part of India, are called the Seven Sisters. They are a landlocked region of India. They have no way to reach out to the ocean. So this opens up a huge possibility. This could be an extension of the Chinese economy." This provocative statement by Yunus, while sitting in China, has deep strategic connotations. By referring to India's northeast and, in the same breath, suggesting that this "opens up a huge possibility for the extension of the Chinese economy," Yunus was, in effect, strategically inviting Beijing and signalling an increasing willingness to facilitate an expanded Chinese strategic presence in a region of immense sensitivity and importance to India. Such remarks reflect a dangerous mindset, as they hint at Bangladesh's willingness to collaborate with China in a manner that could compromise India's national security in the region.

The timing and nature of these statements indicate that Dhaka is not only seeking investment but also indirectly highlighting India's "strategic vulnerabilities" in the northeast to China. The references to India's northeastern states as "landlocked," combined with the implicit invitation to China, appear to be an indirect encouragement for Beijing to expand its influence in Bangladesh as part of its broader strategic game plan against India. By revealing his intentions to bring Beijing closer to India's critical geopolitical chokepoint-the Siliguri Corridor, a narrow stretch approximately 60 km long and 22 km wide that connects mainland India to its northeast-Yunus implies that India's geopolitical weaknesses could be exploited.

Moreover, this "strategic gameplan" aligns with Beijing's long-term geostrategic objectives of encircling and squeezing India by strengthening its footprint in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. Beijing is engaged in a geostrategic and geopolitical rivalry with India, claiming several parts of Indian territory and challenging India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Bangladesh openly welcoming China into India's strategic backyard sends a troubling signal to New Delhi.

Furthermore, during this visit, Yunus signed an agreement with China for the modernisation and expansion of Mongla Port. Beijing pledged $400 million for this project, aiming to enhance the port's infrastructure and increase its capacity. This development will limit New Delhi's strategic space and allow greater Chinese strategic penetration into the Bay of Bengal region. China was already conducting extensive surveillance and other activities against India through its presence there. If this agreement materialises, it will further expand China's presence and pose a greater threat to India's security interests in the region.

Bangladesh's actions do not demonstrate a commitment to regional stability. Bangladeshi authorities are consistently pursuing an anti-India agenda through their provocative rhetoric and actions. Moreover, they accuse India of propaganda, exaggerating events, and spoiling bilateral relationships. However, they act as if they have no agency and fail to acknowledge their role and responsibility in escalating tensions. The release of anti-India elements from jail, the persecution of minorities, and the rewriting of history to diminish India's role in Bangladesh's liberation further highlight this stance. Their double standard is evident in how Bangladesh continues to take actions that threaten India's security interests in the region.

Moreover, a standard narrative in Bangladesh accuses India of favouring the Awami League government, particularly Sheikh Hasina. However, this overlooks the fact that she was the elected leader of Bangladesh, chosen by the Bangladeshi people to represent them. As a result, following diplomatic traditions, New Delhi had to engage with her government, as it does with any ruling administration of any country in the world. It would have been inappropriate for New Delhi to engage directly with opposition parties there, as this could have been perceived as interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs.



IMRAN KHURSHID

At the same time, such engagement would have strained India's relations with Hasina's government, as she might have viewed it as an attempt to undermine her government. Moreover, India has played a crucial role in Bangladesh's development, contributing significantly to infrastructure, power, energy, and various other sectors, demonstrating a broad engagement. Furthermore, India's engagement with Hasina was motivated by pragmatic national security considerations rather than favouritism. For example, during her term, she limited the strategic foothold of China and Pakistan in the region, kept anti-India elements in check, and did not provide sanctuaries to insurgent groups seeking to destabilise India's northeast. In contrast, when the BNP was in power, insurgency and infiltration into India's northeast were common.

Bangladesh's current leadership must recognise that while India has no issues with its partnerships with other countries, as is its right, however, doing so at the expense of India's security interests will undoubtedly raise concerns in New Delhi. While India respects Bangladesh's right to have engagements with multiple countries, recent agreements with Beijing, such as those on the Mongla Port and the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project — made without considering India's larger interests and potential security implications — are particularly worrisome. Bangladesh must also recognise China's well-documented 'debt-trap diplomacy,' which has already ensnared countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Through its grand geostrategic Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) dual-use infrastructure projects, it has gained control over the strategic assets of many countries such as Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port and Pakistan's Gwadar Port. Bangladesh risks falling into a similar trap by allowing China to deepen its economic and strategic presence.

India has long been a key partner in Bangladesh's development, but Dhaka's recent actions signal a departure from this cooperation. Yunus' remarks not only misrepresent India's geographical realities but also indicate a willingness to allow China to exploit India's strategic vulnerabilities.

Bangladesh must recognise that its national interests are best served by maintaining balanced relations with its neighbours rather than aligning with a power that has clear expansionist designs in the region. India, on its part, must recalibrate its approach to ensure that its security interests remain uncompromised while continuing to engage Bangladesh diplomatically.

(The writer is an Associate Research Fellow at the International Centre for Peace Studies (ICPS), New Delhi. He specialises in India–US relations, Indo–Pacific studies, and South Asian security issues. Views are personal)

Trump's tariff deals $5 billio- blow to I-dia

SECOND Opinion

The Trump administration's sweeping imposition of hefty reciprocal tariffs is a seismic shock to the global trade order. India's exports to the US will be subject to a 26 per cent tariff. The US is the largest market for India's engineering exports. **PANKAJ CHADHA**, anticipates the sector will take a $4-5 billion hit in the first year in an interview with **Surya Sarathi Ray**. Excerpts:

Since the US is the top destination for India's engineering goods exports, how will President Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs impact India's engineering goods exports?

The general tariff announced by the Trump administration for India is 26 per cent. This is high enough to impact exports from India and hit the businesses. The US is the top export destination for Indian engineering exports. Our exports of engineering goods to the US totalled $17.27 billion for the April-February period of the 2024-25 financial year. It is 8.3 per cent more than what we achieved in the same period of the previous fiscal year.

The reciprocal tariff will certainly impact in the first year or until we expand our presence in other markets. Our preliminary estimate is that engineering goods exports to the US could drop by $4-5 billion in the first year. The exact impact on engineering exports to the US cannot be determined at present, as it will depend on the American market's ability to absorb these duties.

As India and the US engage in negotiating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), we hope it will mitigate the impact of the proposed 26 per cent tariff on Indian goods.

As many of our competitors in the US market face similar or even higher tariffs, will it, in any way, help India? Or will trade diversion further hurt the domestic industry?

Yes, it will help India. But the question is how it will impact China. Tariffs on Korea, Japan and India are around the same. We have to see how the American customers respond to the tariff, which is essentially a tax on them. That is the key.

Regarding trade diversion, I don't think that will be an issue. India is a sufficiently protected market. Tariffs and non-tariff barriers are in place to safeguard our market from a surge in imports. These are sufficient.

China has retaliated by imposing a 34 per cent tariff on US imports. Do you think India should follow suit?

No, not at the moment. We are already in talks with the US for a bilateral trade agreement. We are hoping to get a favourable deal. At this juncture, it would not be prudent to retaliate. Just as in everyday life, in trade, fighting it back is not the solution; instead, it lies in reaching an amicable solution. Hence, a good, favourable bilateral trade agreement is the only way forward. However, if bilateral trade negotiations fail, then we will have to review our position.

What is the way forward for Indian exporters, finding new markets or fighting hard with competitors to retain their share in the US market?

The imposition of the sweeping tariff has dealt a significant blow to the notion that the US is a fair and trusted market. That notion has gone, and we can't trust the US as a safe bet.

Hence, we have to look out for markets in Latin America, Central America, North Africa and West Africa, which were hitherto uncharted territory for Indian exporters. We need to gain a foothold in these markets to mitigate the impact of higher US tariffs.

Global trade is being increasingly squeezed by protectionist measures, such as CBAM, and the hefty tariffs imposed by the Trump administration. Do you think multilateral agencies, such as the WTO, need to be revamped?

This is going to be the order of the day. We will have to live with that. Multilateral forums have been destroyed. If the most important partner of such forums, such as the US, behaves in this manner, then what is left? The entire WTO is now gone. The significance of the WTO is a big question now. It seems bilateral agreements and FTAs are the wayforward from now on. The era of multilateral dialogue is over.

(The interviewee is Chairman of the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC). Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

A SYMBOL OF EXCELLENCE

Madam — The newly inaugurated Pamban Rail Bridge by the Prime Minister marks a significant milestone in our nation's rail transportation and connectivity. This state-of-the-art bridge, equipped with cutting-edge technology, now allows trains to travel at higher speeds, connecting the globally renowned pilgrim town to the rest of India.The sea bridge, with its vertical lift deck, stands as a testament to modernity, seamless connectivity, and enhanced security. The fact that this massive infrastructure project was completed within a few years — despite nature's many challenges — speaks volumes about the dedication and commitment of the central government, Indian Railways, and other stakeholders involved.

Planning and executing mega projects of this scale is undoubtedly a herculean task. Yet, they become feasible and efficient with foresight, meticulous planning, coordinated management, indigenous construction technology, simplified clearance procedures, and timely execution by government departments. In a country where political interference often causes project delays, the timely completion of the Pamban Bridge shows that when governance at the centre or state is strong and clear, development, progress, and prosperity can flow unhindered.

M PRADYU | KANNUR

US CHINA TARIFF WAR

Madam — US President Donald Trump has once again intensified the tariff war with China, threatening an additional 50 per cent tariff on Chinese goods. This move would result in total levies surpassing the actual value of imported products, escalating the economic standoff dramatically. On Monday, April 7, Trump warned that if China does not immediately roll back its 34 per cent tariff hike — imposed in response to longstanding trade abuses — the US will impose further tariffs effective April 9, 2025.

He firmly stated there would be no negotiations on the matter. If neither side backs down, the resulting 104% combined tariff could severely impact American consumers, who rely heavily on Chinese imports for everyday needs. Trump's aggressive stance came after China's retaliatory move to match US tariffs, further inflaming the trade conflict.With tensions rising and retaliatory measures escalating on both sides, the threat of a broader economic fallout and even the possibility of future global conflict, cannot be ignored.

The escalating tariff standoff between the US and China threatens severe consequences for global trade and American consumers. With neither side willing to compromise, the looming 104 per cent tariff could spark broader economic turmoil.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

FEE HIKE IN DELHI SCHOOLS

Madam — This refers to the report "Delhi to audit fee hikes in all city private schools" (April 8). It is indeed a welcome move that Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood has decided to take strict action against private schools that have arbitrarily hiked fees.However, it is astonishing that the Education Department failed to take timely action against schools that neglected to conduct mandatory audits and submit reports for over a decade. It is difficult to comprehend how such blatant violations went unchecked for so long.

Clearly, a lenient attitude from the authorities emboldened these school managements to flout rules without consequence. It also raises questions about whether the previous AAP government, knowingly or unknowingly, allowed these violations to continue unchecked. For parents, education is non-negotiable, and they have had no choice but to comply with the increasing demands of private institutions. Though some have raised complaints, their protests often remain subdued, fearing repercussions that could affect their children's future. Therefore, the government must enforce strict vigilance and ensure all schools comply with regulations, particularly regarding fee structures, to protect the interests of students and their families.

TT SAKARI | DELHI

COMMON MAN BEARS THE BRUNT AS LPG CYLINER PRICE RAISED BY RS 50

The Union government does it again. Having waited till the major elections are over and having got the solid support of the alliance partners confirmed in comfortably passing the Waqf Bill the cost of cooking LPG is increased by Rs.50 per cylinder. The hike in the international market price is quoted as reason. But the Union government was hiking the cost of fossil fuels even when the international price was sharply declining and even when it was negatively priced. Therefore the reason quoted fails to convince anyone.

