



## April 20 public meetings of Revanth, KCR

# Turn up political heat

Hyderabad: Although not a face-off, on April 20 when Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and former chief minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) chief K Chandrashekar Rao address public meetings at Kaleshwaram and Jagtial respectively, the political heat will have been turned up significantly, with the resultant 'heat wave' necessitating the redrafting of political narratives in the state. In the run-up to what political observers see as the 'A-20 match' ahead, political rivalry between the ruling Congress and the principal opposition BRS has intensified, making the day crucial for both parties. The BRS, as part of its planned state-wide public meetings by party supremo KCR, has framed the one in Jagtial as revivifying as it is going to be the place where the former CM will formally induct senior Congress leader T Jeevan Reddy into the pink party, "pouring 'jeevan' into the party", to paraphrase a leader. Significantly, KCR, who has largely remained confined to his farmhouse and away from active public life for the past two and a half years, is gearing up for a prominent political show to declare his comeback. No wonder, the event is being projected by BRS leaders as what could be "a turning point for the party". Jeevan Reddy's political shift has attracted considerable attention. Once a vocal critic of KCR, he had frequently targeted the



BRS leadership on various issues, including the controversial Kaleshwaram Project. However, in a dramatic turnaround, he is now praising KCR's governance and drawing searing comparisons with the Congress administration led by Revanth Reddy. He has even coined the slogan "Revanth Reddy Povali - KCR Ravali" (Revanth Reddy must go; KCR should come) signalling his strong endorsement of the former chief minister's regime.

## Congress Accelerates the Process of Finalising the List of Nominated Posts

Hyderabad: The Congress has accelerated the process of finalising the list of nominated posts, along with filling key organisational positions. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, along with PCC president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, held a high-level meeting on Wednesday to deliberate on the issue, besides discussing other crucial matters. The leaders decided to expedite the long-pending process of filling nominated posts. Meenakshi Natarajan emphasised that suitable positions should be given to party workers who have contributed significantly to the organisation, particularly those who were actively involved during the elections. The meeting also reviewed the performance of existing corporation chairpersons and reached a preliminary consensus on either extending their tenures or appointing new individuals.



## Badangpet BJP Leader Found Dead

BJP leader of Badangpet and social activist ended his life by suicide at his house under Medipally police station limits on Wednesday. The incident shocked villagers in Badangpet after learning that the victim, Rallagudem Rama Krishna Reddy, had taken his own life. Ramakrishna was known for consistently fighting on public issues and had played a key role in exposing a Rs 150-crore corruption scam in the Badangpet circle a few months ago. His sudden death has raised many suspicions. Police has registered a case of suspicious death under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Act, and investigation is underway.



## INDIA Bloc To Oppose Delimitation Bill In Special Session

# Backs Women's Reservation

New Delhi: INDIA bloc leaders on Wednesday decided to oppose the delimitation bill pushed with an amendment to Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, to provide 33 per cent reservation for women legislators in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The opposition clarified that it is not against the women's reservation and urged them to implement Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 but objected to the delimitation process, which they believe weakens the representation of the southern and north-eastern states in the Lok Sabha. The decision was made in a meeting at the residence of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi. Along with Congress President, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, RJD Working President Tejashwi Yadav, NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal, and other prominent INDIA bloc leaders attended the meeting. "We are all in favour of the Women's Reservation Bill. But the way in which they have brought it, we have reservations about that. It is politically motivated. Just to suppress the Opposition parties, the govt is doing this. Though we have supported the Women's Reservation Bill continuously, we insist that the earlier amendments be implemented. They are playing some tricks with delimitation. We all parties should unitedly should fight in Parliament. We will oppose this bill, but we are not against the reservation (for women)," Kharge said.

## No naxal-affected districts left in India, declares Centre

New Delhi: In a first such official communication after its extensive operations, the Centre has informed State governments that there are no naxal violence-affected districts in the country after more than five decades of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) having originated in India. The declaration followed a high-level security review held early this month by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under the mandated 'National Policy and Action Plan to Address Left Wing Extremism (LWE)' formulated in 2015. Officials told PTI that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a communication on April 8 to nine States, saying that a comprehensive security review completed after March 31 established that "no district in the country falls under the LWE-affected category".



## Revanth to Visit Medigadda on April 20

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is expected to visit the Medigadda barrage on Godavari river on April 20 for a first hand review of steps being taken to speed up preparations for taking up eventual repairs of the barrage. It may be recalled that the Chief Minister, on April 9, chaired a review on Medigadda barrage related issues and directed the irrigation department to step up all work related to the barrage repairs. Following this meeting, the irrigation department drew up a schedule for the required works, including geophysical and geotechnical tests, and preparation of designs for the repairs. Revanth Reddy had directed that the actual repair works should begin this year and all tests should be completed before the monsoon season results in increased flows in Godavari river.

## TG has emerged as role model for entire country: Deputy CM



Sathupalli (Khammam): Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Wednesday said that the state's governance has emerged as a "role model for the entire country", with officials from several States studying its administrative practices. Addressing a public meeting in Sathupalli, he said the Telangana model of governance is being recognised for its efficiency and welfare orientation. Highlighting infra development in the healthcare sector, the Deputy CM said the government has released funds to create around 14,000 additional super-specialty beds across the state. He described health care and education as the "two eyes" of the government, adding that significant investments are being made in both sectors. He inaugurated a 100-bed hospital in Sathupalli and announced additional healthcare facilities, including a 50-bed hospital in Kalluru and a 30-bed hospital in Penuballi.

## Kavitha protests against land acquisition in Vikarabad, taken into custody

Hyderabad: Telangana Jagruthi president Kalvakuntla Kavitha was taken into custody by the police for staging a road blockade before the Revenue Divisional Office (RDO) in Vikarabad, in a protest against the land acquisition of 1,200 acre for an IT corridor in the district. The farmers of Kadlapur and Raopole villages in Parigi mandal of Vikarabad district have been protesting for over a week in Vikarabad against the land alienation notices served to them.



## Govt sanctions Rs 2,080 cr to power Gruha Jyothi scheme

The Telangana government has sanctioned Rs 2,080 crore for free power supply up to 200 units under the

Gruha Jyothi scheme for the 2026-2027 financial year. Special Chief Secretary to Energy Navin Mittal issued the order sanctioning funds to pay monthly power bills to the two DISCOMs. The order stated that the TGSPDCL Chairman and Managing Director requested administrative sanction for Rs 2,080.39 crore to enable TGDISCOMs to claim subsidies based on actuals from April 2026 onwards.





# Hyderabad Voice

Friday, April 17, 2026

## HC upholds biomedical waste billing policy for hospitals

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court has upheld the new billing system introduced by the Telangana Pollution Control Board (TGPCB) for the collection and treatment of biomedical waste in hospitals. A bench comprising Justices K Lakshman and BR Madhusudhan Rao dismissed a petition filed by the Telangana Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association (THANA), which had challenged a circular issued by the state pollution control board on June 4 last year.

## 'Delimitation move will result in grave injustice to women, SCs, STs': CM Revanth Reddy



HYDERABAD: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday accused the BJP of hatching a conspiracy to reduce Lok Sabha constituencies in the southern states under the pretext of increasing the seats by 50 per cent. He called for a protracted struggle against the Union government, demanding an increase in half the seats based on the pro rata principle and the other half based on GSDP of the states. Addressing the gathering during the 135th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr BR Ambedkar here in Hyderabad, the chief minister said that

the Centre's plan on delimitation of constituencies would result in grave injustice to women, SC and ST communities in the southern states. "Are the Union ministers from southern states aware of the Centre's attempt to reduce seats in southern states?" he wondered. Stating that the Congress government accorded top priority to the empowerment of SCs in the state, he pointed out that the BRS leaders never garlanded a statue of Ambedkar during their 10-year rule. Revanth, meanwhile, targeted his predecessor K Chandrasekhar

Rao for not attending the Assembly sessions. "KCR insulted the Speaker by staying away from the House," he said. Asking if the sons and daughters of the Dalit community are not entitled to serve as the finance and health ministers, he said: "It's our people-centric government that brought about a transformation where those who once insulted Dalits are now compelled to request a Dalit individual for a microphone to speak in the Assembly." Stating that some leaders were attempting to sabotage the government's efforts to empower the poorer sections, he urged the people to "bury" the BRS for practising politics of betrayal. The chief minister, meanwhile, recalled the contribution of revolutionary singer Gaddar and popular poet Ande Sri in the statehood movement. "The marginalised and weaker sections of society played an important role in the Telangana movement. Gaddar through his songs galvanised the movement and Ande Sri penned the Telangana song Jaya Jaya He Telangana," he said.



## Ambedkar Ensured Equal Rights to All Through Constitution

Hyderabad: Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday said that B.R. Ambedkar ensured equal rights for every citizen through the Constitution and laid the foundation for a democratic and just society. He was speaking after participating in the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations at the 125-ft Ambedkar statue at Necklace Road. Bhatti Vikramarka said it was a matter of great fortune that Dr Ambedkar was born in India, describing him as a man of extraordinary talent and immense knowledge. He noted that Ambedkar was a visionary who framed the Indian Constitution, establishing India as the world's largest democracy and empowering citizens with the right to vote, thereby making them active participants in governance. Highlighting Ambedkar's contributions to women's empowerment, Bhatti Vikramarka said he was a pioneer in ensuring rights for women through constitutional provisions and was among the first to address gender discrimination. He recalled that even before Independence, Ambedkar fought with the British and sought to secure women's rights through the Hindu Code Bill. As the first Law Minister of independent India, Ambedkar introduced the Bill in Parliament and even resigned from his post in his efforts to ensure its passage. He also wor

ked for the welfare of women cutting across caste and religion, and played a key role in implementing maternity benefits and labour laws, including reducing working hours from 12 hours to eight hours. Bhatti Vikramarka said that through the Constitution, Ambedkar guaranteed fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, the right to question, and human rights, which form the cornerstone of Indian democracy. However, he alleged that there were attempts by the BJP to alter the Constitution and undermine democratic values, warning that such moves could put citizens' rights at risk. He called upon people to unite and protect the Constitution with the slogan "Jai Bhim." Bhatti Vikramarka said that the Indiramma government in Telangana was following the ideals and vision of Babasaheb Ambedkar, with every decision, law, and governance initiative reflecting his economic and social philosophy. He said this approach would continue in the future. Emphasising the government's commitment to social justice, he said it was working towards equitable distribution of resources and political representation based on population, in line with the caste census call given by Rahul Gandhi. He added that Telangana had, for the first time in the country, initiated a caste census in a constitutional manner.

## SC Collegium clears promotion of 4 addl judges of Telangana HC

The Supreme Court Collegium has approved the elevation of four additional judges of the Telangana High Court as permanent judges. The decision was taken during a meeting held on Tuesday, April 14, under the leadership of Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant. The judges recommended for appointment as permanent

judges are Justice Yara Renuka, Justice Nandikonda Narsing Rao, Justice E Tirumala Devi, and Justice BR Madhusudhan Rao. All four are currently serving as additional judges in the Telangana High Court. In a separate development, the Collegium has also recommended the appointment of two women advocates as judges of the Kerala

High Court. The names forwarded are Preetha Aravindan Krishnamma and Liz Mathew Anthraper. Additionally, the Collegium has approved a proposal to appoint three judicial officers as judges of the Karnataka High Court. These recommendations will now be sent to the central government for final approval and notification.



