VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

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Raised concerns of radicalisation in B'desh

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NIRMALA HIGHLIGHTS INDIA'S INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES



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Jack is the perfect film for me after Tillu Square: SIDDU



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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

The BJP-led Centre is exploiting citizens through excessive taxation and unaccounted cess collections. People trusted your promise of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.' But all they got was 'Maximum Taxation, Minimum Relief.' Immediately roll back the hike in petrol and LPG prices. It is a heartfelt cry from the crores of Indians whose pockets are being bled dry while the Centre watches silently



— *KT Rama Rao, BRS MLA*

P4

DON'T MISS...

New liquor policy only study: Minister

Minister for Excise and Mines Kollu Ravindra reiterated the Government's commitment to implement a new liquor police after a comprehensive study. The Minister held a review meeting with the excise officials on the Padmavati Mahila University campus here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister made it clear that the liquor policy, which is being implemented in six States, was being studied. After a comprehensive study, a transparent and effective liquor policy would be...

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Russia invites PM for V-Day Parade

Russia has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the May 9 celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of victory over Germany in World War II, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko has said. Moscow is expecting the Indian Prime Minister at the May 9 parade. The invitation has already been sent and the visit is being worked out, Rudenko was quoted as saying by the state-run Tass news agency. "It's being worked out...He has an invitation," Rudenko said on Tuesday. Russia has invited leaders...

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Rupee dives deeper amid global turmoil

The rupee extended its losing streak for the fourth straight session and settled 45 paise lower at 86.71 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, amid escalating tariff turbulence globally even as the Reserve Bank reduced key interest rate by 25 basis points as a growth-stimulus measure. Even though crude oil prices fell sharply to a record level and the American currency remained weak, the Indian currency stayed under pressure due to incessant outflow of foreign funds and lacklustre sentiment in the...

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IPL: RCB vs DC Interesting clash

An intriguing battle is on the cards when fearless Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Delhi Capitals (DC) clash in an IPL match, where the outcome will be governed by a clutch of exciting personal match-ups, here on Thursday. The Capitals have three wins from as many matches and the Royal Challengers bagged three victories from four games. That record testifies their wonderful shapeshifting ability according to opponents and conditions. Royal Challengers have mastered...

-SPORTS

CM advocates use of AI to combat tax evasion

OFFICIALS URGED TO FOCUS ON NEW INCOME SOURCES

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu stressed the need for increased revenue generation and strict tax collection during a review meeting with officials from revenue-generating departments held at the State Secretariat on Wednesday. He urged officials to focus on identifying new income sources, addressing low revenue generation areas, and ensuring that all tax-related processes are streamlined through technology.

The Chief Minister is keen on digitising the entire tax collection process, including payments, receipts, and notices. He highlighted the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in identifying tax evaders, citing a recent example where AI, through occupancy certificates issued by the Municipality Department, flagged over 1,000 builders who had not registered themselves. Naidu instructed officials to ensure that the state only grants approvals to entities with valid GST registrations and advocated for the use of AI to detect tax evasion across all departments.





The entire tax collection process, including payments, receipts, and notices. He highlighted the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in identifying tax evaders, citing a recent example where AI, through occupancy certificates issued by the Municipality Department, flagged over 1,000 builders who had not registered themselves.

Underlining the government's stance, Chandrababu clarified that, unlike previous administrations, the TDP-led NDA government aims to facilitate tax compliance without harassing traders.

He directed officials to work closely with the business community, ensuring that all taxes are paid while also promoting the ease of tax-related processes through technology.

The CM also stressed the importance of interlinking data from various departments, such as the GST portal, the State Data Centre, and the Andhra Pradesh Commercial Taxes Department (APCTD), to facilitate better tax collection.

Continued on Page 2



CM lays foundation stone for his house in Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone for his residence in Amaravati, the State capital, on Wednesday. The event took place with the Chief Minister and his family participating in the groundbreaking ceremony, held on the E9 road behind the Velagapudi Secretariat. Chandrababu's wife, Nara Bhuvaneswari, their son Nara Lokesh and family members Brahmani and Devansh were also present during the ceremony.

The groundbreaking was scheduled according to an auspicious muhurat at 8.51 AM, as determined by Vedic scholars.

Continued on Page 2



RBI CUTS INTEREST RATE

Home, auto loans to get cheaper

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Home, auto and other loans are likely to cost less as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut interest rates on Wednesday for a second consecutive time and signalled more easing to come as it sought to bolster the economy that is facing further pressure from damaging US tariffs.



The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), consisting of three central bank members and an equal number of external members, voted unanimously to cut the repurchase or repo rate by 25 basis points to 6 per cent. It had reduced rates by an equal measure in February -- the first cut since May 2020.

The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs. With a 25 bps cut in the repo rate, all external benchmark lending rates (EBLR) linked to it will come down. And if the banks fully pass on this to the borrowers, equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home, auto and personal loans will decline by 25 bps.

The move lowers borrowing costs to the lowest level since November 2022, amid easing inflation and a fall in oil prices.

RBI changed its policy stance to "accommodative" from "neutral", indicating the possibility of more rate cuts in future, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said while announcing the MPC decisions.

The rate cut came on a day when the full 26 per cent additional tariffs on Indian goods exported to the US came into effect. The US tariffs exacerbate uncertainties, with some economists predicting a 20-40 basis point drag on Indian GDP growth in the current fiscal year that started on April 1.



AP is prime destination for hospitality investments

Minister Durgesh attends 20th Hotel Investment Conference – South Asia 2025

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA/MUMBAI

Andhra Pradesh is rapidly emerging as a prime destination for tourism investments, with a strong focus on hospitality projects, including luxury resorts and hotels. Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Cinematography, Kandula Durgesh, emphasised the State's growing tourism sector, supported by strategic location, robust infrastructure, and proactive government initiatives. Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the State is positioning itself to become a leading hub for both leisure and business tourism in South Asia.

Minister Durgesh, along with State officials, participated in the 20th Hotel Investment Conference – South Asia 2025 (HICSA), which kicked off at The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake on Wednesday. The event is a significant gathering for the hospitality industry, with over 20 prominent hotel and travel companies in attendance. Minister Durgesh and his team engaged with representatives from national and international hotel giants including Marriott, IHG, IHCL, Accor, Chalet, Imagica World Entertainment Limited, Hama, BNK Group, Ventive Hospitality, Park Hotels, Lemon Tree, Westin, Blackstone, Hilton, Suba Hotels, The Beach AHS, Ambuja Notiya, SRT Hotels, and Royal Orchid.

Additionally, they met with key stakeholders, industry leaders, hotel investors, developers, operators, and experts from across South Asia to discuss potential opportunities in Andhra Pradesh's hospitality sector.

Continued on Page 2

Siva Prasad gets additional charge of APSHCL MD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

M Siva Prasad, Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer of the 2010 batch, has been entrusted with the additional responsibility of Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Ltd. (APSHCL). Chief Secretary K Vijayanand issued orders to this effect on Wednesday.

Siva Prasad, currently serving as the Director of Gram Volunteers/Ward Volunteers and Village Secretariats/Ward Secretariats (GSWS), will assume the full additional charge of the Managing Director's position with immediate effect. The appointment will remain in place until further orders are issued.

Anitha: YSRCP's security breach allegation a 'staged drama'

HM asserts full police deployment during Jagan's visit

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha, on Wednesday, dismissed allegations of a security lapse during YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's visit to Ramagiri mandal in Sri Sathya Sai district, terming it a "pre-planned political drama".

Jagan, who visited the district on Tuesday to console the family of K. Lingamaiah—allegedly murdered by Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supporters—returned to Bengaluru by road, with YSRCP leaders attributing the decision to helicopter damage and citing security failure. Rebutting these allegations, Anitha clarified that despite Jagan currently serving only as an MLA, the government had provided extensive security arrangements.



"Over 1,100 police personnel, including 250 at the helipad, were deployed. Drones, body-worn cameras, PA systems, fire tenders, ambulances, and gas detectors were also in place," she said. She stated that the YSRCP leader landed at 11:04 a.m., and the crowd was managed efficiently.

Continued on Page 2

Medtech innovation hub: AMTZ, FORGE join hands

Strategic partnership launches Forge Factory, Academy, and Accelerator to empower startups

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major push for indigenous medical technology, Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ) has joined hands with FORGE Innovation & Ventures to establish a comprehensive innovation ecosystem at Medivalley Research Square, Visakhapatnam.



The collaboration will roll out three key initiatives—Forge Factory, Forge Academy, and Forge Accelerator—aimed at providing end-to-end support for startups in the medtech sector. The goal is to position AMTZ as a national hub for affordable and homegrown healthcare solutions.

Forge Factory will offer startups access to advanced labs, prototyping tools, and testing facilities, enabling real-time device development.

Continued on Page 2

AP Waqf Board not selling Waqf lands: Chairman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP State Waqf Board Chairman Sheikh Abdul Aziz has refuted the allegations of the Waqf Board selling its assets as 'baseless'. Speaking at a press conference organised at the State Waqf Board office in Vijayawada on Wednesday, he said that any decision on the Waqf Board's assets would be taken after careful consideration. He said that out of 69,000 acres of Waqf Board lands, 36,000 acres have been encroached in the State.

Continued on Page 2

Green signal for Amaravati-Hyd Greenfield Highway

CENTRE FOCUSES ON PENDING ISSUES FROM AP REORGANISATION ACT

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA/DELHI

During the review meeting on Wednesday, the Central government gave the green signal to the Amaravati-Hyderabad Greenfield Expressway. The Ministry of Roads and Highways was instructed to begin work on the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the highway. The government also expedited the approval process for the Regional Ring Road (RRR) in Telangana's northern section. Furthermore, the Home Ministry directed the Petroleum Department to examine opportunities for establishing another refinery in AP, as requested by the State government.

The Central government has turned its focus on unresolved issues in the Andhra Pradesh (AP) Reorganisation Act, addressing various concerns related to both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



On pending issues related to the bifurcation of the two States and proposals from both the AP and Telangana governments. Following the meeting, the Ministry of Home Affairs sent the meeting minutes to the Chief Secretaries of AP and Telangana.

On February 3, a high-level meeting was chaired by Govind Mohan, Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, with officials from 15 different departments. The meeting included senior officials from departments such as Roads and Highways, Steel, Coal, Agriculture, Petroleum, and Railways, among others. Discussions focused on pending issues related to the bifurcation of the two States and proposals from both the AP and Telangana governments. Following the meeting, the Ministry of Home Affairs sent the meeting minutes to the Chief Secretaries of AP and Telangana.

The Ministry of Railways was directed to intensify efforts to ensure that railway zone operations centred around Visakhapatnam begin within the next two years.

Proposals for creating corridors linking Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, Kurnool and Hyderabad were also reviewed, with positive recommendations to proceed with the plans.

Additionally, the Central government addressed pending funds meant for backward areas in AP, directing officials to take necessary actions for their release. The Ministry of Home Affairs also recommended discussions with NITI Aayog regarding the allocation of these funds to Telangana.

This marks a significant step forward in the implementation of key projects and the resolution of pending matters from the AP Reorganisation Act.

TRUMP TARIFFS TAKE EFFECT

China hits back, slaps 84% levy on US goods

PNS ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday hit back at US President Donald Trump's tariffs on Chinese exports with 84 per cent levies on its imports from America, intensifying the trade war between the top two economies of the world.



The hike in levies, up from 34 per cent, came hours after Trump's explosive new tariffs on 60 countries, including 104 per cent on China, came into effect after midnight Wednesday US time.

Trump's threat of the additional 50 per cent tariffs on China on Monday came after Beijing refused to withdraw the 34 per cent tariffs on US goods by Tuesday, which it had announced to retaliate Trump's 34 per cent levy on Chinese goods announced last week.

China will hike the additional tariffs on products imported from the United States to 84 per cent effective Thursday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported quoting the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council's announcement on Wednesday.

The announcement follows the US decision to raise the reciprocal tariffs on Chinese imports from 34 per cent to 84 per cent, a move that is "going further down the wrong path and seriously infringes on China's legitimate rights and interests," according to the Commission.

Twist things and grab the limelight, that is, today's politics

The Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata have ample instances of righteousness winning over devilish characters and the struggle of the good till the last to eliminate the bad of any kind. This was the ethical message of our revered puranas, from which, generations together, we learn and mend ourselves so as not to fall into the clutches of the bad. Lord Rama taught us how good a ruler must be, how ideal a husband should be, and how emulative a brother ought to be. And in the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna explained how one should uncover the bad and expose its triviality. Krishna's way of dealing with things was completely different compared to Lord Rama. Krishna employed all kinds of machinations to expose the bad intentions of the Kauravas and stands by the Pandavas as the protector of good over evil.

In both of our epics, we cannot think of Rama and Krishna in isolation from Ravana and the Kauravas. Concerning them only, we can eulogise the goodness of Rama and the acts of Krishna. Those were the days when the rule of law was paramount. Ethics, morality, and righteousness prevailed. The fact of the matter is that both Ravana and Kauravas, for that matter, Duryodhana, did not need publicity. They acquired a negative image because of their deeds that were no less than the heroes of the epics.

It is the art of twisting things that is running the political parties and giving them the boost they need. This is what is happening on the political stage of the Telugu states, where the opposition parties are making use of everything to blast the ruling parties to be in the limelight, not missing a single day to grab political focus

In modern-day politics, an act a day gives you an ample amount of political mileage. One need not have to be a strong political leader or at least have a stronger presence in the Legislature; what you need is the knack of turning day-to-day occurrences to your side or claiming everything for your side in such a way that causes ripples in the ruling party. It is the art of twisting things that is running the political parties and giving them the boost they need. This is what is happening on the political stage of the Telugu states, where the opposition parties are making use of everything to blast the ruling parties to be in the limelight, not missing a single day to grab political focus.



BUDDHAVARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD
brajeswaraprasad1@gmail.com

Take the case of YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh and the Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) and the BJP in Telangana. These parties are getting more political mileage than the ruling parties of the respective states. In Andhra Pradesh, no day passes without TV channels mentioning the name of YSRCP boss Jagan Mohan Reddy, and in Telangana, no day passes without the channels mentioning the BRS brass. If we go by the debates on the TV channels in Andhra Pradesh, it is mostly over issues concerning the rule of YSRCP and its leader. In this way, Jagan is getting more publicity than ruling party leaders. It is just by igniting issues by throwing a claim or two that have no substance. Based on these, the channels, one after another, take up issues and hold lengthy debates to expose the hollowness of the opposition leader's claim. Of late, so many such issues about the capital city, Amaravathi, to TTD, the channels are hell bent on debunking the YSRCP's claims or criticisms of them.

This kind of comment by opposition parties is a strategy to be in the limelight or not to lose their political significance. Whether it is good or bad, the parties have to be in the reckoning, for in politics, losing a day is losing the career and losing the confidence of the people. With the plethora of TV channels, YouTube, and social media, the opposition parties do not need to be substantive in their comments; whatever they say creates ripples and gives them the political mileage they want. So, in this era of social media percolation and proliferation of TV channels, an issue is enough to trigger an uproar. Stakeholders grab it to extract their share of publicity. Whatever the parties or their leaders utter, it travels across the channels without bothering about its substance or relevance, thereby giving the concerned the political mileage that they otherwise wouldn't have gotten. Whether it is your utterance or utter nonsense, it gets wider coverage depending on the stature of the leader or the person. An issue a day keeps the opposition in the limelight and gives it the necessary maneuverability till the elections. Until the day of reckoning, twist things and turn the limelight to get focused!

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Minister criticises Jagan's 'irresponsible' remarks

An affront to public decency and State institutions

PNS ■ PENUKONDA



The Minister for BC Welfare, Savitha, expressed strong criticism of former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's comments, calling them irresponsible and highly inappropriate. Speaking to reporters at her camp office in the town on Wednesday, she questioned Jagan's maturity, particularly his remarks about police and his recent visit to Papireddypalli.

Savitha condemned Jagan's statements about stripping police uniforms and his comments directed at law enforcement, calling them an affront to public decency and State institutions. She accused Jagan of trying to provoke people and create unrest to maintain his relevance, particularly pointing out how he had been restricted to just 11 seats in the 2024 elections.

Savitha remarked that Jagan's dream of ruling for 30 years had been shattered, leading him to become irrational.

She also reminded Jagan of his history of exploiting "death politics" for personal and political gain. Referring to the untimely death of his father, YS Rajasekhara Reddy, Savitha said Jagan had used the tragedy for political leverage, although he never visited the locations where his father passed away or was brought back. Similarly, she mentioned how Jagan used the death of his uncle YS Vivekananda Reddy for political mileage.

Savitha questioned Jagan's indifference to the numerous murders and suicides during his tenure as Chief Minister, which had affected marginalised communities. She recalled several incidents, including the tragic deaths of families in Kurnool, victims of harassment by YSRCP leaders, and the killing of a man named Raj in Bittapalli village. She accused Jagan's government of using brute force and violence against the public.

She also reminded him of the role the police had played in ensuring his safety during his 2014-2019 Padayatra. While police had risked their lives to provide protection, she accused Jagan of undermining them during his time in power from 2019-2024, forcing them into unconstitutional acts.

Savitha urged Jagan to learn decency and conduct from Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, who she praised for his respectful and principled approach, even in difficult situations, such as during political violence and public protests.

Poster unveiled for AIKS national meet

Conference to be held in Nagapattinam from April 15-17

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham State president G Eswaraiah, general secretary KVV Prasad, vice-president Yallamanda Rao, member Rajendra Prasad, and AP Koulu Rythuala Sangham State general secretary Jamalaiah unveiling the wall poster for AIKS national conference at the Dasari Bhavan in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham State president G Eswaraiah and general secretary KVV Prasad unveiled a wall poster at the CPI State Office, Dasari Bhavan, on Wednesday, promoting the upcoming All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) national conference, set to be held in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, from April 15 to 17.

Addressing the media, the 7 said the conference would highlight the deepening agrarian crisis in the country. Also, they called for nationwide farmers' movements to secure cultivators' rights and address the systemic issues plaguing Indian agriculture sector.

They reiterated their long-standing demand for the Central government to implement a Minimum Support Price (MSP) at 50 per cent above the comprehensive cost of production (C2+50), in accordance with the recommendations of Dr MS Swaminathan. They urged the Centre to pass legislation providing a legal guarantee for the MSP formula. They noted that this would be a central agenda at the upcoming conference.

Criticising the NDA government led by the BJP, the leaders alleged that farmers have been denied MSP during its tenure. They said farmers continue to suffer losses due to crop failures caused by natural calamities, leaving many unable to recover their investments. They also charged the Central government with failing to provide adequate compensation or relief to the affected farmers.

Highlighting the psychological and financial toll, Eswariah and Prasad stated that farmer suicides are rising, driven by unmanageable debt and a loss of self-confidence. To prevent further tragedies, they demanded a nationwide waiver of all crop loans, including those taken by tenant farmers. They also called for a comprehensive, free crop insurance scheme to safeguard both land-owning and tenant farmers.

The Rythu Sangham leaders also strongly opposed the acquisition of agricultural lands under the guise of industrial and infrastructural development, alleging that farmers receive only nominal compensation. They demanded strict implementation of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013.

Further, they criticised the Central government's policies, calling for the withdrawal of the National Agricultural Market Policy, the Digital Agriculture Mission, and the new Cooperative Act, which they said were designed to favor corporate interests and undermine the cooperative sector.

Others present at the press conference included P Jamalaiah, State general secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Koulu Rythula Sangham, M Yallamanda Rao, State vice-president of Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham, and member M Rajendra Prasad.



Tirumala laddus ready for Vontimitta Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Tirumala Srivari Laddu Prasadams are ready to be distributed to the devotees who will attend the Vontimitta Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam on April 11. The packing of the laddus was carried out at Srivari Seva Sadan – 2 in Tirumala on Wednesday with the help of Srivari Sevaks.

Under the guidance of Deputy EO (General) Sri Siva Prasad and AEO Sri Balaraju, around 300 male and female Srivari Sevaks packed 70,000 laddus.

These laddus will be distributed as Srivari prasadam to the devotees participating in the grand festival of Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam, which will be held on April 11 from 6.30-8.30 pm as part of the ongoing Sri Kodandarama Swamy annual Brahmotsavam in Vontimitta in Kadapa district.

CM lays foundation...

Continued from Page 1

Farmers from Amaravati, who have long hoped for the development of Amaravati into a world-class capital, decorated the site with flowers and rangolis. Notably, women farmers worked through the night to decorate the area and later presented new clothes to the Chief Minister and his family.

Lokesh shared his emotions on social media, expressing his pride and gratitude. In his post on 'X', he wrote, "Today is a deeply emotional day for me and our entire family. With immense pride and gratitude, I witnessed my father, @ncbn garu, perform the Bhumi Puja for our home in Amaravati — the capital that lives in the hearts of millions. This moment is far more than just the beginning of construction. It is the rekindling of a dream, the dream of a world-class capital, Amaravati, that my father envisioned for the future of our state."