Squeezing the poor and the middle class and enriching the rich being the character of the government many more such impositions of burdens are probably on the line. The wage remains static for almost a decade. Inflation is not tackled. The real wage is declining causing concern to every employed person. In such a background hiking the cost of LPG gas cannot be justified. Already the cost of commercial gas cylinders is increased repeatedly that, in turn, pinches the pockets of the poor. The present hike is imposed when people are longing for reduction in the cost of fuels as well as the essentials. Only last week saw a hike in the cost of around 900 medicines much to the disgust of the ailing mass and the middle class who are struggling with lifestyle diseases.

Such hikes and squeezings in the background round of the growing apprehension of loss of employment likely to be inflicted by the tariff war and meak submission of our government needs to be viewed sympathetically by the government by ensuring ease of living for the poor and the middle class to retain the welfare image, at least.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTPUR

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | APRIL 9, 2025

Cooperative university to power dairy sector

In a historic move set to redefine the future of India's cooperative landscape, the Government of India has announced the establishment of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) — the country's first dedicated university for cooperative education

FIRST Column



The Government's belief in the power of cooperatives in rural development and nation-building has led to pathbreaking initiatives under the vision "Sahkar-se-Samriddhi" of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. Since the establishment of the Ministry of Cooperation in 2021 under the able leadership of Amit Shah, Hon'ble Minister of Home and Cooperation, it has been the endeavour of the Government that the cooperative sector gets the same opportunities as the corporate sector.

Among many other initiatives, the establishment of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) is an unprecedented step in strengthening the cooperative movement in the country. Dairying has been a traditional household activity since time immemorial; however, due to decades of neglect during British rule, India turned into a milk-deficit, import-dependent nation. Post-independence, the rising population led to declining milk availability, and dependence on imports increased. The milk production during the 1950s and 1960s was stagnant and hovered around 20 million metric tonnes. The per capita availability of milk declined from 130 grams per day to 112 grams per day during this period.

In such a situation, a glimmer of hope emerged from a remote city in Gujarat — Anand — a city synonymous with India's cooperative success story and known as India's milk capital. It is the very place where a successful cooperative movement inspired by the freedom struggle led to the establishment of Amul in 1946. The dairy farmers of the Kheda region were being exploited by middlemen and Polson Dairy, who arbitrarily decided prices and controlled the intake of milk on their whims and fancies.

The dairy farmers decided to call a "milk strike" and stopped supplying milk to Polson. They approached Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for help, who inspired them to form their dairy cooperative under the guidance of young freedom fighter Shri Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel. Shri Tribhuvandas Patel spearheaded the formation of village dairy cooperatives in Anand — and thus Amul was born, with just two village dairy cooperative societies and about 250 litres of milk collection.

The movement quickly spread and more dairy farmers started joining. Shri Tribhuvandas Patel also brought Dr Verghese Kurien to Amul and inspired him to remain with Amul. Amul has never looked back since then — becoming a household name today and rated amongst the world's strongest food brands.

While dairying was flourishing in Gujarat post-independence, it continued to struggle elsewhere in the country. When the then Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri ji visited Anand to inaugurate a Cattle Feed Plant in 1964, he was keen to study the success of dairy cooperatives in Gujarat and spent a night at Ajarpura village.

Impressed by the success of dairy cooperatives in Gujarat, Shastri ji promulgated the formation of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in 1965 to replicate the success of Amul across India. In 1970, NDDB initiated the implementation of Operation Flood (OF) — the world's largest dairy development programme — following the Anand model of cooperation. OF — or the White Revolution — gained momentum and started showing tremendous results. Post-OF, NDDB has continued spearheading the development of the dairy sector through large-scale programmes such as the Perspective Plan and National Dairy Plan I.

These large-scale dairy development programmes have eventually transformed India from a milk-deficient nation into the world's largest milk producer — and today, India contributes one-fourth of the global milk output alone. It has also enabled the dairy farmers to get the maximum share of the consumer rupee, as cooperatives pass on 75–80 per cent of the revenue to the dairy farmers through remunerative, fair, and transparent pricing. The dairy cooperatives not only provide safe and nutritious milk and milk products at affordable prices to consumers but also provide livelihoods to crores of dairy farmers across the country.

During OF implementation in the country, NDDB experienced that such large-scale programmes, dealing with crores of people, needed rural management professionals with skill sets to manage complex rural environments. This led to the birth of an institution — namely the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) — that was established with a vision of promoting sustainable, ecologically friendly, and equitable socio-economic development of rural people through professional management.



MEENESH SHAH

IRMA was established in 1979 with financial and technical support from NDDB, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), the Government of India, the erstwhile Indian Dairy Corporation, and the Government of Gujarat, which provided land.

IRMA has now become a premier institution dedicated to cooperative and rural management. It is a matter of great pride that IRMA is now set to achieve a historic milestone with the establishment of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) at its campus in Anand, Gujarat — rightly chosen as the place for India's first cooperation university.

IRMA is all set to expand its legacy with the establishment of TSU. The university has been aptly named after Tribhuvandas Patel ji, who started the cooperative movement in the dairy sector.

Since then, dairy cooperatives have been the shining example of the most successful cooperative model for any agricultural commodity in the country. The success of dairy cooperatives has inspired the spirit of cooperation in many other sectors.

The unique and remarkable idea of a dedicated cooperative university was first proposed by Shri Amit Shah ji, the first Hon'ble Minister of Cooperation, to honour Tribhuvandas Patel's contributions to India's cooperative movement and to create a world-class institution that fosters research, policy formulation, and leadership development in the cooperative sector. This university will be one of its kind — and India's first dedicated cooperative institution for higher education. The TSU will leverage IRMA's 40+ years of expertise in rural and cooperative management.

The TSU will help strengthen the rural economy, develop the ecosystem of self-employment and small entrepreneurship, increase social inclusion, and increase opportunities to set new standards in innovation and research.

It will impart technical education and management training in the cooperative sector; promote cooperative research and development; attain standards of global excellence; and strengthen the cooperative movement in the country through a network of institutions.

The TSU will be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 as a body corporate and will be declared an institution of national importance. It will have the capacity to provide education to about 8 lakh candidates every year.

The colleges affiliated with the university will be opened across the country. IRMA will continue to function as an autonomous school under TSU and will be declared a centre of excellence for rural management. As a result, there will be an infusion of new blood into the cooperative movement — with young, dynamic professionals graduating from TSU. India will get a new cooperative leadership — inspired by the spirit of cooperation and equipped with modern education.

The establishment of an exclusive national university for cooperatives will surely prove to be a landmark initiative and will go a long way in grooming manpower resources aligned to the needs of the sector.Tribhuvan Sahkari University will not just be another academic institution — but a movement to ensure that India's cooperative sector grows further by leaps and bounds.

By blending traditional cooperative values with modern management practices, it aims to produce leaders who can replicate the Amul success story in agriculture, banking, and other rural enterprises. Passage of the TSU Act could not have had better timing — as not only is it the International Year of Cooperatives of the UN, but more importantly, we are also embarking on the journey of establishing viable PACS / dairy / fishery cooperatives in the uncovered panchayats and villages, and strengthening the existing PACS / dairy / fishery cooperative societies across the country in the next five years — ushering in White Revolution 2.0 under the guidance of the Ministry of Cooperation.

The main objective of this initiative is to empower crores of small and marginal farmer members to reap the benefits of equitable regional development and bridge the gap in rural prosperity.

The Government of India has targeted to establish 2 lakh multipurpose PACS / dairy / fishery cooperatives in the next five years to cover all the gram panchayats under any form of cooperative — with the help of NABARD, NDDB, and the National Fishery Development Board (NFDB).

As per the plan, NABARD will form about 70 thousand new multipurpose PACS (M-PACS); NDDB will form and strengthen about 1.21 lakh Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS); NFDB will establish about 12 thousand Fishery Cooperative Societies (FCS); and in addition to these, about 25 thousand new M-PACS / dairy / fishery cooperatives will be formed by the state governments.

Along with other resources, this massive effort will require lots of trained manpower and this is where the establishment of TSU will supplement our efforts and provide critical manpower support for the success of White Revolution 2.0. It will truly contribute to realising the vision of "Sahkar-se-Samriddhi" in India.

Through strong government backing and IRMA's expertise, TSU is poised to become a global benchmark in cooperative education — invigorating and revitalising the cooperative sector, driving India's next phase of rural prosperity, and making India a developed nation by 2047.

(The author is Chairman and Managing Director of NDDB and Chairman of IRMA, with four decades of experience in the dairy sector; Views are personal)

Trump's tsu-ami: The e-d of global trade

From penalising Australia's remote, penguin-inhabited islands to targeting India's IT, pharmaceutical, and automobile exports, Trump's sweeping trade measures are less about economics and more a strategy to reshape global geopolitics



One man has rewritten world trade rules. Reciprocity is the name of the game. Difficult to find fault with his arguments. What you are doing to America, its President, Donald Trump, has now decided to do to you. Cold War having gone, the scope for others to play off one superpower against the other is not available and challenging times lie ahead for world leaders and diplomats.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) better self-deport itself from the scene! In a world in turmoil, unilateralism replaces multilateralism. India certainly is in a quagmire, as all WTO principles and protection walls are being felled with 26 per cent tariff — 50 per cent of 52 per cent allegedly being charged by India.

The reciprocal tariff is in addition to the existing one. Automobiles or parts have a 25 per cent tariff, and another 26 per cent is to be levied. It could hit the country's major export pillar — the IT services.

But that is not the peak of absurdity. In his absurd passion for world tariffs, fuelled by zeal for bulldozing world order, Trump has imposed a 10 per cent tariff on the uninhabited, volcanic Heard and McDonald Islands — one of the remotest places on Earth, home to penguins, near Antarctica — an external territory of Australia, reached by a two-week boat ride from Perth.

The last visit to this man-forsaken place by people is believed to be nearly 10 years ago. But data show that the US had imports of $15,000 to $325,000 in machinery a year during the past five years! Such tariff-hit territories include the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island, and Norfolk Island. Norfolk, a 2,000-inhabited island, gets a 29 per cent tariff for its tiny footwear exports of $655,000 to the US.

The islands are part of Australia. Leading Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese reacted on April 3 — a day after Trumpelling moves roiling the world — "Nowhere on Earth is safe." India thus is not in an unviable position. At best, it can wonder whether it would remain fascinated with the New World as the order collapses. Would it look for new trade avenues?

It is trying, but has not yet found a lucrative market. Even as the US sinks, it remains a "superpower". It knows that the US system itself has gone beyond sane moves — forcing India to extend several concessions, even in pro-Trump or better say, Joe Biden — days, on agriculture and other products.

The more it yields, the more it is being subjected to shed.India needs a charter for negotiating world chaos. It was once at the forefront of establishing multilateralism since its glorious Non-Aligned Movement.

It has lost the edge during the 30 years of globalisation, getting closer to the US — perhaps fascinated by its economic power. And now, as Trump announces April 2 as Liberation Day, it is looking for new avenues.The new tariffs include a universal 10 per cent duty on all imports into the US starting from April 5, with an additional 16 per cent to be applied from April 10. The reciprocal tariff imposed is a big blow to India's exports, affecting multiple industries. Key sectors could be hit. Ranging from small to big, company revenues are likely to fall.