## No North-South bias in delimitation: Laxman

Hyderabad: BJP Rajya Sabha Member and Parliamentary Board Member K Laxman on Tuesday rejected Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's recent criticisms, particularly regarding his representation of Uttar Pradesh in the Rajya Sabha. Addressing the media, Laxman emphasised his deep roots in Telangana and his unwavering commitment to the development of the state, dismissing the remarks of the Chief Minister as sarcastic, baseless, and intended to mislead the public. Laxman clarified that key matters, such as constituency delimitation, are determined strictly in accordance with the Constitution, using demographic data and expert recommendations. He assured that ongoing reforms will guarantee equal justice and uniform seat enhancement across all states, with no North-South disparity. Addressing public concerns, he explained that the current twenty-four per cent share of parliamentary seats for Southern states will remain unchanged even after the Lok Sabha expands to 816 seats, ensuring the South retains 195 seats.

## Ponnam Appeals to TGSRTC Staff to Call Off Strike

Hyderabad: Telangana Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has urged RTC employees to withdraw their proposed strike, stating that such a move would adversely affect both the organization and the public. In a statement, the minister said the government is committed to resolving all issues concerning RTC staff through dialogue and mutual understanding. He assured that the government's doors are always open for employees to present their grievances and seek solutions. Ponnam Prabhakar clarified that matters related to RTC merger and trade unions fall under the government's purview, and a committee is already working on the



merger issue. He noted that except for these two aspects, the government is ready to discuss all other concerns raised by employees. Highlighting recent measures, the minister said the government has implemented a 2.1% Dearness Allowance (DA) for RTC employees and cleared pending dues.

## After conning 60 women into marrying, man tries to play pookie again, nabbed

Hyderabad: In a shocking airport security breach, a man posing as a CISF officer was caught at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad. He was seen wearing a CISF uniform, moving suspiciously and taking photographs within the premises at International Airport. The person identified as Balakrishna from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, allegedly impersonated CISF personnel and falsely claimed he was employed with the force. According to officials, the accused was seen wearing a CISF uniform and taking photographs inside the airport premises. His actions drew the attention of on-duty CISF personnel, who grew suspicious and stopped him for questioning. Upon verification, Balakrishna was found to have no affiliation with CISF and had been impersonating an officer.

## Cong never undermined Jeevan Reddy's dignity, says Revanth



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy stated that the Congress party had never undermined the dignity of senior leader Jeevan Reddy and had consistently respected his political stature. He said the party had worked together during the 2023 elections to ensure his victory and had supported his political aspirations in subsequent contests. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday night held a meeting with key Congress leaders from Jagtial, reviewing the prevailing political situation in the region and addressing internal party issues. Speaking to the leaders, the Chief Minister said the meeting was convened to discuss the current circumstances in the state and strengthen organisational coordination at the grassroots level. Explaining the sequence of events, the Chief Minister said that the party had suggested Jeevan Reddy contest from Karimnagar in the Parliamentary elections. However, when he opted to contest from Nizamabad instead, the party allotted him the ticket, though he ultimately faced defeat. He further said that in municipal elections too, tickets were given based on recommenda-

tions made by Jeevan Reddy. Revanth Reddy added that despite assurances regarding his political future and that of his family members, the leader chose to leave the party. The Chief Minister alleged that the decision of Jeevan Reddy to exit the Congress and align with the BRS was driven by political differences, adding that such actions had disappointed party workers who had supported him for decades. He remarked that it was unfortunate to see a leader of his experience aligning with the opposition, and said such developments had affected the morale of the Congress cadre in Jagtial. Revanth Reddy maintained that he had never made any disrespectful remarks against the senior leader and emphasised that his actions were aimed at safeguarding the party from political challenges. He also questioned attempts to destabilise a democratically elected government, stating that the Congress would defend its mandate. The Chief Minister appealed to party workers to remain united and strengthen the organisation ahead of future political battles.

### Fraudulent Job Racket Busted In Jubilee Hills

HYDERABAD: Jubilee Hills police on Tuesday dismantled a fraudulent gang operating under the firm name "Trivial Chapter," which allegedly cheated unemployed youths of lakhs of rupees by promising lucrative jobs abroad. Two suspects, including a woman, were arrested in this connection. The accused lured aspirants with offers of work visas for Greece and Romania, collecting ₹4-5 lakh per candidate, SHO U. Srinivasulu Reddy said. Victims were issued forged offer letters, after which the firm severed all communication. Investigations revealed the gang used Instagram and Facebook to pose as an overseas consultancy, despite lacking a valid Recruitment Agent licence from the Ministry of External Affairs. They generated fake "work authorisation" letters through online templates to gain trust. The arrested are Lanka Nirupama, vice president (South Zone), and Mamidi Arun Raj, regional manager (Telangana). Police are searching for eight absconding associates, including the founder, CEO, and Visa department head. Records seized show similar frauds within KPHB limits. Police advised job seekers to verify recruitment agents through the official eMigrate portal and scrutinise offer letters before making payments.

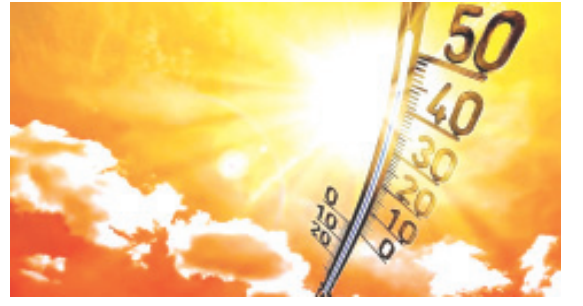
## Government students in Telangana's Peddapalli district to learn AI and robotics this summer



HYDERABAD: IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Tuesday launched a summer camp on artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and computer education for government school students in Peddapalli district. The camp will be held from April 27 to May 23 across four mandals — Manthani, Peddapalli, Ramagundam and Sulthanabad. Each mandal will host a week-long programme with daily sessions of three hours. The initiative is being implemented by T-Fiber under its T-NxT programme in collaboration with Super Teacher Edu Reforms, with

a focus on improving digital learning and equipping students with future-ready skills. Officials said the programme builds on a pilot project conducted in Adavi Srirampur village of Mutharam mandal, where Telangana's first rural AI lab was set up to provide hands-on training in emerging technologies. The curriculum includes digital literacy, basic computer education, AI awareness and introductory robotics. Students will engage in practical activities, project-based learning and hands-on sessions using robotics kits. The programme will conclude with a district-level showcase on May 26 at the district collectorate, where students will present their projects and learning outcomes. District Collector K Sree Harsha, T-Fiber Managing Director Venu Prasad Pannuru, MLAs Vijaya Ramana Rao and Raj Thakur, along with other officials, attended the launch.

### IMD issues five day heat wave alert for TG



Hyderabad: The IMD has sounded a heatwave alert in Telangana for the next five days, with temperatures expected to rise above 40 degrees across the state. North Telangana districts reported temperatures exceeding 42 degrees on Tuesday. As a precaution, the state government appealed to the people not to venture out of their houses in the afternoon. IMD officials said Nizamabad registered the highest reading at 42.4 degrees Celsius. Temperatures of 42.3 degrees were recorded in Adilabad, and 41 degrees in Mahabubnagar. Hyderabad is also witnessing temperatures exceeding 40 degrees. In many parts of the state, levels are currently hovering two to three degrees above normal. The intensity of the heat begins to rise early in the morning, reaching its peak during the afternoon hours. Meteorological officials indicated this situation is likely to persist and advised the public to refrain from venturing outdoors unless absolutely necessary. State Panchayat Raj Minister Sitakka appealed to citizens to avoid outdoor activities during peak hours and directed officials to set up drinking water kiosks in major Gram Panchayats and mandal headquarters. In unavoidable situations, she said, people should cover their heads with caps or towels to protect themselves. She cautioned that failure to take precautions could lead to sunstroke. The Minister also addressed Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme workers, acknowledging their challenges during summer.

### BJP slams Cong hypocrisy on Ambedkar's legacy and women's reservation



BJP President N Ramchander Rao criticised the Congress party for what he termed as hypocrisy regarding Dr BR Ambedkar's legacy and the issue of women's reservations. Addressing the media on Tuesday, on the occasion of Ambedkar's birth anniversary, Rao dismissed Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's concerns

that delimitation could create regional inequalities, stating that the process is constitutionally mandated and will not disadvantage southern states. He clarified that delimitation, which determines the allocation of Lok Sabha seats based on population, was last undertaken in accordance with the 1971 census and has been frozen since 1976. The next delimitation is expected after the 2026 census, with implementation likely by the 2029 elections. Rao accused the Congress of misleading the public by conflating the separate processes of census and delimitation, and using these issues for political gain. Rao launched a pointed attack on the Congress party, alleging a history of betrayal toward Dr Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution.



### Transport Department Organises 'Arrive-Alive' Event

Hyderabad: The state transport department organised the 'Arrive Alive' road safety awareness programme at the Khairatabad Transport Office as part of its ongoing efforts to curb road accidents. Transport minister Ponnambhakaram, along with Hyderabad district collector Harichandana Dasari and senior officials from the transport department, participated in the programme. Addressing the gathering, the minister stated that road safety was a shared responsibility of both the government and the public. He emphasised the need for citizens to remain vigilant and adopt respon-

sible behavior while using roads. The minister and senior transport department officials took a pledge regarding road safety. "As part of the 99 Days of Praja Palana initiative, we are undertaking road safety awareness programmes," Ponnambhakaram said. "Road safety is not solely the responsibility of the government. It is also the responsibility of the public. It is impossible to deploy a sufficient number of personnel to monitor every single motorist. We are providing a reward of Rs 25,000 to those who assist individuals injured in road accidents," the minister added.

## Pocharam Srinivas set to lift veil soon; plans ghar wapsi to BRS like Gudem



Hyderabad: Speculation is mounting in Telangana political circles over whether Government Advisor (Agriculture) and turncoat BRS MLA Pocharam Srinivas Reddy will follow the path of Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy and return to the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). The discussion gains significance in light of Mahipal Reddy's recent political move. After briefly joining the Congress, he returned to the BRS and went on to ensure the party's victory in municipal elections in his constituency, la-

ter admitting that shifting allegiance to Congress had been a mistake. Now, similar rumours are circulating around Pocharam, who has recently made strong critical remarks against the Congress government. Pocharam, a senior leader, who previously served as Minister and Speaker, has openly expressed dissatisfaction with the functioning of the government led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. During a visit to the Siddapur Reservoir under construction in Varni mandal of Nizamabad district, he lashed out

at ministers and officials over delays in releasing funds. He alleged that development works have come to a standstill due to non-payment of pending bills and said contractors are struggling as a result. In a sharp remark that has since gone viral, Pocharam questioned whether he was expected to "fall at the feet of ministers" to get funds released. He also claimed that despite calling ministers—and even the Chief Minister—multiple times, he received no response. His comments have triggered intense debate within political circles, especially as dissatisfaction appears to be growing within the ruling Congress. Former Minister Jeevan Reddy has already quit the Congress and is reportedly preparing to join the BRS, adding fuel to speculation about further political realignments. Pocharam's political journey has itself been controversial. He was elected as a BRS MLA from Banswada but later joined the Congress after it came to power in the state. At the time, BRS leaders accused him of switching sides for personal and business interests, while Congress leaders such as Enugu Ravinder Reddy opposed his induction, leading to internal friction. Although he was later appointed as Government Advisor, reports suggest he has been unhappy with the role.