Satya Kumar flays Jagan's disdain for police uniforms

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Satya Kumar Yadav has come down heavily on former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for his apparent dislike of police uniforms, calling it a deeply ingrained trait inherited from his grandfather, late Raja Reddy. In a post on social media platform X, Satya Kumar alleged that Jagan's aversion to law enforcement stems from his family's feudal mindset, which contradicts the principle of equality before the law enshrined in the Constitution.

"Jagan's family has always been against the idea of equality under the law," Satya Kumar said, adding that they view themselves as being above the law, which is a mindset they have inherited through generations. According to the Minister, the police uniform represents the rule of law and the Constitution, something Jagan's family has consistently rejected.

The Minister also referenced Jagan's actions while in power, pointing out that the former CM showed clear disdain for the police and law enforcement agencies. He specifically highlighted Jagan's previous threat to remove police uniforms upon regaining power, suggesting it was part of a broader plan to undermine the police's adherence to the law and transform the force into a personal army.

The Minister assured the police force that their uniform and authority were secure, stressing that the people of Andhra Pradesh would never grant Jagan another opportunity to alter the nature of law enforcement in the State. "The lions on their caps will continue to roar," he stated, pledging support to the police in the face of any attempts to erode their authority.

AP Waqf...

Continued from Page 1

He said that the salaries of the Waqf Board employees and welfare schemes for poor Muslims would have to be managed through the revenue generated from the lands.

"Various organisations have been asked to give an Expression of Interest to conduct commercial activities in the vacant Waqf Board lands to increase the income of the Waqf Board. Many companies have come forward to do so, especially from the UK and Dubai, to run various types of businesses," he said. He said that the companies that have given ideas and their names will be sent to the State government, and the government will decide whether to go for tenders or not after considering their suggestions. Aziz said that the Waqf Board will go ahead as per the decision of the State government.

Chairman Aziz said that Muslim children are in a situation where they cannot study corporate education, so they will conduct a talent test and provide them with corporate education.

'Impact of Trump's tariffs not yet known'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The impact of US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs is not yet known and New Delhi's strategy to deal with the situation is to firm up a bilateral trade pact with Washington by fall of this year, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday. In first detailed response to the US policy on tariff, Jaishankar said India is perhaps the only country to reach an understanding with Washington to seal a trade deal after Trump assumed the presidency for the second time.

The external affairs minister's comments came hours after Trump's sweeping tariffs against around 50 countries including India came into force triggering massive trade disruptions and fears of a global economic recession.

India is among the countries that have adopted a cautious approach in reacting to potentially seismic action, saying it is engaged with the Trump administration on the bilateral trade agreement (BTA).

Medtech innovation hub...

Continued from Page 1

Forge Academy will provide specialised training, mentorship, and regulatory support to equip innovators with industry-specific skills. Meanwhile, Forge Accelerator will back early-stage ventures with seed funding, business strategy, and access to domestic and international markets. Describing the partnership as a "milestone in building self-reliance," Dr. Jitendar Sharma, Managing Director and Founder CEO of AMTZ, stated, "This collaboration paves the way for a robust innovation ecosystem that empowers startups to transform bold ideas into meaningful healthcare solutions. It's a stride toward achieving self-reliance in the medtech sector." Echoing this vision, Vish Sahasranamam, Co-founder and CEO of FORGE, highlighted the transformative scope of the partnership, stating, "AMTZ is already recognised as a world-class infrastructure. With this collaboration, our goal is to build a vibrant innovation ecosystem that drives impactful solutions and reinforces India's public healthcare systems."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	
Thrayodasi:	Apr 09 10:55 PM to Apr 11 01:00 AM
Chathurdasi:	Apr 11 01:00 AM to Apr 12 03:21 AM
Nakshatram:	
Purva Phalguni:	Apr 09 09:57 AM to Apr 10 12:24 PM
Uttara Phalguni:	Apr 10 12:24 PM to Apr 11 03:10 PM
Rahukalam:	1:49 PM to 3:22 PM
Yamagandam:	6:07 AM to 7:39 AM
Varjyam:	08:26 PM to 10:13 PM
Gulika:	9:12 AM to 10:44 AM
Amritakalam:	05:20 AM to 07:06 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:52 AM to 12:42 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 36°C
Humidity: 72%
Sunrise: 5:56 AM
Sunset: 6:22 PM
Updated: April 9, 2025 5:00 PM

CM advocates use...

Continued from Page 1

He suggested that AI could play a key role in automating notices to taxpayers and addressing grievances, further accelerating the official machinery. The Chief Minister set a revenue target of Rs 1,37,412 crore for the state in the current financial year, emphasising the need for 100 per cent target achievement. While the State has seen a 2.2 per cent growth in its overall revenue for the 2024-25 fiscal compared to the previous year, Naidu noted that non-tax revenue is still below expectations. Tax revenue, however, showed growth, with GST up by 4.9 per cent, professional taxes by 15.2per cent, and excise revenue by an impressive 24.3per cent. Notably, the state recorded a 33 per cent increase in excise revenue from October 2024 to March 2025, with a total of Rs 4,330 crore collected during this period.

In addition to this, the Municipal department also saw a Rs 500-crore increase in revenue for 2024-25 compared to the previous fiscal year. However, Chandrababu pointed out that tax dues amounting to Rs 2,500 crore remain pending, particularly concerning taxes on Central and State properties and vacant lands.

Officials shared that a significant improvement in property tax collection was achieved after the announcement of a 50% interest subsidy in March, with Rs 240 crore collected in just six days.

AP is prime...

Continued from Page 1

Durgesh extended an invitation to these stakeholders to establish luxury resorts and hotels in major tourist cities like Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Amaravati, and Rajahmundry, which are expected to draw a significant number of visitors in the coming years.

Highlighting the favourable investment climate, the Minister assured that Andhra Pradesh provides an attractive platform for tourism investments. He also emphasised that the government is offering enhanced subsidies for investors in the tourism sector, which will include all industry-standard incentives available to other sectors. Tourism Secretary Ajay Jain, Tourism MD Amrapali Kata, and AP Tourism Authority Investment Promotion Nodal Officer Satya Prabha were also part of the delegation, strengthening the State's push for significant growth in its tourism and hospitality sectors.

This push to attract major hospitality investments is expected to boost both the State's economy and its profile as a sought-after tourist destination in South Asia.

Anitha: YSRCP's...

Continued from Page 1

At 12:42 p.m., the party claimed helicopter damage; however, the same chopper took off without issue at 12:56 p.m. "This raises questions about the authenticity of their claims," she observed. Alleging that the YSRCP intentionally misled the public, Anitha said the return by road was pre-planned. She condemned Jagan's remarks against the police, stating, "Such derogatory comments are unacceptable. Officers were injured in the line of duty and are now being vilified unfairly." Responding to provocative comments by former YSRCP MLA Karumuri Nageswara Rao, she warned that any attempts to incite unrest would invite strict legal action. A detailed inquiry has been initiated to examine the entire episode.

In a separate media briefing after reviewing law and order with senior officials from the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram, and Manyam, the Home Minister highlighted Andhra Pradesh's strides in crime prevention and enforcement. She noted that law and order had significantly improved since the coalition government assumed office nine months ago. "Advanced tools such as CCTV networks, drones, and fingerprint scanners have accelerated investigations, with many arrests made within 24 hours," she said.

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E-PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE No.04/HOD/UG&F/ADCL/2025-26, Dt. 09.04.2025
Name of the work: Greenery Refurbishment works of AP Secretariat with one month Maintenance at Velagapudi, Amaravati. **ECV: Rs.97.25 Lakhs.** The above bid can be downloaded on "ap-eprocurement" portal from **10.04.2025 to 16.04.2025, 3.00 PM** and due date for submission of Bid on **16.04.2025 up to 3.30 PM,** bid opening is on **16.04.2025 @ 4.00 PM.** Please refer to **www.apeprocurement.gov.in** for details. For any further clarifications Contact: **Sri. V.S.Dharmaja,** Joint Director (I/c), ADCL Limited, Vijayawada, Mobile Number: **89777 58150.**
Sd/- Chairperson & Managing Director, ADCL, Vijayawada.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
EOI Notice No.1/ 2025-26/Appointment of 3rd party Quality Control/ Dt.07-04-2025
Sealed expression of interest is invited in offline for appointment of consultants for Appointment of 3rd party Quality Control Agency for all Engineering works pertains to Tribal Welfare Engineering Department in 26 Districts of Andhra Pradesh from reputed Organizations/firms. The details of scope of work, brief objective and other details can have from this office during office hours on all working days. All the details in sealed covers A&B are to be submitted to this office in person or through post on or before **Dt.25.04.2025 @ 4.00 PM**
Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
T.W. Visakhapatnam
DIPR R.O.No: 1937/SCL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22, Dt: 09.04.2025

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The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | APRIL 10, 2025

Govt forms committees for auction of Agri Gold properties

Aims to ensure transparent and legally compliant process for the sale of properties

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has issued orders to form both State and district-level committees to facilitate the auction of Agri Gold properties, in compliance with directives from the Special Court in Eluru. This move follows a request from the Director General of Police, Crime Investigation Department and aims to ensure a transparent and legally compliant process for the sale of properties linked to the controversial Agri Gold Group.

The State-level Committee will be chaired by the State Chief Secretary and will include a team of senior officials from key departments. The committee will comprise the Secretaries of the Information & Public Relations and Information Technology Departments, the Inspector General of Stamps & Registrations, the Special Secretary of Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) and retired IPS officer Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao. The Director General of Police (CID) will serve as the Convenor of the committee.

Besides, financial expert T Kutumba Rao has been designated to assist in the valuation and auction of the properties. A representative from Agri Gold Farm Estates India Private Ltd. will also participate in the process, as per the Special Court's instructions.

The district-level committees will be led by the Joint Collector or Revenue Divisional Officer. These committees will include officials from various departments, such as the District Registrar, District Public Relations Officer, District IT Officer (to manage e-auctions), and an Additional SP or DSP from the CID. An Assistant Officer from MAUD and a representative from Agri Gold will also be involved in the district-level committees.

The district committees have been tasked with critical preparatory functions, including physical verification of the properties, obtaining valuations from Sub-Registrar Offices (SROs), and collecting fair market price assessments from authorised agencies. The committees will also ensure that the mutation of Agri Gold lands in revenue records is completed before the auction process begins.

The State government has directed both the State and district Committees to act swiftly and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to initiate the auction process in a timely and legally compliant manner. The auction is part of an effort to resolve the long-standing Agri Gold scam, which involved over 32 lakh investors.

Collector calls for strategic, transparent handling of revenue matters

Emphasises efficient service delivery, faster implementation of land regularisation schemes

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad has emphasised the importance of a strategic and transparent approach to resolving both short-term and long-term revenue-related issues. Speaking at a district-level revenue workshop at the Collectorate on Wednesday, he urged officials to ensure that processes are efficient, people-centric, and aligned with government regulations.

He called upon all revenue personnel, from senior officers to field staff, to stay informed on the latest government orders, regulations, and amendments. Clear directions were given for the effective implementation of key government orders related to land regularisation, transfers, surveys, mutations, registrations, gift and conveyance deeds, 22A lists, and actions under Sections 27, 30, 296, and 388 of the Revenue Act.

Lokesh inaugurates Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Park

Announces ₹9 cr for TIDCO Park development



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Nara Lokesh on Wednesday inaugurated the newly developed Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Park (SLN Park) in SLN Colony of Mangalagiri. Spread across 0.35 acres, the park has been developed at a cost of ?1.06 crore.

Speaking to the locals during the event, Lokesh announced plans to develop more than 30 parks and lakes in the Mangalagiri constituency in a phased manner. He also mentioned that the TIDCO Park in Mangalagiri would be developed at a cost of ?9 crore, with work on the project set to begin later this month.

Additionally, Lokesh highlighted plans to develop Lake Parks in Nulakapeta and Chinnakakani for the benefit of walkers and the local community. Several key leaders from the constituency participated in the event.

Collector, CP stress speedy justice in SC/ST atrocity cases

Review progress of investigations, compensation disbursal

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha and Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu have directed officials to take stringent and coordinated action to ensure swift justice for victims of SC and ST atrocity cases. The officials also reviewed the progress of investigations, compensation disbursal, and measures to uphold civil rights at the grassroots-level.

A meeting of the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (DVMC) under the Protection of Civil Rights and Prevention of Atrocities Against SC and ST Act was held at the Pingali Venkaiah Conference Hall in the Collectorate, Vijayawada, on Wednesday. The session was chaired by Collector Dr Lakshmisha and organised under the aegis of the Social Welfare Department.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Lakshmisha emphasised the need for strict implementation of the Act and urged officials to work coordinately to deliver justice to victims. He directed departments to expedite the issuance of caste and medical certificates, and to ensure timely disbursement of compensation.

Providing an update, the Collector informed that since April 4, 2022, a total of Rs.2.54 crore has been paid as financial assistance in 216 cases across the district. He said that Rs.10.75 lakh for 10 cases in Tiruvuru Division, Rs.1.78 crore for 150 cases in Vijayawada Division, and Rs.65 lakh for 56 cases in Nandigama Division has been paid.

Dr Lakshmisha also instructed the officials to organise awareness camps across the district on the SC/ST Atrocity Abolition Act, and to hold DVMC meetings at the divisional level for improved monitoring and response.



NTR District Collector Dr Lakshmisha, Police Commissioner Rajasekhar Babu and other officials attending the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting at the collectorate in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Speaking at the meeting, Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu stated that 31 atrocity cases are currently under investigation, while 30 cases are under trial in the district. He assured that the Police Department is committed to securing justice for victims and is actively working to resolve pending cases.

Others present at the meeting included NTR District Social Welfare Officer K Srinivasa Siromani, DRO M Lakshmi Narasimha, DCP KGV Saritha, and RDOs K Chaitanya, K Balakrishna, and K Madhuri, among others.

Minister Subhash slams Karumuri

YSRCP accused of instigating violence and corruption in the State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Labour, Vasamshetti Subhash, has issued a stern warning to YSRCP leader Karumuri Nagaswara Rao, stating that if he doesn't control his language, he will face severe consequences. Addressing the media, the Minister condemned the political tactics of the YSRCP and accused them of instigating violence and corruption in the State.

Subhash highlighted that the YSRCP, under the leadership of former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has become a breeding ground for political goons, rowdies and corrupt individuals. He pointed out that Karumuri Nagaswara Rao, a key figure in the party, has been involved in several scandals, including the TDR Bond Scam, where he was allegedly responsible for embezzling a staggering Rs 390 crore.

₹ 1,332 cr for Tirupati-Pakala-Katpadi line doubling works

Project will boost tourism in the area, which includes Tirupati, Sri Kalahasti and Chandragiri Fort: Railway Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA/DELHI

The Central Cabinet has approved `1,332 crore funds for the doubling of the railway line between Tirupati, Pakala and Katpadi, covering 104 km, as announced by Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw.

Addressing a press conference in Delhi, Vaishnaw highlighted the rapid progress of the doubling work, which would significantly benefit the region. He stressed that the project would foster tourism in the area, which includes key attractions such as Tirupati, Sri Kalahasti and Chandragiri Fort. The project would also benefit 14 lakh people across 400 villages, create 35 lakh man-days of employment and open opportunities to transport four million tonnes of cargo annually.

"This project will lead to substantial development in tourism and strengthen transportation in the region. It will also benefit key areas in the fields of healthcare and education with the Tirupati-Pakala-Katpadi route playing a crucial role in linking important hubs," Vaishnaw stated.

CM thanks PM Modi

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed his gratitude following the approval of the `1,332-crore project for the doubling of the railway line between Tirupati, Pakala and Katpadi. In a message on social media, he thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for their support.

Minister pays surprise visit to KGBV in Saluru

Reviews food supplies, sanitation, safety measures for girls, and overall academic environment

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

Minister for Women & Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare, Gummidi Sandhya Rani, paid a surprise visit to the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) located at Karasuvalasa in Saluru mandal on Wednesday, following complaints regarding inadequate maintenance, substandard food, and concerns over educational quality.

During her inspection, the Minister thoroughly reviewed the food supplies, sanitation levels, safety measures for the girl students, and overall academic environment. She interacted directly with the students to understand their challenges and requirements.

Emphasising the importance of safety, the Minister stated, "The security of girl students is of paramount importance. Any untoward incident will be the direct responsibility of the Special Officer in charge." She instructed the Special Officer to ensure that the school functions in a disciplined and student-centric manner.



Minister Gummidi Sandhya Rani inspecting the food prepared for KGBV students

Highlighting the need for quality education, Sandhya Rani asserted that academic standards at KGBVs should be on par with reputed institutions, enabling students to excel in competitive examinations at the national level. Cleanliness, she added, must be treated as a top priority.

Addressing health concerns, the Minister stressed that no student should suffer from anaemia or illness.

CR's life is a symbol of great humanity: Ramakrishna

CPI leader remembered on his 31st death anniversary



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Communist Party of India (CPI) State secretary and former MLA K Ramakrishna paid rich tributes to the party's iconic leader Chandra Rajeswara Rao (CR), describing his life as a shining example of humanity, sacrifice, and commitment to communist ideals. He noted that CR spent over six decades in the communist movement, served as general secretary of the CPI for 25 years, a rare distinction in the party's century-long history.

Marking the 31st death anniversary of CR, a revered leader of land struggles and a guiding force in the communist movement, CPI members and admirers gathered at the Visalandhra Headquarters, Chandram Buildings on Wednesday, to pay homage. Ramakrishna, along with Visalandhra Publishing House Editor Gaddam Koteswara Rao and Visalandhra General Manager P Haranath Reddy, garlanded CR's portrait in a solemn tribute.

In his address, Ramakrishna hailed CR as an ideal communist and revolutionary. He said that CR, despite being born into a wealthy landowning family, dedicated his entire life and wealth to the uplift of the oppressed and to the Communist Party of India. "He is a world-class leader and a source of pride for us all," Ramakrishna remarked.

Exercise Tiger Triumph 2025: India, US complete harbour phase

Tri-service drills strengthen humanitarian and disaster relief cooperation, cultural bonds, and strategic interoperability

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian and United States Armed Forces successfully concluded the harbour phase of Exercise Tiger Triumph 2025 in Visakhapatnam, furthering their tri-service cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations. The exercise reflects growing defence collaboration and interoperability between the two strategic partners.

The training featured a range of tactical drills, physical conditioning, fieldcraft, and cultural exchange modules. Representing India were troops from the 8 Gorkha Infantry Battalion Group of the Amphibious Brigade under the Bison Division, Sudarshan Chakra Corps. They were joined by the US Army's 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment ("Bobcats") of the 11th Airborne Division and the US Marine Corps' 1st Light Armoured Reconnaissance Battalion.

At the Duvvada Firing Range, soldiers engaged in close-quarter battle exercises, buddy pair and combat firing, and Jungle Lane Shooting drills, simulating combat in dense terrain. The Integrated Field Craft (IFC) module focused on tactical navigation, obstacle clearance, and terrain-specific movement. A Combat Medical Aid module addressed battlefield first-aid and casualty evacuation techniques.



Troops also participated in joint Yoga and AMAR (Army Martial Arts Routine) sessions at the HQ Eastern Fleet Sports Complex, blending traditional Indian asanas like Surya Namaskar with martial arts moves to promote agility and discipline. At INS Karna, mountain warfare training included knotting, anchoring, stretcher-making, and rope-based mobility drills such as rappelling and slithering

Senior commanders, including Rear Admiral Greg Newkirk, Commander, Task Force 70 (U.S. Navy), and the Commanding Officer of the Gorkha Battalion, participated in live-fire and jungle warfare drills, exemplifying hands-on leadership. Senior officials from the Eastern Naval Command and Integrated Defence Staff were present, highlighting the exercise's strategic importance.

Troops also participated in joint Yoga and AMAR (Army Martial Arts Routine) sessions at the HQ Eastern Fleet Sports Complex, blending traditional Indian asanas like Surya Namaskar with martial arts moves to promote agility and discipline. At INS Karna, mountain warfare training included knotting, anchoring, stretcher-making, and rope-based mobility drills such as rappelling and slithering.

A cultural highlight was the spirited "Gorkha Fury" Khukri dance, showcasing the valour and heritage of the Gorkha Regiment, warmly received by the US personnel. Following the harbour phase, both contingents now proceed to Kakinada for the sea phase, which will include amphibious operations, maritime coordination, and HADR simulations in the Indo-Pacific region.



West Bypass road will be constructed to ease traffic congestions: MP

PNS ■ ONGOLE



MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy has underlined the need of constructing a west bypass road to Ongole city to divert traffic to ease traffic congestions in the city.

MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy and Collector A Thameem Ansariya held a meeting here on Wednesday with the officials concerned and reviewed the traffic snarls in the city and increasing road accidents.