$23 bn Concessions

India has a trade surplus of $46 billion. Hit by the big brother, it may slash import duties worth $23 billion on US goods, including gems, jewellery, pharmaceuticals, and auto parts. Would that soften the blow? India's top exports to the US are engineering goods — $17.6 billion (bn) in 2023–24 and $18.6 bn in 2022–23; electronic goods — $10.1 bn and $5.7 bn; gems and jewellery — $9.9 bn and $12.5 bn; pharmaceuticals — $8.7 bn and $7.5 bn; textiles — $9.2 bn and $9.7 bn; and petroleum products — $10.10 bn and $5.8 bn.



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The imports are: $5.2 bn petroleum oil in 2023–24 and $10 bn in 2022–23; petroleum gases — $1.2 bn and $1.9 bn; petroleum coke — $1.54 bn and $1.9 bn; aircraft — $2.09 bn and $2.11 bn; and nuts — $1.02 bn and $1.11 bn.The new tariffs are likely to have short-term and long-term implications for the overall economy, trade relations, currency markets, investments in businesses, and stock markets.

There is a view that compared to other countries like China (54 per cent tariff), Vietnam (46 per cent), Thailand (36 per cent), Taiwan and Indonesia (32 per cent each), the impact is less on India. The reality may be harsher and the industry would have to make wider adjustments — do cost-cutting and reduce product prices.

The tariffs are likely to hit autos, pharmaceuticals, and IT. Additional duties may hit hard automobiles and auto parts, cars, and light trucks.Tata Motors — the parent company of Jaguar Land Rover, which exports to the US — saw its shares fall 5 per cent following the tariff announcement, while Sona Comstar, an Indian global automotive systems manufacturer, declined 4 per cent.

The pharmaceutical sector may also come under pressure. Although specific tariff rates are yet to be detailed, the US remains a key market for Indian drug exports, and any hike in duties could impact revenue. However, pharma products have reportedly been exempted from the latest round of US reciprocal tariffs.

Steel, Farms, IT Hit

Sectors such as steel and agriculture are likely to be hit, with the impact first reflected in the stock market. Indian equities may come under pressure — particularly export-driven sectors like pharmaceuticals and IT — amid fears of retaliation. It could disrupt global supply chains.

Rising trade tensions may weigh on the rupee and dampen FDI, though domestic stimulus could cushion some of the blow. Japan's auto sector may face export hurdles, pressuring the Nikkei. Globally, risk-off sentiment could boost the US dollar and Treasuries. Investors should closely track retaliatory moves and sector-specific vulnerabilities.India's diplomacy will be changing on the pattern summed up best by Minister for External Affairs, who in 2022 said, "This is a time for us to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play, draw neighbours in, extend the neighbourhood and expand traditional constituencies of support." China may emerge as a friend, and the US may not be a foe in the new order as trade diversifies.Being optimistic is a natural human phenomenon.

Every Indian expert, including former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, says the country would emerge stronger, as it has done with each crisis. There are others who are critical of the accommodative Indian approach. Many wanted the country to retaliate like China, a prime Trump target. China announced imposition of a 34 per cent tax on all US imports next week, part of a flurry of retaliatory measures.

Trump threatens an additional 50 per cent tariff on China and a termination of negotiations if Beijing does not withdraw its retaliatory measures. But China has called for global digital Renminbi (Chinese Yuan) settlements — making the US fear of de-dollarisation sharper.

Trump has already expressed disdain over the BRICS bid to move away from dollars. He forgets that many nations, including India, have taken to trade in gold, as till three months ago it cost less than the dollar.

With central banks of many countries rushing for gold purchases, gold prices shot up by 15 per cent. Since the "Liberation Day" US announcement, gold slipped 2.7 per cent or $3,000 an ounce. It is predicted to fall further. Stock markets across the globe — the US, Asia, and Europe — are crashing since the April 2 shockwaves.

Hong Kong's stock market suffered its steepest single-day decline in nearly three decades amid a wave of panic selling. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index plummeted 13 per cent, while Japan's Nikkei fell 8.6 per cent, and Shanghai's Composite dropped 7 per cent. European equity markets are experiencing their worst session since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, as investors continue to flee from risky assets. European trade officials are meeting in Luxembourg to discuss tariffs, with Germany calling it "nonsense".

Indian companies are witnessing the sharpest wave of earnings downgrades. Foreign portfolio exits are causing severe concern.The Trump trade war sees everyone losing.

The internal US financial crisis has led to severe protests in 50 American states, as they fear harsh economic conditions with prices zooming.It reminds one of the 1930s when the Great Depression in the US gradually escalated to World War II. Could it happen again?

A pessimistic trading nation — tiny Singapore , at least has expressed the apprehension. Though so far nobody has said the tariff barrier could break into a global armed conflict, the trade war is destabilising the global system — more likely to be unfolded in the coming weeks and reflect how India fares amid the glut of unwanted American imports.

(The writer is a veteran journalist; Views are personal)

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IN BRIEF



Gold falls Rs 200 to Rs 91,250/10 g; Silver rebounds

Gold prices fell by Rs 200 to Rs 91,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid subdued demand in the local markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 91,450 per 10 grams on Monday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity dipped Rs 200 to Rs 90,800 per 10 grams. It had concluded at Rs 91,000 per 10 grams in the previous market close.
However, silver prices rebounded after falling for the past five sessions and rose by Rs 200 to Rs 92,700 per kg against the previous close of Rs 92,500 per kg. Meanwhile, spot gold increased 0.82 per cent to USD 3,007.60 per ounce in the overseas markets. "Gold traded positive with a sharp recovery...as rupee weakness added to the upside momentum. The global sentiment remained cautious with the dollar index moving sideways near the 102-mark, offering no strong headwinds to bullion prices," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.



Piramal Finance and ICICI join hands for co-lending

NBFC firm Piramal Finance Ltd on Tuesday said it has forged a co-lending partnership with ICICI Bank to improve credit accessibility in rural and semi-urban regions, focusing on home loans and loans against property. This collaboration strengthens Piramal Finance Ltd's position in India's semi-urban regions, reinforcing its commitment to providing easy and affordable credit solutions to the borrowers, the NBFC firm said in a statement. Through this partnership, Piramal Finance Limited combines its innovative 'High Tech + High Touch' approach with the financial and banking expertise of ICICI Bank, it said. Piramal Finance Ltd's strong presence across 510 plus branches in 13,000 pin codes, serving 4.5 million customers in 26 states, will further bolster outreach and accessibility, it added.



Solex Energy kicks off 15 GW expansion project

Solex Energy on Tuesday announced the start of its 15 GW expansion plan in Gujarat which would cost around Rs 8,000 crore. The expansion has started with initial capacity of 2.2 GW with over Rs 200 crore investments, the company said in a statement. The capacity will be increased to 3.7 GW by September this year, from 1.5 GW at present, Solex Energy said, adding the capacity will be increased in phases to 15 GW, which will cost around Rs 8,000 crore. "This expansion is about increasing capacity and creating opportunities like hiring skilled talent, fostering innovation, and strengthening our partnerships," Solex Energy CMD Chetan Shah said. Sharing details of the first phase, Solex Energy said the new production line is expected to commence commercial operations by the beginning of the third quarter of FY26. The modules will be produced with new-age TOPCon (glass-to-glass) technology, using automated production process that includes AI and (automate quality control) AOI-driven efficiencies for real-time traceability and data analytics.

RBI likely to cut rates amid global tariff

Guv Malhotra to announce fiscal's 1st credit policy today

PNS ■ MUMBAI



RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra will announce the first bi-monthly monetary policy of the current fiscal on Wednesday, the central bank said, amid expectations of a 25 basis points reduction in the short-term lending rate.

RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by Governor Malhotra started its three-day deliberations on the next set of credit policy on Monday.

In February, the MPC slashed the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. It was the first reduction since May 2020 and the first revision after two-and-a-half years.

Experts are of the view that the RBI will again reduce the rate by 25 bps on Wednesday against the backdrop of moderating inflation and the need to stimulate growth as Trump tariffs pose severe challenges to the global economy.

"Monetary Policy Statement by RBI Governor @GovSMalhotra at 10:00 AM (on April 9)," the RBI said in a post on social media platform 'X'.

US President Donald Trump has announced a hefty 26 per cent reciprocal tariff rate on India, effective April 9.

Coincidentally, the MPC decision will be announced on April 9, the day when the reciprocal tariff kicks in.

An HSBC Global Research report said:"We expect the RBI to deliver a 25 bps repo rate cut in April, taking the repo rate to 6 per cent. We also expect it to discuss/implement steps that help sustain liquidity at surplus levels.

We believe the RBI may lower its growth and inflation forecasts. Following the April rate cut, we expect two more rate cuts of 25bp each in the June and August meetings, taking the repo rate to 5.5 per cent, which is our estimate of neutral."

Goldman Sachs too expects a 25 bps repo rate cut.

A moderation in domestic activity in the first quarter based on the high frequency data, benign inflation and a sharp pullback in Brent crude oil and the DXY Index (dollar index) post President Trump's tariff announcements have created a favourable environment for the RBI to ease, it said.

"...our expectation of a sub-4 per cent headline inflation by Q4 CY25, we added an additional 50 bps of repo rate cuts by the RBI in CY25, totalling 100 bps of repo rate cuts in this cycle," said a Goldman Sachs report.

One state-one RRB to be effective soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One state-one RRB will become a reality from next month as the finance ministry has issued notification for the consolidation of 15 Regional Rural Banks across 11 states to achieve better operational efficiency and cost rationalisation. With this fourth round of consolidation of regional rural banks (RRBs), the number would reduce to 28 from the existing 43. As per the gazette notification, RRBs in 11 states -- Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan -- are to be merged into one entity, respectively, for each of these to realise the goal of 'one state-one RRB'. The effective date for amalgamation has been fixed to May 1, as per the gazette notification dated April 5, 2026. As per the notification, in line with the powers granted under Section 23A(1) of the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, these RRBs will merge into a single entity in the public interest and in the interest of the development of the area served by these entities and also in the interest of the Regional Rural Banks themselves.

India's domestic demand big magnet amid US trade tariffs: Nirmala

PNS ■ LONDON

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday that the resilience of the economy and strength of domestic demand will continue to make India an engine of growth amid the rapidly evolving global trade landscape as a result of US tariffs.

In an interaction entitled the 'Opportunities and challenges for India's quest to become a developed economy by 2047' at the High Commission of India in London, she asserted that the economy was well placed to capitalise on domestic efficiencies and competitiveness as it tackles global headwinds.



"The world has seen depressed growth for over several years; earlier, it was low interest for long and now it's going to be low growth for long, and that's not happy news for anybody," said Sitharaman, who is here on her first UK visit in her current Union Cabinet term.

"India has maintained its fastest growing economy tag continuously now for five years and we still think that momentum may moderate a bit, but it will still be India who will keep that growth... as our growth gets calibrated because of the consumption which exists domestically. It is backed by demand for global-standard goods and that is why globalisation since the 1990s has given India many opportunities," she said.

"The US is the leading trade partner for India. So, at a time when trade is going to be influenced by tariffs, measures which the US government is taking, we still will have to make sure that the strength that India has in domestic demand as a big magnet which can attract global supplies must be sustained and boosted," she noted.

The minister said the strength of this demand would prove attractive for foreign direct investment (FDI) and international manufacturing to supply for the domestic market and also export from India.

Micro, small businesses witness moderation in credit growth: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Credit growth for micro and small businesses slowed to 10.1 per cent in November 2024 from 15.5 per cent in May 2024, said a survey.