### Respect must be shown through deeds: KTR attacks Congress on Ambedkar Jayanti



Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao on Tuesday, April 14, attacked the Congress, saying that respect for BR Ambedkar must be demonstrated through action and not merely through words. KTR led a group of

BRS leaders to the 125-foot Ambedkar statue at Tank Bund in Hyderabad on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti. Speaking to the media after paying homage, he said the BRS had built its political foundations on Ambedkar's core philosophy of "Educate, Agitate, Organise," and that the party had achieved statehood for Telangana guided by those principles. "Former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy (KCR) established this Ambedkar statue. With the intention of showing respect through deeds rather than words, we established 1,000 Gurukul schools for Dalit children and named the State Secretariat after Babasaheb," KTR said.

Friday, April 17, 2026

## Ex CM vs HC Judge: What Triggered the Unexpected Face-Off?



Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal sought recusal of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma in the liquor policy case, which led to a major political debate. The AAP President made the request when he appeared in the court and personally argued on the CBI's petition, which challenged his acquittal in the liquor scam case. He sought the recusal on the grounds that Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma passed the March 9 order, the first day of hearing in CBI's plea, in a haste. During the hearing, Kejriwal said that Sharma partially stayed the trial court judgement, and said that the trial court's observations were erroneous and needed reconsideration. Justice Sharma stayed the recommendation to initiate departmental proceedings against the CBI officer probing the scam. Kejriwal said that he had doubts whether the court is biased and if he would get justice in the High Court. Kejriwal argued the case for nearly an hour and pointed out that Justice Sharma's orders favored the CBI and the ED in five cases. He claimed that her handling of CBI matters shows a trend leaning towards the CBI and the ED. Kejriwal also said that Justice Sharma attended events organized by ABVP, affiliated to the RSS, not once but four times. In Hindi, Kejriwal said that they were opposite to their ideology and the liquor scam case being a political one, could create an impression of being biased. To this, Justice Sharma responded and asked whether she had made any ideological or political statements during those events. Kejriwal said merely attending the events was sufficient grounds for concern. The AAP chief's argument sparked a debate over recusal standards in political cases.

## 9 Dead, 15 Injured In Boiler Blast At Vedanta Power Plant

Raipur: At least nine people were on Tuesday killed and over 40 others injured in an explosion in one of the boiler units in the Vedanta power plant in Singhi Tarai village in Chhattisgarh's Shakti district, officials said. The death toll may increase as conditions of some of the injured persons were stated to be critical, officials said. Majority of the injured people were admitted to a private hospital in the neighbouring district of Raigarh. As many as 18 injured people were brought to the hospital. Five or six of them have died. We are giving priority to the treatment of the injured. Details will be known later", Raigarh sub-divisional officer (SDO) Mahesh Sharma said. Sources said that some other injured people were admitted to other hospitals. Eyewitness accounts said that there was a stampede-



like situation in the unit with workers running helter-skelter to safety following the explosion. The local administration and the police rushed to the spot to launch rescue and relief operations. In a statement, the plant spokesperson said, "An unfortunate incident occurred in one of the boiler units at our Singhi Tarai plant on the afternoon of April 14, 2026, involving personnel from our sub-contractor, NGS, which operates and maintains the unit." "Our immediate priority is to ensure the best possible.

# Trump, Modi Talk Over Ties, Hormuz For 40 Minutes

New Delhi: Amid reports that Pakistan may host the second round of talks between Iran and the United States within the next couple of days, United States President Donald Trump called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed the situation in West Asia, including the importance of "open and secure" navigation through the Straits of Hormuz. The call, which lasted for nearly 40 minutes, comes a day after the US Navy began a blockade of Iranian ports, following the collapse of the first round of talks between the warring nations in Islamabad last week. On social media platform X, Modi posted, "Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed the substantial progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors. We are committed to further strengthening our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas. We also discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure." US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor termed the latest conversa-



tion between the two leaders as "very positive and productive". The call ended with Trump telling Modi, "I just want you to know we all love you", the US ambassador said. Gor said the US would welcome Indian role in the West Asian peace talks but clarified that the matter is "for India to decide" upon. Navigation through the Straits of Hormuz is important for energy-hungry India due to the oil supplies that pass through the Strait of Hormuz in tankers.

India has successfully been in touch with Iran to ensure the continued safe passage of Indian vessels through the Hormuz Straits. In view of the American announcement of a blockade, India had on Monday said it "expects that unimpeded freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce would prevail through the Straits of Hormuz" and reiterated that "de-escalation, diplomacy and dialogue are essential" to resolve the West Asian conflict.

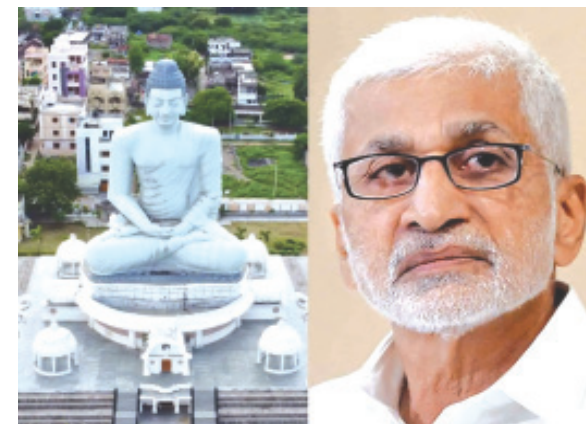


## Botsa Fell In The Trap Of Government?

Botsa Satyanarayana may have unknowingly walked into the trap of the Ruling Party. The Ruling Side has absolute majority in the Assembly. It has 164 seats out of the total 175 seats and YSR Congress boycotted the Assembly in the name of no Leader of Opposition Status to Jagan Mohan Reddy. There is no problem there. But YSR Congress has majority in the Council and the party is taking the house for ransom with that majority. Botsa Satyanarayana was made the Leader of Opposition to lead the pack there. The Government wants to stop YSR Congress there and Botsa played into the hands. Minister Atchannaidu stirred the Hornet's Nest by linking Jagan Mohan Reddy to YSR's death and invoking Botsa Satyanarayana to it. Botsa Satyanarayana who is currently the Leader of Opposition in the Council was startled by it and called for a Pressmeet. He came up with an explanation trying to give cleanbill to Jagan. He even broke down and cried in front of the cameras while speaking about Y. S. Rajasekhar Reddy. But he may have least thought the crying will backfire. Social Media and Media started digging the old videos where in Botsa really made such allegations about Jagan Mohan Reddy. In politics, leaders changing the parties has become common. It is quite common they abuse a leader when they are on the other side and the same people praise the leader when they shift parties.

## Sai Reddy's Amaravati Idea: A Slow-Cooked Slum Strategy

Vijayasai Reddy seems to share the vision of his former leader, Jagan Mohan Reddy as far as Amaravati is concerned. A message he posted on X this morning makes us to think so. Sai Reddy says, "Bengaluru was founded in 1537 by Kempe Gowda, Hyderabad in 1591 by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, and Chennai in 1639 by the British East India Company under Francis Day. It took 500, 430, and 380 years respectively for them to become the metropolitan cities they are today. Amaravati cannot be manufactured overnight with borrowed money and grand illusions, especially when it is not self-financing as claimed." He further says, "Build the basics first, Assembly, Secretariat, High



Court, and essential housing for government employees and stop there. Let Amaravati grow organically with people, business, and time. A capital city must rise from strength, not debt. Indiscriminate spending on fancy designs and over-crowded infrastructure is not vision; it is financial recklessness. Every unwarranted rupee spent today becomes a burden on the people of Andhra Pradesh tomorrow. Loans for non-revenue-generating projects do not build prosperity, they strain public finances". This is pretty much what Jagan Mohan Reddy says but Sai Reddy stopped just before supporting MA-VI-GUN. Keeping aside the political rhetoric, let us look into the argument - 'let Amaravati rise grow organically with people.

## BJP's Samrat Choudhary Set to Be Sworn in as Bihar CM

Patna: BJP leader Samrat Choudhary will be sworn in as the chief minister of Bihar on Wednesday, marking the first time the party will lead a government in the state. Choudhary (57) is scheduled to be administered the oath of office at the Lok Bhawan here, in the presence of top leaders of the NDA, which comprises the BJP, Nitish Kumar's JD(U) and three other parties. Besides, the chief ministers of several states will attend the oath-taking ceremony. Kumar, who is now a Rajya Sabha MP, relinquished the chief minister's post on Tuesday, dissolving his Cabinet in which Choudhary was a deputy chief minister and held the crucial home portfolio. Choudhary, who joined the BJP in



2017, was named the legislative party leader on Tuesday in the presence of top functionaries like BJP chief Nitin Nambin and Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, whom the parliamentary board had named as "central observer" for the transition. In a state where


caste considerations are of paramount importance in politics, Choudhary happens to be only the second person from the influential Koeri caste to occupy the top post. In 1968, Satish Prasad Singh enjoyed a barely five-day-long tenure as chief minister, until his coalition government fell as a result of the Congress withdrawing its support. Choudhary also finds himself in the company of Bharat Ratna Karpoori Thakur, who was the only other leader to have been a deputy CM and chief minister. However, unlike the quick elevation of Choudhary, it had been a two-year wait for Thakur, who became deputy chief minister in 1967 and remained in office for 11 months before becoming chief minister in 1970.

Estd : 1996

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### VOICE OF WORDS

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## Education

**VOICE OF WORDS**

Friday, April 17, 2026



### 54 degree colleges in Telangana fail to attract any admissions

Hyderabad: A troubling trend has emerged in the State's higher education as 54 degree colleges have failed to attract even a single student this academic year, raising concerns over the quality of higher education. While 53 colleges that recorded zero admissions were under private management, a government degree college that provides free education could not get a single student on its rolls. The majority of these zero-enrolled degree colleges, as per officials, were located in the rural and remote areas of the State. Telangana Council of Higher Education Chairman Prof V Balakista Reddy said there was a provision to disaffiliate colleges that fail to secure even a single admission for three consecutive years. The Council would advise the universities to take necessary action with regard to colleges with zero admissions. After all rounds of DOST counselling for the academic year 2025-26, a staggering 53.38 per cent of seats remained vacant. A total of 1,76,170 out of 3,77,907 seats in 830 degree colleges were filled via the DOST. Among the filled, 91,264 were women and 84,906 were men. Overall, 2,05,140 seats out of 4,40,107 were filled in 969 colleges, including DOST, residential degree colleges and non-DOST colleges. As for the university-wise admissions, nearly 99,000 seats went vacant in Osmania University as 99,242 out of 1,98,107 seats in 417 degree colleges were filled. Over 60,000 degree seats were unfilled in colleges under the Kakatiya University. Similarly, 19,105 seats in Palamuru University and 15,552 seats in Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda, had no takers. Among the courses, BCom was top choice for students when it comes to their undergraduate education, as 76,690 candidates opted for this programme, followed by BSc Physical Science that saw 37,528 enrolment. As many as 36,445 students enrolled in the BSc Life Science programme, while the BA and BBA programmes received 29,849 and 17,864 admissions, respectively.