Speaking on the occasion, MP Srinivasulu Reddy underlined the need of constructing a bypass road from Throvagunta to Pelloor on the west side to reduce traffic congestion, accidents in the city and also to divert vehicles transporting granite from outside the city.

The MP directed the officials to formulate proposals keeping in mind these issues as well as future needs, adding that the review meeting was primarily organized for this purpose. He advised the officials to pay special attention to starting the work this year itself.

MP Srinivasulu Reddy said that a final decision would be taken after consulting all the MLAs concerned. Santhanuthalapadu MLA BN Vijay Kumar highlighted that the main objective is to control the traffic congestion in Santhanuthalapadu and the movement of heavy vehicles transporting granite.

The MP told the officials to take into account these factors while preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR). Responding to this, officials apprised the MP that proposals would be prepared taking into account construction cost, social, environmental and engineering.

Joint Collector R Gopal Krishna, MLAs Mukku Ugra Narasimha Reddy, Mayor Gangada Sujata, ZP CEO Chiranjeevi, Municipal Commissioner Venkateswara Rao and DPO Venkata Naidu were among those who attended the meeting.

Later, addressing the District Development and Coordination Committee meeting here on Wednesday, the MP directed the officials to take steps to tackle the drinking water scarcity in the rural areas during the summer.

He told the officials to take steps to complete the construction of water tanks to provide water for cattle which are being built with the aim of providing drinking water to people as well as livestock as per the set target at the earliest.

The MP noted that in the next 3 months (April-June) of the 2025-26 financial year, the target has been set to benefit 1.11 crore work days for the sub-district laborers and 2.95 lakh families through the MGNREGS and the officials were instructed to prepare plans accordingly.

The MP instructed the DWMA officials to work towards the five priorities to be undertaken as part of the implementation of the NREGS namely, the construction of cattle water tanks, the completion of the construction of farm ponds as per the set target, the dredging of crop canals, the dredging of irrigation ponds and the ensuring that the average minimum wage does not fall below Rs. 290-300 per day.

MP Srinivasulu Reddy also told the officials to take steps to implement the PM Suryagarh solar energy scheme efficiently and provide drinking water tap to every household.



Many issues of Nuzvid constituency will be taken to the notice of CM: Min

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and I&PR K Parthasarathi has asserted that many issues of Nuzvid constituency will be taken to the notice of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu during the April 11 programme and he called upon people to make the Chief Minister's programme a big success.

The Minister said that a programme would be organized at Agiripalli in Nuzvid constituency on April 11 on the occasion of social reformer Jyotirao Pule's birth anniversary. The Minister, accompanied by Collector K Vetri Selvi, Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy and SP KPS Kishore inspected the arrangements for the Chief Minister's programme at Agiripalli village on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Parthasarthi said that he is striving to resolve many issues of Nuzvid constituency and some of the issues would be taken to the notice of the Chief Minister and he would urge him to resolve the issues.

"Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will participate in a number of programmes on the day at Agiripalli in which he will distribute tools to the artisan. The Chief Minister will also visit some families belonging to the backward communities and interact with them," he said and appealed to the people to make the programme a big success.

There is a massive irrigation tank located in the area and if a lift scheme is constructed that would provide irrigation water to agriculture fields. The previous YSRCP regime had neglected the NSP canal causing a huge damage to the interests of farmers, he criticized, adding that the Naidu headed Government will speak to the Irrigation Minister of Telangana State in this regard.

"I will take the Minor Irrigation Rehabilitation plan to modernize the NSP canal to the notice of the Chief Minister during the programme here. I will also appeal to the Chief Minister for the construction of a ring road around Nuzvid town to ease traffic congestion in the town," the Minister asserted.

The development of the famous Narasimha Swamy temple would also be taken to the notice of the Chief Minister, he highlighted. Due to the financial indiscipline of the previous YSRCP regime, the State had become debt-ridden and Chandrababu Naidu is making all efforts to bolster the State economy now, he lauded. After the public meeting, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu would address over 5000 TDP activists on the day, the Minister noted.



SDRF personnel rescue woman from river Krishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The swift action of SDRF personnel saved the life of a woman, who jumped in the river Krishna in a bid to commit suicide, at the Prakasam barrage here on Wednesday.

Police said that 29-year-old woman, Mekha Divya, a resident of Yenamalakuduru in the city, jumped into the river Krishna from the Prakasam barrage at crest gate No 67 at 9:40 am in a bid to end life.

The 16 battalion of SDRF personnel who were on duty at Durga ghat noticed the woman in the river Krishna. They immediately swung into action and reached her on a boat. They rescued the woman using a rope and brought her to shore safely. The SDRF personnel informed the matter to the 1 town police station and a head constable reached there and gathered details of the woman.

New liquor policy will be implemented after comprehensive study: Minister

PNS ■ TIRUPATI



Minister for Excise and Mines Kollu Ravindra reiterated the Government's commitment to implement a new liquor police after a comprehensive study.

The Minister held a review meeting with the excise officials on the Padmavati Mahila University campus here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister made it clear that the liquor policy, which is being implemented in six States, was being studied.

After a comprehensive study, a transparent and effective liquor policy would be implemented in the State in the coming days, he announced. He highlighted that the licenses for the liquor shops were given in a transparent manner which fetched Rs 1,800 crore to the State Government.

The Excise Minister asserted that 350 old brands of liquor were reintroduced in the State after the Coalition government came to power. In order to check the illegal import of liquor from neighbouring States, the prices of liquor were made equal to neighboring States which curbed transport of illegally.

Minister Kollu Ravindra claimed that all belt liquor shops were wound up in the State. The Special Enforcement Bureau which was set up by the YSRCP regime was disbanded as its functioning was found inefficient.

Moreover, the Government has set up Eagle teams especially to curb the illegal cultivation, transportation and selling of ganja. "The YSRCP regime had borrowed Rs 32,000 crore mortgaging the liquor income.

"The YSRCP leaders themselves are disclosing about the liquor scam and irregularities," the Minister claimed. "The CID is carrying out an investigation on the 'cash and carry policy' which was implemented in the sales of liquor during the YSRCP regime in which Rs 1 lakh crore sales transactions took place," Kollu Ravindra revealed.

Now the liquor is being sold through digital payment also to maintain transparency, the minister noted. He warned of taking stringent action, if anybody organizes a belt liquor shop in the State. He slammed the YSRCP for ruining the excise system during the five years regime.

The YSRCP leaders had taken control over the distillers as well as liquor shops in the State and plundered money from 2019-24, he lambasted. By consuming the 'J' brand liquor, introduced during the YSRCP regime, thousands of people suffered kidney and liver damage and many of them lost their lives, he lamented. All the 'J' brands were done away with after the coalition government came to power, he mentioned.

Water will be released from Veligonda in June, 2026: Nimmala



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Irrigation Nimmala Ramanaidu has reiterated that water will be released from the Veligonda project in June, 2026 and steps have been taken to carry out works expeditiously.

The Minister held a video conference with the irrigation officers on Wednesday and reviewed the progress of the works. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has laid special focus on the Veligonda project and is determined to complete the project by the prescribed time.

He said that while Rs 880 crores were to be extended as compensation to the Veligonda project evacuees, Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government had not provided a single rupee.

The Minister has made it clear that Rs 4,000 crores more is required to complete the Veligonda project, adding after the coalition government came to power, the work of the Veligonda project has been expedited.

He explained that they are discussing the feasibility of constructing a bypass tunnel, in light of the court case that is preventing the removal of the TBM machine in the tunnel. Minister Ramanaidu clarified that the construction work of the head regulator, tunnels, and feeder canal and rehabilitation colonies is being expedited.

"Former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy dedicated the Veligonda project to the nation without completing the works and he deceived people by making them believe that the project works were completed," he slammed. Nimmala Ramanaidue lamented at the incompleteness of the Veligonda project even after 30 years. Irrigation Special Chief Secretary Sai Prasad and ENC Venkateswara Rao were among those who attended the meeting.



Well-marked low-pressure area persists over Bay of Bengal

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The well-marked low-pressure area over the west-central and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal, observed on Tuesday, continued to persist in the same region as of 0830 hours on Wednesday.

According to the meteorological report, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of 40–50 kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next five days and in Rayalaseema over the next four days.

Maximum temperatures are expected to remain 2–4 degrees Celsius above normal in Coastal Andhra Pradesh for the next five days and in Rayalaseema for the next four days. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Rainfall was recorded at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the past 24 hours. The highest maximum temperature of 39.4 degrees Celsius was recorded at Kurnool in Rayalaseema on Tuesday, the report added.

The associated cyclonic circulation extends up to the middle tropospheric levels, the Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

According to the meteorological report, the system is likely to move nearly northwards over the west-central Bay of Bengal during the next 12 hours, maintaining its intensity. Subsequently, it is expected to recurve north-northeast wards and gradually weaken over the central Bay of Bengal in the following 24 hours.

The trough that extended from the cyclonic circulation over the west-central Bay of Bengal to south Tamil Nadu now persists up to 1.5 km above mean sea level.

Centre's policy is 'maximum taxation, minimum relief': KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao has written a strong letter to Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, demanding the immediate rollback of the hike in the prices of petrol and LPG and accusing the BJP-led Centre of 'exploiting' citizens through excessive taxation and cess collections.

"The people trusted your promise of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'. But all they got was 'Maximum Taxation, Minimum Relief," he said in the letter.

In a strongly worded letter dated April 9, KTR expressed anguish over the burden being forced upon common citizens, especially women and the middle class.

"This is not just a formal communication. It is a heartfelt cry from crores of Indians whose pockets are being bled dry while the Centre watches silently," KTR said, calling the fuel price hike a "cruel and continuous assault."

Citing comparisons with neighbouring countries, he wrote, "India is one of the most expensive countries in the world for petrol, diesel, and LPG. Fuel is cheaper in Bhutan, Pakistan, and even economically battered Sri Lanka."

Slamming the Centre for not passing on the benefits of falling crude oil prices, KTR said that while global prices have dropped 41 per cent since May 2014, the Centre has raised excise duties. "When crude falls but duties rise, you're not fuelling growth, you're taxing survival," he said.

KTR also objected to the LPG subsidy claims made by the Centre, pointing out that while the Centre boasts of a Rs 50 reduction, the actual cost of an LPG cylinder has crossed Rs 1,100 for non-beneficiaries and remains unaffordable even for Ujjwala users.

Officials directed to expedite housing construction



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani directed the officials to expedite the construction of houses for the poor and weaker sections in the district and monitor the process constantly.

Collector Nagarani held a meeting here on Wednesday virtually with the officials of housing construction, MPDOs, Tahsildars and DEs and reviewed the construction process. Speaking on the occasion she said that the government is striving to realise the dream of the poor of constructing their own house. The Collector expressed her displeasure at the tardy progress of housing construction at some places.

The Government is providing additional assistance to fulfill the dreams of middle-class families who are facing great financial burdens. The SC, ST, and the BC communities should be fully aware of this and take advantage of it to complete their housing construction, the Collector told the officials. "The State Government has sanctioned additional assistance of Rs 50,000 for the SC and the BC communities and Rs 75,000 for the ST communities and they should make use of this," the Collector observed. She questioned the officials why there is no speed in housing construction in West Godavari district which is financially affordable. The Collector regretted that West Godavari district is ranked 12th from the bottom in the State in terms of housing construction progress.

She ordered the officials concerned to expedite efforts to ensure that West Godavari district should stand at least at the 10th in the State in the next ten days. Tehsildars and MPDOs should visit the field level and work towards stage conversion, she ordered them. District Housing Department Officer G Pichaiyya and other officials were among those who attended the meeting.

Police being used for political gains: Ambati Rambabu

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Former minister Ambati Rambabu has flayed TDP leaders for their irresponsible remarks against former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy who warned a section of erring police officers during his Rapthadu tour.

Speaking to media here on Wednesday, the State government has been deliberately toning down the security of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy wilfully and reiterated that police are being used for their political ends.

The remarks made by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during his tour on erring police has been in a democratic manner and all officials who err in discharging their duty will be brought to book in a legal course.

1.7 KGs of cannabis seized, 3 peddlers arrested

PNS ■ ONGOLE



The police seized 1.7 KGs of ganja and arrested three peddlers in Markapur

DSP U Nagaranu told the media that the police team led by CI Subba Rao conducted a raid at Estate Area in Markapuram and noticed three persons fleeing on a bike after seeing the police. The police team chased and apprehended them.

The police found a bag at them and the bag contained ganja.

They were going to sell the ganja in Markapur town. Cases under Cr.No 58/2025 u/s 8 (c) r/w 20 (b) of NDPS Act were registered against the drug peddlers. The police gave the names of arrested drug peddlers as Sunkara Madhu Venkat Gopinath, Padi Tirimalaiah and Sk. Imran. The trio was being produced before the court, the DSP added.

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | APRIL 10, 2025

ACROSS THE STATES



Prez Murmu greets citizens on eve of Mahavir Jayanti

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday greeted citizens on the eve of Mahavir Jayanti and asked all to imbibe his teachings in their lives to promote peace, non-violence and harmony in the society. Bhagwan Mahavir, the embodiment of non-violence and compassion, showed a new path to humanity through the message of 'Ahimsa Paramo Dharma', which means non-violence is the supreme religion, she said in a message. Mahavir Jayanti gives us the message to follow the path of spirituality and adopt the values of simplicity, kindness and detachment from material possessions and desires, Murmu said. "Let us imbibe the teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir in our lives and promote peace, non-violence and harmony in the society," she said. Murmu, who is currently on a state visit to Portugal and Slovak Republic, extended greetings and best wishes to all fellow citizens, especially the Jain brothers and sisters on the eve of Mahavir Jayanti.



Woman shot dead by husband following fight

A 32-year-old woman was allegedly shot dead by her husband in Bihar's Gaya district after an altercation, police said on Wednesday. The incident happened in Tetua village in the Atari police station area, they said. Sushma Devi's husband Ramesh Singh, a truck driver, had come home from Patna on Tuesday. "They had an argument last night. Amid that, he shot her dead and fled in the morning," alleged Poonam Kumari, Sushma's younger sister. Police said a country-made pistol was seized from near Sushma's body, which was found lying in a pool of blood. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anand Kumar said the body was sent for the post-mortem examination. "Investigation is on and a search is underway to nab the accused," he said. Villagers claimed that Sushma was distantly related to Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, who represents the Gaya seat in the Lok Sabha.



Properties of terrorists attached in J-K's Baramulla

Properties belonging to two terrorists were attached in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on Wednesday, police said. Police in Sopore have attached seven marlas of land belonging to two LeT terrosists/handlers -- Bilal Ahmad Mir and Mohammad Umar Mir, both residents of Brath Kalan Sopore, a police spokesperson said. He said these actions are connected to cases registered under Arms Act, UAPA, and Explosive Substances Act. The attachments were executed under the provisions of Sections 82, 83 of CrPC, by a team of Sopore Police and Revenue officials, after receiving approval from the competent authority, he said. This measure marks a significant step in the investigation into subversive activities in the area. It underscores police's commitment to countering threats to national security and ensuring peace and stability, the spokesperson added.

Raised concerns of radicalisation in B'desh

Jaishankar on PM Modi's meeting with Yunus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India conveyed its concerns over attacks on minorities and radicalisation in Bangladesh at the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and head of the neighbouring country's interim government Muhammad Yunus last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

Jaishankar underscored India's push for holding fresh polls in Bangladesh, saying elections are essential to democracies, and asserted that "no country wishes Bangladesh well more than us".

Modi and Yunus met for the first time in Bangkok since the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government in August last year in the face of a massive anti-government protest.

"I think the main messages from our side which came out at the meeting -- one that our relationship with Bangladesh for historical reasons is a very unique relationship. It's very fundamentally a people-to-people connect," Jaishankar said at the News 18 Rising Bharat Summit.

"No country wishes Bangladesh well more than us; that's almost in our DNA. As a well-wisher, as a friend, I think we hope they go the right way and do the right things," he said.

Jaishankar underscored India's push for holding fresh polls in Bangladesh, saying elections are essential to democracies, and asserted that "no country wishes Bangladesh well more than us"

Jaishankar said the Indian side was very open in sharing its concerns over the current situation in Bangladesh.

"We have concerns about radicalising tendencies. We have concerns about the attacks on minorities. I think we were very open about sharing those concerns," he said responding to a question on what PM Modi conveyed to Yunus.

"As a country which has a democratic tradition, democracies require elections. That's how mandates are given and mandates are renewed. So, we hope that they go down that path," Jaishankar said, underlining India's push for holding fresh elections in Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh relations nosedived dramatically after the interim government headed by Muhammad failed to contain attacks on minorities, especially Hindus, in that country.

Slovakia will support India's bid for permanent seat at UNSC: Prez

PNS ■ BRATISLAVA



Slovakia extends its "full support" to India on its bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, President Peter Pellegrini said.

"Together with India, we are major advocates of the multilateral functioning of the world, and we do support the functioning of our international organisations. It is key to Slovakia, and I've emphasised this yesterday in a meeting with a former president of the UN General Assembly," the Slovakian president said in a statement after meeting President Droupadi Murmu, who is on a two-day state visit here.

The United Nations Security Council has 15 members of which five are permanent -- the USA, the UK, France, Russia and China.

The five members have veto powers allowing them to block any Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states to the UN or nominees for new Secretary General of the UN.

The two leaders met at the Presidential Palace here for talks after a ceremonial Guard of Honour and traditional Bread and Salt ceremony where Murmu was offered bread by a Slovak couple dressed in traditional attire.

Following the custom, Murmu took a piece of handmade bread loaf, dipped it in salt, and ate it.

The ancient custom is performed for distinguished guests on various special occasions symbolically as a token of hospitality, friendship, and respect.

India and Slovakia signed two MoUs -- cooperation between MSMEs between National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and the Slovak Business Agency and cooperation between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) and the Slovak Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

In her statement after the meeting, Murmu thanked Slovakia for its help in evacuating Indian students when war erupted in Ukraine.

India will always remember "the cooperation and generosity" of Slovakia which will strengthen the relations as a true friend and partner, she said.

The two countries reviewed all issues of bilateral relations, and common global and regional matters, she said.

Working to curb rising human-animal conflicts: Min



PNS ■ WAYANAD

Union Minister Kirti Vardhan Singh on Wednesday said the Centre, in collaboration with state governments, is implementing a series of measures to reduce the number of human-animal conflicts and expressed hope that the issue can be resolved soon. He said the population of wild animals, especially endangered species, is increasing in India, thanks to the conservation efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

At the same time, the country is also witnessing a situation where wild animals are venturing out of forest areas or local people are entering forest buffer zones, said Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, adding that such conflicts are on the rise.

"We are taking this situation very seriously. We are introducing measures to counter it," he said, adding that these steps are being implemented in collaboration with state governments.

Singh was in Kalpetta in this hill district to inaugurate the Post Office Passport Seva Kendra. He said steps have been taken to create awareness among locals about animal behaviour and the protective measures they can adopt.

Radio collaring and other tracking methods are being used to monitor such animals, and physical barriers like fencing and trenches are being installed in areas with frequent instances of human-animal conflict.

18 BJP MLAS TO SPEAKER

Withdraw suspension from K'taka Assembly

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The 18 BJP MLAs on Wednesday claimed that Speaker U T Khader's decision to suspend them from the Karnataka Legislative Assembly for six months is a "violation of rules" and "not in accordance with law", as they urged him to reconsider and withdraw their suspension.

Pointing out that MLAs in the Maharashtra Assembly were suspended in a similar fashion—a move the Supreme Court ruled "irrational and illogical", the MLAs said they would petition the Speaker to reconsider and withdraw the suspension using the powers vested in him, instead of approaching the court.

In an unprecedented move, 18 BJP MLAs were suspended on March 21 for six months for "indiscipline" and "disrespecting" the Speaker. They were forcefully evicted from the House by marshals after refusing to leave.

"We discussed the Speaker's decision to suspend 18 BJP MLAs from the Assembly and how to resolve this issue. We have been suspended under Rule 348 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, which allows naming and warning a member, or suspending them for a day, or up to the end of the ongoing session," BJP MLA C N Ashwath Narayan said.

Submit proposal for using electric vehicles in govt bodies: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to submit a proposal by April 30 on the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in government departments to reduce pollution.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan asked additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati to place on record the proposal by April end.

During the hearing, Bhati said while 60 lakh vehicles over the permissible age were plying in Delhi, in the NCR the number stood at 25 lakh.

"ASG has flagged issues that large number of overage vehicles plying in Delhi and NCR region. We will issue directions on this when we consider the issue of vehicular pollution (sic)," the bench said.

The top court further directed the Centre to complete the study within three months on the use of remote-sensing technology to keep a check on vehicular pollution.