However in case of large businesses, the credit growth remained stable while for medium-sized firms it rose to 20 per cent in November from 12.6 per cent in June, said the third edition of the bi-annual MSME Sampark Report by Ugro Capital and Dun & Bradstreet.



The survey is based on the analysis of over 45,000 enterprises during 2021-2024 across seven sectors.

"Among the over 45,000 MSMEs analysed, the light engineering, electrical equipment, food processing, and chemical sectors emerged as the largest borrowers in the first three quarters of 2024. Interestingly, over the past six months, B2C businesses have taken on less new debt than B2B businesses, except in the auto components and hospitality sectors," it added.

Credit growth in Udyam-registered MSMEs slowed from 61 per cent in FY22 to 22 per cent in FY23. It inched up marginally to 23 per cent in FY24.

"Loan disbursements have moderated in 2024, but the rise in working capital loans highlights a growing reliance on short-term financing. This shift reflects the challenges businesses face in long-term planning amid economic uncertainty," a release said.

It further said, around 64 per cent of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) resumed operational activities post-pandemic, with 54 per cent reporting a growth of over 10 per cent year-on-year, underlining the sector's strong momentum.

'Mobile phone exports surpass Rs 2 lakh cr '

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mobile phone exports surpassed Rs 2 lakh crore in the 2024-25 financial year with iPhone shipments alone contributing about Rs 1.5 lakh crore, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Tuesday.

The minister said that smartphone exports have seen a 54 per cent growth over the 2023-24 fiscal.

"Smartphone exports crossed Rs 2 lakh crore in the financial year 2024-25. It is now among the top exported goods out of India.

About Rs 1.5 lakh crore worth of iPhones were exported," Vaishnaw said.

He said that electronics manufacturing in the country has increased more than five times and exports by more than six times in the last 10 years.

The minister also announced that the government is issuing a draft notification for a passive component scheme, which will be open for consultation for about two weeks.

Investors become richer by Rs 7.32 lakh cr as markets recover

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Investors' wealth swelled by Rs 7.32 lakh crore on Tuesday as equity markets staged a strong comeback after crumbling in the previous trade.

Snapping its three-day decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,089.18 points or 1.49 per cent to settle at 74,227.08. During the day, it climbed 1,721.49 points or 2.35 per cent to 74,859.39.

Thanks to the positive trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 7,32,042.69 crore to Rs 3,96,57,703.44 crore (USD 4.62 trillion).

"Markets opened sharply higher following gains in Asia in the morning after another highly volatile overnight session in the US. After a brutal sell-off, markets are staging a cautious relief rally on hopes for positive news, in terms of concessions, ahead of deadline for reciprocal tariffs. On the domestic front, we saw strong DII (Domestic Institutional Investors) buying cushioning the market fall yesterday," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

On Monday, the market cap of BSE-listed firms declined sharply by Rs 14,09,225.71 crore to Rs 3,89,25,660.75 crore (USD 4.54 trillion) in a single day amid a global market meltdown due to recession fears.

All Sensex firms, except Power Grid, ended in the positive territory.

Titan, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Zomato and Asian Paints were the biggest gainers.

World markets also staged a rebound after Monday's collapse.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 2.18 per cent and midcap index surged 1.87 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended higher.

Oil & Gas index jumped the most by 2.58 per cent, followed by consumer durables (2.38 per cent), telecommunication (2.32 per cent), industrials (2.04 per cent), energy (2.03 per cent), consumer discretionary (2.02 per cent), teck (1.97 per cent), healthcare (1.94 per cent) and IT (1.77 per cent).

As many as 3,093 stocks advanced while 871 declined and 119 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Regulatory easing to support credit growth: Icra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The incremental credit is likely to rise 10.8 per cent to Rs 19-20.5 lakh crore in the current fiscal compared to Rs 18 lakh crore or a 10.9 per cent growth in 2024-25, according to rating agency Icra.

In a release on the Indian banking sector outlook, the agency said it expects the regulatory easing seen in recent months to support a credit expansion of about 10.8 per cent in FY2026.

Such measures include the repo rate cut, deferment of proposed changes in the liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) framework and additional provisions on infra projects, along with the roll-back of increased risk weights on lending to unsecured consumer credit and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

"Besides this, the durable liquidity infusion by the Reserve Bank of India through open market operations (OMO) by way of purchases of Government bonds and forex swaps with banks, would aid the liquidity and faster transmission of the ongoing cut in policy rates," it said.

The persisting challenges in deposit mobilisation, high credit-deposit (CD) ratio and rising stress in the unsecured retail and small business loans would remain a drag on credit growth and accordingly, the pace of credit expansion is expected to trail the recent highs seen in FY2024, it added.

Sachin Sachdeva, vice president and sector head, Icra, said the pro-growth regulatory stance has revived the lenders' appetite for credit growth in Q4 FY2025 after a brief period of slow incremental credit growth in the initial period of FY2025.

"Accordingly, Icra estimates the incremental credit expansion to be around Rs 19-20.5 lakh crore, clocking a growth rate of about 10.8 per cent in FY2026 compared to credit expansion of Rs 18 lakh crore or a 10.9 per cent growth rate in FY2025," Sachdeva said.

MEGA PETCHEM IN ODISHA

IOC to invest Rs 61,000 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, will invest over Rs 61,000 crore in setting up a mega petrochemical complex at Paradip in Odisha to meet the rising demand for petrochemicals in the world's fastest-growing economy, its chairman AS Sahney said.

IOC has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Odisha government at the state's investor meet, committing to invest Rs 61,077 crore in the complex. Besides IOC, Petronet LNG Ltd, India's biggest liquefied natural gas importer, signed a pact to invest Rs 6,500 crore to set up a LNG import terminal at Gopalpur port in the state.

Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd, the special purpose vehicle created by the government for setting up strategic oil reserves, signed for setting up a 4 million tonnes underground storage facility at Chandikhol in Odisha at a cost of Rs 8,743 crore.

IOC's Rs 61,077 crore will be the company's largest-ever investment at a single location. The firm already operates a 15 million tonnes a year capacity oil refinery in Paradip.

Sahney said the naphtha cracker, which will make raw material used to make plastics, technical textiles and other such chemicals, will be commissioned by 2029.

India to become 3rd largest generator of wind, solar power: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India became the world's third-largest producer of electricity from wind and solar energy in 2024, overtaking Germany, according to a new report published on Tuesday.

The sixth edition of global energy think tank Ember's Global Electricity Review said wind and solar together generated 15 per cent of global electricity last year. India's share stood at 10 per cent.

The report said low-carbon sources, including renewables and nuclear power, together provided 40.9 per cent of the world's electricity in 2024. This is the first time the 40 per cent mark has been crossed since the 1940s.

In India, clean sources accounted for 22 per cent of the electricity generation. Hydropower contributed the most at 8 per cent, while wind and solar together accounted for 10 per cent.

Globally, renewables led the growth in clean electricity, adding a record 858 terawatt hours (TWh) in 2024 -- 49 per cent more than the previous record in 2022.

Solar was the largest source of new electricity for the third straight year, adding



474 TWh in 2024. It was also the fastest-growing power source for the 20th year in a row.

In just three years, global solar power generation doubled to 6.9 per cent of the electricity mix.

India, too, saw a rapid increase in solar power. Solar contributed 7 per cent of the country's electricity in 2024, the generation doubling since 2021.

India added 24 gigawatts (GW) of solar capacity in 2024, more than twice the addition in 2023, becoming the third-largest market after China and the US.

It also recorded the fourth-largest increase in solar generation globally, adding 20 TWh.

"Solar power has become the engine of the global energy transition," said Phil MacDonald, Ember's managing director. "Paired with battery storage, solar is set to be an unstoppable force. As the fastest-growing and largest source of new electricity, it is critical in meeting the world's ever-increasing demand for electricity."

The report, released on Tuesday along with an open dataset on electricity generation in 2024, covers 88 countries that account for 93 per cent of global electricity demand and includes historic data for 215 countries.

Ember's Asia Programme Director Aditya Lolla said the clean energy transition in Asia is accelerating, led by record growth in solar and other renewables.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. 02/GHMC/MPT/ EE/2025-26 Date: 07-04-2025
Name of Work: Civil Work (1), Estimate Amount / ECV: **Rs. 10.50 Lakhs**, Start Date/ Last Date & Time for receipts of Bids: **08.04.2025 @ 10.30 AM / 19.04.2025 @ 10.40 AM. Name & Address Officer:** Sri. E.U.Ramesh, Executive Engineer, GHMC, Moosapet Circle-23, **Cell: 9849994029.** For Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ **www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in**
Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR R.O.No: 158-PP/CL/AD/VT1/2025-26, Dt: 08-04-2025 GHMC, Moosapet Division - 23

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTICE (THROUGH 'E' PROCUREMENT)
Nit No. 01/EE/GHMC/DIV-21/2025-26 Dt: 08.04.2025
Tenders are called vide No. 01/EE/GHMC/Div-21/2025-26. Through 'e' procurement for (02) work with an estimated cost of **Rs.51.10 Lakhs**. The sale of bids is open on the website procurement market place from **11.00 AM on 10.04.2025 onwards.** Last date for submission of bids is **17.04.2025 at 11.00 AM.** Sale of bids closes one hour before the submission time. Further details can be seen on the website **https://tender.telangana.gov.in.**
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
DIPR R.O.No: 172-PP/CL/AD/VT1/2025-26, Dt: 08-04-2025 Chandanagar Circle-21, SLP Zone: GHMC

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WEDNESDAY APRIL 9, 2025

WELCOME TO THE *POOKIE CLINIC*!

SRISHTI GARG IS HERE TO TREAT YOUR DELULU IN DOSES



In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, content creator and chaos connoisseur Srishti Garg opens up about the wildly viral *Pookie Clinic*—a satirical pink-hued therapy setup where she lovingly roasts toxic traits, alpha energy, and everything in between. With props, skits, and quick-fire diagnosis sessions, she's turned emotional unavailability into punchlines, and red flags into comic relief

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Move over, talk shows! Make room for *Pookie Clinic*—a delightfully absurd, pastel-soaked fever dream from content creator Srishti Garg, where red-flag-riddled internet men are diagnosed with fake syndromes and put through a series of unhinged challenges in a bid to become "Certified Pookies." Think: alpha male meets nail spa, filtered through a Gen Z lens of parody, pop culture and pink chaos.

The trailer has already left fans wheezing, featuring stars like Santanu Hazarika, Hamza Sayed, Sufi Motiwala and Kevin Zingkai tackling their assigned syndromes—from 'Mean Posting Syndrome' to 'Bohot Bada Playboy Syndrome'—with side-splitting results. Whether it's whispering ASMR apologies to an ex or parodying Espresso videos, the guests must prove their reformation by going on a surprise date. If they pass, they earn the much-coveted Certified Pookie Award. If not? They're handed an apple—because, in Srishti's words, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away, and Dr. Srishti doesn't want to see them again."

Though the term "Pookie" has gone viral online, Srishti confesses she didn't fully understand its meaning at first.

"I remember this guy from the West kept using it, and I thought it was so adorable. Then people started calling me that. I even went on a podcast where they asked me, 'How does it feel to be the internet's Pookie?'" she recalls, laughing. "I was shy at first. But over time, it stuck. I began using it in videos and then during promotions with Richa Chaddha, we coined Pookie Mandi. That became the name of my broadcast channel." What started as a comment section nickname turned into a digital identity—and now, a full-fledged IP.

So how did the idea for a show like Pookie Clinic come to life?

"I wanted to do something different from the typical interview formats. The idea was to make it random, fun, and uniquely me. A big inspiration was Between Two Ferns, which was quirky and weird, and I wanted that energy."