## Empowering the Future: UoH Hosts Insightful Panel Discussion on Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) hosted a panel discussion on Monday on the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 (Women's Reservation Bill), jointly organised by the School of Social Sciences and the School of Economics. The program was chaired by the incharge VC Prof J Anuradha who emphasised the timely importance of such discussions. Dean of Social Sciences Prof. Suneetha Rani and the Dean of Economics Prof. D Acharya also made important remarks and insights about the question of gender gap and intersectionality. This event was coordinated by Prof. G Sridevi and Prof. Anurekha Chari Wagh. The event brought an esteemed panel of experts and scholars, attended by faculty, staff, and students for a thoughtful engagement with one of the most significant recent developments in India's democratic framework. Geographic Reference The discussion situated the Bill within the long history of the women's movement in India, emphasising that it is the outcome of decades of sus-



tained struggle by women's organisations who deliberated on this question that has been with us since the constituent assembly debates and resurfaces again and again. The speakers highlighted the frameworks that feminist scholarship offers on the question of substantive equality against systemic barriers. Early demands for political representation, including those raised during the colonial period, were highlighted, along with the transformative impact of reservations in local self-governance. Panelists noted that India's experience with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which enabled substantial participation of women in grassroots democracy, offers important lessons for the implementation of this legislation. While acknowledging the unanimous passage of the Bill as a milestone,

speakers raised critical concerns regarding "reservation within reservation." The absence of updated census data was identified as a key challenge, particularly in the context of the demand for a caste census. These have significant implications for equitable representation. The need to centre inclusivity in order to achieve substantive democratic outcomes was strongly emphasised in the context of religious minorities as well, who are sorely underrepresented in the parliament in the present. The panel also drew attention to research by global and international organisations that gives comparative cases to learn from to enhance women's political participation, noting that India has a strong foundation to build upon. However, barriers such as lack of financial re-

sources, institutional support, and safe political environments continue to hinder meaningful participation. Strengthening these support systems was identified as essential to ensure not just representation, but impact. Important questions were raised about the scope of the Bill, including its implications for delimitation and the need to ensure that women's voices are not overshadowed by political interests. The discussion also foregrounded the inclusion of transwomen referencing legal frameworks that affirm the right to self-identification, while pointing to the recent developments with the trans bill. The panel concluded by underscoring the importance of deepening democratic commitments to equality and representation, and reflecting on the continued relevance of social justice in shaping inclusive political futures. The focus on power that is 'shakti' should not overshadow the promise and visions of equality. Reservation is not an end but the beginning where we can move towards a culture of voluntary reservations.



## Students achieve top scores in inter exams

Students from Resonance Junior Colleges excel in the Telangana Intermediate Public Examinations 2026, with several securing top marks across MPC and BiPC streams. In the junior MPC stream, multiple students achieved a score of 468, including Kavyashree Savarad, Mirza Ibrahim Ahmed, Kanukula Sasya Reddy, A Naga Sai Himesh, and Mukkamalla Jnaneswari. Others such as Desetty Sarayu Nakshatra, Male Bhavika, Madapathi Sahithi, and Megavath Vasundhara were also among the top scorers with similar marks. In the junior BiPC stream, Akula Sai Siva Laasya and Gedda Dheeraj Kumar led with 437 marks, followed by Varala Durga Anjali, Ponnuri Himadyuthi, and Yerva Akshaya, who secured comparable scores. Among

senior students, Revanth Vangala topped the MPC stream with 994 marks, while Shaik Aira Jasia led the BiPC stream with 995 marks, emerging as one of the highest scorers. The results also reflected a broader trend of high performance, with 345 students securing positions among the state's top five marks and 780 students ranking within the top ten marks category. Several students also achieved full marks in core subjects, indicating strong conceptual understanding. The performance highlights the increasing competition among intermediate students in Telangana, particularly in science streams, where consistent scores and subject mastery play a crucial role in future academic opportunities.

### SAT May 2026 registration closes on April 17: College Board

Hyderabad: The College Board has announced that registrations for Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) in May 2026 will be closed on April 17. Students will be allowed to make changes to their registration, cancel, or complete late registration until April 21. The test is scheduled for May 2. Geographic Reference The SAT continues to play an important role in helping students demonstrate academic readiness across a wide range of higher education systems. Scores are accepted by over 3,000 universities and colleges globally, including a growing number of institutions in India. College Board South and Central Asia Senior Director & Regional Head Meenakshi Kachroo Chatta said a strong SAT score can help students strengthen their academic profile, stand out in competitive applicant pools, and, in many cases, improve access to scholarships and merit-based opportunities. "Approaching the process early can help students keep options open across institutions and countries, while navigating admissions with greater confidence and clarity." College Board continues to support student readiness through free, official SAT preparation on Khan Academy, free peer-to-peer tutoring through Schoolhouse, world, and full-length practice tests available on the Bluebook app.



### IIM Kashipur hosts Global conference on sustainability at SMSIF 2026

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kashipur concluded the Second International Conference on Sustainability Management Strategies for India's Future (SMSIF 2026). The three-day event brought together a diverse group of academicians, industry leaders, and policymakers, creating a dynamic platform to discuss and reimagine sustainable development strategies for the country. The conference featured a rich mix of research paper presentations, keynote sessions, and thematic discussions, enabling participants to engage in meaningful academic exchange and explore solutions to pressing sustainability challenges. Delegates shared innovative ideas and research findings, contributing to the growing discourse on sustainability across sectors. The inaugural session began with a welcome address by Prof. Somnath Chakrabarti, who reflected on India's economic progress while emphasizing the importance of inclusive, responsible, and environmentally conscious growth. He highlighted that such collaborative platforms are vital in advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Director Prof. Neeraj Dwivedi further reinforced the importance of sustainability, stating that it must be central to leadership and institutional frameworks, encompassing economic resilience, social equity, and ethical governance. Prof. Alka Arya pre-

sented the conference highlights, tracing the evolution of sustainable development and linking it to contemporary management practices. She also outlined key thematic areas and spoke about the institute's green initiatives, encouraging continued collaboration among participants. The conference featured keynote addresses from eminent speakers. Prof. Rama Mohana R Turaga of IIM Ahmedabad discussed governance for environmental sustainability, while Prof. B. Mahadevan of IIM Bangalore highlighted the relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in shaping modern public policy and management practices. The first day also included several research presentations across multiple thematic tracks. On the second day, Prof. Haritha Saranga emphasized the growing importance of sustainability in research and policy, particularly in areas such as renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. Adding an industry perspective, Subramanian Chidambaram of Cummins India stressed the need to balance growth with energy efficiency and responsible consumption. The final day continued with multiple academic sessions, offering researchers opportunities to present their work. Overall, SMSIF 2026 underscored the importance of sustained collaboration in building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for India.

### MPBSE Class 10 Result 2026: 77.52% Girls, 69.31% Boys Pass; Panna's Pratibha Singh Solanki Tops With 499 Marks Out Of 500

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) announced the Class 10 Board Exam results on Wednesday. This year, a total of 73.42% students passed the exam. Among them, 69.31% boys and 77.52% girls cleared the exam. Like every year, girls have performed better overall. The exams were held from February 13 to March 6, 2026. As many as 7.87 lakh students appeared in the board exams in 2026. Over 1.09 lakh students appeared as private candidates. In total, more than 43 lakh answer sheets were evaluated across the state. Students from special categories, including children with disabilities (CWSN), also participated. Their overall pass percentage was around 54.86%. Pratibha Singh Solanki from Panna secured first rank with 499 marks. Akshara Ghodeswar and Abhay Gupta shared second rank with 498 marks, while Yogendra Singh Parmar got third rank with 497 marks. All scored first division. The board has also announced a second chance exam (supplementary exam) for students who failed in one or more subjects.



International News

**VOICE OF WORDS**

Friday, April 17, 2026

## Many US Catholics are dismayed by Trump's unprecedented broadside at the first American pope

WASHINGTON: A majority of U.S. Catholic voters supported Donald Trump in his 2024 presidential victory. Yet across the broad Catholic political spectrum – even among conservative-leaning bishops – there is dismay over Trump's unprecedented verbal assault on Pope Leo XIV, the first American to lead their church. Leo says he is sharing a Gospel message and not directly attacking Trump or anyone else with his appeals for peace and criticism of attitudes fueling the war. Criticism of Trump came from Archbishop Paul Coakley, head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and from Minnesota-based Bishop Robert Barron, who only a few days ago was applauding Trump as an Easter guest at the White House. Barron called the president's remarks "entirely inappropriate and disrespectful" and urged him to apologize. The dismay extended into an even more solid base of Trump support – conservative Christian evangelicals. Many were appalled that Trump followed his Truth Social attack on Leo by posting an image depicting himself as a Christ-like savior. "TAKE THIS DOWN, MR. PRESIDENT," posted David Brody, a prominent Trump-supporting commentator with the Christian Broadcasting Network. "You're not God. None of us are. This goes too far. It crosses the line." By midday



Monday, the image had been taken down from Truth Social. And speaking at the White House, the president claimed that he never intended to liken himself to Jesus when he posted the picture. "How did they come up with that?" he asked. "It's supposed to be me as a doctor, making people better. And I do make people better. I make people a lot better."



## India sends 13 tonnes of BCG vaccines to Afghanistan to boost child TB immunisation

India on Tuesday dispatched 13 tonnes of Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccines along with related dry supplies to Afghanistan to strengthen its child immunisation programme against tuberculosis, the Ministry of External Affairs said. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X that the consignment was delivered to Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health to support ongoing efforts to expand childhood TB vaccination coverage. India has regularly extended humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, including medical supplies and vaccines, as part of its continued support to the Afghan people even in the aftermath of recent natural disasters, including the April 3 earthquake. Earlier on April 5, the MEA had said India sent humanitarian aid and disaster relief materials to Afghanistan affected by floods and earthquakes. The shipment included kitchen sets, hygiene kits, plastic sheets, tarpaulins and sleeping bags. "The people of Afghanistan have India's solidarity, and we remain committed to providing humanitarian assistance during these difficult times," Jaiswal had said. According to the National Disaster Management Authority, recent heavy rains and flooding damaged 131 houses, partially damaged 650 others, and affected more than 3,000 jeribs of farmland. Separately, the Afghan administration has criticised the United Nations sanctions regime following the latest update to its list targeting senior leaders, calling the measures ineffective and unreasonable. Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said continued sanctions reflect flawed policy decisions and argued that repeated restrictions fail to achieve meaningful outcomes. He added that such measures disproportionately affect ordinary citizens rather than political leaders. His remarks came after the United Nations Security Council's 1988 Sanctions Committee updated identifying details for four senior Taliban figures, including Mohammad Hassan Akhund, Abdul Ghani Baradar, Amir Khan Muttaqi, and Hedayatullah Badri.



## Xi, Sánchez say China and Spain should help safeguard multilateralism

BEIJING: The leaders of China and Spain on Tuesday pledged to strengthen their relations and work to safeguard multilateralism at a time when the world is being impacted by various conflicts, including the recent war in Iran, during a meeting in Beijing on Tuesday. "We should strengthen communication, consolidate mutual trust, cooperate closely, oppose the world's retrogression to the law of the jungle, and jointly safeguard genuine multilateralism," said Chinese President Xi Jinping during a reception for Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez at the Great Hall of the People. Sánchez agreed and said both countries "can contribute to finding solutions to the various trade tensions that exist, to the geopolitical difficulties and complexities of today's world, to the wars, to the environmental and social challenges that afflict the world." Sánchez is in China for his fourth trip in just over three years to the world's second-largest economy. Spain is looking to strengthen its political and commercial ties with Beijing, and the visit comes as Sánchez faces a strained relationship with the US over his opposition to the war in Iran.