"Attention is invited to reconsider the issue pertaining to issue of remote sensing. UoI (union of India) has sought time of 10-12 months to complete the study. This issue is of vital importance for curbing vehicular pollution. We direct Union of India to complete the study within three months from today," the bench said.

Bhati said after the FASTag system coming into existence, cars zoomed past toll plazas and couldn't be used anymore to conduct the study.

So, we will need some more time, she said.

The proposal for using remote sensing devices for on-road emission monitoring had first come in 2019 from Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, which assists the apex court on environment issues.

DELHI-BANGKOK FLIGHT

AI passenger urinates on fellow traveller

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

An Air India passenger allegedly urinated on a fellow traveller during a flight from the national capital to Bangkok on Wednesday, according to sources. Air India, in a statement, said that an incident of "unruly passenger behavior" was reported on its Delhi-Bangkok flight on April 9 and the matter has been reported to the authorities (DGCA).

When asked about the incident, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu on Wednesday said the ministry will take note of the incident and speak to the airline. "If there is any wrongdoing, we will take necessary action," Naidu said on the sidelines of an event in the national capital. "Air India confirms that an incident of unruly passenger behaviour was reported to the cabin crew operating flight AI2336, from Delhi to Bangkok, on April 9, 2025," an Air India spokesperson said.

Russia invites PM Modi for Victory Day Parade on May 9

PNS ■ MOSCOW



Russia has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the May 9 celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of victory over Germany in World War II, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko has said.

Moscow is expecting the Indian Prime Minister at the May 9 parade. The invitation has already been sent and the visit is being worked out, Rudenko was quoted as saying by the state-run Tass news agency.

"It's being worked out...He has an invitation," Rudenko said on Tuesday.

Russia has invited leaders of several friendly nations to attend this year's Victory Day parade.

In January 1945, the Soviet Army launched an offensive against Germany. The commanders-in-chief on May 9 signed the Act of Unconditional Surrender of Germany which ended the war.

In July last, Prime Minister Modi visited Moscow to attend the 22nd Russia-India summit, his first trip to the country in nearly five years. He had visited the far eastern city of Vladivostok in 2019 to attend an economic conclave.

Congress adopts resolution to get back to power in Gujarat



PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

A special resolution focusing on bringing the Congress back to power in Gujarat, where the BJP has been in power since 1995, was adopted during the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session here on Wednesday, a party leader said.

Gujarat Congress spokesperson Hiren Banker confirmed that the resolution was adopted during the session held on the banks of the Sabarmati River here.

Addressing a press conference earlier while the session was underway, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said it was for the first time in his party's history when a state-specific resolution has been brought during an AICC session.

Titled 'Why Congress is needed in Gujarat', the resolution outlines the party's strategy to get back to power with the motto of "Nutan Gujarat, Nutan Congress' (new Gujarat, new Congress), he said.

When asked why this resolution has been brought, Ramesh said, "This session is being held in Gujarat and we are out of power in this state for the last 30 years".

"It was Congress which laid the foundation of Gujarat's development back in the 1960s and 70s. However, Gujarat's development suffered a blow under the BJP rule. That is why we are bringing this special resolution on Gujarat during today's session," he said.

"This resolution, titled 'Why Congress needed in Gujarat', will outline party's strategy to get back to power, the issues faced by people, economic policies that we will implement and what we can do for the students, traders, farmers, labourers, middle class and industrialists, and not just for one or two crony capitalist friends, of the state," the Congress leader said.

Seeking to clear the party's stand on industrialists, Ramesh said the party was always in support of genuine businessmen, especially those running small and medium enterprises, but "not one or two corporates who get all the benefits".

Yoga, meditation may have brief effects on blood pressure: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Relaxing techniques, including yoga, meditation and breath control, help bring down one's blood pressure in short-term. However, the long-term effects are unclear, according to a review of previously published studies.

Researchers from the University of Bristol, UK, said that more rigorously designed and longer duration studies are needed to confirm if relaxing methods can help treat high blood pressure.

Hypertension, a chronic condition, will require long-term treatments and behavioural changes and thus, interventions providing short-term benefits are "unlikely to be clinically useful", they added.

Experiencing high levels of stress is known to be a risk factor for high blood pressure or hypertension -- which can increase one's chances of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

While drugs for treating the condition are available, adherence in taking these drugs is poor, thereby generating interest in alternative approaches such as relaxation techniques to reduce stress, according to the researchers.

Analysing 182 previously published studies, the researchers found that most relaxing mechanisms seemed to lower both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in about three months.

The findings of the study, published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Medicine, suggested that "relaxation and stress management techniques might have beneficial short term effects on blood pressure for people with hypertension, but the effectiveness of these interventions is still uncertain".

The interventions commonly employed for relaxing analysed in the study included breath control, yoga or tai chi (a Chinese martial art), meditation, biofeedback, muscle relaxation and music.

Breath control was found to bring down systolic blood pressure -- the first and higher number in a blood pressure reading -- by 6.65 mm Hg and meditation a drop of 7.71 mm Hg.

Meditative movements of tai chi and yoga could achieve a drop of 9.58 mm Hg in systolic blood pressure, while mindfulness and psychotherapy could lower the value by 9.90 mm Hg and 9.83 mm Hg, respectively.

"The results of our systematic review and network meta-analysis indicate that relaxation or stress management techniques might result in meaningful reductions in blood pressure at up to three months of follow-up," the authors wrote.

"Hypertension is a chronic condition likely to require long term drug treatments or behavioural changes. As such, interventions that are used for a brief period, or provide only short term benefits, are unlikely to be clinically useful," they wrote.

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Editor's TAKE

Winds of change in the Kashmir Valley

As the Government works towards building "Naya Kashmir" challenges galore

In the wake of escalating terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday delivered a resolute message at a high-level security meeting held at Raj Bhawan in Srinagar. Chairing the Unified Headquarters — the apex security grid of the Union Territory — Shah underscored the need for a "zero-tolerance" approach to terrorism and vowed to ensure "zero infiltration" across the border. The Home Minister's visit comes amid a three-day tour of the Union Territory, during which he reviewed both developmental progress and the volatile security scenario.

Shah has urged all security agencies to work in complete synergy to eliminate the last vestiges of terrorism, particularly in the Jammu division, which has seen a recent uptick in militant activities. He reiterated that there will be no compromise in the mission to root out terrorism from J and K. The goal is zero infiltration, zero tolerance.

While acknowledging the operational successes of security forces, Shah emphasised that complacency cannot be afforded. The Home Minister also took stock of the preparations for the annual Amarnath Yatra and the anticipated surge in tourism during the summer months — a critical period for the UT's economy and public safety.

Shah also chaired a developmental review meeting alongside LG Manoj Sinha to take stock of the development work. The session focused on expediting infrastructure projects and enhancing governance mechanisms in alignment with the government's vision of a "Naya Kashmir." He also had a private meeting with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, signaling a broader political engagement during his visit.

Amit Shah's visit to the Valley is both timely and important from the security point of view. With the beginning of the summer season infiltration bids also reaches a high. The Border Security Force (BSF) in the Kashmir Valley faces significant challenges in countering infiltration attempts, particularly during periods of geopolitical sensitivity and seasonal changes. The melting of snow reopens traditional infiltration routes along the Line of Control (LoC), providing opportunities for militants to cross into Indian territory. Additionally, adversaries aim to exploit the heightened focus on internal affairs of the country to destabilise the region.

The abrogation of Article 370 and the subsequent bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir have further intensified the security dynamics, rendering the Indo-Pak border more sensitive and prompting continuous infiltration attempts by militants. Moreover, the successful hosting of international events, like the G20 summit in Kashmir, has been met with frustration by Pakistan's ISI, leading to a surge in infiltration bids as a means to undermine the prevailing peace and stability. In response, the BSF, in collaboration with the Indian Army and intelligence agencies, has bolstered vigilance and area domination exercises to thwart these infiltration attempts and maintain regional security.

The heightened security is already bearing fruit. Shah highlighted that three more organisations had severed ties with the separatist Hurriyat Conference and pledged allegiance to the Constitution of India. Indeed, it is time to have a cordial atmosphere in the Valley so that the support to the infiltrators can be minimised. In this scenario development plays a very significant role. And this was the second big concern for Amit Shah. He called it "a growing endorsement of the Prime Minister's vision of a peaceful, progressive Naya Kashmir."

As terrorism continues to pose challenges in the region, Shah's visit has sent a clear message: the Centre remains uncompromising in its mission to restore peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir. With the focus squarely on coordination, counter-terror strategy, and public welfare, the government's resolve appears firmer than ever.

Leaderspeak



Due to the sustained and coordinated efforts of the Modi government, the entire terror ecosystem nurtured by elements inimical to our country in J and K has been crippled. The Modi government is working with an unwavering resolve towards building a developed J and K. The tireless efforts of PM Narendra Modi are ushering in a new era of prosperity for every citizen through development and welfare initiatives.

AMIT SHAH, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS

India: Towards purposeful growth

With the world looking to reduce reliance on China, India's political stability, consistent policies, and sizeable operational capacity make it a key alternative



On an otherwise unremarkable morning, I watched President Trump's press conference announcing a significant shift in global trade. He unveiled sweeping tariffs under the "America First" banner, including a staggering 104per cent tariff on China. Meanwhile, the European Union is considering a 25per cent retaliatory levy, highlighting the rise of protectionist sentiment in global policy. In the complex arena of global geopolitics, opportunities often emerge from seemingly chaotic situations. India has a notable track record of navigating such challenges. During the pandemic, it became the world's pharmacy, delivering over two billion vaccine doses to more than 90 nations and developing praised digital platforms like CoWIN. Amid the turmoil of the Russia-Ukraine war, India adeptly increased discounted oil imports from Russia, stabilised domestic inflation, and exported refined fuel to Europe, all while maintaining a careful geopolitical balance.

Let the world turn protectionist. We shall turn purposeful. India currently faces a 26 per cent tariff, while key competitors like Vietnam, Bangladesh, and China face much higher rates of 46 per cent, 37 per cent, and 34 per cent, respectively. Malaysia has a comparable tariff of 24 per cent but lacks India's diverse export sectors. India is well-positioned for long-term growth with its scale, stable policies, and demographic advantages.

India is becoming increasingly cost-competitive in the global market as American retailers reassess their sourcing strategies. With the world looking to reduce reliance on China, India's political stability, consistent policies, and sizeable operational capacity make it a key alternative. Sectors like electronics are poised for growth, especially as countries like China and Vietnam face higher tariffs. A prime example is Apple, which is expanding partnerships with Indian firms like Tata Electronics to meet rising US demand. India could further drive this trend, encouraging firms to utilise India's Production-Linked Incentive scheme, enhancing India's position as a leading manufacturing hub.

President Trump's announcement of a 104 per cent tariff on Chinese imports marks a defining moment in the evolution of U.S.-China economic relations. It's a sweeping escalation affecting many industries critical to American manufacturing and consumption. The U.S. has long depended on China as a dominant supplier of machinery and electronics for automobiles, electrical equipment, and rare earth materials. For instance, China accounts for nearly 27 per cent of U.S. electrical and electronic equipment imports and over 16 per cent of machinery imports. Given how central these sectors are to the U.S. economy, a complete decoupling is neither easy nor costless, so diplomatic reconciliation is still on the cards. However, even if rapprochement occurs, the long-term shift is already underway. US corporations will diversify their sourcing bases to reduce geopolitical risk, and India stands out as a viable and democratic alternative.

The United States has become India's largest trading partner, reflecting significant advancements in their relationship over the past decade. Access to the US market presents significant opportunities for India's growth. Additionally, Washington must ally with India, a nation of 1.4 billion people, to counterbalance China.

By engaging in early dialogue with the U.S. rather than conflict, India had strategically positioned itself to negotiate favourable trade terms and emerge as a trusted global trade partner.

At the same time, India is putting itself for a multipolar trade order, having signed over 10 Free Trade Agreements in the last five years with partners like the UAE and Australia. Ongoing negotiations with the EU, UK, and EFTA enhance its commercial ties, giving Indian exporters access to stable markets while reducing disruption risks. India's structural transformation also supports this shift with investments in people, infrastructure, and innovation.

The country's inward-focused yet globally attuned-economic model allows for key reforms to strengthen logistics and regulatory processes. Commitment to green manufacturing and robust digital infrastructure ensures that Indian exports are competitive and sustainable. This evolving trade landscape can drive job creation and skill development and attract foreign direct investment. With a growing consumer base, India is poised to adapt to changes and lead the global economy.



GOURAV VALLABH

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) projects a $50 billion opportunity arising from this disruption. It is not merely a windfall — it marks a fundamental rebalancing of global supply chains, with India poised at the very axis of this new commercial order. While a short-term impact is inevitable, the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) has projected that India's GDP would see only a marginal 0.1 per cent effect from the newly imposed US reciprocal tariffs.

It reflects the nation's growing domestic manufacturing strength, competitive pricing, and strong policy support. The robustness of US domestic demand and negotiations by American importers seeking price relief will be important to monitor.

The Reserve Bank of India's recent decision to reduce the repo rate by 25 basis points — bringing it down from 6.25 per cent to 6.00 per cent — is pivotal for the Indian economy. With global supply chains in flux due to intensifying US - China trade tensions, this policy move acts as a timely enabler for domestic industry. Though volatile global capital markets may obscure immediate investor reactions, a reduction in the repo rate typically nudges down deposit rates, thereby lowering the cost of funds for banks.

This, in turn, is expected to seep into reduced lending rates across sectors, particularly benefiting capital-intensive industries and MSMEs. As borrowing becomes more affordable, private investment is poised to pick up momentum, especially in export-linked sectors that should be India's first new orders as companies may shift away from Chinese suppliers.

India, with its large domestic market, developing industrial base, and growing diplomatic ties, is positioned to lead amidst global shifts. As supply chains reshape and nations seek dependable partners, India provides a reliable path forward, fostering trade and talent even as tariffs rise elsewhere.

(The writer Professor of Finance, XLRI Xavier School of Management and BJP Leader. Views are personal)

The fragile line between healer and healed

SECOND Opinion

BY ASHA IYER KUMAR

Some voices stay with us for a lifetime. For me, one of them is the voice of a doctor saying, "We couldn't save him" referring to my father. It came without fanfare, without softness, without ceremony. Just four words-and the world changed for me.

At that moment, I wanted to hold someone accountable for the unbearable loss I had just suffered. My father was in the doctor's care, and I had trusted him to guard my father's life. And yet, death had slipped through the cracks. I remember standing there, wordless, caught in a strange pause between fury and resignation. I didn't lash out. What would be the point now? The man was gone. To behave like a savage towards a doctor like many patients do in the face of a tragedy wasn't in my character.

And yet, somewhere deep within, the question lingered: had someone failed? Could the doctor have saved my father? Or had he tried enough and this was simply the limit of human effort?

Years later, I would hear echoes of that question in an entirely different setting-this time, from the doctor's side. A casual conversation with a dear friend-herself a seasoned physician-turned unexpectedly poignant. "We can't retire because this is what are ordained to do in our lives," she said, "and we can't continue like this either because age is catching up and we are unable to balance work and life. Patients' expectations these days are too high to meet satisfactorily." She was referring not just to the long hours or the relentless pressure of life-and-death decisions, but to something more insidious: the growing distrust, the unrealistic expectations, and the Google-fed entitlement of patients who arrive armed with half-truths and full confidence.

Another doctor friend chimed in at this point, only half in jest: "These days, people come to consult us not for answers, but to argue. And if things go wrong, we're the first to be crucified."

In their voices, I heard a quiet exhaustion. A fatigue that wasn't just physical, but existential. Medicine, once seen as a noble calling, is now burdened by demands that no human can fulfil. Patients seek quick cures, perfect answers, and unconditional availability. And when outcomes don't match expectations, it's not uncommon for doctors to face blame, abuse, and even violence as witnessed many times in our country.

This is not to excuse negligence. Nor to overlook the occasional callousness that does exist. But in our collective haste to demand accountability, have we begun to forget that doctors, too, are human?

That behind every prescription is a person who probably hasn't slept a full night in weeks. That beneath every white coat is a beating heart, anxious to save, terrified to fail.

My friend spoke of missing family gatherings. Of being unable to remember the last time she read a book for pleasure. Of watching the profession she once idolised become a crucible of stress and fear. "Sometimes," she said, "I feel like I'm drowning in expectations I can't meet."

It made me think-how did a role rooted in healing and service become one of the most unforgiving? When did the caregiver become the scapegoat?

Perhaps we, as a society, have elevated doctors to a pedestal so high that we have forgotten the toll it takes to stay up there. We forget that not all battles can be won. That despite the best of efforts, some outcomes lie beyond control.

We demand empathy from doctors, and rightly so. But empathy, like every virtue, must flow both ways. Maybe it's time we paused to ask: what are we giving back to those we expect so much from?In an age where algorithms offer diagnoses and chatbots provide remedies, the human connection in medicine remains irreplaceable. A doctor's touch, their voice, their presence-these are things no machine can replicate. But even these need nourishment, need rest, need understanding.

Maybe the next time we visit a doctor, we could remember they too have burdens. That their mistakes are not always malice. That their fatigue is not indifference. That their silence might just be sorrow. And perhaps, with that awareness, we might begin to heal not just our own ailments, but the fractured bond between the healer and the healed. Because ultimately, both stand on the same side of a fragile line-one fighting to preserve life, the other desperate to hold on to it. And in that shared fragility lies our common humanity.

(The author is a Dubai-based columnist and creative writing coach. She has published six books. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

When doctor is a fraud

Madam — Trust is the thread that binds a patient's life to a doctor. But what if that white coat hides a fraud? What remains then? Neither trust, nor life. The horrifying incident at a hospital in Damoh district reads like a dark chapter out of a nightmare.

A fake doctor, masquerading under the identity of a renowned physician, infiltrated the hospital and even performed surgeries on critical heart patients—without a degree, without qualifications, without scrutiny. Even as patients began to die, no questions were raised.

No police were informed. Bodies were buried without postmortems, and grieving families were shamelessly extorted for hefty sums. This is not mere negligence—it is a deeply rooted, systemic crime.

But this is not just Damoh's tragedy. It is a warning for the entire nation. How long will fake doctors be allowed to claim innocent lives? How long will our healthcare system continue to look the other way?

It is high time the government takes this seriously, punishes the guilty, and implements strict doctor verification protocols in every hospital. For when the doctor is fake, treatment becomes death.

Let us face it. These things are happening but going unreported. It is high time the government takes some action to take such people to task who play with people's lives

RK JAIN ARIJEET | BARWANI

CPM must do some course correction

Madam — The newly appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has laid out a list of priorities that suggests the party will continue to focus on electoral politics rather than rebuilding grassroots movements or working-class struggles. For the first time in over two decades, the party has elected a leader without academic credentials or a base in the national capital.

MA Baby, a leader rooted in Kerala's political soil, has taken the helm. Alongside this change, the party has added eight new members to the Politburo and 30 new faces to the Central Committee—thanks to the age-limit reforms adopted at the Coonoor Party Congress three years ago.However, the question remains: has the party truly introspected on the factors behind its decline in national relevance?

If it did, it might realise that a Delhi-centric, intellectual leadership played a major role in eroding its mass base. MA Baby outlined three key goals: forging maximum political unity against the "neo-fascist" Modi government, engaging in social struggles, and reviving working-class movements. Yet, these goals seem more rhetorical than strategic.

The party still hasn't reassessed its trajectory, one that has led it to political irrelevance outside of Kerala. Fighting the BJP-RSS's Hindutva project, backed by monopoly capital, remains a distant dream unless the CPM reevaluates its approach.

ABHIJIT ROY | JAMSHEDPUR

Turning diplomacy into wrestling

Madam — The self-styled leader of the free world, US President Donald Trump — an open admirer of WWE wrestling — has seemingly turned global diplomacy into a wrestling ring. The world economy is undergoing a transformation and developing nations are bearing the brunt of Trump's tariffs.

Only, this wrestling match plays out in the arena of international trade, with nearly every country — willingly or not — dragged into the fray. Trump's withdrawal from major international institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the Paris Agreement has sent shockwaves through the global order.

The economic, cultural, and commercial unity once fostered by globalisation is now rapidly unraveling. Even traditional allies like the European Union, once closely aligned with the US, have found themselves sidelined.

Mexico and Canada, too, have felt the brunt of Trump's trade offensives.In this environment, nations are retreating from the idealism of globalisation and instead embracing protectionism to safeguard their own interests.

The spirit of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* — the world as one family — is fading. What we are witnessing is the rise of a new world order: fragmented, self-serving, and far removed from the cooperative ideals of the past.

JITESH MORI | KUTCH

DISMISSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT: DO NOT NORMALISE HER TRAUMA

The recent statement by Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara, in response to a shocking incident where a woman was groped on a Bengaluru street, is both alarming and unacceptable.
His remark that "such incidents will happen in a
big city" is not only insensitive but also dangerously dismissive of a serious crime.