Initially, she dreamed of "Gen Z-fying" seasoned actors like Pankaj Tripathi or Javed Jaffrey, but logistics made that difficult. "I reached out to a lot of people. Nothing worked. It felt like the universe was against me," she admits. Then came an epiphany.

"I thought—why not take loud, problematic alpha figures from the internet and make them cute? Instead of Gen Z-fying older people, which felt done by now, I decided to flip the narrative on toxic masculinity and create a show where I roast them, they roast me, and then I 'diagnose' them."

The clinic concept grew out of her love for contradictions.

"I love juxtaposition. The idea of putting a toxic man in a girly pink clinic, doing skincare and waxing—it's hilarious to me. That's the essence of the show. And it's exactly the kind of content I love creating."

This kind of character-driven satire isn't new territory for Srishti. "I've done mockumentaries before—'Beautiful Princess Disorder,' 'Diva Disease'—so syndromes and quirky personas were always part of my content. *Pookie Clinic* just took it to the next level."

The casting process was equally intentional. "We weren't necessarily looking for actual red-flag people. We focused on their internet personas—people who are a little edgy or controversial online."

Srishti admits she can be seen as problematic too. "I give boyfriend advice, so even I come off as preachy or 'too much' sometimes. That was the whole point—everyone has a little red flag energy."

She's deeply grateful to those who came on board. "They supported my pilot. Whether as guests or dates—they've been so kind and gracious. I can't thank them enough."

The ultimate "treatment result" of the show—either a Certified Pookie Award or an apple—is pure internet gold.

"I knew exactly how I wanted the award to look. I doodled the bow emoji with 'Certified Pookie' on it and worked with the team to build it," she says. "For the apple, it was a cheeky pun—'an apple a day keeps the doctor away,' so if you get that, I don't want to see you again!"

From the blue teddy bear on the desk to pink props pulled from her room, every detail on set is personalised. "This IP is my baby. Every joke, every object—nothing is random."

The show's hilarious segments range from "Pill the Tea" to chaotic karaoke, but Srishti is especially excited about the Date segments.

"If you're into chemistry, flirtiness and seeing if someone becomes a Certified Pookie—those are your episodes. But if you want to hear ASMR apologies or daddy voice challenges, 'Pill the Tea' is your jam!"

One guest who surprised her was Sufi Motiwala. "We'd never spoken before the shoot, so I didn't know what to expect. But the vibe was amazing. He was a total sweetheart, especially during the waxing challenge—which he just took like a champ!"

With Kevin and Shantanu, whom she'd met at events, the vibe was easier. "But with Sufi, it went from awkward to so fun, so naturally. I really appreciated that."

Despite the roasting format, Srishti was extremely mindful about keeping things respectful.

"Humour's tricky today. I didn't want anyone to leave feeling bad. So a week before the shoot, we sent scripts to the guests and their managers. They could veto anything. I was very transparent."

That said, she kept one element a surprise—their roast of her. "I had no idea what they were going to say. Kevin, for example, brought something on set that genuinely stunned me."

She adds with a laugh, "I'm not great at handling roasts—I'll literally start crying! So this was a very interesting experience for me."

So how does Srishti define the genre-bending Pookie Clinic?

"If I had to describe it, I'd say it's the rom-com version of YouTube videos," she smiles. "It's just pure, feel-good, lighthearted chaos. I don't care about views or engagement right now. I just hope people see the effort and love we put in." She's already receiving feedback from early viewers. "People asked for more subtitles, so that's happening next. Every schedule will evolve based on reactions."

The term 'Pookie' has become a cultural meme, but why does it resonate so deeply?

"I think it's just the cutest term of endearment," she says. "Anyone—man or woman—would blush if you call them Pookie. It makes you feel adorable. Simps are like aashiqs, but Pookies are just cuties."

And if she had to diagnose herself?

"Definitely Delusional Diva Disorder," she laughs. "I'm super delusional and narcissistic—in a good way—and of course, I'm a diva. It works for me!"

For now, the focus is on how the pilot season unfolds.

"I know content needs to evolve every 6 to 8 months. If *Pookie Clinic* grows, it'll be because we keep pushing it with more diverse guests and even wilder ideas."

Whether it's a satire on toxic masculinity or a joyful celebration of internet absurdity, Pookie Clinic is a one-of-a-kind creation—part roast, part rom-com, and entirely Srishti Garg.



The costly blind spot

In the competitive world of automotive sales, first impressions can make or break a deal. A report by Google and Kantar highlights that 95% of consumers buying vehicles start their car-buying journey digitally. This means that before stepping into a dealership, a potential buyer's first interaction with a vehicle already happens through its visuals.

Yet, many dealerships and sellers fail to prioritise high-quality car visuals, relying on dimly lit, low-resolution photos and unattractive car walkaround videos, that do little to attract buyers and fail to showcase the vehicle's best features. This has serious financial consequences, as users scroll past good-conditioned vehicles simply because of poor visuals.

A 2022 AutoTrader survey reveals that listings with high-resolution images and good visuals receive approximately 163% higher engagement rates than those with subpar visuals. The automotive industry is evolving, and consumers expect nothing short of magic when investing time in finding a product online. They expect a digital experience that is at par with being physically present in the showroom. If the visuals do not inspire buyers, they will move on to a different dealership.

THE DIGITAL SHOWROOM EFFECT

In today's world, your website is your digital showroom and the first point of contact with the buyer. However, many sellers consider it an afterthought and end up using low-quality generic images that don't do justice to the vehicles they are trying to sell. Sellers must understand that bad-quality images lead to bad sales.

According to a Cox Automotive study, 60% of car buyers skip a listing with poor-quality images, even if the price and specifications are appealing. So, if the dealerships have a great vehicle but have poor visuals, regardless of how great the deal is or how excellent the condition of the vehicle is—they'll end up losing the customer. That's millions of lost revenue due to a lack of high-quality images.

The Psychology behind Buyer's Trust: Why Car Visuals Matter?

Psychology further reinforces the power of visuals. Research shows that humans tend to form first impressions in just 50 milliseconds. When an image fails to captivate or convey trust, potential buyers disengage almost instantly.

Moreover, for many, buying a car is an emotional decision. Whether they're first-time buyers or upgrading to their dream car, they want to see themselves in the vehicle.

Premium brands like BMW and Tesla don't just showcase cars—they create an experience. Their high-quality visuals evoke emotions of luxury, performance, and innovation. Indian dealerships need to adopt the same mindset—because a car is more than just a product; it's a dream.

The Financial Cost of Bad Car Visuals

Many dealerships don't have the budget to advertise in merchandising, but nobody calculates the cost of not investing in it. Every day a car sits unsold on the lot, it incurs hidden expenses to the dealer—from lot space and security to financing interest and remarketing spends. Additionally, an idle car costs the dealer even more in maintenance and overall depreciating value of the vehicle. That's thousands of rupees lost per car, per day, just because poor visuals delayed the sale. For some dealers, who do spend time showcasing their vehicles using phone photography end up with bad images—leading to low engagement, fewer clicks, and lower lead conversion rates.

Online buyers can't physically inspect the car. They rely on clear, professional images to build trust. Blurry or inconsistent visuals create doubt, making potential customers hesitant to reach out. So, a vehicle that doesn't look appealing online takes longer to sell.

What can dealers do to win sales and build a brand?

In a market where buyers make instant decisions, visuals are everything. Dealerships that invest in great visuals aren't just showcasing cars, they're building trust and giving consumers an immersive experience. This enables buyers to rely on these dealerships and set expectations that ultimately lead to closing more deals.

Winning the visual game in car sales is not complicated. It requires a more strategic approach and investing time and money in the right tools. There are several startups that are making strides in building technology that have replaced the need for high-end professional studio with AI-powered solutions. These solutions allow dealers to click high-resolution and well-lit visuals that rapidly boost click-through rates, making professional photography a small but impactful investment.

(The author, Sanjay Varnmal, is the co-founder and CEO of Spyne.)

Social media and its effect on love and relationships

Love has no longer remained a personal experience. The advent of social media has seen love turn into a social concept as well, struggling to prove its stance on every pedestal. Social media has transformed the way we perceive love, influencing everything from how we communicate with partners to what we expect from relationships. From instagram, twitter and tiktok, it shapes and moulds our very idea of how love should be, curating a specific and idealistic image universally, overlooking personal differences.

Although social media showers its boons in the form of opening up taboos, starting conversations, being informative and most importantly, easing communication, it also brings in relationship anxiety, social standards and unrealistic expectations. Let us understand this better.

The rise of relationship goals

From trending videos, curated pictures, extravagant gestures and gifts, to perfect looking romance and a happy-go-lucky life, social media never fails to sugarcoat seamlessly. But does this idealistic portrayal of relationships actually fit in the real world?

Unrealistic expectations

The way we see relationships on social media or how love is described as, it sets unrealistic expectations in more than one way. Couples make their relationships appear perfect by posting well chosen pictures, passionate gestures and lavish presents. In reality, however, social media simply shows the best bits. Because the difficulties, disagreements, and ordinary parts of relationships often go unnoticed, people tend to think that love should always be exciting and flawless.

The trap of comparison

Not just personally, social media also affects the idea of one's own relationship and love in contrast to others. Through all negatives and positives, it has become second nature for everyone to compare their relationships to the ones on the gram and scrutinize every bit. Seeing "perfect couples" online makes people feel like their own relationships are inadequate. The cycle continues from factual ideologies to perceived rights and wrongs, doing more harm than good.

Dissatisfaction and disappointment

Many people expect constant excitement and validation in relationships, leading to disappointment when reality doesn't match their expectations. Social media overlooks personal differences, unique personalities, and different love languages. Regardless of any situational or circumstantial factor, it sets love on a pedestal so high and unreachable that disappointment is inevitable.

The pressure to perform well online

Social media has created an expectation to publicly display affection and relationship milestones, from anniversary posts to couple selfies, regular updates are necessary to maintain their social media presence. But is that even their actual life?

Validation seeking

The algorithm changes every other day, and with it increases the pressure to perform. Likes, comments, and shares have no longer remained just words. They



are instant sources of dopamine and people are hungry. So much so that the happiness, peace and stability of a relationship depends on how it looks online.

Jealousy and insecurity

Not just from other couples or idealistic standards of love, jealousy and insecurity stem from the very image created of how true love looks universally. If a partner doesn't post about the relationship, it can create doubts about their commitment. Disregarding personal choices and privacy terms, posting online and being open about their relationship online has become more of a norm, a necessity, instead of just a harmless trend.

Shallow displays of love

Public gestures sometimes replace genuine intimacy, leading people to prioritise online appearance over real connection. Instead of actually looking into the relationship and introspecting what works for them and what they can work on, people focus on how it looks virtually and if it meets the perfect expectations. As long as their social media meets the pace, their relationship meets the peace.

Trust issues, relationship conflicts and media

Social media provides constant access to other people's lives, which can sometimes lead to jealousy and trust issues in relationships. From liking someone else's photo to following an ex, even innocent online behaviors can trigger insecurity.

Online monitoring

Social media eases access into someone's privacy. Technological advances have compromised people's personal lives in huge ways. Seeing a partner interact with someone attractive online can spark overthinking. Stalking behaviors are increasing everyday and can become extremely productive.

Ease of micro-cheating

Other than newer terms like casual relationships, situationships, and whatnot, social media and interactive websites have also given rise to anonymous behavior. Anonymity often reduces the sense of morality, promoting emotional cheating, external involvement, and higher amounts of secrecy and infidelity.