## UN Chief Antonio Guterres Warns Of Global Crisis, Pushes Urgent Diplomacy After US-Iran Talks Fail



New York: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday stressed that there is no military solution to the ongoing conflict in West Asia and called for the immediate resumption of talks to achieve a lasting agreement. In a post on X, Guterres wrote, "After weeks of destruction & distress, it is clear that there is no military solution to the current conflict in the Middle East. I call for the resumption of talks for an agreement to be reached. The ceasefire must absolutely be preserved. All violations must cease. All parties to the conflict must respect the freedom of navigation, including in the Strait of Hormuz, in line with international law." UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric noted that although no formal agreement was reached, the discussions represented a constructive step and reflected the seriousness of engagement by both parties. The release stated that, while no agreement was reached at the talks hosted by Pakistan between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamabad, the discussions themselves underscored the seriousness of their engagement and constituted a positive and meaningful step toward renewed dialogue. "Given the deeply rooted differences, an agreement cannot be reached overnight, and the Secretary-General calls on the talks to continue constructively for an agreement to be reached," Dujarric said in a statement. He further reiterated that the ceasefire must be fully preserved and that all violations must stop, urging all parties involved to adhere strictly to international

commitments. The UN also expressed gratitude to mediators Pakistan, which hosted the discussions, as well as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkiye for their diplomatic efforts, calling on the international community to support continued engagement. The statement also said that the Secretary-General stresses that all parties to this conflict must respect freedom of navigation, including in the Strait of Hormuz, in line with international law. We need to remember that some 20,000 seafarers have been caught up in this conflict and are currently stranded on ships, facing worsening conditions. The UN highlighted that disruptions in maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz have already contributed to global economic instability, including rising costs, supply chain disruptions, and increased food insecurity due to impacts on fertiliser transport and fuel supplies. The disruption of fertilizer and its inputs further exacerbate food insecurity for millions of vulnerable people around the world, adding to the rising cost of living due to impacts from fuel, transportation and supply chain disruptions. With that in mind, the Executive Director of the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Jorge Moreira da Silva, working with UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Chamber of Commerce, continues engaging extensively with relevant parties to design and operationalize the mechanism we announced for the Strait of Hormuz on 27 March.

## Emmanuel Macron Announces France-UK Naval Mission To Secure Strait Of Hormuz Amid Tensions

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday announced that France and the United Kingdom will jointly lead a multinational initiative aimed at restoring free and secure navigation in the Strait of Hormuz amid uncertainties over the virtual control of the strategic waterway between the US and Iran. In a post on X, Macron said that the move is part of broader diplomatic efforts to address escalating tensions in the Middle East and ensure long-term regional stability and emphasised that the mission would be "strictly defensive" and separate from any parties involved in ongoing hostilities. Macron stated that France and the UK will convene a conference in the coming days with countries willing to contribute to a "peaceful multinational mission" to safeguard maritime traffic through the vital chokepoint, which is crucial for global energy shipments. "Regarding the Strait of Hormuz, we will organise with the United Kingdom, in the coming days, a conference with countries ready to contribute alongside us to a peaceful multinational mission aimed at restoring freedom of navigation in the strait. This strictly defensive mission, distinct from the belligerents, will be deployed as soon as the situation allows," Macron said in his post.

He also linked the initiative to wider regional concerns, including Iran's nuclear and ballistic activities and what he described as destabilising actions in the region, despite a two-week ceasefire in place between the US-Israel coalition forces and Iran after over a month of conflict in the region. The French President further said the effort is part of a broader push for diplomatic resolution of con-



licts in West Asia, including restoring stability in Lebanon while respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"No effort must be spared to swiftly achieve a solid and lasting resolution to the conflict in the Middle East through diplomatic means. A resolution that would enable the region to be endowed with a robust framework allowing each party to live in peace and security. To achieve this, all substantive issues must be addressed with lasting solutions, whether concerning Iran's nuclear and ballistic activities or its destabilising actions in the region, but also to enable the resumption, as quickly as possible, of free and unhindered navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and to ensure that Lebanon returns to the path of peace in full respect of its sovereignty and territorial integrity," the post added.

According to CENTCOM, the measures are being implemented under a directive from US President Donald Trump and will apply uniformly to vessels of all nationalities operating in and out of Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. CENTCOM clarified that while the measures target port activity associated with Iran, freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz for vessels transiting between non-Iranian ports would remain unaffected. In response, Iranian authorities strongly criticised the US move, warning that maritime security across the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman would be jeopardised if Iran's security interests were threatened.

## US blockade on Iranian ports will worsen tensions, weaken fragile ceasefire: China

China on Tuesday strongly criticised the United States over its recent military activities, warning that they could further destabilise an already fragile ceasefire in the West Asian region, according to Al Jazeera. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said Washington's reported actions to restrict vessel movements in the Strait of Hormuz would "exacerbate tensions" rather than reduce them. As quoted by Al Jazeera, he stated that increased US military operations and what he described as a targeted blockade effort would worsen tensions and undermine the already fragile ceasefire arrangement. Separately, Chinese President Xi Jinping has proposed a four-point framework aimed at promoting peace and stability in West Asia, Xinhua reported. The proposal emphasises respect for peaceful coexistence, national sovereignty, international law, and better coordination between development and security priorities. Xi outlined the initiative during a meeting in Beijing with Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Earlier, according to CNN citing MarineTraffic data.

# VOICE OF WORDS

## BUSINESS

# India's UPI hits 228.5 billion transactions in 2025, up 33%: Worldline report

India's digital payments ecosystem saw remarkable growth in 2025, with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) handling 228.5 billion transactions—a 33% increase from the previous year—according to a report by Worldline. The total value of UPI transactions reached Rs 299.74 trillion, reinforcing its status as the primary mode of everyday payments across the country. The report, titled India Digital Payments Report – Year 2025 in Review, highlights a clear shift toward a micro-transaction economy, where digital payments are steadily replacing cash for small-value purchases in areas like local retail, transport, and daily services. This trend is reflected in the declining average ticket size (ATS) of UPI transactions. Overall ATS dropped by 9% to Rs 1,314, while merchant transaction ATS fell to Rs 592, indicating increased use for routine, low-value payments. UPI continues to lead across both person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) segments. Notably, P2M transactions rose 34% to 143.82 billion, underlining its growing importance in merchant payments. Infrastructure supporting digital payments also expanded significantly. The number of UPI QR codes grew 15% year-on-year to 731.38 million, while point-of-sale (PoS) terminals increased to 11.48 million. Meanwhile, card payments are maintaining relevance in higher-value and online transactions. Credit card usage rose 27% to 5.69 billion transactions, while debit card usage declined by 23%, suggesting that smaller payments are shifting toward UPI. Online credit card spending reached Rs 14.53 trillion, highlighting their continued role in e-commerce and premium purchases. Recurring payments are also



gaining traction. Transactions via Bharat BillPay climbed 40% to 3.05 billion, with total value surging 93% to Rs 14.84 trillion. These are increasingly used for expenses such as education fees, insurance premiums, EMIs, and subscription services—pointing to the rise of a “set-and-forget” payment model. According to Ramesh Narasimhan, CEO of Worldline India, India's digital payments landscape is entering a more mature phase, where rapid scale is now being complemented by better structure, with distinct roles emerging for UPI, cards, and recurring payment systems.



## Two-wheelers drive India's auto market surge, sales jump nearly 20% in March

India's automobile industry ended the financial year on a strong footing, with major vehicle categories posting robust double-digit growth in March 2026, according to data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on Tuesday. The two-wheeler segment led the expansion, reflecting broad-based demand and sustained positive sentiment in the sector. Passenger vehicle sales rose 16% year-on-year to 4,42,460 units in March 2026, compared with 3,81,358 units in the same month last year. The increase points to steady consumer demand and a healthy flow of new model launches across manufacturers. Two-wheelers recorded a sharp 19.3% growth, with total sales climbing to 19,76,128 units from 16,56,939 units in March 2025. Within the category, scooters outperformed motorcycles, growing 29.8% to 7,61,422 units, while motorcycle sales rose 12.9% to 11,68,514 units. Three-wheelers also saw strong growth, with sales increasing 21.4% to 76,273 units compared to 62,813 units a year earlier. The overall performance helped the auto industry close the financial year on a positive note, with healthy growth across segments. The data does not include luxury carmakers such as BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), and Volvo. Overall, the figures highlight continued momentum in India's auto sector, supported by improving demand conditions and a steady pipeline of products.

## GAIL To Invest Rs 3,800 Cr On Solar Power Generation In UP, Maharashtra

New Delhi: State-owned gas utility firm Gail (India) Limited on Tuesday said it would invest Rs 3,800 crore in setting up 700 MW of solar power capacity across Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, as part of its push towards clean energy and net-zero goals. The projects are aimed at boosting renewable energy capacity and ensuring round-the-clock power supply through integrated storage solutions. Issuing a statement, the firm also said it would develop a 600-MW solar project with a 550-MWh battery energy storage system at the TUSCO Solar Park in Jhansi, primarily to meet the captive power needs of its petro-

chemical plant at Pata in Uttar Pradesh. “It will also set up a 100-MW solar project with a 22-MWh storage system in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra, to cater to its PDH-PP plant in Raigad,” the company said. Are Soaring, and Not All Will Survive Advertisement Upon commissioning, Gail's installed renewable energy capacity is expected to rise to over 1,000 MW from the current 147 MW. “The move aligns with its strategy to expand its green energy portfolio while maintaining a balanced mix of conventional and renewable assets,” the company said. Deepak Gupta, chairman and managing director, Gail.



## RBI Turns Down Ujjivan SFB's Application For Universal Bank Status

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has turned down the application of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank to be granted the status of a universal bank, the lender said on Monday. The bank had applied with the RBI in February last year for the status, but the regulator has asked the lender to diversify its loan portfolio. “The RBI took note of the Bank's recent efforts towards diversification of its loan portfolio. However, they were of the view that there is scope for progress in this area,” the bank said in a regulatory filing. “Therefore, the RBI has returned the above-mentioned application and advised the Bank to consider applying again after demonstrating a diversified loan portfolio,” it further added. In a separate statement, the bank assured that it will work upon the directions of the lending regulator to apply again for universal bank status with the RBI. “Ujjivan will continue to embark on the path of diversification and will resubmit the application in due course, keeping RBI's guidance in view,” it said. The status of a universal bank allows a lender to offer a wide range of financing products instead of serving only underserved segments. RBI's minimum requirements for banks to seek universal bank status require lenders to have a net worth of at least Rs 1,000 crore, a diverse lending record, maintenance of minimum capital requirements, along with a satisfactory track record in the last five years, profitability, and controlled non-performing assets. As of December last year, Ujjivan had a loan book of Rs 37,050 crore with deposits of Rs 42,220 crore. The last time the RBI had given universal bank status to a small finance bank was in August last year on the application of AU Small Finance Bank. This was the first time in almost a decade that a new universal bank was added to the list of lenders.