Rather than unequivocally condemning the act and assuring citizens of measures to improve women's safety, the minister's words trivialise the trauma of victims and normalise sexual harassment as a mere byproduct of urban life.

This mindset is intolerable.We expect better from those entrusted with our safety. Crime should never be treated as an unavoidable side effect of urban growth.

Women have every right to feel safe —whether it's day or night, in crowded areas or deserted ones.The minister's comment reflects a disturbing failure to grasp the urgency of the issue.

What we need are stronger patrols, quicker police response, and serious efforts to sensitise the police force. Bengaluru's citizens deserve better. Safety is not a privilege — it is a fundamental right.

The Home Minister's dismissive stance undermines the gravity of gender-based violence and erodes public trust. Leaders must rise above complacency and prioritise women's safety through action, not apathy.

The state must ensure safer streets, stricter enforcement, and a zero-tolerance approach to harassment. Bengaluru's women deserve respect, protection, and dignity — anything less is a betrayal of duty and a failure of governance in its most essential form.

VISHAL MAYUR | TUMAKURU

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

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | APRIL 10, 2025

Rivers that built a civilisation

In India, these waterways are more than just sources of sustenance—they are sacred, storied, and deeply interwoven with the cultural, economic, and spiritual fabric of the land, write BKP SINHA and ARVIND JHA

FIRST Column



Throughout history, nature and human civilisation have shared a profound and enduring connection. From the earliest human settlements to today's sprawling urban centres, societies have evolved by adapting to their environments, harnessing natural resources, and responding to ecological challenges.

Among the many gifts of nature, rivers have stood out as lifelines of human progress. They offered fertile plains for agriculture, freshwater for sustenance, and navigable routes for trade and communication. From the Nile in Egypt to the Ganga in India, these flowing bodies of water became the cradle of civilisations.

In India, rivers are revered as divine entities-symbols of purification, continuity, and life itself. As Jawaharlal Nehru eloquently wrote in The Discovery of India, the Ganga is the very soul of India-an eternal, flowing force that carries the memories, aspirations, and history of its people. Its waters, ever in motion, embody the essence of civilisation: deeply rooted in tradition, yet constantly evolving.

Nowhere is the life-giving power of rivers more evident than in the rise of the Indus Valley Civilisation, which thrived around 2500 BCE along the banks of the Indus and its tributaries. It stands as one of the most advanced urban societies of the ancient world, marked by planned cities, drainage systems, and a high degree of social organisation. Major centres like Harappa in Punjab and Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh-both in present-day Pakistan-reflect how rivers nurtured the growth of early civilisation.

Its success was deeply rooted in the fertile alluvial plains shaped by the annual rhythm of the Indus River, whose seasonal floods replenished the soil and made intensive agriculture possible. To manage and optimise these natural cycles, the inhabitants developed efficient irrigation infrastructure-canals, reservoirs, and wells that supported farming even in semi-arid conditions. Staple crops like wheat, barley, peas, sesame, and cotton were grown and stored in well-ventilated granaries, carefully designed to protect against pests and spoilage. This agricultural prosperity not only sustained a significant population but also facilitated long-distance trade with Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia.

Centuries later, under the Maurya and Gupta empires, cities such as Pataliputra (modern-day Patna) flourished as major political, administrative, and cultural centres. The Ganga played a pivotal role in this transformation, serving as a vital artery that connected distant regions of the empire.

This riverine connectivity spurred the growth of market towns along its banks, while organised systems of taxation regulated commerce and ensured a stable flow of revenue for the state.

During the Mughal era, the Ganges retained its strategic importance, enabling the movement of armies, officials, and resources, which supported military campaigns and strengthened administrative control across northern India.

Textiles from Varanasi, black pepper and other spices from the southern interior, and precious stones from the Deccan were among the key goods transported along these inland waterways. Surat, on the Tapi River, became a prominent port for the export of cotton and spices to the Persian Gulf and Red Sea regions.

Varanasi on the Ganges thrived as a centre of silk weaving and religious pilgrimage, drawing merchants from across Asia. Hampi, on the banks of the Tungabhadra, served as a hub for trading diamonds, horses, and metal goods.

This legacy continued into the colonial period when river transport became a crucial component of imperial trade strategies. The Hooghly River in Bengal, a distributary of the Ganges, emerged as a key route for the export of jute, indigo, and textiles.

Even in the post-independence era, rivers continue to shape the economic and cultural foundations of India.

As the population grew and food security became a national priority, the role of rivers in agriculture became increasingly vital. The Green Revolution of the 1960s, which dramatically increased food production, was largely concentrated in river-fed regions like the Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh, where perennial rivers such as the Sutlej, Beas, and Yamuna provided the necessary water for intensive irrigation.

The steady flow of these rivers enabled the expansion of vast canal networks, which distributed water efficiently across agricultural lands, supporting multi-cropping and the widespread cultivation of water-intensive staples such as rice and wheat.

In the eastern plains, especially along the Ganges and Brahmaputra, agriculture remains closely tied to the seasonal rhythms of these rivers. Annual floods, though sometimes destructive, deposit nutrient-rich silt that rejuvenates the soil, making the region one of the most fertile in the country.

Over generations, this natural abundance has supported the cultivation of key crops such as jute, sugarcane, and rice, forming the backbone of rural economies and livelihoods. In Assam, farmers practice bao rice cultivation in low-lying floodplains, where rice is sown during the monsoon and harvested as floodwaters recede. Tribal communities in the Himalayan foothills cultivate wet rice on terraced slopes, using traditional channels that efficiently divert water from perennial mountain streams.

The Brahmaputra and its network of wetlands-known locally as beels-support one of India's richest inland fisheries. Communities living in these floodplain ecosystems rely on seasonal fishing cycles, often using age-old techniques that harmonise with the natural breeding patterns of indigenous fish species.

In the deltaic regions of West Bengal and Odisha, rivers such as the Mahanadi and Subarnarekha support expansive estuarine wetlands and mangrove forests, sustaining some of the most biodiverse coastal ecosystems in the country. These brackish zones are teeming with life, offering vital habitats for fish, crustaceans, and migratory birds.

Moving into the heart of peninsular India, the Godavari and Krishna rivers nourish vast agricultural belts across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, where crops like sugarcane, turmeric, paddy, and pulses thrive. Their deltas rank among the country's most productive rice-growing regions, while coconut, banana, and chilli are cultivated intensively along their banks. The Tungabhadra River in Karnataka irrigates fields of cotton, groundnut, and sunflower. It also sustains a network of traditional tank irrigation systems (man-made reservoirs designed to capture and store rainwater, originally developed for dryland irrigation), some of which date back to the Vijayanagara Empire.

In Kerala, the landscape is defined by a dense network of shorter rivers flowing swiftly from the Western Ghats to the Arabian Sea. Here, a unique synergy exists between river systems and coastal backwaters. These interconnected waterscapes nourish paddy fields and coconut groves while enabling integrated farming practices. One notable example is pokkali, a traditional method where rice and shrimp are cultivated in rotation within the same field-an ingenious adaptation to the region's seasonal cycles of salinity and freshwater flow.

In contemporary times, with the swift advance of urbanisation and industrial expansion, the relationship between rivers and civilisation has grown increasingly intricate. What were once lifelines of prosperity are now entangled in the complexities of ecological strain and human ambition. Yet history offers sobering lessons: the very rivers that gave rise to flourishing civilisations have also witnessed their decline-often as a direct consequence of humanity's disregard for natural rhythms.

The fading course of the Sarasvati, long linked to the decline of the Harappan Civilisation, and the recurrent floods of the Kosi, Brahmaputra, and Mandakini serve as stark reminders of what unfolds when ecological balance is ignored-echoing Garrett Hardin's warning against the overuse of shared resources and Rachel Carson's call to acknowledge the environmental cost of human ambition.

Civilisations that endured were those that listened to the land, respected its limits, and moved in rhythm with it. The question before us today is not whether nature will shape human destiny-it always has. The real question is whether we will heed its warnings and choose a sustainable path before the rivers run dry or wild again.

(The writers are former principal chief conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra. Views are their own)

Indian Homoeopathy: Blending traditional wisdom with innovations

Once rooted in anecdotal wisdom and centuries-old healing traditions, Homoeopathy in India is undergoing a bold transformation — emerging as a modern, research-driven medical discipline



Homoeopathy in India, deeply rooted in traditional healing wisdom, is undergoing a significant transformation. Homoeopathy is evolving rapidly, gaining scientific credibility, expanding its reach, and playing a bigger role in healthcare policy, education, and research.

At the forefront of this evolution is the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), the apex Organisation involved in Research, under the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India. With a mission to validate and modernise the practice of Homoeopathy. CCRH is leading a nationwide revolution based on scientific evidence, innovation, and global collaboration.

Headquartered in New Delhi, CCRH coordinates a multi-layered network of 27 Institutes/ units and 07 treatment centres across the country. These centres carry out high-quality research, combining clinical experience with rigorous scientific methodology. From the bustling corridors of urban research institutes to outreach in rural India, CCRH's work ensures that Homoeopathy remains not only accessible but also scientifically sound.

A cornerstone of the Council's work lies in the cultivation of medicinal plants and the standardisation of drugs used in Homoeopathy. The process of standardisation involves establishing defined parameters and acceptable criteria for various plant characteristics, thereby ensuring the quality and consistency of raw materials. Since its inception, the Council has conducted pharmacognosy studies on 368 drugs, physicochemical studies on 362, and pharmacological studies on 151. A total of 149 drugs have been studied across all three dimensions. Council's Central Research Institute in Ooty has prepared over 11,717 herbarium sheets and digitisation efforts are currently underway, reinforcing the Council's commitment to preserving and enhancing botanical knowledge.

Drug proving and clinical verification form the bedrock of Homoeopathy's scientific framework. CCRH has successfully proved 132 drugs, including 22 newly introduced by the Council. These efforts are further strengthened by collaborations with 19 homoeopathic medical colleges and the implementation of the HPT portal, which enables real-time data collection from proving centres. Since 1978, CCRH has been systematically verifying indigenous and fragmentarily proved drugs. A total of 126 drugs have been clinically verified, and the findings have been disseminated through six books, 72 journal articles, and 19 drug monographs. In Clinical Verification, 08 drugs are undergoing verification, namely Benzinum nitricum, Cheiranthus cheiri, Coleus forskohlii, Cucurbita pepo, Cuscuta reflexa, Iberis amara, Justicia adhatoda and Phyllanthus niruri.

In the evolving narrative of modern medicine, where traditional knowledge increasingly meets evidence-based inquiry, the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) stands tall as a symbol of scientific transformation. Far from being confined to anecdotal wisdom or historical practice, homoeopathy in India is now undergoing a research-driven renaissance-and CCRH is leading that charge with remarkable scientific depth and discipline.

CCRH's commitment to rigorous clinical research brings together the holistic framework of homoeopathic medicine and the methodological gold standards of contemporary science. The Council conducts trials through globally accepted practices like randomised controlled trials (RCTs), double-blinding, and robust statistical modelling to explore the safety, efficacy, and effectiveness of homoeopathic interventions. This approach ensures that homoeopathy is evaluated at par with any other modern medical system-credibly, transparently, and repeatably.



SUBHASH KAUSHIK

Over the decades, the Council has built an expansive research portfolio that is both ambitious in scope and comprehensive in execution. To date, 238 clinical studies have been conducted, of which 195 are completed, including 154 observational studies and 41 RCTs.

These studies span an impressive range of health concerns, demonstrating the versatility of homoeopathy across disease spectrums. On one end are infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, influenza-like illnesses, acute encephalitis syndrome, and gastroenteritis-conditions where cost-effective, immune-boosting interventions are vital. On the other end are chronic and lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, benign prostatic hyperplasia, cervical spondylosis, urolithiasis, and thrombocytopenia due to dengue-conditions that often strain healthcare systems and patients alike. What's truly striking is the Council's ability to pivot rapidly in times of crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CCRH played an instrumental role by conducting clinical studies to evaluate the role of homoeopathy in symptom management and immunity enhancement marking a bold step in integrating alternative systems in public health emergency responses.

The realm of research doesn't stop at just clinical implementation. CCRH has also conducted 335 disease-specific trials, with a strong publication record of over 400 scientific papers in reputed national and international journals. This vast dissemination of knowledge not only supports clinical practitioners and educators but also strengthens India's global voice in the realm of medical pluralism.

What emerges from this extensive clinical exploration is a new model for how traditional systems like homoeopathy can evolve-not by abandoning their core principles, but by reinforcing them with data, evidence, and continual innovation. With each study, CCRH is not merely validating treatments-it is building bridges between traditional wisdom and the scientific world, empowering both policy makers and patients with informed choices.

The Council's approach integrates homoeopathic philosophy with contemporary scientific methods, including randomised controlled trials, double-blinding, and statistical evaluation. To date, 238 studies have been conducted, of which 195 have been concluded 154 observational studies and 41 randomised controlled trials. An additional five studies are currently ongoing. These studies address a wide spectrum of health conditions, ranging from infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, gastroenteritis, and influenza-like illness, to lifestyle and non-communicable diseases such as benign prostatic hyperplasia, hypertension, cervical spondylosis, urolithiasis, and even COVID-19. The cumulative body of work includes 335 disease-specific studies, with over 400 publications in both national and international peer-reviewed journals.

Besides research, the Council also offers homoeopathic treatment in various parts of the country. As per AHMIS data from 20 implemented institutes, last year's OPD turnover was 5,50,404. 2. Recognising the growing need for Homoeopathy in epidemic and pandemic scenarios, the Council established an Epidemic Cell in 2015. This specialised unit explores and implements the use of Homoeopathy in managing outbreaks, offering both preventive and therapeutic strategies. The work of the Epidemic Cell highlights CCRH's proactive role in public health and epidemic preparedness.

The Council has also expanded its efforts into fundamental and pre-clinical research to investigate the biological and molecular mechanisms underpinning Homoeopathic treatment. To this end, state-of-the-art laboratories have been developed. These include a virology lab at the Dr Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute in Kolkata, a clinical HIV laboratory at JSPS Government Homoeopathic Medical College in Hyderabad, and the Dr. Bholanath Chakraborty Memorial Fundamental Research Laboratory at the Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur. These facilities support specialised research in areas of national health importance and offer infrastructure for advanced scientific exploration.

CCRH's commitment to fostering research-oriented education is equally noteworthy. The Council launched the Short Term Studentship in Homoeopathy (STSH) program in 2014 to promote research aptitude among undergraduates pursuing the Bachelor of Homoeopathic Medicine and Surgery (BHMS) degree. Since the program's inception, 5,717 students have registered, and 421 have received scholarships. These initiatives not only nurture future researchers but also help integrate scientific thinking into Homoeopathic education from an early stage. In addition to its national efforts, CCRH actively collaborates with leading institutions such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), Paralympics Committee of India (PCI), Apollo Group of Hospitals and National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), DBT- THSTI (Translational Health Science and Technology Institute) etc. Through these collaborations,

CCRH ensures that its researches are conducted as per robust methodologies and that its findings align with the healthcare requirements of the country. International partnerships further help elevate the global perception of Homoeopathy, transforming it from a traditional system into a modern, evidence-supported medical discipline. To date, CCRH has published 239 research papers in reputed journals, alongside monographs, newsletters, and educational materials.

These publications play a critical role in knowledge dissemination, helping practitioners, researchers, and policymakers stay informed about the latest advancements in the field.The Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy is not just preserving a medical tradition-it is transforming it. As they have coined their acronym as Committed to Credible Research in Homoeopathy, through an unwavering commitment to research, standardisation, education, and innovation, CCRH is driving a scientific revolution in Homoeopathy. As the world increasingly turns toward integrative and holistic healthcare models, India is leading the way in demonstrating that Homoeopathy can be both traditionally rooted and scientifically advanced.

(The writer is Director General, Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH). Views expressed are personal)

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | APRIL 10, 2025

MONEY MATTERS



Glenmark, Biocon units recall products in US

Drug firms Glenmark and Biocon are recalling products in the US for manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator. In its latest Enforcement Report, the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) stated that a US-based unit of the Mumbai-based drug firm is recalling a medication to treat various ailments like schizophrenia and anxiety. New Jersey-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc is recalling 8,160 bottles of chlorpromazine hydrochloride tablets in the US for "CGMP deviations", USFDA stated. "Results of the finished product is above the agency's current recommended limit of a Nitrosamine, N-Nitroso-Desmethyl Chlorpromazine impurity," it added. The company initiated the Class II nationwide (US) recall on March 11 this year. USFDA stated that US-based Biocon Pharma Inc is recalling 2,184 bottles of a medication to treat high cholesterol. The company is recalling the affected lot due to "failed dissolution specifications", the US health regulator said. The company initiated the Class II recall on March 17, 2025. As per the USFDA, a Class-II recall is initiated when the use of, or exposure to, a violative product may lead to temporary or medically reversible health consequences, or when the likelihood of serious adverse health outcomes is minimal. Shares of Glenmark ended 4.35 per cent down to Rs 1,376.35 apiece on the BSE on Wednesday. Biocon shares, on the other hand, ended 5.33 per cent down at Rs 305.20 apiece on the BSE.



Infosys extends partnership with AIB

Indian IT major Infosys on Wednesday announced the expansion of its partnership with AIB, a financial services group in Ireland and the United Kingdom, to deliver application development, testing, and support services.Infosys will assist AIB in improving its software systems and managing application development and maintenance, according to a company statement. "Building further on its 10-year relationship, Infosys will take on a renewed and expanded role to support AIB as it further accelerates its transformation initiatives and delivers support and value to its customers and stakeholders," the statement said. AIB Group Chief Technology Officer Graham Fagan said the extended collaboration seeks to progressively modernise the firm's technology and data capabilities. "By combining our collective expertise and experience, we will deliver on our customer-first commitment and enhance operational efficiency and resilience," he said. Infosys shares settled 1.76 per cent lower at Rs 1,404.20 apiece on BSE on Wednesday.



CBDT sets deadline for Vivad Se Vishwas scheme

The income tax department on Wednesday said taxpayers willing to avail of the Vivad Se Vishwas dispute resolution scheme will have to file declaration by April 30. This is the first time that the I-T department has notified the last date for filing declaration under the scheme launched on October 1, 2024. "CBDT notifies 30.04.2025 as the last date, on or before which a declaration in respect of tax arrears can be filed by the declarants to the designated authority under the Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Scheme, 2024," the I-T department said in a X post. The scheme can be availed of by taxpayers who have disputes/appeals, including writs and special leave petitions (appeals) whether filed by the taxpayer or the tax authorities are pending as on July 22, 2024 before the Supreme Court, high courts, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Commissioner/Joint Commissioner (Appeals). Around 2.7 crore direct tax demands totalling about Rs 35 lakh crore are being disputed at various legal fora. The Vivad Se Vishwas scheme, 2024, was announced in Budget 2024-25 on July 23 and October 1, 2024, was notified as the start date for availing of the scheme. Taxpayers availing of the scheme will have to pay 110 per cent of the disputed tax demand.

INVESTOR ROUNDTABLE IN LONDON

Nirmala highlights India's investment opportunities

PNS ■ LONDON



India offers a compelling growth opportunity for foreign banks, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told investors in the UK.

Sitharaman's remarks came as she chaired an India-UK Investor Roundtable in London, attracting around 60 UK investors representing various pension funds, insurance companies, banks and other financial institutions.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the high-level roundtable on Tuesday evening outlined the priorities of the government for enabling sustained economic growth and investment opportunities, with the policy support that is shaping "New India". It highlighted the efforts being made by the ministry to pursue process and governance reforms to reduce compliance burden and ease regulation for facilitating an enabling environment for business and investments.

"India offers a compelling growth opportunity for foreign banks and the government of India is actively encouraging foreign investment in the banking sector," Sitharaman told the gathering.

With an expanding middle class and strong and stable policy environment, the Union Finance Minister said that India is set to become the sixth-largest Insurance market by 2032 with the expected growth at 7.1 per cent CAGR from 2024-2028 — one of the fastest growing insurance markets among G20 countries, the Ministry of Finance readout said. Sitharaman also informed the investors that the Indian securities market is among the first major markets to fully adopt the T+1 settlement, as early as 2023, and India's market capitalisation stands at $4.6 trillion, currently ranked fourth globally.

"The Union Finance Minister spoke at length about India's maiden International Financial Services Centre GIFT-IFSC — an offshore zone that is endowed with an enabling ecosystem with considerable tax exemptions, skilled manpower, foreign currency transactions, and strategic geographical location," the ministry noted. The gathering was informed that as of March 2025, more than 800 entities across banks, capital markets, insurance, fintech, aircraft leasing, ship leasing, and bullion exchange, among others have been registered with the IFSCA.

FM holds talks with British PM Stamer, Chancellor Reeves

PNS ■ LONDON

Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday held talks with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chancellor Rachel Reeves, who received the Finance Minister at her 11 Downing Street office here.