Social media triggers

Social media creates standards that limit the idea of relationships. Perceived behaviours considered acceptable and appreciated or inappropriate and intolerable are no longer based on factual terms. Social media governs the understanding of normalcy and how one needs to follow it to fall into the righteous and supposedly acceptable criteria.

Love in the digital age

The digital world and technological advancement has led to escapism into virtual reality. From relationship trends, social media's pressure and fear of missing out, to the access of privacy and social media triggers, everything in the virtual world is affecting real-world relationships. Online behaviors have turned problematic beyond a normal range.

Social media affects our understanding of love and everything surrounding it. from setting unrealistic expectations to influencing trust and self-worth. While it has benefits, like helping people connect, it also creates challenges that can distort our idea of what love should be. Love in the digital age is both deeply connected and paradoxically distant. With dating apps, social media, and instant messaging, we can meet, communicate, and express affection faster than ever before. Yet, these same technologies often create miscommunication, unrealistic expectations, and emotional detachment.

However, digital love isn't all bad, it allows long-distance relationships to flourish, fosters deeper emotional connections through constant communication, and provides access to potential partners we might never meet otherwise. The key is balancing technology with genuine human intimacy.

Conclusion

Social media has completely reshaped the way we connect with each other, both for better and for worse. On one hand, it lets us stay close even when we're far apart and share our lives in ways that feel immediate and real. On the other, scrolling through carefully curated snapshots of other people's lives can leave us feeling insecure or unsure about our own relationships. Ultimately, it's not social media itself that's the problem, it's how we let it influence our perceptions and interactions. When we set healthy boundaries and choose genuine, heartfelt connections over digital validation, we can create relationships that truly thrive.

(The author, Sidhharrth S Kumaar, is a life and relationship coach, at NumroVani.)





Chandrabose and Amrutha Varshini



Amulya and Ananya

Doggy Ville, the new state-of-the-art dog care facility, was inaugurated by Oscar Award-winning lyricist Chandrabose, alongside Doggy Ville's founder, Amrutha Varshini Nalla. The facility, located on Road No. 11 in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, offers a unique blend of services, including cage-free boarding, daycare, specialized training programs, a spa, behavior therapy and more.





The Global Excellence Awards, hosted by the Federal Research and Recognition Council (FRRC), took place at Le Meridien Hotel in Gachibowli, Hyderabad. The ceremony celebrated outstanding achievements across over 50 diverse categories, honoring around 100 individuals and organizations for their contributions to innovation, leadership, and global excellence. The event marked the presence of T. Harish Rao, MLA of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) party, who served as the Chief Guest.



PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



Vedantu has expanded its offline presence in Telangana with the launch of three new Vedantu Learning Centres in Madhapur, Warangal, and Adilabad. This brings the total number of Vedantu Learning Centres in the state to six, joining the existing centres in Nizampet, Dilsukh Nagar, and Dr. A.S. Rao Nagar. This expansion reinforces Vedantu's mission to empower students across Telangana.



On World Health Day, Tempest Advertising, in collaboration with Mahavir Hospital, organised a Free Health Camp at its office in Begumpet. The event featured a dedicated team of doctors, nurses, and medical staff from Mahavir Hospital conducting essential health checks, including blood pressure, glucose levels, oxygen saturation, heart rate, weight and temperature monitoring.

Vyapari Diwas returns!

Flipkart Wholesale unveiled the launch of 'Vyapari Diwas' – the annual flagship sale event designed to bolster savings and boost profitability for its Kirana partners. This sale underscores Flipkart Wholesale's commitment to empowering its members while celebrating and valuing its strong association with them. The same will be LIVE from April 5 to April 13, 2025. This sale will be accessible at all Flipkart Wholesale stores and its online platform/mobile application, offering enticing deals across various categories, including staples, personal care, home care, food, and beverages, among others.

InnoWin Day launched

A wave of tech innovators identified by Marico Innovation Foundation (MIF) are addressing India's most pressing challenges—climate resilience, agri-transformation, water scarcity, and plastic waste management. They are turning stubble into furniture, converting industrial emissions into valuable chemicals, developing rare-earth magnet-free motor systems, managing plastic waste, and extracting moisture from air. These innovations are shaping India's green economy, but scaling these solutions requires forging critical connections to funding sources - be it investors, grantmakers, and institutional customers.

Lloyd expands premium AC range

Lloyd, a leading consumer durables brand from Havells India, is elevating its product offering with a new line-up of luxury cooling solutions with the launch of the Lloyd Luxuria Collection. This exciting expansion includes the introduction of the innovative StunnAir, and the expansion of the already popular Stellar &Stylus models. With this, Lloyd is enhancing its premium air conditioner offerings, responding to the growing demand for high-end products. In addition, to meet the anticipated rise in consumer demand and build on last year's successful launch, Lloyd has ramped up the combined manufacturing capacity of its Ghiloth and Sri City plants.

LISTINGS

National Mart marks grand finale of Festive Dhamaka

National Mart- India ka Hypermart, a leading retail chain, proudly announced the winners of its much-anticipated "Festive Dhamaka" Lucky Draw at its Nagaram store. The "Festive Dhamaka" Lucky Draw campaign, which ran from March 1 to March 31, was designed to bring festive joy and excitement to customers across the region. National Mart celebrated the grand finale of its Festive Dhamaka Lucky Draw with a spectacular event, where a total of 222 prizes were given away. The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the Mega Prize – a brand-new car, which added immense excitement to the occasion. Along with the Grand prize, 13 lucky customers walked away with brand-new double-door refrigerators as part of the Bumper Prize.



ITC welcomes Nani as its brand ambassador

ITC Ltd's Aashirvaad Masalas, a trusted name in Telugu households, proudly announces Tollywood natural star Nani as its brand ambassador for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. To mark this partnership, the brand has launched a new television commercial (TVC) as part of its regional campaign, "*Dammu Meede, Star Meere*", Mr. Piyush Mishra, Business Head, Spices, ITC Ltd., said, "We are thrilled to have Nani as the brand face of Aashirvaad Masalas. His cultural affinity and genuine connection with Telugu audiences make him the ideal choice to represent our brand." Nani stated, "I am delighted to be the face of Aashirvaad Masalas, a brand that has a trusted name in the region for its commitment to quality and taste.



Hybiz TV announced the return of its highly anticipated summertime event — The Great Indian Ice Cream Tasting Challenge, scheduled for April 27, 2025, at Next Premia Mall, near Irrum Manzil Metro Station in Hyderabad. The event's excitement kicked off with a grand curtain-raiser hosted at the venue, featuring popular actress Kavya Kalyan Ram, Bigg Boss fame Swetaa Varma, and acclaimed actor Sameer, who actively participated in the blindfolded ice cream tasting activity. Notable dignitaries, including Suhas B. Shetty (Founder & CEO, Organic Creamery by Iceberg Ice Creams) and K.V. Nagendra Prasad (Leasing & Advertising Business Head – L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad Ltd.), along with the organizers, also attended the event.

Sphoorthy Engineering College NCC organized a tree plantation drive and a yoga and fitness session to mark World Health Day. The event aimed to promote health and wellness among cadets and the community, aligning with the 2025 theme: "Healthy Beginnings and Hopeful Futures." The event saw participation from Secretary and Correspondent S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, HODs of all departments, CTO Bhagath, 45 cadets and students. Cadets actively planted trees and took part in the yoga session.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 A large group of musicians
6 The steps of a ladder
7 Do this when you are thirsty
9 Knotted
10 Opposite of newest
12 Mend
14 A holder for cut flowers
17 A slow-moving creature
18 Jewellery for fingers
19 People who hide on ships to avoid paying a fare

DOWN

2 Wash the soap out of
3 A snake noise
4 A seat on a horse
5 Lift up
6 Goes back to a place
8 Baby cats
11 Rest your head on this
13 Pigtail
15 Pester
16 The people working on a ship or aircraft

SOLUTION



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

	6			3		2		
5							1	
		7	5		9	4	8	
					3			
		4	2	7	6	5		
			8					
	4	6	7		8	3		
	8							6
		1		9			5	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Yesterday's solution

6	2	5	4	9	3	1	8	7
7	3	4	8	2	1	6	9	5
1	8	9	7	6	5	4	3	2
4	9	2	6	7	8	3	5	1
8	5	6	3	1	2	9	7	4
3	7	1	5	4	9	2	6	8
2	1	3	9	5	7	8	4	6
5	4	8	1	3	6	7	2	9
9	6	7	2	8	4	5	1	3

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

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REVIEW



Cast: Madhavan, Siddharth, Nayanthara, Meera Jasmine, Nassar, Mohan Raman, Vinay Varma and others

Cinematographer: Viraj Singh Gohil

Music director: Shakthisree Gopalan

Writers: S Sashikanth, Suman Kumar

Producers: Chakravarthy Ramachandra, S Sashikanth

Director: S Sashikanth

Streaming on: Netflix

Rating: 3/5

MADHAVAN'S *STELLAR* PERFORMANCE ELEVATES *TEST* TO NEW HEIGHTS

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

S Sashikanth, who has produced many Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi films under his production house YNOT Studios, makes his directorial debut with *Test*. He roped in a stellar cast, including Madhavan, Siddharth, Nayanthara and Meera Jasmine, making it a significant film in terms of the ensemble. Written by Sashikanth and Suman Kumar, the film is directly released on Netflix, with Chakravarthy Ramachandra as the co-producer. *Test* is a sports drama that coincides with the ongoing IPL season in India, possibly to make the release timely and relevant.

Story

Arjun Venkataraman (Siddharth) is a star cricketer struggling to regain his form. He prioritises cricket over his family and gets one last chance to prove himself in a Test match against Pakistan in Chennai. Meanwhile, Saravanan (Madhavan) is a scientist who invents a cheap fuel to run vehicles. He seeks government approval for his thesis, facing a bribe demand of Rs 50 lakhs.

On the other side, Kumuda (Nayanthara), Saravanan's wife, works as a teacher and dreams of having children. She wishes to undergo IVF treatment, which costs Rs 5 lakhs. Interestingly, Arjun is a schoolmate of Kumuda and she is an ardent fan of his.

The lives of these three individuals become intertwined with the Chennai Test. How do they navigate their personal struggles, and what are the circumstances they face? Will Arjun regain his form in the Chennai Test? How did Saravanan manage to gather the Rs 50 lakh bribe? What happens to Kumuda's dream of having children? To find out, you'll need to watch *Test*.

Analysis

Sashikanth, with his extensive experience as a producer, made a confident directorial debut. He introduces the characters—Arjun, Saravanan, and Kumuda—highlighting their priorities and personal goals. Arjun, a star cricketer, is desperate to regain his form. Saravanan, an intelligent scientist, wants to make his invention accessible to the world. Kumuda, a caring teacher, dreams of starting a family.

The film starts with their individual stories, but things take an interesting turn when Arjun's son enters Kumuda's life. The narrative intensifies as Arjun gets selected for the Chennai Test, attracting attention from bookies. Saravanan, desperate for money, kidnaps Arjun's son to secure the Rs 50 lakhs needed for his project.

From this point, Sashikanth crafts a gripping narrative filled with twists and emotional highs and lows. The film delves into how people, even the most intellectual, can fall to desperate measures when faced with dire circumstances.

Performances

Madhavan delivers a standout performance as Saravanan. His portrayal of a scientist transitioning from a lighthearted character to one driven by desperation is exceptional. His expressions and emotional depth make his performance truly captivating.

Nayanthara shines as Kumuda, showcasing her versatility. Her emotional range is evident, especially in the second half when she deals with the kidnapping situation and supports Saravanan, despite the moral conflict.