## India's Russian oil imports more than triple to 5.3 bn euro in March

NEW DELHI: India's crude oil purchases from Russia more than tripled to 5.3 billion euro in March as volumes doubled and a surge in oil prices pushed up the import bill. European think tank Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), in a report, said after a drop in purchases in February, India was back to a buying binge in March. “India was the second-highest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in March 2026, importing a total of EUR 5.8 billion of Russian hydrocarbons. Crude oil products constituted 91 per cent of India's purchases, totalling EUR 5.3 billion,” it said. Coal (EUR 337 million) and oil products (EUR 178.5 million) constituted the remainder of their monthly imports. In February, India was the third largest importer, purchasing Russian hydrocarbons worth 1.8 billion euro. Crude oil constituted the largest share at 81 per cent (EUR 1.4 billion), followed by coal (EUR 223 million) and oil products (EUR 121 million). “While India's total



crude imports recorded a 4 per cent reduction in March, Russian imports doubled,” CREA said. The spurt in volumes followed the United States granting a one-month sanctions waiver on Russian oil, covering cargoes already at sea and shipments on previously sanctioned vessels. The move was to ease prices that had spiked after Washington waged war against Iran. The waiver led to state refiners, which had previously paused Russian oil purchases, resuming imports from Moscow. “The biggest shift (in March) was in state-owned refineries' imports from Russia, which saw a massive 148 per cent month-on-month increase,” CREA said. “Their im-

ports were in fact 72 per cent higher than March 2025, presumably due to Russian barrels being more available in the spot market, which serves as the primary source of imports for them.” The state-owned Mangalore and Visakhapatnam refineries had stopped Russian imports at the end of November 2025, but purchases resumed in March 2026. “Private refineries, meanwhile, registered a more modest 66 per cent month-on-month increase, but remained lower than the same time last year,” it said. In March, China bought 51 per cent of Russia's crude exports, followed by India (38 per cent), Türkiye (6 per cent), and the European Union (1.8 per cent). In February, India was the third-largest importer of Russian oil behind China and Türkiye. “While India's Russian crude imports recorded a 19 per cent reduction in February, total imports saw a more modest 9 per cent reduction. Russia was still India's biggest crude oil supplier in February.

## Dollar's Era As Global Reserve Currency To Be Over Soon



Chennai: The US dollar will cease to be the global reserve currency in the next five to seven years, going by the pace at which countries are de-dollarising themselves. US President Donald Trump's focus on industrialisation is also accelerating dedollarisation. A digital gold-backed Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) is likely to replace dollar as a reserve currency for global transactions. “Every central bank intervention in the spot market is essentially a dollar asset dumping exercise,” says Anindya Banerjee, head of commodity and currency research at Kotak Securities. “If you can't find buyers for your debt, you can't sustain a model of printing money, creating debt, and borrowing at near-zero rates. That's why the game is up. According to Banerjee, the ongoing trend of de-dollarisation is not merely a reaction to the US “weaponising” trade or finance, but a deeper breakdown of the dollar's underlying economic model. Post-Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944, it replaced the British pound as the world's primary reserve currency.

## West Asia Conflict Drives Global Energy Price Surge, Hits Singapore's Port And Industries: Report

Singapore, April 14, 2026: Singapore's central bank on Tuesday warned that the West Asia conflict is impacting the city-state's status as the world's top refuelling port and industries due to shipping disruptions and a rise in global energy prices. The impact of conflict will ripple through the entire economy, reported The Straits Times, citing the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) report. Beyond transport operators, industries like construction, real estate, and food and beverage (F&B) are expected to face both direct and indirect cost increases, it said. The latest MAS macroeconomic review warns that a long-term energy disruption could hurt the labour market, which relies heavily on migrant workers, including those from India. This could lead to slower hiring and stagnant pay, alongside broader risks of higher inflation and weaker economic growth. Global oil and natural gas prices have surged since February 28, when the United States and Israel launched an air campaign against Iran. Iran, in turn, has effectively blocked the Strait of Hormuz that, in peacetime, allowed the flow of a fifth of global oil



and natural gas supplies from the Persian Gulf, according to media reports. The disruption to supplies and maritime trade routes could result in a near-term negative impact on the Singapore economy, said MAS in its report. MAS said prices of a wider range of imported goods and services are expected to increase in the months ahead.

# VOICE OF WORDS

## HEALTH

### Why staying healthy after 50 needs more than just diet? Experts explain



Preventive wellness and supplements are gaining importance among those over 50 as nutrient absorption declines with age. Experts say deficiencies often occur in clusters, making guided supplementation and early care essential for long-term health.

There's a quiet shift happening in how people over 50 are thinking about health. It's no longer just about fixing problems when they show up. Increasingly, it's about staying ahead of them. From supplements to preventive wellness, this generation is beginning to look at health as something that needs consistent, long-term support. And the reasons are becoming clearer.

#### When small signs start adding up

Sometimes, the change doesn't come from a diagnosis. It comes from everyday moments. As Mihir Karkare, Co-founder and CEO of Meru Activs, points out, even minor, repeated injuries can reveal deeper issues. In one case from their survey, a woman experienced multiple injuries within weeks from routine situations, something that raised concern only after a pattern emerged. These are not isolated incidents. They reflect how the body begins to respond differently with age.

#### The gap between diet and absorption

One of the biggest challenges after 50 is not always what you eat, but what your body can actually use. Studies show a large percentage of Indians in this age group face deficiencies, particularly Vitamin D. But it doesn't stop there. Many also experience issues with B12 levels, liver function, and lipid balance. The key point is this: even a well-balanced diet may no longer be enough. As the body ages, nutrient absorption slows down, and efficiency drops. This creates a gap between intake and utilisation, something that often goes unnoticed until symptoms appear.

#### Why deficiencies rarely come alone

Doctors say these issues rarely show up in isolation. According to Dr Radhika Vishweshvar, who is a medical advisor with Meru Activs, most individuals over 50 years of age suffer from a number of deficiencies as opposed to one. The low level of Vitamin D might affect bone strength, whereas a deficiency in B12 can affect energy levels and thinking capacity. In addition to this, magnesium imbalance can affect muscle strength as well as sleep patterns.

#### The shift towards preventive wellness

This is where the importance of preventive health comes in. At this point in their lives, individuals do not care about following trends. Their only concern is finding ways of remaining independent and staying active. When talking of supplements, this cannot be an easy fix. They are about filling nutritional gaps that the body can no longer bridge on its own.

#### Why guidance matters more than ever

At the same time, experts caution against self-medication. For example, Vitamin D supplements are often taken in high doses without supervision. However, as a fat-soluble vitamin, it can build up in your body rather than simply washing out. Medical professionals advise supplementing under guidance, depending on blood tests, with regular and correct doses rather than intermittent high doses. Health for people past 50 should be more preventative than reactionary. The increasing attention to the importance of supplements for wellness demonstrates a greater realisation that ageing is not only about dealing with disease but about functioning and vitality. Because the goal is no longer just to live longer. It's to live well.

## Early signs of dehydration you should never ignore in summer



Dehydration is common in summer due to heat and fluid loss. Experts say early signs like thirst, fatigue, dizziness, and dark urine should not be ignored. Staying hydrated with water, ORS, and water-rich foods is key to prevention. Summer has a way of catching up with the body faster than we realise. One long day in the heat, a few missed glasses of water, and suddenly you're feeling drained without quite knowing why. Dehydration is one of the most common yet overlooked issues during this time. According to Dr Kushal Bangar, Consultant Physician at AIMS Hospital, Dombivli, recognising the early signs is key to preventing more serious complications. Reasons why dehydration occurs during the summer season during hot seasons, the body sweats out extra fluids because it is its way of cooling itself. However, when these fluids are not replenished, it causes a lot of problems with some body functions such as keeping body temperature constant and proper digestion. With time, even slight dehydration may cause fatigue and irritability. Common triggers include prolonged sun exposure, outdoor activity, not drinking enough water, and even illnesses like vomiting or diarrhoea. High intake of caffeine or sugary drinks can also worsen the problem. Dehydration rarely shows up suddenly. It builds gradually, often through small signals



that are easy to ignore. Watch out for dryness in the mouth, unusual thirst, dark yellow urine, or a noticeable drop in urination. Fatigue, dizziness, headaches, and muscle cramps are also common warning signs. In certain scenarios, dryness in the mouth, sunken eyes, or an accelerated heartbeat might be observed. This indicates that the body has been put into a state of stress.

#### When should you take it seriously?

If the above symptoms continue to prevail or even get worse, immediate action must be taken. Neglecting to treat dehydration could prove disastrous, particularly for small children, older people, and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions. Mild issues can easily worsen with continued fluid loss from the body. In this situation, prevention is very straightforward yet commonly ignored. It is necessary to consume sufficient amounts of water each day. Typically, it is advised that people consume about 2 to 3 liters of water per day based on their physical activity and heat exposure. Alternatively, one can use homemade drinks containing water, salt, and sugar. Additionally, incorporating more water-containing foods such as cucumber, watermelon, tomatoes, and spinach into your diet can be beneficial. Traditional drinks like nimbu pani, coconut water, and buttermilk are also effective in keeping the body cool and hydrated.

## Heart surgeon with 25 years of experience flags 4 foods that may shorten your life, alcohol tops the list



surgeon highlights four common foods that may increase long-term health risks, including alcohol, processed meats, sugary drinks, and saturated fats. He emphasises moderation and consistency over strict dieting. Diet plays a major role in longevity and disease prevention. Diet plays a major role in longevity and disease prevention. What you eat shows up over time. Not immediately, not always in obvious ways, but it builds quietly. Your daily plate, more than anything else, shapes how your body holds up in the long run. It is not just about weight or short-term fitness. Diet plays into bigger risks. Heart disease, metabolic issues, even serious conditions like cancer. The connection is not subtle. Dr Jeremy London, a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon with over 25 years of experience, recently spoke about this on Instagram. His focus was simple. A few everyday foods that need to be watched, not ignored.

#### Foods to limit for long-term health

According to Dr London, some foods tend to appear too frequently in everyday diets. And that is where the problem begins. Alcohol: Common and widely accepted, but something that still needs to be kept in check.

Processed meats: Items like hot dogs and deli meats may be convenient, but are not ideal when consumed regularly. Sugary drinks: "They have empty calories, and



they never make you feel full," Dr London said. This makes it easier to overconsume without realising it. Saturated fats: Found in high-fat meats, butter, and full-fat dairy products, which can add up quickly if not moderated.

#### Why moderation matters more than perfection

Dr London did not push for extreme restrictions. Instead, he acknowledged reality. "Life gets in the way," he said, pointing out that a perfect diet is not always practical. What works better is consistency with a balanced approach. He shared a simple principle based on his own routine. "For me personally, 80 per cent of the time, that's a win," he explained.

The idea is not to eliminate everything. It is to avoid making these foods the base of your diet. "What you wanna shoot for is reducing these things, living in moderation. What you wanna avoid is having any or all of these things foundational in your nutritional plan," he said. There is also a bigger perspective to keep in mind. Something he came across and chose to share. "You can either take time for wellness or make time for illness." And that, in a way, sums it up. Not perfection. Just awareness, and a bit of consistency.

# VOICE OF WORDS

## WOMEN

### Teen acne vs adult acne: A dermatologist explains the key differences



Teen acne and adult acne are often treated the same, but they differ in causes, triggers and behaviour. While teenage acne is largely hormone-driven, adult acne is influenced by stress, lifestyle, medications and skincare habits. Acne is one of the most common skin concerns across age groups, yet not all acne is the same. There is a difference between teen acne and adult acne in terms of causes, triggers, and behavior, though they have been grouped together. The grouping of teen and adult acne is a cause for confusion, and more importantly, it can affect treatment decisions. Understanding these differences is key to managing acne effectively at any stage of life. "In clinical practice, we often see teen and adult acne being treated the same way, which is where the problem begins," says Dr Akanksha Sanghvi, dermatologist and founder of Oprava Aesthetics. "Understanding these differences is key to managing acne effectively at any stage of life."