Progress of the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations were among the topics on the agenda of the meeting, which came ahead of the 13th UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD).

Sitharaman told PTI ahead of the dialogue that closer cooperation between the financial sectors of the two countries and stronger educational ties to welcome UK universities into India were among the areas of focus for the discussions.

"We will also cover mutual recognition of certain professions, which is important for both the countries, and science and technology where the UK holds some premier research positions and India would like to seek cooperation and collaboration," said Sitharaman.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the EFD is a significant bilateral platform between the two countries encompassing various aspects of financial collaboration, including investment matters, financial services, financial regulations, UPI interlinkages, taxation matters and illicit financial flows.



Rupee dives deeper amid global turmoil

Ends 45 paise down at 86.71 against dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee extended its losing streak for the fourth straight session and settled 45 paise lower at 86.71 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, amid escalating tariff turbulence globally even as the Reserve Bank reduced key interest rate by 25 basis points as a growth-stimulus measure.

Even though crude oil prices fell sharply to a record level and the American currency remained weak, the Indian currency stayed under pressure due to incessant outflow of foreign funds and lacklustre sentiment in the domestic equity markets, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.52 and moved between a high of 86.47 and the low of 86.71 against the greenback during intraday, facing extreme volatility. The unit settled at 86.71 (provisional) against the dollar, sharply lower by 45 paise from the previous closing level.

On Tuesday, the Indian currency crashed 50 paise to settle at 86.26 against the dollar. This was the steepest single-day decline for the rupee since January 13, when it lost 66 paise.

In the preceding two sessions on Monday and Friday, the rupee had lost 32 paise and 14 paise, respectively. In the last four trading sessions the rupee has lost 104 paise against the US dollar. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee declined amid dented global market sentiments owing to trade war between the US and China after US President Donald Trump imposed an additional 50 per cent tariff on China.

"Weak domestic markets and FII outflows also pressurised the rupee. However, weakness in crude oil prices and a decline in the US dollar index cushioned the downside. RBI cut repo rate by 25 bps to 6 per cent, in line with expectations," he said, adding, "investors may remain cautious ahead of the inflation data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 86.30 to 86.90."

RBI's monetary policy committee on Wednesday decided to slash the key interest rate by 25 basis points, reducing it for the second time in a row, paving the way to cut financing cost and stimulate economic activities.



India economy to grow at 6.7% in FY26: ADB

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to expand at 6.7 per cent during the current fiscal year spurred by higher domestic demand, rising rural incomes and moderating inflation, ADB said on Wednesday.

Favourable monetary and fiscal policies are expected to sustain the growth momentum, with GDP projected to increase by 6.8 per cent in FY26 (2026-27), according to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2025.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday lowered its GDP forecast to 6.5 per cent from 6.7 per cent estimated earlier for the current financial year on account of impact of global trade and policy uncertainties.

India continues to show resilient growth despite global uncertainties, driven by the Government of India's focus on infrastructure development and job creation, said Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director for India Mio Oka.

"The further strengthening of the manufacturing sector through regulatory reforms, combined with the already robust services and agriculture sectors and the recently announced tax incentives for the middle class, will help sustain India's strong economic growth trajectory," she said.

VIJAY MALLYA CASE

Indian banks win UK bankruptcy appeal

PNS ■ LONDON



A consortium of Indian banks, led by State Bank of India, on Wednesday won their court appeal in London to uphold a bankruptcy order against Vijay Mallya in a long-standing legal battle seeking repayment of a judgment debt owed by his now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

High Court judge Anthony Mann ruled in favour of the banks to allow an appeal heard in February, while refusing two applications seeking permission to appeal filed by the 69-year-old businessman, declared a fugitive and wanted for fraud and money laundering charges in India.

"The banks' pleaded position on security was one which they were entitled to adopt," Justice Mann ruled.

"The bottom line in relation to this is that the bankruptcy order stands," he concludes.

Gold slips below Rs 91,000 level on reduced demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Gold prices plunged Rs 1,050 to Rs 90,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday due to poor offtake by stockists and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 91,250 per 10 grams in the previous market close.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated Rs 1,050 to Rs 89,750 per 10 grams against the Tuesday's close of Rs 90,800 per 10 grams.

However, silver prices climbed Rs 500 to Rs 93,200 per kg. The white metal had settled at Rs 92,700 per kg on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, spot gold increased USD 61.98, or 2.08 per cent, to USD 3,044.14 per ounce in the overseas markets.

"Gold reclaimed the USD 3,030 level as fears of a full-fledged global trade war plunging the world economy into recession reignited demand for safe-haven assets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

President Trump has imposed additional tariffs on China, which now faces a 104 per cent levy, with Beijing vowing to retaliate, announcing it would raise the tariff on US goods to 84 per cent, escalating the trade conflict between the world's two largest economies.

I am Sanjay but not Sanjay of Mahabharat, says RBI guv

PNS ■ MUMBAI



I am Sanjay but not Sanjay of Mahabharat who can predict future rate actions and at what level rate moderation will stop amid the ongoing global uncertainties, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Wednesday.

Malhotra's remarks came at a media briefing on being asked if more interest rate cuts are in the offing, after he delivered the second straight interest rate cut since taking over as the RBI governor.

According to the Mahabharat, Sanjay was blessed with divine vision and used his power to relay actions at the Kurushetra battlefield to blind King Dhritarashtra at his palace. He further said monetary policy and fiscal policy are acting in tandem to meet the growth-inflation targets.

"It is a joint effort... the government has done its bit in the Budget recently by taking a large number of measures in terms of the increased capex, tax rebates and we have reduced repo rate and changed the stance going forward, which means that the direction of the policy repo rate is downwards.

"Where it will reach… we really don't know. I am Sanjay, but I am not Sanjay of Mahabharat to be able to foresee that far. I do not have the divine vision that he had," he said. He further said "we will jointly (with the government) try to manage the growth and the inflation dynamics in our country".

RBI's rate cut to cushion economy, says India Inc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Reserve Bank's move to lower its benchmark repo rate for the second time in a row will cushion India's economy against external shocks in the face of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the US that has triggered a global turmoil, industry bodies said on Wednesday.

The RBI on Wednesday slashed the key interest rate by 25 basis points to 6 per cent providing relief to home, auto and corporate loan borrowers.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee termed the decision to continue with the rate easing cycle as timely and prudent.

"The rate cut coupled with the shift in monetary policy stance from 'neutral' to 'accommodative', too, is a big positive," Banerjee said.

The RBI's rate cut, and stance change reflect concerns about the impact of slower global growth on domestic economy and a relatively benign outlook for domestic inflation, he added.

Unemployment rate declines marginally to 4.9%: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Unemployment rate among persons of 15 years or above slipped to 4.9 per cent in calendar year 2024 from 5 per cent in the previous year, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released on Wednesday.

In rural areas, there is a marginal decline in overall unemployment (4.3 per cent to 4.2 per cent), with slight reductions for both men and women, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a release.

Urban male unemployment rose (6.0 per cent to 6.1 per cent), but female unemployment declined (8.9 per cent to 8.2 per cent), keeping the overall urban rate stable at 6.7 per cent. At all-India level, unemployment saw a minor drop (5.0 per cent to 4.9 per cent), suggesting slight improvements in employment opportunities, it stated.

It also stated that decline in unpaid helpers in household enterprises seems to have contributed to the drop in WPR (workers population ratio) as well as LFPR (labour force participation ratio) among rural females, as the percentage of 'helpers in Household Enterprises' decreased from 19.9 per cent to 18.1 per cent from 2023 to 2024.



Slight improvements were seen across all categories, particularly in the overall WPR (47.0% to 47.6%) in Urban areas, it stated adding that at all-India level, overall WPR remained relatively unchanged (53.4% to 53.5%).

In urban areas, the LFPR increased for males (74.3% in 2023 to 75.6% in 2024) and slightly for females (25.5% to 25.8%), leading to an overall rise in LFPR (50.3% to 51.0%).

Overall LFPR remained constant at 56.2 per cent, despite minor variations across categories, it stated. LFPR refers to the percentage of population that is either employed or seeking employment.

Under Principal and Subsidiary Status(PS+SS), the labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India remained largely stable between 2023 and 2024, though there were some variations across rural and urban areas. Under the PS+SS approach, if a person has engaged in any economic activity for a period of 30 days or more during the preceding 365 days a person is considered as employed.

At the national level, the overall LFPR remained nearly unchanged, with a marginal decline from 59.8 per cent to 59.6 per cent. The worker population ratio (WPR) followed a similar pattern. At the all-India level, WPR recorded a marginal decline, moving from 58.0 per cent to 57.7 per cent, indicating a slight drop in employment despite stable participation rates.

Stock markets decline as global trade tensions escalate

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower on Wednesday in line with losses in global markets amid escalating trade tensions, even as the Reserve Bank cut policy rates for a second consecutive time as it sought to bolster the economy in the face of further pressure from damaging US tariffs.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 379.93 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 73,847.15. During the day, it slumped 554.02 points or 0.74 per cent to a low of 73,673.06. The NSE Nifty declined 136.70 points or 0.61 per cent to 22,399.15. Intra-day, it tanked 182.6 points or 0.81% to 22,353.25. Mirroring weak trends in Asian equities, domestic key equity indices opened lower and remained in the negative territory throughout the session after the US imposed a fresh set of tariffs, including a whopping 104 per cent levy on Chinese imports.

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | APRIL 10, 2025

Akshay Kumar channels grit and grace as C Sankaran Nair

Akshay Kumar, who is gearing up for the release of his next *Kesari Chapter 2*, has shared his striking new look as C. Sankaran Nair, a character that embodies tradition, resistance, and truth. On Wednesday, the actor took to his Instagram handle and shared a new powerful look from the film and captioned it, "This is not a costume. It's a symbol — of tradition, of resistance, of truth, of my nation. C. Sankaran Nair didn't fight with a weapon. He fought the British Empire with the law — and with fire in his soul. This 18th APRIL, we bring you the court trial they never taught in textbooks. #KesariChapter2 #SankaranVsTheEmpire Only In cinemas."

In the image, Akshay is seen in a stunning Kathakali getup, showcasing his powerful transformation into the character of Sankaran Nair. The intricate makeup and traditional attire highlight the intensity and depth of his portrayal, symbolising the themes of tradition, resistance and truth. This striking visual showcases Kumar's commitment to authentically bringing the character to life while embracing the cultural richness of Kathakali dance.

Directed by Karan Singh Tyagi, *The Kesari Chapter 2* is produced by Hiroo Yash Johar, Karan Johar, Aruna Bhatia and Adar Poonawalla. The film also stars Ananya Panday as Dilreet Gill, a determined female barrister who partners with Nair in his pursuit of justice. R. Madhavan plays Neville McKinley, a brilliant mind referred to as 'a genius' in the film.

Kesari Chapter 2 is set to release in theatres on April 18.



RANDEEP HOODA

I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED ACTION AS A GENRE



After captivating audiences with his powerful portrayals in biopics and cop dramas, Randeep Hooda is making a roaring return to the action genre. Bollywood's biggest versatile star, known for his incredible star presence, is set to play a formidable larger than life character in the film *Jaat* that releases this week across India. Excited about stepping back into the action zone five years post the release of *Extraction*, Randeep calls this experience "absolutely kicking" and a refreshing change from his recent roles.

Randeep last took on the action hat in *Extraction*, making him the only Indian actor taking on a full blown role - *Extraction* with Chris Hemsworth. The film directed by Sam Hargrave and produced by the Russo Brothers, released on Netflix in 2020 earning incredible reviews for Randeep's action avatar. Now with *Jaat*, his action star role is all set to be back, this time on the big screen as he steps into the role of Ranatunga.

Talking about his return to action, Randeep Hooda shares, "I have always loved action as a genre. There is something raw, visceral and thrilling about it. After playing intense characters in biopics and embodying law enforcement roles, getting to unleash my dark side as the menacing Ranatunga in *Jaat* has been exhilarating. I had been missing action and this film gave me the perfect opportunity to get back into that space. The choreography, the high-octane sequences and the sheer physicality of the role—it has been a challenging yet fulfilling experience. Playing a character who is as ruthless as he is charismatic is something I'm really looking forward to showcasing. Extraction was the first of its kind for me, to be an Indian actor taking on a full blown action role in the west, was a thrilling experience".

Jaat is a gripping action thriller that delves deep into the power dynamics of rural India, intertwining themes of revenge, honor and survival. Randeep Hooda's character in the film is a fearsome force—brutal, cunning and unrelenting.



Hera Pheri 3 to hit screens before next monsoon? Paresh Rawal suggests so

Ever since the announcement, fans have been unable to keep calm about Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty and Paresh Rawal starrer *Hera Pheri 3*. Now, Paresh has dropped a major hint regarding the release date of this much-anticipated drama.

Paresh shared the re-release trailer for his film *Andaz Apna Apna* on X, however, one of the netizens asked him about *Hera Pheri 3* in the comment section saying, "*We are waiting for Babu Bhai Mr. Teza*. Hinting at the sequel's release date, Paresh responded with *Soon soon ! Before the next monsoon!*"

It is still not certain if the veteran actor's remark was in reference to the release date of the much-awaited sequel that is expected to hit the big screens in the first half of 2026.

On January 30, Priyadarshan confirmed working on the much-anticipated sequel, *Hera Pheri 3* on his birthday.

After Akshay Kumar wished him via a social media post, Priyadarshan thanked him saying, "Thank You so much for you wishes @akshaykumar. In return I would like to give you a gift, I'm willing to do *Hera Pheri 3*, Are you ready Akshay, @suniel.shetty &; @pareshrawalofficial," confirming the project.

The first installment in the franchise, *Hera Pheri* reached the audience in 2000. A remake of the Malayalam film *Ramji Rao Speaking* received an overwhelming response from the audience. Six years later, the sequel to the film, *Phir Hera Pheri* was released in 2006 and it also turned out to be a box office success. In addition to this, Priyadarshan has joined hands with Paresh and Akshay for another project, *Bhooth Bangla*. Apart from them, the drama will also see Wamiqa Gabbi, Tabu, Rajpal Yadav and Govardhan Asrani in significant roles.

Paid peanuts, told she'd never make it—Tillotama Shome proved otherwise

Tillotama Shome has long been known for her nuanced, powerful performances, whether in *Sir, Monica, O My Darling*, or the latest season of *Paatal Lok*. But beyond the accolades and layered characters, lies a journey defined by quiet grit and self-belief — something she revealed recently in a candid interview with The Hollywood Reporter.

In the interview, Shome opened up about a moment early in her career that left a mark — a comment from a director during a project's wrap party. When casually asked what she was "lusting for," she responded with a dream: a car she had her eye on, one she hoped to afford with a bigger paycheck someday. What followed was a comment she didn't forget.

She recalled, "I mentioned a particular car that cost a certain amount and said, 'If I do a film where I'm paid this much, I could buy that car.'" But instead of encouragement, the director, despite acknowledging her talent, told her outright that she would "never earn that kind of money." He even admitted it was unfair but insisted that it was just the way the industry worked.



Though Shome believes the director meant no harm, the comment stuck with her. "It stayed with me," she said. But instead of letting it define her, she used it as fuel. Her very next film — creatively fulfilling and artistically rich — became a turning point. She negotiated her contract for four months, refused to back down, and eventually landed double the fee she had once hoped for.

"Then came my next film, which was everything I could dream of creatively. I knew I'd never get a role that good again, but I still negotiated for four months. I fought for the money, and eventually, I got paid double the amount I'd mentioned at that party," she shared.

Once the deal was sealed, Shome texted the same director. Not with resentment, but with resolve. She told him about the amount she had closed the deal for and gently reminded him of the weight words carry — especially when said to someone navigating their place in a tough industry. "I asked him to be cautious about telling other actors what they were capable of doing," she added.



Fatima on facing dating speculation: 'Some days, it still affects me'

Fatima Sana Shaikh, known for her powerful performance in *Dangal*, addressed the long-standing rumours about her relationship with superstar Aamir Khan. While Aamir confirmed he's dating Gauri Spratt, old speculations linking him to Fatima had resurfaced too—and the actress has finally opened up about how such talk affects her.

In an interview, Fatima revealed that the whispers about her alleged romance with Aamir did impact her at one point. "Earlier, I used to get affected by all this," she admitted, adding that she had never experienced gossip and speculation on such a massive scale before. The actress pointed out that the people making these claims don't even know her personally. "A bunch of strangers, whom I've never met, are writing things about me," she said, expressing her frustration. "They don't even know if there is any truth to this. Sometimes I feel like telling them, 'Ask me, I'll give you an answer.'" While Fatima has learned to tune out the noise, she confessed that there are still moments when the rumours get under her skin. "It disturbs me because I don't want people to assume wrong things. But I've learned to ignore it. Yet, there are some days when I do get affected," she shared honestly.

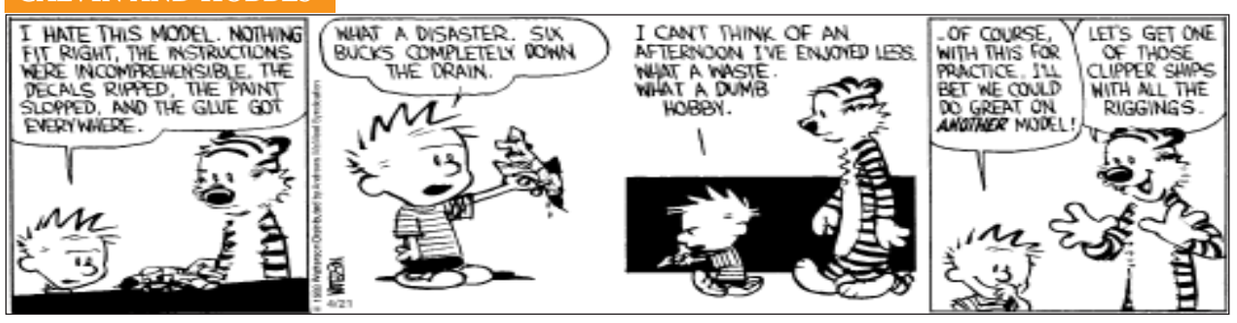
Despite the gossip, Fatima has nothing but admiration for Aamir as a professional. In another conversation, she described him as a generous and disciplined co-star. "He's very easy to work with and a very giving actor," she said, adding that his punctuality and awareness of the value of time on set made a strong impression. "He understands that every second on set costs money and he respects that."

FUN

ARCHIE



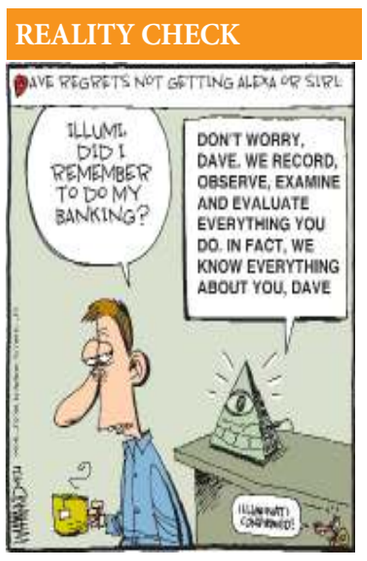
CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



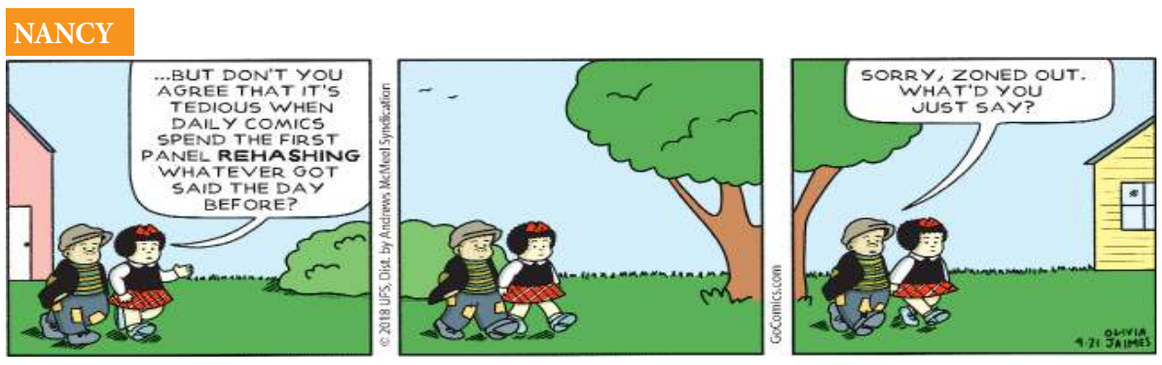
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

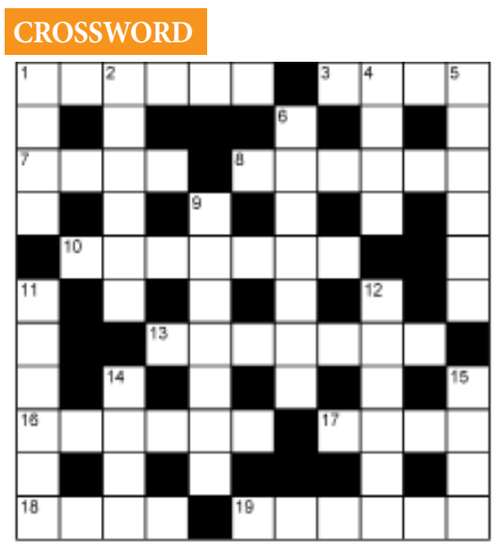
Yesterday's solution

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

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 The crime of killing someone
3 This covers your body
7 Baby goats
8 Cardboard box
10 People you like who like you
13 Envious
16 Fires a gun
17 An easy card game
18 A student's table
19 The capital of the United Kingdom

DOWN

1 Manufacture
2 People on horses
4 Fly this on a string
5 One hundred less ten
6 Light open shoes with straps
9 Says again
11 Overtook
12 Spoiled
14 Male children
15 Twirl around

SOLUTION

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The Pioneer

Vijayawada

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THURSDAY APRIL 10, 2025

'You can't write a historical if you don't feel the Mitti'

In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, screenplay writer Rishi Virmani opens up about the intense creative journey behind *Chhaava*, the historical epic directed by Laxman Utekar. From grappling with the weight of portraying Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj authentically to shaping Aurangzeb as a cold and calculated adversary, Rishi reveals how the film balances strategy, emotion and historical truth

TEJAL SINHA
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How do you write a man like fire? How do you script the son of Shivaji — a warrior-scholar whose ferocity on the battlefield was matched by the sharpness of his mind? For screenwriter Rishi Virmani, bringing Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj to life in the epic historical film *Chhaava* wasn't just about battles and bravery — it was about grounding himself in the soil, the spirit and the silence of history.