Siddharth impresses as Arjun, portraying the internal struggle between his passion for cricket and his responsibilities towards his family. His scenes with the captain and coach are particularly powerful.

Meera Jasmine also stands out as Arjun's wife, delivering an impactful performance. The emotional confrontation between her and Siddharth in the second half is a highlight. The supporting cast adds value, enhancing the film's emotional and narrative depth.

Technical Aspects

The cinematography, led by Viraj Singh Gohil, deserves special mention. The cricket sequences are captured with authenticity, making them feel real and engaging. The camera work adds to the film's dramatic tension, especially in the emotionally charged scenes.

The music by Shakthisree Gopalan complements the narrative effectively. The background score enhances the emotional beats, while the songs align well with the story's tone.

Verdict

Test is a well-written sports drama that unfolds in an intriguing manner. While the initial part of the film is slightly slow, the narrative gains momentum once Madhavan's character takes a dark turn.

It's unfortunate that such a stellar cast, including Madhavan, Nayanthara and Siddharth, couldn't have a theatrical release. However, *Test* is available on Netflix and is definitely worth watching, thanks to Madhavan's exceptional performance.

Pawan Kalyan rushes to Singapore after son injured in school fire

Deputy Chief Minister and actor Pawan Kalyan's younger son, Mark Shankar, was injured in a fire accident at his school in Singapore. On Tuesday, post his political commitments, Pawan Kalyan rushed to Singapore. Meanwhile, according to a statement released by the Deputy CM's PR team, Mark Shankar sustained injuries to his hands and legs and suffered from smoke inhalation. He was immediately rushed to the hospital by school authorities and is currently under treatment.

Mark lives in Singapore with his mother Anna, Pawan Kalyan's wife, along with his sister Polina Anjana. Pawan Kalyan named his son to reflect both his wife's faith and to honour his elder brother Chiranjeevi, whose birth name is Siva Shankara Vara Prasad. Mark Shankar is 8 years old.

Meanwhile, Pawan Kalyan released an official statement, late Thursday evening, stating that Mark is now recovering well and also expressed his gratitude for all the best wishes.



IT'S OFFICIAL

Atlee to direct Allu Arjun in a high-octane pan-India film



Allu Arjun celebrated his birthday on Tuesday, and on this occasion, the official announcement of his film with director Atlee was unveiled. Sun Pictures is producing this massive pan-India project. With his last film *Pushpa 2* becoming a huge success, especially in the Hindi belt, Allu Arjun has risen to national stardom. Now, he's teaming up with visionary director Atlee under the entertainment powerhouse Sun Pictures, led by Kalanithi Maran.

Currently referred to as *Project A22 x A6*, the yet-to-be-titled film is said to be a high-scale venture packed with emotion, action and storytelling rooted in Indian ethos with global appeal. This collaboration marks one of the biggest announcements in recent times. The film is scheduled to go on floors later this year, with more details on the cast, crew and release date to be revealed soon.

Shiva Nirvana launches emotional teaser of *Dear Uma*





Actress Sumaya Reddy brings an emotional love story to the silver screen with *Dear Uma*, a film she has also produced. Popular filmmaker Shiva Nirvana unveiled the teaser of the film and praised the team for its heartfelt execution.

After watching the teaser, Shiva Nirvana lauded the emotional depth and feel-good essence conveyed in the narrative. He highlighted the powerful dialogues and applauded Sumaya Reddy's performance, noting that the film is likely to strike a chord with all audiences, particularly the youth.

The teaser suggests that *Dear Uma* explores themes of two lives, two worlds, two emotions and the bond of love between the lead characters. It also hints at a social message subtly woven into the love story, adding further emotional impact. The film is scheduled to hit the screens on April 18.

Action drama *Kora* gears up for April release

Director Oratashree is gearing up to present his upcoming action-packed film *Kora*, which boasts a unique concept and features Tsunami Kitty in the lead role. The movie also stars Charishma and P. Murthy in pivotal roles. Produced by AB Nandini and AN Balaji, the film is currently in the final stages of post-production.

Censor formalities are presently underway and the filmmakers have confirmed that *Kora* will be released within this month. The exact release date will be officially announced soon.

The song *Oppukundiro*, launched by Academy Award-winning lyricist Chandra Bose, has already generated buzz and captured the audience's attention.

Meanwhile, the makers are wrapping up all pending work to ensure a smooth release.

"We're currently completing censor procedures and very soon, we'll announce the official release date," stated the producer.



Cherasaala to paint a portrait of modern relationships

Actor-director Ram Prakash Gunnam leads the upcoming film *Cherasaala*, which is set to release on April 11. Produced by Kathri Anjumma, the film also stars Sreejith, Nishkala, and Ramya in pivotal roles.

"We are bringing *Cherasaala* with a great concept. Sreejith and Nishkala have given outstanding performances. I have showcased how a relationship should be, how it should not be and the emotional aspects of it," said Gunnam. He added that the film balances emotion with entertainment.

Sreejith, known for his work in Kannada cinema, expressed gratitude for being entrusted with the role. Nishkala, making her Telugu debut, said, "I played a beautiful role as Priya. It's a great joy to work in such a good film."



Akhil Akkineni returns with a bang in *Lenin*

Apart from Allu Arjun, Akhil Akkineni also celebrated his birthday on Tuesday. On this occasion, the teaser and title of his next film Lenin were revealed. Directed by Murali Kishor Abburu, the film is jointly produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Akkineni Nagarjuna.

The teaser features Akhil in a striking avatar, delivering a powerful dialogue: "When you are born you have the breath and no name, when you die you lose your breath and the name lives on." The accent and tone hint at a Rayalaseema backdrop and a gripping action narrative. Sreeleela stars opposite Akhil, while music is composed by S. Thaman.

After a significant break, Akhil is back with *Lenin* and fans are hopeful that this marks a strong comeback for the actor.

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IPL 2025: LSG beat KKR in high-scoring thriller

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kolkata

Lucknow Super Giants held their nerve in a high-octane, high-scoring contest to edge past Kolkata Knight Riders by four runs in a pulsating IPL encounter at Eden Gardens on Tuesday. On a night dominated by batting fireworks, KKR skipper Ajinkya Rahane rolled back the years with a reinvented, power-packed 61 off 35 balls, nearly pulling off KKR's highest-ever run chase.

But LSG's spin attack, led by Ravi Bishnoi and Digvesh Rathi, applied the brakes just in time to seal a thrilling win limiting themm to 234/7.

LSG jumped to fourth spot with six points after their third win, while KKR remained on four points at sixth place.

Earlier, Mitchell Marsh (81 off 39) continued his sensational form with a fourth fifty of the season, while Nicholas Pooran launched a brutal assault with a 21-ball half-century, finishing unbeaten on 87 (not out), as LSG piled up their second-highest IPL total — 238/3 — after being put in to bat. Rahane, usually known for his timing and elegance, stunned the LSG bowlers with audacious strokeplay.

In a transformed avatar, he tore into the Indian pace attack — Akash Deep (43 in 3 overs), Shardul Thakur (30 in 2 overs), and Avesh Khan (17 in 1 over) — setting up KKR's best-ever powerplay score since 2017, racing to 90/1. Rahane's sparkling knock ended against the run of play, falling victim to Shardul Thakur's wide-ball ploy.

After sending down five wides in the over, a frustrated Rahane chased a wide delivery and gifted a simple catch to Nicholas Pooran at cover. Incidentally, LSG bowled 20 wides in a tactical strategy that seemed to have worked in the end.

His transformed innings had put KKR firmly in control. At 162/3 in 13 overs, KKR were cruising with a current run rate of 12.46, comfortably ahead of the required 11 per over, needing just 77 off 42 balls.

But Rahane's dismissal stalled the momentum and triggered a collapse as KKR lost four wickets for just 15 runs, slipping to 177/6 in 15.2 overs.

LSG struck four times in as many overs as the boundaries dried up — KKR went 13 balls without a four or six.

Ravi Bishnoi removed Ramandeep Singh in the next over — a surprising promotion ahead of the in-form Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Rinku Singh. The decision backfired.

Raghuvanshi too fell soon after, undone by a clever low yorker from Avesh Khan.

Attempting a reverse ramp, he only managed to lob a simple catch to Rishabh Pant, leaving KKR suddenly wobbling.

Avesh Khan leaked 14 runs in the penultimate over but Ravi Bishnoi managed to hold his nerve and defend 24 runs in the last over despite Rinku Singh's presence at the crease. Left-arm spinner Digvesh Rathi, a find of the season for LSG, impressed again with 1/33, including the prized wicket of Sunil Narine — his idol — off his very first ball.



His very first ball against Narine (30 off 13) had the Trinidadian mistiming a slash straight to long-off. Aiden Markram completed the catch as Rathi, already under the scanner for his 'notebook' celebration (three demerit points), reprised it — this time writing on the Eden grass.

Earlier once Quinton de Kock (15) fell to a DRS call in the third over, Rahane and Sunil Narine counter-attacked in stunning fashion, dismantling LSG's Indian pace attack with disdain. Their assault yielded 50 runs in just 19 balls, powering KKR to their best powerplay score since 2017 -- 90/1. Akash Deep bled 43 in three overs, Shardul Thakur leaked 30 in two, while Avesh Khan was hammered for 17 in a solitary over as Rahane and Narine tore into them on a batting-friendly Eden surface with a buttery outfield.

On a sultry afternoon, LSG's opening pair of Aiden Markram (47 off 28; 4x4, 2x6) and Marsh (81 off 48; 6x4, 5x6) gave them a blazing start, adding 99 runs off just 62 balls. Pooran then lit up the evening with his 36-ball unbeaten 87, studded with seven fours and eight sixes, to power them to their second highest IPL total.

Krunal's decade-long experience helped RCB defeat MI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Royal Challengers Bengaluru all-rounder Krunal Pandya acknowledged that he had to dig deep into his decade-long experience of playing the game to help his side beat Mumbai Indians by 12 runs in an edge-of-the-seat thriller here on Monday.

Just when it seemed Mumbai Indians would chase down a steep target of 222 with Hardik Pandya (42) and Tilak Varma (56) batting with ferocity, Krunal kept his composure and grabbed three three wickets in the last over to take the wind out of the home team's sails, managing to tie them down to 209 for nine.

"The amount of games I have played in the last 10 years, whatever experience I had, it had to come in right. Sometimes, you want to commit but you know it is important to commit 100 per cent," said Krunal, who returned excellent figures of 4 for 45, after the match.

"So the execution becomes much on your side. I was clear in a way where I wanted to commit fully to whatever ball I wanted to bowl," Krunal added as RCB clinched their first victory at the Wankhede Stadium in 10 years.



On his bonding with brother Hardik, who hit some lofty shots and was on the verge of taking the game away from RCB with his 15-ball knock, Krunal said the two cherish the affection they have for each other. "The bond that we have, at the end of the day, we knew only one (Pandya) would win. But the love and affection we have for each other is very natural. He (Hardik) batted well. We won, and I also wanted to win, he also wanted to win. I feel for him," said Krunal.

Krunal added that RCB skipper Rajat Patidar always back his players, one of the reasons they have started so strongly in IPL 2025. RCB are currently third with six points from four games while MI have just two from five matches. "Rajat has been terrific the way he has started. A captain who gives you that comfort, he gives you the ball and backs your game-plan. Sometimes as a bowler, you want that.

"He has a calm demeanour, does not make things complicated. Been good playing under him. Jitesh (Sharma, 40 not out) has been terrific, he has improved his game. The game awareness while batting has been top-notch, and with the gloves, he has been terrific always."