#### What drives teen acne

In adolescents, the main cause of acne is hormonal changes that occur at the time of puberty. The hormones, especially androgens, increase the activity of the sebaceous glands, leading to an excessive secretion of sebum. This, along with the proliferation of bacteria that cause acne, leads to blocked pores, blackheads, whiteheads, and inflammatory papules. The T-zone of the face is commonly affected in teenage acne, and the lesions are usually more inflammatory in nature. Another group of teenagers with acne includes those with early-onset polycystic ovarian disease. These patients have more resistant and severe forms of acne, which is also more difficult to treat. "Recognising these signs early is important, as management extends beyond topical treatments and often requires a multidisciplinary approach," adds Dr Sanghvi.

#### How adult acne presents differently

Adult acne, particularly in women, has a different pattern and set of triggers. It tends to occur in the lower face, along the jawline, chin and neck. Hormonal changes remain an essential factor, and polycystic ovary disease still remains an important cause in this age group, too. Adult patients may have late-onset acne or acne that persisted since adolescence and never fully went away. In addition, stress, sleep, and metabolic factors all contribute to this problem.

#### Hidden triggers you might be missing

Another important and often under-recognised cause of adult acne is medication-induced breakouts. Drugs such as corticosteroids, certain hormonal therapies, lithium, antiepileptics and even some vitamin supplements can trigger or worsen acne. "These eruptions may have a sudden onset and can be resistant to conventional acne treatments unless the underlying trigger is addressed," explains Dr Sanghvi. An increasingly common contributor across both age groups is cosmetics-induced acne, also referred to as acne cosmetica. In addition to this, heavy and occlusive or comedogenic products have the potential to cause blockage of pores, thus leading to more pimples. Moreover, using multiple products in layers without being aware of the compatibility of the ingredients used in the products is also likely to worsen the situation.

#### The skincare mistakes that make acne worse

Another major issue is self-prescribed skincare. With the rise of social media trends and over-the-counter actives, many individuals unknowingly damage their skin barrier. Overuse of exfoliating acids, retinoids or harsh cleansers can lead to irritation, increased oil production and secondary acne. "What begins as an attempt to treat acne often ends up perpetuating it," says Dr Sanghvi.

## UV index at 13: Why sunscreen is now a daily essential

With UV index levels rising in cities like Bengaluru, experts stress that sunscreen is now a daily necessity, not a cosmetic choice. Regular application, reapplication and protection even indoors are key to preventing sun damage, pigmentation and premature ageing. Stepping out in the sun has always come with a warning, but now, that warning is getting louder. In cities like Bengaluru, the UV index has touched extreme levels, far beyond what skin can safely tolerate. Yet, for most people, sunscreen is still treated as an occasional step, not a daily essential.

"An index above 7 is already considered high, but we are now seeing levels around 13," says Dr Suma K R, Specialist in Dermatology, Venereology and Leprosy. "At this stage, the risk of sunburn, dehydration and long-term skin damage increases significantly, which is why protection becomes non-negotiable."

#### Why sunscreen is more than a cosmetic step

Sunscreen is often associated with preventing tanning, but its role goes far deeper. Sun exposure damages skin cells, accelerates ageing and increases the risk of pigmentation and long-term skin issues. It is not just about how the skin looks, but how it functions over time.

Dr Shalini Dubey, Medical Affairs Manager, Iberia Pharmaceuticals, explains that sunscreen should be seen as a health essential. It protects against not only UVA and UVB rays but also environmental stressors that contribute to oxidative damage.

#### The biggest mistake people make

Applying sunscreen once in the morning and forgetting about it. "Reapplication is compulsory every two hours," emphasises Dr Suma K R. "Even water-resistant or sweat-resistant sunscreens lose effectiveness, especially in hot weather." In a tropical climate like India, where sweating is common, this step becomes even more critical. Yes, you need sunscreen even indoors. One of the most overlooked facts is that sun protection does not stop at your front door. UV rays can penetrate through windows, and even indoor lighting contributes to what experts call blue light exposure. Over time, this can lead to pigmentation and skin dam-



age. "Even on cloudy days, UV exposure remains high," Dr Suma adds. "People assume they are safe, but that is when the damage happens silently."

#### Clothing can help, but not fully

While sunscreen is essential, physical protection adds another layer of defence. Dark-coloured, thickly woven fabrics offer better protection than light, loosely woven clothes. Covering up with full sleeves, scarves or even using an umbrella can reduce direct exposure.

However, these are supplementary steps rather than alternative options.

#### Selecting the right sunscreen

Not all sunscreens are made equal. For high levels of ultraviolet radiation exposure, experts advise using physical sunscreens with an SPF value of at least 50. On the other hand, modern-day sunscreens contain hydrating and soothing components such as hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, aloe vera, and vitamin E.

This strategy should provide consistent results. A sunscreen that feels comfortable on the skin is more likely to be used regularly. Sun protection is no longer seasonal. It is daily, essential and non-negotiable.

Whether you are stepping out briefly, sitting near a window or even staying indoors, your skin is constantly exposed to environmental stress. The solution is simple: apply, reapply and stay consistent. Because when it comes to skin health, prevention is always easier than repair.

## Minimalist skincare: Are fewer products actually better for your skin?

Minimalist skincare focuses on fewer, targeted products to protect the skin barrier and reduce irritation. Experts explain how over-layering can damage skin and why a simple, consistent routine often delivers better results.

At some point, skincare stopped being self-care and started feeling like a checklist. Cleanser, toner, serum, essence, actives, moisturiser, sunscreen and then a few extras just in case. It looks impressive on a shelf, but your skin may not agree. Dermatologists are increasingly seeing people with irritated, reactive skin, not because they are neglecting it, but because they are doing too much. When skincare becomes overload "The problem isn't that people aren't taking care of their skin. It's that they are overloading it," says Dr Priyanka Sharma, Co-founder, Director and Chief Dermatologist at V6 Clinics. Many popular ingredients like exfoliating acids, retinoids, vitamin C and niacinamide are effective on their own. But layering them without structure can quietly damage the skin barrier. The result is often redness, breakouts and a kind of dullness that does not improve, no matter how many products you add. Your skin already knows what to do. Skin is not passive.



It regulates moisture, maintains balance and repairs itself constantly. "Most people don't think of their skin as a system, but it is," Dr Sharma explains.

When too many products interfere with that system, the skin starts to push back. Not subtly either. It shows up through sensitivity, irritation and inconsistent results. What minimalist skincare actually means. Minimalist skincare is not about doing nothing. It is about doing what matters. A basic routine usually includes:

#### A gentle cleanser

A barrier-supporting moisturiser  
A reliable sunscreen  
Beyond this, treatments should be targeted. Whether it is acne, pigmentation or early ageing, products should be added with intention, not impulse. "It's about being deliberate. Every product should

earn its place," says Dr Sharma. The hidden damage: Skin barrier dysfunction  
One of the most common issues dermatologists see today is barrier dysfunction. It happens when the outer layer of the skin can no longer retain moisture or protect against irritants. Once that balance is disturbed, even simple products can trigger reactions. "Frequent product switching and over-exfoliation don't give the skin time to stabilise," Dr Sharma notes. In many cases, recovery involves cutting back, not adding more. Why your routine alone is not enough  
Even the best skincare routine has limits. Hormones, sleep, stress, and diet are just some of the factors that greatly affect your skin. You might be using the same products with your friend, and yet your skin looks completely different.

# VOICE OF WORDS

## SPORTS

# Sanju Samson named ICC Player of the Month following stellar T20 World Cup run



## Demotivating, sign of disrespect: Tejaswin Shankar hits out at National Sports Award delay

New Delhi: Asian Games silver medallist decathlon athlete Tejaswin Shankar has criticised the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for a reported delay in announcing the National Sports Awards, calling it a "sign of disrespect" and "demotivating to athletes and coaches." The ministry invited applications for the National Sports Awards, viz. Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Awards, Arjuna Award, Arjuna Award (Lifetime), Dronacharya Award, Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar (RKPP) for the year 2025 on September 29 last year, which was later extended to November 4. At least 24 names figured in the proposed list to the sports ministry, which includes Tejaswin's name for Arjuna Award, after a meeting of the selection committee on December 24. But, then the process has halted. As per the ministry sources, "Preparations for the National Sports Awards program are underway. The list of athletes is currently being re-evaluated, which is causing some delay. The awards ceremony will be organised as soon as possible." Tejaswin Shankar adds heptathlon gold to Indian medal tally of five medals in Asian Indoor Athletics C'ships But the delay is getting a lot of pushback from athletes who believe this 're-evaluation' is putting way too much pressure on those who already met the requirements. "This should have been thought of 'before' the unofficial recommended names came out in December. Not 4 months 'after'. This delay is not just demotivating to athletes and coaches but also a sign of disrespect," Tejaswin posted on X. According to the latest scheme (dated 14.10.2024), the awards will be conferred in a ceremony by the President of India, ordinarily on August 29, birth anniversary of Late Major Dhyan Chand. However, during the years when Olympic Games, Commonwealth and Asian Games are held, the date of award ceremony will be finalised keeping in view the closing dates of these Games and in consultation with the Secretariat of the President of India.

India's star wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for March 2026, following his match-winning performances in India's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 triumph. Samson played a key role in India's title-winning campaign, producing a series of explosive innings at a crucial stage of the tournament. Initially not part of the regular playing XI, the right-hander was drafted into the squad for the Super 8 stage and quickly emerged as one of India's standout performers. He started with a composed 24 against Zimbabwe before finding top form with an unbeaten 97 against the West Indies, helping India advance to the semi-finals. Samson carried his momentum into the knockout stages, scoring a blistering 89 against England in the semi-final at the Wankhede Stadium to power India to a commanding total. The 31-year-old reserved his best for the final, smashing another 89 to guide India to a dominant win and successfully defend their T20

World Cup crown. Across three crucial matches in March, Samson amassed 275 runs at an outstanding average of 137.50 and a strike rate close to 200, highlighting his dominance in the shortest format. Reacting to the honour, Samson told the ICC that winning the award was a special moment in his career. "Winning the ICC Player of the Month award is an incredible feeling, especially as it comes during what has been the most unforgettable phase of my cricketing journey. Playing a part in India's triumph at the Men's T20 World Cup was truly a dream realised, and it took some time for the magnitude of that moment to fully sink in," he said. "This is an exciting era for Indian cricket, with immense talent across the board. I feel grateful for the opportunities I've received, and for the trust and support from my teammates and coaching staff that have allowed me to perform at my best," he added. This is the first time Samson has received the ICC



Player of the Month award, capping a breakthrough tournament that firmly establishes him among the leading performers in T20 cricket.