"It's impossible to write a historical, if you don't feel the mitti," points Rishi in an exclusive chat with ***The Pioneer***. "You have to smell it, live it and earn it. That's the only way the characters breathe."

Known for his contributions to acclaimed projects like *Chup: Revenge of the Artist, Ghoomer* and now *Chhaava*, he calls this historical drama one of the most creatively and emotionally demanding journeys of his career. Set in the rich, layered landscape of Maratha history, *Chhaava* follows the incredible life of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj — a tale not just of warfare, but of spirit, resilience and vision.

"For a non-Maharashtrian like me, writing *Chhaava* was definitely challenging," Rishi admits as he goes on to credit the director, Laxman Utekar. "It was through him that I learned how to approach this story with complete honesty. If you can't feel the culture of the land or the essence of the soil, then even the best scenes won't work."



The first few drafts were terrible. I was nervous. I couldn't figure out the zone. But by the fourth or fifth attempt, Laxman sir really liked what I wrote, and I finally got the tone right. From that point, I started enjoying the process

To bring *Chhaava* to life, Virmani and his team embarked on an extensive research journey. Collaborating with historians, they were constantly cross-checking and verifying facts. "Many books contradicted each other. You might not find the same version of an event in two different historical texts. It was hard work to make sure what we were putting out was accurate," he explains. Rishi, along with his team, immersed themselves in Maratha history — reading (including Marathi novel *Chhava* (also spelled *Chhaava*) by Shivaji Sawant), researching, double-checking — and working alongside him in constructing the screenplay. "In terms of liberties, we've not fictionalised any part of the story. We've tried our best to stay true to the historical narrative. We used all the information available to us and shaped the screenplay around it."

At the heart of *Chhaava* is Sambhaji Maharaj — a leader of immense courage, depth and conviction. "Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj stood apart from every other warrior of the Maratha Empire," Rishi says passionately. "He was the only man who made Aurangzeb rise from his throne and journey for a year on foot to conquer the Deccan. Until then, Aurangzeb had never felt threatened. Sambhaji changed that."

One powerful example Virmani shares from the film is the coronation sequence. "Traditionally, a king wouldn't leave his palace for about a month after coronation due to rituals and gatherings. But Sambhaji Maharaj decided to attack Burhanpur just days after. It was unprecedented. That action alone speaks volumes about the kind of thinker and warrior he was — strategic, fearless and unpredictable."

Rishi emphasises that *Chhaava* isn't just about battles — it's also a deeply human story. "Sambhaji wasn't just a warrior. He was a strategist, a scholar, a great son, a loyal friend, a devoted husband and a compassionate king. We tried to show all of these sides."

He highlights the performance of Rashmika Mandanna, who plays Sambhaji's queen. "She brought such strength and softness. The compassion in her eyes, the faith she shows in her husband, the decisions she makes while the king is away at war — only she could have pulled it off. She brought a beautiful balance that made our job as writers easier." Aurangzeb's portrayal also demanded careful consideration. "He's someone who ruled most of the world — calm, precise, always ahead of his time. His scenes had to be written with poetic depth. His conflict with Sambhaji was one of the most powerful in the film. Both kings stand for very different ideologies, and their confrontation had to reflect that. Vicky Kaushal and Akshaye Khanna brought it alive with so much fire and pain."

Writing dialogue for *Chhaava* was a delicate balancing act. For example, he quotes a line that we see Vicky Kaushal saying, "*Hum Shor Nahin Karte, Seedha Shikaar Karte Hai*." The *Ghoomer* writer explains, "The language had to retain its purity but also remain simple enough for a modern audience to understand. We live in a world of smartphones and social media slang. My goal was to write Hindi and Urdu that's clean and expressive. Even if someone doesn't understand a word, they should feel the emotion through the scene."

The film's action sequences are rooted in the unique warfare style of the Marathas. "They were always outnumbered. Thousands versus lakhs. So they invented guerrilla warfare, known as 'Ganimi Kava' — strategic, surprise attacks often in disguise. Every war scene you see in *Chhaava* has an idea behind it. There's no random swordplay — it's all thought through, with deep cultural grounding."

Despite the historical depth and epic scale, writing *Chhaava* didn't start smoothly for Virmani. "The first few drafts were terrible," he admits candidly. "I was nervous. I couldn't figure out the zone. But by the fourth or fifth attempt, Laxman sir really liked what I wrote and I finally got the tone right. From that point, I started enjoying the process."

The collaboration between writer and director became the backbone of the film's storytelling. "Laxman sir had the entire film clearly mapped out in his head. We worked closely — jammed on ideas, rewrote lines on set, improved things during dubbing. Every scene kept getting better. There was clarity from day one about the kind of film we were making, and we just kept polishing it."

While the vision came from Laxman Utekar, Rishi emphasises that *Chhaava* is the result of collective passion. "Every actor brought something unique to their role. The film wouldn't have been this special if it was only one man's effort. There was support from every corner — cast and crew alike — to bring this story to life. All the credit goes to Laxman sir. He's the kind of leader who inspires people to give more than their best."

Beyond beauty, healing in harmony

PNS|HYDERABAD

In an era where beauty shelves are cluttered with synthetic serums and quick-fix creams, Rakhi Maiti, an advanced cosmetologist, aromatherapist and Ayurvedic skincare formulator, has carved a path rooted in ancient Indian wisdom. Her brand, Regoras, stands tall on the synergy of bioactive botanicals, therapeutic essential oils and dosha-balancing ingredients that work not just on the skin—but through it, toward holistic well-being.

"Regoras was born from the idea of redefining skincare by blending Ayurvedic Proprietary Medicine with Aromatherapy Essential Oils," says Maiti. "Ayurveda isn't just an ancient tradition; it's a science that focuses on holistic healing and skin wellness at a deeper level."

As someone who's seen firsthand the damage caused by chemical-laden skincare—thinning skin, premature aging, increased sensitivity—Maiti was determined to break the cycle. She observed how many so-called 'natural' products were often greenwashed, loaded with synthetic additives that offered instant gratification but no true nourishment. "This inspired me to create a brand that stays true to Ayurveda while integrating modern skincare needs. Our formulations use bioactive botanicals and essential oils to restore balance, enhance skin health, and provide long-lasting results."

Indeed, Regoras is not merely a brand. It's a movement toward mindful, conscious skincare. The label prides itself on crafting every product by hand—a process that demands both precision and deep respect for ingredients. One of its most popular offerings, the 3-in-1 Cleansing Ubtan, illustrates this devotion. A multi-functional marvel, the Ubtan adapts to users' routines as a face wash, exfoliating scrub and detoxifying face pack.

"This formula includes potent ingredients like turmeric, sandalwood and orange peel—all known for their skin-purifying and brightening properties," says Maiti.

Another fan-favourite is the Glow Serum, a rich blend of nine botanical oils that hydrates, evens skin tone and smooths fine lines. "Infused with Ayurvedic botanicals and essential oils, it provides visible results while nurturing skin health from within."

Each ingredient in their product is carefully selected based on a dosha-based philosophy. The formulations target not just symptoms, but underlying imbalances. "We ensure every ingredient aligns with Ayurvedic principles while addressing modern concerns like pollution, blue light exposure and oxidative stress," she explains. For instance, aloe vera and sandalwood soothe Pitta (sensitive) skin, while neem and turmeric detoxify Kapha (oily) tendencies. Modern additions like plant-based hyaluronic acid and niacinamide are seamlessly incorporated into these ancient recipes—ensuring performance without compromising purity.

With the rise of "clean beauty," Maiti acknowledges that educating customers about authentic Ayurvedic skincare has been both a challenge and a mission. "There's a misconception that Ayurveda is slow or ineffective," she admits. "While conventional skincare may show instant but temporary results, Ayurvedic skincare works at a deeper level, offering long-term transformation."

Overcoming this skepticism through evidence, she explains, "We rely on clinical studies, real-user testimonials, and education to help customers understand the science behind Ayurvedic healing."

Another obstacle is standing apart in a market where "Ayurveda" is often used as a buzzword. "We ensure transparency by following classical Ayurvedic formulations, dermatologically testing our products, and listing every ingredient clearly, helping consumers make informed choices."



Beyond skin health, sustainability is embedded in their DNA. "We prioritise ethical sourcing, partnering with suppliers who follow fair trade and regenerative harvesting practices," Maiti explains. Their formulations are water-efficient and designed for nutrient retention. Packaging, too, is shifting toward biodegradable, recyclable options. "We're reducing plastic usage through glass containers and eco-friendly alternatives and our small-batch production minimises waste."

Balancing tradition with innovation is no small feat, but Maiti has found her rhythm. She introduces modern enhancements like micro-emulsion technology and pH-balanced formulations to elevate the efficacy of herbal actives. "By staying authentic yet adaptable, we make Ayurveda relevant for today's beauty-conscious consumers."

Her brand is proudly rooted in Indian soil—both metaphorically and literally. Signature ingredients are drawn from every corner of the country: Kashmiri Kumkumadi for radiance, Bengal's Manjistha to detoxify, Himalayan Ashwagandha to reduce stress-related aging and Brahmi for collagen support. "These herbs, combined with essential oils like frankincense, sandalwood, and vetiver, create potent formulations that heal, restore, and rejuvenate," she adds.

Convincing a synthetic-skincare-dominated market to embrace Ayurveda hasn't been easy, but Maiti is unwavering in her approach. "We focus on transparency and education by sharing in-depth insights on our ingredients, formulations, and the science behind our products. Our fusion of Ayurveda and Aromatherapy offers benefits that synthetic products cannot replicate—such as dosha balancing, stress relief, and deep tissue rejuvenation." Purity is non-negotiable at Regoras. The brand follows strict guidelines: "No synthetic preservatives, parabens, sulfates, or artificial fragrances. Only cold-pressed and steam-distilled extracts, therapeutic-grade essential oils for fragrance, and absolutely no fillers or artificial colorants." Aromatherapy plays a central role in their formulations, tailored for each skin type and dosha. For dry and aging skin (Vata), essential oils like frankincense and rose offer deep nourishment. Pitta skin benefits from calming chamomile and vetiver, while Kapha skin is balanced with tea tree and neem. "Customers can take a dosha-based skin analysis for personalised recommendations," she notes. At the heart of it lies the mission to bridge long-term wellness with today's demand for instant results. "We balance immediate benefits with long-term skin transformation. Bioactive botanicals like saffron and aloe vera offer an instant glow, while our modern formulation techniques ensure deeper absorption."

Ultimately, Maiti believes the key to radiant skin lies in listening to it. "One common skincare mistake people make is using products that don't align with their dosha. Ayurveda teaches us to understand our skin's changing needs and nourish it accordingly. That's what brings true, lasting harmony."

Is your office chair hurting your health?

Gone are the days when offices were all about one-size-fits-all cubicles and desks - they have now transformed into more functional, ergonomic and comfortable environments that focus on human-centric design. From offering multiple seating options to creating relaxing environments for employees to enhance satisfaction and productivity, modern-day workplaces have changed for the better. As hybrid work models dominate, the demand for intelligent, adaptive office furniture—particularly chairs—has surged. Today's "smart" chairs are no longer static objects, but proactive tools designed to enhance health, focus, and efficiency through cutting-edge technology.

The dangers of prolonged sitting have been well-documented, and the numbers paint a worrying picture. Traditional office chairs force our muscles to work overtime, leading to chronic back pain and reduced circulation. Considering the increasingly sedentary lifestyle that the world is moving towards, the way we sit is in dire need of an upgrade. This is where it becomes increasingly important for companies to invest in ergonomic seating solutions not only from an



employee well-being standpoint, but also from a business perspective. For instance, when companies invest in ergonomic solutions, the results are remarkable: a 15% boost in productivity, a stunning 67% reduction in musculoskeletal-related absences, and a 24% increase in employee satisfaction. The mind-body connection plays a crucial role here. When employees sit in chairs that properly align their spine, they're not just more comfortable—they're more focused. The evidence is clear: workers using ergonomic chairs show 32% lower healthcare costs and maintain concentration for extended periods, transforming physical comfort into measurable business outcomes.

Our phones, cars, and even refrigerators are smart. But can our chairs be smart too? Absolutely! Today's smart chairs are sophisticated wellness tools that adapt to our needs in real-time. Several leading manufacturers have developed chairs that use advanced sensors to continuously adjust lumbar support based on your unique spinal curvature.

While Artificial intelligence has manged to revolutionize the tech landscape, it is also improving the way we sit. Some innovative companies have now introduced AI-powered models that serve as personal posture coaches, providing gentle reminders when you start to slouch. But this innovation goes beyond merely correcting our posture as some modern smart chairs also incorporate climate control features and breakthrough materials that regulate temperature during those marathon meetings. Many premium models now offer targeted massage functions, helping you stay relaxed and focused without leaving your desk. The most advanced chairs track your sitting patterns over time, learning your habits and offering personalized recommendations for optimal break intervals.

Forward-thinking companies are discovering that investing in smart chairs delivers impressive returns. For every dollar spent on ergonomic upgrades, businesses see a return of $3 to $6, primarily through reduced absenteeism and improved employee retention. Organisations that have embraced AI-enabled chairs report productivity increases of 25-50%, as employees maintain comfort and focus throughout their workday. The impact extends beyond pure productivity metrics. In today's competitive job market, 78% of employees consider workplace well-being when choosing their next employer. Leading technology companies have recognised this shift, creating dedicated well-being budgets that include smart furniture allocations to attract and retain top talent.

The next wave of innovation promises even more exciting developments. Imagine chairs that sync with virtual reality systems to optimise ergonomics for remote workers, automatically adjusting to match your virtual workspace setup. Sustainability is becoming increasingly central to design, with innovative manufacturers pioneering modular chairs made from recycled materials.

The integration of AI will continue to push boundaries. Future chairs may communicate with your wearable devices, adjusting their settings based on your stress levels or suggesting specific stretches when they detect fatigue. This evolution will further blur the line between furniture and wellness technology, creating workspaces that actively support human potential.

The transformation of the office chair from a simple piece of furniture to a strategic business tool represents a fundamental shift in workplace design. As hybrid work models become the norm, smart seating solutions offer more than just comfort—they provide a competitive advantage in productivity, cost management, and talent retention.

For businesses navigating the future of work, the question isn't whether to invest in smart chairs, but how quickly to adopt them. The numbers speak for themselves: reduced healthcare costs, increased productivity and improved employee satisfaction make smart seating not just a luxury, but a necessity for sustainable business success in our increasingly dynamic work environment.

(The author, Ganesh Sonawane, is the Co-founder and CEO, at Frido.)

The Pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | APRIL 10, 2025

RCB vs DC: Interesting clash in IPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru



An intriguing battle is on the cards when fearless Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Delhi Capitals (DC) clash in an IPL match, where the outcome will be governed by a clutch of exciting personal match-ups, here on Thursday. The Capitals have three wins from as many matches and the Royal Challengers bagged three victories from four games. That record testifies their wonderful shapeshifting ability according to opponents and conditions.

Royal Challengers have mastered conditions as distinct as Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai and their lone stumble came at home against Gujarat Titans.

It was more to do with a rather out of character Chinnaswamy pitch taking them by surprise than any sudden erosion in skills. The RCB will be wiser for that experience against the Delhi side, who have wins at varied Visakhapatnam and Chennai tracks. But the hosts will be a confident group as star batter Virat Kohli made a return to run-making ways after an all too brief blip. If the 22-yard strip here retains its nature from that GT match, then Kohli's form will be crucial for RCB.

Kohli vs Starc and Kuldeep

The 36-year-old Indian star will have two formidable foes to negate in this match — pacer Mitchell Starc and left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav.

Kohli has an edge over Starc in T20s as he has scored 72 runs off 31 balls, but the Aussie is in fine fettle this season taking nine wickets from three matches at an average of 11.

So, Kohli's battle with Starc in the Power Play will have a massive influence on RCB's initial charge. Kohli will come up against Kuldeep (6 wickets at an economy of 6) if he bats a bit deeper, and it will be an interesting battle. Kohli is a much-evolved batter in T20s after shedding his reticence to play lofted and sweep shots against spinners. It has allowed him to bat with more liberty against slow bowlers, and Kuldeep's endless bag of tricks will challenge the senior pro, especially the one the slides away from the right-hander.

Here, in-form RCB skipper Rajat Patidar too will have a big role to play as he is a superb player of spin, and, in that context, DC will hope for a heavier contribution from left-arm spinner Axar Patel. The Delhi captain has bowled just eight overs across three matches, and is yet to take any wickets. Without being spectacular, Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar have given RCB control over their rivals in the Power Plays. They will have to do an encore against Delhi keeping KL Rahul, who knows the conditions here to the hilt, silent. Rahul is now trying to maximise his stay at the crease rather looking to bat deep as he has often done in the past, and it has made him a more dangerous customer. The Delhi outfit will also closely watch the fitness of Faf du Plessis, who missed the previous match against Chennai Super Kings. If Du Plessis, another player with first-hand knowledge of the conditions here, joins Rahul atop then it will become imperative for RCB new ball bowlers to fall into their rhythm straightaway.

Teams

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Rajat Patidar (c), Phil Salt, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Liam Livingstone, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Tim David, Krunal Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Josh Hazlewood, Yash Dayal, Suyash Sharma, Rasikh Dar Salam, Manoj Bhandage, Jacob Bethell, Swapnil Singh, Abhinandan Singh, Romario Shepherd, Lungi Ngidi, Nuwan Thushara, Mohit Rathee, Swastik Chikara.
Delhi Capitals: Axar Patel (c), Jake Fraser-McGurk, Faf du Plessis, Abishek Porel(w), Sameer Rizvi, Tristan Stubbs, Ashutosh Sharma, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohit Sharma, Mukesh Kumar, Karun Nair, Donovan Ferreira, Tripurana Vijay, Darshan Nalkande, Dushmantha Chameera, KL Rahul, T Natarajan, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Manvanth Kumar L, Madhav Tiwari.

Sarandeep praises Priyansh Arya for stunning century

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former India spinner and Delhi coach Sarandeep Singh has called young batter Priyansh Arya "one of the country's most talented players right now" and said his ability to score briskly through proper cricketing shots sets him apart.

The 21-year-old struck a stunning century for Punjab Kings in their Indian Premier League (IPL) match against Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday.

Arya, who was bought for ₹3.8 crore in the auction after impressing in the domestic circuit, scored a match-winning 103 in only his fourth IPL match.

The southpaw has now tallied 158 runs in four games at an average of 39.50 and a strike rate of 210.66. His 11 sixes have placed him among the top power-hitters of IPL 2025.

"A few months ago, I saw him playing in local Delhi matches," Sarandeep said in an interaction with media.

"We picked him in the DPL for our South Delhi Superstarz team. He scored a hundred, hit six sixes in an over, and finished as the tournament's top run-getter. We knew he had something special."

Arya's breakout performance in the Delhi Premier League led to a call-up for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, and after impressing in the premier domestic competition, Punjab Kings picked him up at the Indian Premier League auction.