On whether RCB can break the IPL jinx this time around, Krunal said, "I don't want to jinx it or say it, but we all know what you want at the end of the season. Just want to keep my head down and keep winning." MI skipper Hardik said there was not much his bowlers could do to stop the flow of runs on this surface. "It was a run-fest. The wicket was really good. I was just talking about that to myself. We fell short with two hits, don't know what to say. The way the wicket was, the bowlers did not really have much space to hide.

"It came down to execution. You can stop the batters, but I don't want to be harsh on the bowlers. It was a tough track, not much options. 5-10, maybe 12 runs I can say (we conceded more)," he said.

He was, however, happy that Jasprit Bumrah was back in the side after recovering from an injury.

I still back senior players: MI's Coach Jayawardene

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Mumbai Indians have lost four of their five matches so far in the Indian Premier League, but head coach Mahela Jayawardene has ruled out making too many changes in the playing eleven, saying he would back the senior players to come good.

MI lost by 12 runs against Royal Challengers Bengaluru here on Monday. In the process, RCB snapped their six-match winless streak at the Wankhede Stadium. While Jasprit Bumrah was tidy in his comeback spell, former skipper Rohit Sharma (17) flopped again and even Suryakumar Yadav struggled during his 26-ball knock for 28 runs in a stiff chase.

"Not really," Jayawardene replied when asked if the defeats would lead to changes in MI's playing XI.

"(The) results (may) not (be) going (our way), but at the same time you can agree that we are playing some good cricket as well," he said after a pause.

"I still back the the senior pros and all the guys I put out there, they have the skill. It's just that we need to be a bit more ruthless and at times we're missing out on those one or two overs where we lose our discipline, that's with the bat as well so that's something that we need to rectify," he said.

Jayawardene said bringing in fresh faces into the eighth-placed MI might also not be the right approach.

"Losing is not a great thing. You start doubting yourself and sometimes a fresh face coming into this kind of situation, (it) might be even tougher for that (player) as well without the experience," he said.

"The guys who have the experience, (they) know to handle tough situations and be mentally stronger going forward. That's something that we will bank on," he said.

Jayawardene acknowledged that powerplay performance has been a concern for the five-time winners whose top order, including Rohit, has been unable to fire.

"Rather than (taking) names, powerplay is a concern for us with the ball and the bat. (In) the last few games we were leaking too many runs with the ball in the powerplay, (and) we're not getting the starts and losing wickets, especially in Wankhede (Stadium)," he said. He backed Rohit, who has had scores of 0, 8, 13 and 17 so far, to fight his way through the challenges, especially against left-arm pace. Rohit was dismissed by a left-armer — Yash Dayal — for the second time this season.

"For right-handed batsmen, (facing) left-arm (pace bowling) is a natural thing. It's been there for many years. I can remember Wasim Akram doing the same thing for many years, it's just a natural angle and then creating that space," he said.

"I'm sure Ro (Rohit) has been working on it, he's been practicing hard and he's a very experienced player. I'm sure that's not the thing (that Rohit struggles against left-arm pace), he was trying to give us a good start and he played some really good shots.

"Yash bowled a good ball, it was late swing and fuller, got through Ro's defence. When you have played the game for that long, you need to sometimes give credit to the bowlers as well. I wouldn't read into that too much but it's something that I'm sure that Ro will work hard on it," he added.

> It is just that we need to be a bit more ruthless and at times we are missing out on those one or two overs where we lose our discipline
>
> — MAHELA JAYAWARDENE, HEAD COACH

Jayawardene said MI are not playing the "best cricket" that they could play.

"With the talent that we have, we know (that) we are always in the game. We know that we just need to be patient and and most of the guys are match winners, it's just that we are not getting that tempo going consistently," he said.

"When Hardik (Pandya) walked into bat, the conversation I had with him (was that) try and see whether you can get three big overs in and that's what he delivered and the momentum changed, Tilak (Varma) started going as well so we were close, but not good enough.

"The emotions were great for a while, but we have to be realistic that we're not playing the best cricket that we could play," he said. Jayawardene also expressed his satisfaction on Tilak's response with a 29-ball 56 after being retired out against Lucknow Super Giants.

"I have a lot of faith in the Tilak's ability. That day, he just couldn't get going and it was a tactical call I made. I needed two hits from someone else and we tried that.

"But today I backed him to bat and he delivered and he will continue to deliver for us, so the class is always going to be there," he said.

Jasprit Bumrah in good nick: Jayawardene

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

India pacer Jasprit Bumrah is in "good nick" following a three-month-long injury lay-off and Mumbai Indians want to ease him into competition mode in the Indian Premier League, said head coach Mahela Jayawardene.

Bumrah made his return to top flight cricket here on Monday in MI's IPL clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after another back-related trouble sidelining him in early January. While he was welcomed back with a six over mid-wicket by India teammate Virat Kohli on the first ball, Bumrah couldn't force matters on his own apart from a customary tidy spell as RCB notched up a 12-run win to hand MI their fourth loss in five matches.

"I just spoke to him after the game and he looks in good nick. He's disappointed as well, he wanted a win when he came back but other than that he looks fine. The pace was up, the execution was good," Jayawardene told the media after the match. Jayawardene defended MI's call to introduce Bumrah late into the attack, saying the team management wanted to ease him into the competition.

"(To have Bumrah back) it just gives us more options," Jayawardene said.

"We (have) got two swing bowlers (and) we need to give them that opportunity first up. Boom (Bumrah) is coming back from a three-month layoff as well, so we just wanted to ease him into the competition," the MI head coach said.

"But he bowled well and and controlled things really well, so the more he starts playing game time, he'll get into it. The last time he was playing a Test match so all of a sudden he's playing a T20 so we need to understand that, but the skills were brilliant," he added. Jayawardene sounded assured of Bumrah's progress as well as current status in terms of fitness and form.

"Yesterday (Sunday) was his first day where he bowled to batsmen. That (Bumrah's bowling) is something that we lacked in the last few games, so we have (now) that as well," he said.

"But we just need to put all these pieces together and and execute a good game to give us confidence so that we can move on," he said.

Jayawardene said while Bumrah had bowling sessions at BCCI's Centre of Excellence, he of course lacked game-time and building that was their focus during training on Sunday.

Rajat helps RCB discover pathway to success in IPL, says Sunil Gavaskar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Legendary batter Sunil Gavaskar feels the "relaxed" approach of skipper Rajat Patidar has helped Royal Challengers Bengaluru to eventually discover a pathway to success in the IPL after years of disappointments.

RCB are on a roll in the initial part of the IPL, and they have scored their first win at Chepauk in 17 years and ended a six-match losing streak at the Wankhede Stadium.

"Patidar certainly seems liberated as the leader. Seventeen years without a title, and now they understand what needs to be done to win. With a relaxed, laid-back captain, others are also stepping up with their experience to help move the team forward," Gavaskar told JioStar.

Gavaskar also lauded the role played by Dinesh Karthik, the RCB mentor.

"He has seniors who are always willing to lend a hand, and a strong support staff. Someone like Dinesh Karthik - people don't talk enough about his influence.

"DK is the kind of guy who spends time with younger players, offering guidance and inputs. Rajat is lucky to have that environment — a group that's been hungry for success," said Gavaskar.

The former Indian skipper said Virat Kohli's willingness to play lofted shots have made him an even bigger threat in this edition of the IPL.

"The big difference over the last season and a half has been his intent to play lofted shots much earlier. Earlier, those lofted shots would come later in the innings, but now he's looking to take risks from ball one, and that's making a huge difference. "Bowlers who were prepared for his drives and flicks are now seeing the ball going over the infield for boundaries. That change in mindset has thrown the bowlers off," he added.

Gavaskar also urged the misfiring senior batter Rohit Sharma of Mumbai Indians to be a bit more selective about his shot-making.

"When he gets out in the power play, it hurts - whether it's for Mumbai Indians, India. I believe his shot selection needs a bit of tempering.

"You have to be aggressive and score as much as possible in the first six overs, but choosing the right risks is key," he said.

The 75-year-old said star pacer Jasprit Bumrah, who returned to competitive cricket for the first time since January after recovering from a back injury, will keep getting improved as he plays more matches.

"The first and foremost thing was seeing him come in steaming and bowling at his usual pace — over 140 km/h.

"I believe that with a few more games under his belt, he'll likely hit 150 km/h as he gains more confidence in his back and feels secure enough to bowl at full tilt," he noted.

Took me 3-4 years to fi- d what I am as cricketer i- IPL: Padikkal

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Young batter Devdutt Padikkal acknowledged that the constant shifting through the teams "was challenging" and delayed his blooming as a cricketer in the Indian Premier League.

Devdutt began his IPL career at Royal Challengers Bengaluru in 2020 and shifted to Rajasthan Royals after two seasons. After being in the ranks of RR for two years (2022-2023), the left-hander moved to Lucknow Super Giants in 2024, before returning to his home franchise RCB this season.

He is yet to fire big this season, but Devdutt showed signs of being in his dominant self with a 22-ball 37 against Mumbai Indians here on Monday.

"It's definitely challenging when you are not settled on any side. As a 21-year-old, I was in RCB and when I made that move to another franchise, it was a little uncomfortable, obviously," he told the media in the post-match press meet.

"I wasn't very confident about myself and it took me three-four years to really find what I am as a cricketer in the IPL. It's not that easy. You try your hardest, but at times it just doesn't work," he added.

Devdutt said he had made a dedicated pre-season effort to iron out certain flaws in his batting.

"Coming into this season, obviously, I had to work really hard. I knew there were things that I needed to improve on. There were lots of aspects of the game that I wasn't up to the mark I felt in the last year. I had a good couple of months before the IPL started and I feel all that hard work is coming into effect now," he said.

Devdutt, who added 91 runs for the second wicket with Virat Kohli to help RCB set a huge target of 222 against MI, said batting with the star batter was always a "pleasure".

"Obviously, batting with Virat is a pleasure. He's done this over and over again for so many years so that's the level of consistency that you aim for as a young cricketer playing the IPL," he said.

"He makes it look easy, but it isn't that easy to be honest, to come in every single year and get above 400, 500 runs. As youngsters in the team, we are looking to learn that from him," he said. Devdutt said Rohit Sharma's struggles against left-arm pace was the reason behind bringing on Yash Dayal early into the attack.

"That is actually true, I don't attend the bowlers' meeting. But I am aware that a lot of left-hand pacers have bowled to Rohit in the past and had success against him. So, I'm sure that was the thinking



behind that move," he said.

Devdutt did not reveal much about RCB's elation after they defeated Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium after six attempts but took a more pragmatic view of the victory.

"To be honest, every game is important for us. It doesn't matter who we are playing and where we are playing. That was the same way when we were playing CSK (in Chennai). It was the same when we played KKR (in Kolkata) and it's the same now that we have played MI (in Mumbai)," he said.

"It's important that we take every game at a time and try to win each and every game because you never know where the momentum takes you in this tournament. I really feel that we went out there, wanted to win, and we got that," he added.

Devdutt said it was "boring" to be left out during the team's fielding innings and hoped to get more time in the field. He was swapped with Impact Sub Suyansh Sharma during RCB's target defence.

"Honestly, it's not ideal. I've always enjoyed fielding and that's something I've always wanted to do in every single game," he said.

"I feel I can make that difference when I'm on the field. But the team is set up in such a way that I have to be the one that sits out and we have some great fielders on the ground even then."

"It is a rule that they feel helps the game. Hopefully, I can eventually start fielding again because it's pretty boring sitting out and watching," he added.