## Sindarov sets up World Championship title clash with Gukesh



BENGALURU: It's official. Javokhir Sindarov will be D Gukesh's challenger at the Classical World Championships later this year. The Uzbek phenom, just 20, displayed an uncommon capacity to punish all errors made by his opponents during the ongoing eight-man Candidates event, the competition from where the winner advances to the title clash. Over the last two-and-a-half weeks in Cyprus, the 20-year-old emerged as the undisputed champion thanks to some gun chess against all players. In the

penultimate round against Anish Giri, the only player who may have caught him in the final round with back-to-back wins, tried to create something but Sindarov, with black, was rock solid. The first half of this tournament helped him gain all the momentum in the world when he went back-to-back-to-back against R Praggnanandhaa, Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura, the three pre-tournament favourites. Since those hat-trick of wins, he has been happy to play within himself, wanting to preserve the advantage rather than creating chances by playing ambitious chess. With pressure on other players to force the pace, they made mistakes and Sindarov was happy to take advantage. From an Indian perspective, R Vaishali ensured she would go into the final day on the back of a draw. She had to defend a tough position for an hour and it could have been unpleasant had Tan Zhongyi found the right continuation. A small inaccuracy allowed her to equalise and she was happy to take the draw. She faces a tough fight as the likes of Zhu Jiner and Bibisara Assaubayeva are all within touching distance. Select results (Rd 13): Open: Anish Giri drew with Javokhir Sindarov, Hikaru Nakamura drew with Matthias Bluebaum. Women: R Vaishali drew with Tan Zhongyi, Kateryna Lagno bt Divya Deshmukh.

## Swimming Becomes First Major Olympic Sport To Lift Restrictions on Russian Athletes



Lausanne: Russian swimmers, divers and water polo players will be allowed to compete without restrictions and with their national flag and anthem. The decision by governing body World Aquatics marks a major shift in how a key sport treats Russia ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and prompted condemnation by Ukraine. World Aquatics said on Monday it will remove restrictions which required Russian and Belarusian athletes to be vetted and to compete as neutrals. It excluded Russia and Belarus from its events like the world championships after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, then allowed limited participation as neutrals a year later, and further eased the rules since. "Senior athletes with Belarusian or Russian sport nationality will be permitted to compete in World Aquatics events in the same way as their counterparts representing other sport nationalities, with their respective uniforms, flags and anthems,"

World Aquatics said in a statement. It had previously relaxed the rules for junior athletes. We are determined to ensure that pools and open water remain places where athletes from all nations can come together in peaceful competition." Ukraine condemns decision World Aquatics isn't the first sports body to reinstate Russia in full - judo did it in November and taekwondo in January - but it's by far the biggest. Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyaryov thanked Al Musallam "for his firm position on this issue" and said they'd discussed the issue together in January. It is very important that international sporting dialogue is bearing fruit and enables the orderly restoration of sporting ties," Degtyaryov, who also heads the Russian Olympic Committee, wrote on the social media app Max. Ukraine Minister of Youth and Sports Matvii Bidnyi condemned the decision. "Sport should unite around fair rules and respect for life."

## India's bid based on using existing facilities at Amdavad and progress impressive: CS CEO Katie Sadleir

CHENNAI: The buzz around the 2030 Commonwealth Games is slowly picking up. The evaluation of India's preparedness has already kicked in even though they were awarded the right to host the Games only in November. A five-member delegation of the Commonwealth Sport (CS) visited Amdavad (Ahmedabad) to inspect the condition at the venues. CS Chief Executive Officer Katie Sadleir, who had fruitful discussions with all stakeholders - the Gujarat state government, central government, the Indian Olympic Association and host city officials - said the visit was fruitful. She was impressed with the existing facilities and is sure India would deliver a 'wow Games'. Hours before leaving for Birmingham for the 100-day countdown for the 2026 CWG, she spoke with this daily about India's preparedness. She is expecting the organizing committee to be formed as early as possible (after the elections) and said there would be at least a couple of traditional sports with the sports programme to be finalized by the end of



this year. Excerpts: How was your visit to Amdavad? How did the discussions go? It was really good. This was my fourth trip to India and my second to Amdavad but the first after the announcement (of hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games) in November at our General Assembly. We had some really good meetings with the government at the city level. We are really impressed with some of the stuff that had happened ever since the General Assembly which was in November. We got to have a look around some of the proposed facilities and there are some world-class facilities. It's just going to wow people, in terms of the facilities that are both currently there and the ones that are planned. So yeah we were very, very impressed. You have visited almost all the facilities. In terms of percentage, how much progress have been made? There are two things. One of the things that we have been working on from Commonwealth Sport's perspective over the last two years, in particular since Victoria pulled out, was what we call a Commonwealth Games reset where we have a commitment at a Commonwealth Sport level to take the Commonwealth Games around the Commonwealth. What has been happening is that the Games tend to bounce back-and-forth between Australia and the UK; and a couple of others every now and then. However, in terms of a product that countries felt that they could afford and deliver there was few and far between who would put up their hands up for the bid. What we did is we went and looked at the product in Birmingham and said, "how do we actually bring this down to be something that is affordable?" And one of the significant elements that we wanted to try and take 60% out of the cost of the Birmingham Games and one principle behind that was that we did not expect people to be building new facilities to host the Commonwealth Games. If there were plans already in place, if a country or a city didn't have a stadium.

## Hugo Ekitike injury looks 'really bad' in potential blow for Liverpool and France



LIVERPOOL: Hugo Ekitike was forced off with an injury in the first half of Liverpool's Champions League quarterfinal loss to Paris Saint-Germain on Tuesday. The France striker appeared to hurt his right leg when he slipped in the 27th minute of the second-leg match at Anfield. "It doesn't look good," Liverpool coach Arne Slot said after the 2-0 defeat, which sealed a 4-0 aggregate victory for PSG. "It looks really bad, but it's difficult for me to say how bad. Tomorrow we will investigate further."



## Bad Boy Karthik is a strong emotional story - Naga Shourya

## Ram Charan sends global shivers with his new photoshoot



Mega Powerstar Ram Charan continues to redefine pan-global stardom, and his recent appearances are a perfect testament to his commanding screen presence. Following the historic triumph of RRR, his global footprint has expanded remarkably, making every single visual of his a highly celebrated event across the world. Showcasing an effortlessly cool demeanor, the actor looks breathtakingly sharp in his latest photoshoot. The aquatic shots reveal a raw, magnetic intensity, while his sophisticated street-style look exudes pure swag. His ability to carry complex, stylish looks with such ease is truly commendable. This magnetic off-screen persona is naturally fueling the fire for his highly awaited cinematic return in Peddi. The creative collaboration of director Buchi Babu Sana, legendary composer AR Rahman, and producer Venkata Satish Kilaru has set a remarkably grand stage for the actor. The anticipation for the film is monumental, capturing global headlines well before its release. The impactful glimpses and the first two songs have already established a huge foundation of hype, but Ram Charan's unparalleled style and undeniable charisma remain the true driving force of his soaring journey.



Naga Shourya is looking to make a blockbuster comeback with this emotional actioner titled Bad Boy Karthik. The movie has good expectations post the trailer release. Directed by Ramesh and featuring music by Harris Jayaraj, the project is produced by Srinivasa Rao Chintalapudi, Vijaya Kumar Chintalapudi, and Dr. Ashok Kumar Chintalapudi under the Sri Vaishnavi Films banner. The team organized a successful pre-release event today to interact with the media and share their journey. During her speech, actress Sridevi Vijayakumar expressed immense confidence in the final output. She stated that her on-screen pairing with Naga Shourya feels very new and highly praised his performance. Extending her heartfelt thanks to the makers for their unwavering support, she also commended Rasool for his excellent visual work and noted that every actor in the huge cast has a very meaningful role to play. Taking the stage, Naga Shourya thanked the technical team, specifically pointing out how well cinematographer Rasool showcased him on screen. He welcomed debutante Vidhi to the Telugu industry and spoke highly of Sridevi Vijayakumar. He explained that the director carefully assembled the heavy star cast because the intense narrative genuinely demanded such talented performers to bring the vision to life. As the promotional activities reach their peak, the team is highly confident about the movie's success. Bad Boy Karthik is officially slated for a worldwide theatrical release on April 17th. Following its run in cinemas, the film will be available for streaming, as ZEE5 has secured the exclusive digital rights.

## Before Kaithi 2, Karthi Set to Bring Another Cult Sequel?



Director H. Vinoth is reportedly lining up an exciting slate of projects after Jana Nayagan. According to the latest buzz, his next film will be with Karthi, and it is said to be a sequel to the blockbuster Theeran Adhigaram Ondru. The original film, also known as Khakee in Telugu, was a massive success and enjoys a strong fan base in Telugu states to date. On the other hand, director Lokesh Kanagaraj has already indicated that Kaithi 2 will begin only after his film with Allu Arjun. This timeline could allow Karthi to complete the Theeran sequel beforehand. If both Khakee 2 and Kaithi 2 materialize, it could mark a massive career boost for Karthi. As he needs a solid hit to make a comeback, these promising films can make his comeback even smoother. Let's see how things work out in the days to come.

## Naga Babu Unveils 'Chiranjeevi' First Look

The title and first look poster of the film "Chiranjeevi" have been officially unveiled by Mega Brother Naga Babu. Naga Babu sends best wishes to the entire team. The film features Kiku Yamanala and Kashish Khan in the lead roles, supported by a strong ensemble cast including Tanikella Bharani, Eswari Rao, Goparaju Ramana, Srikanth Bharath, Viva Raghav, and others. The project is being produced under the Kiku Entertainment banner by Deepti Nadiminti, with Sai Venkat handling both script and direction. The makers have confirmed that the film is scheduled for a summer release, with the release date to be announced soon. The storyline centers around a young man named Chiru who is affected by dextrocardia, a rare medical condition where the heart is positioned on the right side of the chest. The narrative focuses on his personal struggles and emotional journey. The film aims to present an inspiring account of perseverance and achievement, showcasing how the protagonist overcomes life's challenges despite his condition.



## Krithi Shetty Looks Classy in Red Saree



Krithi Shetty shows how simple style can look very adorable. In a recent Instagram post, Krithi looks traditional in the bright red saree with a rich golden border. She looks utterly classy. In the picture shared by karthikha\_photography, Krithi Shetty is seen wearing a red saree paired with a detailed blouse and it's just awesome. Krithi Shetty has been gaining strong attention in the film industry. Recently, she has been busy promoting her latest film Love Insurance Kompany. The movie is directed by Vignesh Shivan and features Pradeep Ranganathan in a key role. As part of promotions, she spoke openly about her thoughts on cinema and the films that influenced her. She shared her views about the Hollywood film Barbie. She said, "At first I did not enjoy the movie because I expected it to be a simple and cute story. I thought it would be like a fairy tale. But when I watched it again, my opinion completely changed. I understood the deeper meaning of the film and appreciated how it talks about society and how women are seen. I think many people judged the film too quickly without understanding its message." Krithi also spoke about Kill Bill which is an action film directed by Quentin Tarantino. She said she enjoys strong action roles and would love to see such films being made in India. She even mentioned that she is waiting for opportunities like that.



## Devara Producer's Next With Vishwak Sen

Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen begins his next with Yuvasudha Arts. This will be production No.3 for the Blockbuster banner which produced Devara. The journey has officially begun with an auspicious pooja. Featuring Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen in a new age rom com genre, the film already carries strong anticipation even before shooting begins. The film began with a formal pooja ceremony today. Director Koratala Siva gave the ceremonial clap, while the script was handed over by Shyam Prasad Reddy, followed by the camera switch-on ritual. The film will be directed by Rajath known for Dev and is said to be a refreshing romantic comedy. With Aravind Vishwanathan handling cinematography and Thejas Krishna composing music, the project aims to bring a youthful and engaging cinematic experience. Vishwak Sen is also presenting this film.