"Earlier he was just hitting — 50s and 60s and then getting out. We worked on his game awareness and patience. Now you see maturity. He values his wicket," added Sarandeep.

One of Arya's standout traits is his ability to hit hard and long.

"He does not play rash shots. No reverse sweeps, no wild swings. He hits proper cricketing shots — straight, through the covers, off the back foot. It's all about the timing and hard work in the nets."

Arya now finds himself in a fantastic learning environment under the mentorship of Australian legend Ricky Ponting. Sarandeep termed this the perfect opportunity for the talented opener to learn, improve and take his game to the next level.

"He is with the best in the business," said Sarandeep Singh.

"Now it's about consistency. You've made one hundred, now make three. Take your team to the playoffs. That's what will set you apart."

With 10 league matches still to play, Arya is being backed as a potential Orange Cap contender.

"He has that ability. If he keeps working hard and stays grounded, he could end this Indian Premier League as the top run-scorer — and maybe get that India call-up sooner than expected," Sarandeep concluded.

It has been frustrating season for CSK so far: Fleming

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mullanpur

Head coach Stephen Fleming was relieved to see Chennai Super Kings' top-order producing some runs, but, for him, the failure of his side to cross the line in the fourth consecutive IPL match this season remained a "frustrating" element.

CSK batters gave a better account of themselves in pursuit of 220 set by Punjab Kings, but still fell short of the target by 18 runs here on Tuesday.

"It (has been) a frustrating season so far," Fleming told the media after the match. "The catching has been poor, but it was poor from both sides. Whether it was something in the light, I'm not sure, but certainly for us that was an area of concern. If you want to pick up 20 runs, it's probably that and (the) drop catches," he said. Fleming had a point there because CSK have so far dropped 11 catches in five matches, with three of them occurring against Punjab Kings.

The Kiwi then touched upon CSK's improved batting effort as openers Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra put on 69 runs, following which the former added another 89 runs for the third wicket with Shivam Dube (42).

> We (CSK) batted a bit better. We got some substance from the top order, which has been lacking so we were able to then construct the chase
> — STEPHEN FLEMING, CSK COACH

"Well, positive-wise, we batted a bit better. We got some substance from the top order, which has been lacking so we were able to then construct the chase," Fleming said. "We just weren't able to keep the run rate at a good level through the middle, and it just left too much towards the end. But we've been out of games, so to be in a game for a lot longer is a positive aspect. The game was really lost in the field," he added. Fleming heaped praise on Punjab Kings' batter Priyansh Arya, who made a 42-ball 103 despite regular fall of wickets at the other end.

"Well, firstly, he had a day out, didn't he? He played very well right from the first ball. It's very brave when you come off a first ball dismissal to look to play a shot like that," Fleming said.

"Our fault was we were too wide. The plan was to bowl straight at the stumps and create some pressure that way. The first ball we bowled straight, we created a caught and bowled chance, and that changes the night quite drastically.

"We were just a little bit sloppy. We were put under pressure, and the young man had some amazing shots. We succumbed a little bit to that pressure by putting the ball in areas that he was stronger in, and we just did not adjust quick enough," he said.

Punjab Kings' Shashank Singh, who struck a 36-ball 52 and forged two vital partnerships to help his side recover from a perilous position of 83/5, said state-based T20 competitions are important to discover talents like Arya.

"I am really in favour of these leagues because you see today Priyansh Arya, then Digvesh Rathi in Lucknow (Super Giants)... The players who did well for the state league," he said.

"These (competitions) are really good because obviously you get an opportunity to play under lights, play with Kookaburra ball and play in those pressure situations.

"You get to know the character of the player as well apart from skills, because skills obviously most of them have but the mental toughness, the character you get to see in the state leagues," Singh added.



Cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar during a visit to Kaziranga National Park in Assam on Wednesday, which was posted on 'X' by State Minister of Environment and Forest Chandra Mohan Patowary

Axar's captaincy plays massive role in Delhi Capitals blazing start to IPL 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru

Axar Patel's captaincy style puts the players at ease instantly and has also played a massive role in Delhi Capitals blazing start to this IPL season, reckons the team's assistant coach Matthew Mott.

The Capitals have won three games on the bounce and currently sits on the pole position in the points table.

"He's just got a great balance on cricket and life. He'll just summarise the group and make sure the players are included. They've got a smile on their face. He doesn't come across as being the only voice (in the team)," Mott said in the pre-match press conference here on Wednesday.

Mott said Axar uses the experience of other senior players in the squad like KL Rahul and Faf Du Plessis, a former Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper, to good effect. "He is not taking it all on himself. He leverages a lot of the other senior players in the group. We mentioned KL, Faf as well. He's got a lot of experience to draw on, particularly Faf. We had a productive meeting around that," he said.

Mott also rated Axar as a level-headed person who realises the "fickle" nature of cricket. "He's played enough cricket to know that it can be a pretty fickle game at times. You're well aware that when you're winning, it's all rosy.

"I like to think that he's got that character where if we do have a bad day, he'll be just as positive," Mott added.

However, the former white-ball coach of England hoped Axar will utilise himself a tad more as a bowler.

The left-arm spinner has bowled just eight overs across the last three matches without taking any wickets.

"We were probably a little surprised that he didn't bowl more. He felt like the other bowlers were doing well. Someone like Vipraj (Nigam) has come in and been a sensation for us.

"He probably took some overs where Axel might have bowled. Given his experience and time, I felt he had control of the game. I think in the matches coming forward, you'll see him bowl a lot more," he noted.

Mott, the Australian women's World Cup-winning coach, patted Rahul for showing the flexibility to bat anywhere in the order. "I thought KL in the last game was amazing to come in at short notice and play an innings like that to really set us up for the win. We've got a number of guys who can go in and open.

"I think what separates KL from a lot of people in the group is his ability to bat anywhere. He's a class player," he said.

Hinting that Rahul will have continued presence in the DC top-order, Mott said the hit-or-miss style of other opener Jake Fraser-McGurk demands an experienced batter at the other end.

"The role that Jake plays in every side he is in, it iss high risk, but when he has his days out, it's what is the goal. But he has got full autonomy from all of our leadership," he explained.

I want to play according to situation: Virat Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Champion cricketer Virat Kohli said curbing the ego and playing as per the demands of a match situation form the core principle of his batting. One of the most successful batters of the modern era, Kohli recently flew past another milestone while becoming the first Indian player to score 13000 runs in T20s.

"It's (batting) never about ego. It was never about trying to overshadow anyone. It's always been about understanding the game situation — and that's something I've always taken pride in. I want to play according to what the situation demands," Kohli said.

"If I was in rhythm, in the flow of the game, I naturally took the initiative. If someone else was better placed to take the lead, they would do it," he added.

Kohli is the highest run-getter in the IPL with 8168 runs from 256 matches with eight hundreds, the most by any batter. The 36-year-old said he decoded the demands of the format from the 2011 edition onwards.

"In my first three years with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, I didn't get many opportunities to bat in the top order. I was usually sent lower down. So, I wasn't really able to crack the IPL in a big way.

"But from 2010 onwards, I started performing more consistently, and by 2011, I was regularly batting at number three. That's when my IPL journey really began to take shape," he added.

Kohli admitted that spending 18 years in the league helped him polish his skills in the shortest version of cricket.

"IPL challenges you in a very unique way because of how the tournament is structured. It's not like a short bilateral series, it spans several weeks, and your position on the points table keeps shifting. That constantly changing scenario brings different kinds of pressure.

Glenn Maxwell fined 25 per cent match fee for IPL code breach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mullanpur

Punjab Kings' all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has been fined 25 per cent of his match fee and handed one demerit point for breaching IPL Code of Conduct during the match against Chennai Super Kings here.

The 36-year-old Maxwell has admitted to the Level 1 offence under article 2.2 which relates to abuse of fixtures and fittings during the match which was played here at the New PCA Stadium on Tuesday.

"Glenn Maxwell, All-rounder, Punjab Kings has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees and has also accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's match against Chennai Super Kings at the New PCA Stadium, New Chandigarh on Tuesday," the BCCI informed in an email.

Iyer wants batters to play with aggressive mindset

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mullanpur

Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer on Tuesday said he wants his batters to play with an aggressive, fearless, and free-flowing mindset, something young opener Priyansh Arya showcased during his sensational maiden IPL century against Chennai Super Kings.

Arya rode on his luck and power-hitting to slam 103 off 42 balls — the fifth fastest century in IPL history as PBKS posted 219/6 despite half their side returning to the dugout in the first eight overs.

"Absolutely. This is going to be the template, irrespective of the ground. We have variety in the batting line-up. Great hitters, great timers, scintillating to watch Priyansh bat from the outside."

"When I had a chat with him in the last game, he was a bit timid in his decision-making against Jofra (Archer). Tonight, he was backing his instincts," Iyer said at the post-match presentation. "It was free-flowing and that is the mindset I want in everyone. Today, he kept on going, he was fearless and it was basically one of the top knocks I have seen in the IPL so far." Yuzvendra Chahal bowled just one over giving away nine runs and Iyer said it was a tactical move to hold back the experienced leg-spinner.

"That was a tactical call, because (Shivam) Dube had already played a few deliveries, and also Conway. With Yuzi coming in, we know how destructive he (Dube) can be. But Yuzi is a smart bowler. My instincts felt that pacers bowling slower balls into the wicket (would work), and we basically wanted pace against Dube.

"We delayed a bit but eventually, it worked out." CSK skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad lamented his side's missed chances in the field, admitting that dropped catches have cost them dearly in recent games. "I think the last four games, the only point of difference, it has been critical, the catches we have been dropping, the same batsman is scoring 15,20, 30 runs," he said after CSK lost by 18 runs against Punjab Kings.

Gaikwad was full of praise for young PBKS opener Arya. "Priyansh played well. High risk batting and it came off well. We were getting wickets at regular intervals but they kept the momentum going. 10-15 runs lesser would have helped us. But it comes down to dropped catches. It was spot on in the batting perspective," he said. Chasing an imposing 220-run target, CSK could manage 201 for 5.

"Two of our best batters who play pace well went at the top of the order. They had a good powerplay. Lot of positives in the batting department," Gaikwad said.

Dinesh trying to create new player out of me: Jitesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru



Jitesh Sharma attributed his ongoing renaissance as a T20 batter to the efforts put in by Royal Challengers Bengaluru mentor Dinesh Karthik who believes that the wicketkeeper can develop into a true '360' degree player.

Jitesh had a lukewarm IPL 2024 for Punjab Kings, scoring just 187 runs from 14 matches at a measly average of 17 and at a reduced strike-rate of 131.

But at RCB, the 31-year-old has already made handy 85 runs from four matches, and his strike-rate has touched 185, a sign of him regaining confidence.

"It is been a great journey till now because in the off-season, I really worked hard with him. I think whichever shot that I am playing right now is the replica of what he used to play. He is trying to create a new player in me," said Jitesh on the eve of the match against Delhi Capitals.

Jitesh said Karthik, a former wicketkeeper batter for RCB, has a lot of trust in his abilities with the bat.

"He believes in me that I can play all around the circle — 360 angles. I am really enjoying myself in a new role. While I am playing those shots, I am very happy because I have never tried those shots and I have all the backing. The process is still on," he added.

The first thing Karthik drove into Jitesh's mind was that a lean season happens to every cricketer, and there is nothing to be disappointed about it.

"I think last year's performance was my mental thing. I was not mentally in the game at that moment. I was thinking about the future. But when I met Dinesh bhai, he told me that it's a human error. It's not rocket science," he said.

Perhaps, Jitesh was a worried man after losing his place in the Indian T20I side after the home series against Afghanistan in January 2024.

The Maharashtra man said Karthik identified some shortcomings in his batting, and began to work on it.

"He saw how I try to dominate. I do not have the craze to take out runs, but I have the craze to win the match. I like that a lot. So, I think he found out that there are some shots that I am lacking and started working on that," he said.

The signs are quite conspicuous as he made a 21-ball 33 against Gujarat Titans and an even more impactful 19-ball 40 against Mumbai Indians.

Jitesh said the Royal Challengers hold all the aces against their rivals from Delhi because his side has won some tough away matches. "We have upper hand because we have played away games and we have won the difficult games.

"Also, the batting line-up which we have... Everyone has chipped in. But in DC, I think they are relying on three players. So, it will be a good challenge," he said.

Jitesh said RCB's good run in this iteration of the IPL is a result of them playing smart cricket rather than going for a downright aggressive game.

"We are playing smart cricket and we are just going and bashing every bowler. We know everyone's strength and the team management has given us a proper role. It's like Jitesh will target certain bowlers and the others will look after some other bowlers. "We are not trying to dominate blindly. It's not like we are drinking any magical portion. So, we are just trying to execute our plan," he detailed.

Jitesh had faced ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah, who returned to competitive cricket for the first time since January, a few days back and came back an impressed man.

"I felt as if he had just come back from the ICC Champions Trophy. Bumrah is so accurate. He was properly fit and he has done proper tests. He is on the peak right now," he said.

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MANCHU FAMILY FEUD STARTS AGAIN



After a few months of silence, the Manchu family is again in the news. In the latest development, Manchu Manoj wanted to go inside his father Mohan Babu's house at Jalpally, but the police didn't allow him to enter. He sat in front of the gate in a dharna and expressed his displeasure for not being permitted to go inside. "This is not about a property dispute, but this is about students," said Manoj, speaking to media persons.

"I already told my father that I don't want any property or money. I want to fight for the students and their future. Actually, the problem started there and since December, many issues have occurred, but the police didn't file a single charge sheet," says Manoj. He accuses his brother Vishnu of being behind all of this.

"Goons attacked us with knives and sticks and I gave proof to the police. In this house, I have my belongings and also my pets. I want to take them with me, but I'm not allowed," said Manoj. He added that the police said they needed to ask Mohan Babu and only if he approved would they allow entry. "But he is not there in the house," said Manoj.

The actor accused his elder brother Vishnu of orchestrating everything. "When we went out to celebrate my daughter's birthday, Vishnu took my car and also attacked my people. I gave proof of him taking my car to the police," said Manoj. "If they can show any proof where I am fighting for the property, I will say sorry to everyone and ask them to apologise to me," said Manoj. He added that he gave all the evidence to the police, but they are not taking any action.

"They told me to succeed with an outside production house and then they would give me a chance under our own banner. I did a lot for Vishnu's career and today I don't know why they are doing this to me," said Manoj about their family. He added that he wanted to release his upcoming film Bhairavam to compete with Vishnu's Kannappa. "With that, Vishnu got tense and postponed his film. He can't do anything, so he is doing all this to me," accused Manoj.



Mohan Babu, Vishnu meet UP CM

On the other hand, Mohan Babu and his elder son Vishnu met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath Yogi in Lucknow. In a social media post, Vishnu stated that the UP CM announced the new release date of his film *Kannappa*. The film is now set to release on June 27. They also gifted a Ramesh Gurajala painting to the UP CM. On this occasion, both the father and son thanked the CM for his hospitality and for taking time to announce the new release date of their film. *Kannappa* was originally scheduled to release on April 25, but due to some VFX work delays, it has now been postponed to June 27.



JACK IS THE PERFECT FILM FOR ME AFTER *TILLU SQUARE*: SIDDU

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com



Siddu Jonnalagadda's upcoming film *Jack* is hitting the screens today. Bommarillu Bhaskar is the director, while Vaishnavi Chaitanya plays the female lead. Siddu's earlier film *Tillu Square* was a huge blockbuster and now he is doing *Jack*. "After *Tillu Square*, I was in a dilemma about what kind of story to do next. I thought it should be impactful, but I wasn't sure what that would be. At that time, Bommarillu Bhaskar came with this *Jack* and I knew this was the film I should do after *Tillu Square*," said Siddu.

The actor said he had worked with Bommarillu Bhaskar for *Orange*, which was long time ago. "I didn't get a chance to talk with him much at that time, but now, I have travelled a lot with him. He always thinks about cinema, and he gave full freedom to me for this film," said Siddu.

"I had great comedy timing in *DJ Tillu* and *Tillu Square* and that timing is not missing in this Jack," he said. "After seeing the film *Baby*, we decided that Vaishnavi was our female lead for this film. She is an outstanding actress with a bright future ahead," said Siddu about Vaishnavi Chaitanya. Siddu is confident that *Jack* will enthrall everyone.

NTR to join sets from April 22

NTR is all set to start his next with director Prashanth Neel. The shooting of this film began long ago, but they were waiting for NTR to join. NTR has completed his debut Hindi film *War 2* and has now lost some weight for this Prashanth Neel film. He is now looking lean and all set to join the shoot.

According to the official release from the team, NTR will join the shooting from April 22 onwards. Initially, the film was planned for a Sankranthi 2026 release. However, the shoot may now be delayed, and the release could be pushed further, says a source.

On the other hand, NTR also confirmed that he will do part two of *Devara*. The first part was a super success, so they are now coming up with the second part. Koratala Siva is the director and is currently preparing the script. Once NTR completes the Prashanth Neel film, he will begin Devara part two, added the source.

PAWAN KAYAN'S SON RECOVERING, SHIFTED TO GENERAL WARD

Andhra Pradesh Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan's younger son Mark Shankar, who was injured in the school fire, is recovering. According to a statement, the young boy has now been shifted to the general ward from the ICU. However, he is still undergoing treatment in a hospital in Singapore. The Deputy CM, who left for Singapore from Hyderabad last night, reached the hospital directly and saw his son.

He is being treated in the emergency ward for burns to his hands and feet and smoke inhalation in his lungs. "We spoke to doctors and officials there, and they said that Mark is recovering and that they are conducting tests for health problems that may arise from smoke inhalation in his lungs," said the statement.

Pawan Kalyan's elder brother Chiranjeevi and his wife Surekha accompanied Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday night. They wanted to give moral support to him during this difficult time.

Tamannaah dodges breakup rumours with witty reply

In the world of celebrity relationships, few things are as unpredictable as the dynamics between stars, and Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma's romance was no exception. After more than two years of being in a relationship, rumors have surfaced suggesting that the couple has amicably decided to part ways. Though neither Tamannaah nor Vijay has publicly confirmed their breakup, speculation surrounding their split has been making the rounds.

The latest buzz erupted when Tamannaah recently launched the trailer for her upcoming film *Odela 2* in Mumbai. During the event, a journalist, seemingly aware of the rumors, tried to subtly bring up Vijay by asking, "Is there any such personality over whom you want to achieve Vijay (victory) with the knowledge of Tantra Mantra?" While the question was cleverly framed, Tamannaah, who is known for her witty responses, chose to sidestep the mention of Vijay altogether. With a smile, she responded, "*Yeh to aap pe hi karna padega. Fir saare paparazzi mere mutthi mein honge.* What do you say? *Karle?* Sir pe hi karle? Then all the paparazzi will be listening to whatever I say." This humorous reply left the media in a flurry, though it did little to clarify her relationship status with Vijay.



Zero buzz & empty halls for Pradeep's film despite Pawan Kalyan's title?

TV anchor and actor Pradeep Machiraju is playing the lead role in *Akkada Ammayi Ikkada Abbayi*, which is set to hit the screens this Friday, April 11. Interestingly, the film shares its title with Pawan Kalyan's debut film, which had gained iconic status over the years. Despite this nostalgic association, the film doesn't seem to be generating much interest. Pradeep, who is a familiar face on television thanks to hosting several shows, hasn't been able to replicate that popularity on the big screen. As per online booking data, most of the theatres remain empty with occupancy reportedly under 10 percent.

Sources say the timing of the release might be one of the reasons. "The IPL season is underway and many students are currently preparing for entrance exams and other aptitude tests. It's just bad timing," said a source.

Even though the film is backed by a big distribution house like Mythri Movie Makers, the lack of buzz has made it a tough sell. Directed by the duo Nitin and Bharath, the film is seeing a limited release. Despite the reuse of a powerful title, the film seems to be struggling to attract audiences.



Anirudh Ravichander out, Sai Abhyankkar onboards Bunny's next

Allu Arjun and director Atlee's film was officially announced on Tuesday on the occasion of Allu Arjun's birthday. Sun Pictures is producing this high-profile film. Everyone thought that Anirudh Ravichander would be the music director, as his name had been circulating on social media for the past few months.

But to everyone's surprise, the makers didn't announce Anirudh Ravichander. Instead, they have chosen a new composer, Sai Abhyankkar. Sai actually composed the music for the announcement video released on Tuesday. Impressed with his work, Atlee decided to bring him on board as the music director for the full film, say sources.

Sai Abhyankkar hasn't worked on any film until now but has composed a few private tracks that became superhits online. Now, everyone is wondering about this young boy composing music for a high-budget film like the Allu Arjun–Atlee combo. It seems Sai is just 20 years old, and both his parents, Tipu and Harini, are singers. They have sung many popular songs in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi.