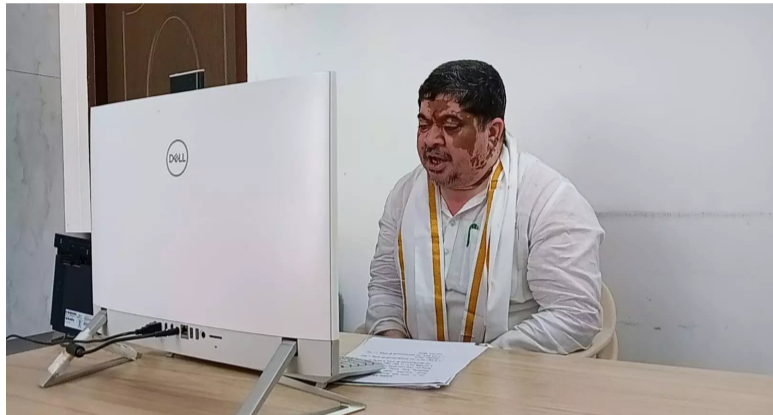


Fix Union Concerns by May 17, Ponnampalli Tells RTC Officials



Hyderabad : Transport minister Ponnampalli Prabhakar has directed RTC officials to address issues raised by trade union leaders during their meeting with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday. At a review meeting, the minister asked officials across all divisions to ensure a supportive work environment and avoid harassment of staff. "I urged officials at every divisional level to carry out work with a positive, supportive approach and ensure staff are not subjected to any harassment," he said. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 He instructed officials to maintain an approachable attitude towards lower-level staff and passengers, and to interact with drivers, conductors and other employees in a friendly manner rather than being abrasive. The minister set May 17 as the deadline to improve basic amenities at depots and bus stations, with priority on clean restrooms, water, greenery and overall hygiene.

FIRs Filed Against ex-AAP MP Sandeep Pathak Post BJP Entry



Chandigarh: Punjab Police is learnt to have booked Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak, who recently defected to the BJP, sources said on Saturday. Two FIRs have been lodged against Pathak under non-bailable sections, they said. No further details about the FIRs have been disclosed yet. Pathak was among the seven Rajya Sabha MPs who had quit the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and joined the BJP. On April 24, the AAP suffered a jolt when seven of its 10 Rajya Sabha MPs -- Pathak, Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Harbhajan Singh, Rajendra Gupta, Vikramjit Sahney and Swati Maliwal -- quit, alleging that Arvind Kejriwal's party had strayed from its principles, values and core morals. Six of the seven MPs were from Punjab. Later, Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan officially accepted their merger with the BJP, reducing AAP's strength in the Upper House to three.

Ghee Adulteration Row: Panel Flags Lapses in TTD



Hyderabad: The one-man commission headed by retired IAS Dinesh Kumar flagged major lapses in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). Former Executive Officer A.V. Dharma Reddy was named as a key person in the fiasco while the roles of former TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal, and YSRCP lead-

Farmers Pin Hopes on Barrage Revival After CM's Thummidihatti Visit

ADILABAD:

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's likely to visit Thummidihatti in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district amid renewed focus on the proposed Pranahita-Chevella barrage project has raised expectations among farmers, who said the long-pending project could bring irrigation to vast stretches of barren land. Local residents said the Chief Minister's visit signals progress on the project, which has remained pending for years. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad



Crime in 2025 Revanth Reddy will be the second Chief Minister to visit Thummidihatti after former chief minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, who laid the foundation stone for the project in 2008

under the Jalayagnam programme. The Pranahita-Chevella project was originally designed to irrigate about 16.4 lakh acres across several districts, including Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Nizamabad, Medak and Nalgonda, with around 1.56 lakh acres in the erstwhile Adilabad district. The project was estimated at Rs. 38,500 crore. Also Read - BRS Won't Return To Power: Ponguleti The foundation

for Dr B.R. Ambedkar Pranahita-Chevella Sujala Sravanti was laid at Thummidihatti on December 16, 2008, on the banks of the Pranahita river. Officials said the present government is examining revival of the project nearly 18 years after its foundation. Farmers in Sirpur (T) constituency said the project would help irrigate lands that have remained uncultivated despite proximity to the river. Also Read - TIMS Sanathnagar Sees 97 Patients on Trial Run Sirpur (T) MLA Palvai Harish Babu said he

would extend support to the project and was ready to facilitate discussions with the Maharashtra government regarding the proposed barrage. He said preparation of a Detailed Project Report is required to move the project forward. Earlier, a delegation of Congress leaders led by N. Uttam Kumar Reddy had visited Thummidihatti in 2019 and demanded construction of a barrage on the Pranahita river. Local representatives said the proposed barrage would provide irrigation and drinking water benefits to the district.

KTR holds meeting with BRS Rangareddy leaders

HYDERABAD:

BRS working president KT Rama Rao held a meeting with party senior leaders from erstwhile Rangareddy district unit on Saturday and wanted them to gear up for the forthcoming corporation elections. The BRS working president congratulated the party leaders, who secured victories in the recent local bodies (gram panchayat and municipal) elections. The meeting was held at his Nandi Nagar residence. The leaders were specifically directed to expose the Congress



government's failure in fulfilling the promises made to different sections. The BRS working president congratulated the party leaders, who secured

victories in the recent local bodies (gram panchayat and municipal) elections. During the meeting, he discussed the key issues like strengthening the party in the erstwhile district. This apart, discussions were held on upcoming party membership enrolment and establishing party committees to ensure proper coordination among leaders. The BRS working president also discussed on the action plan to be adopted for the Special Intensive Revision in the erstwhile district.

Hyderabad Police takes down 184 profiles promoting betting, fake investment scams

Hyderabad:

The Cyber crime unit of Hyderabad police in April, through continuous digital monitoring and intelligence-based tracking, identified 184 social media profiles actively operating and running 801 paid advertisements promoting various online gaming, betting applications and fake investment websites targeting users in India. As a precautionary and preventive measure, all the 184 identified profiles have been reported to the platform concerned and have been taken down to prevent further dissemination of such unlawful and misleading content. "These advertisements were strategically designed to attract vulnerable users by promising easy money, bonus, and referral commissions and huge returns on their investments. The identified profiles were systematically sharing promotional content, referral links, IPL predictions and deep fake videos of well-known personalities to lure



the public into unlawful betting and fake investment schemes," said an official of Hyderabad police. Further based on the identified violations six FIRs have been registered in April month against the promoters. As part of the ongoing cyber patrol initiatives, a cumulative total of 427 social media profiles and 1903 paid promotional advertisements have been identified and taken down for promoting online gaming, illegal betting, and fake investment websites targeting users in India, added the official. Investigation is underway to trace the individuals and financial channels associated with these profiles. Legal action will be

BJP, TMC Welcome SC Vote-Counting Directions for West Bengal Polls

Kolkata:

The BJP and TMC on Saturday both hailed the SC directions on the Election Commission's circular over the deployment of central government personnel for vote counting in West Bengal. The apex court on Saturday said no further order was necessary on the TMC's plea challenging the Calcutta High Court's dismissal of its petition against the April 13 circular. In a social media post, BJP leader Amit Malviya said, "In yet another legal setback, the Supreme Court has refused to intervene. The Trinamool Congress had approached the court challenging the exclusion of state government employees from vote-counting supervisor duties, and had sought an urgent hearing." Hung Assembly Explained: What It Means, Why It Happens, and What Comes Next "The refusal to entertain this plea underscores



a clear message -- attempts to influence or cast doubt over the integrity of the counting process will not find easy validation. Another day, another judicial rebuff for Mamata Banerjee," he added. The TMC, however, claimed that the SC directions vindicated its stand. "The issue raised before the Hon'ble Supreme Court pertained to the implementation of the said communication in a manner whereby only Central Government/Central PSU employees were being appointed as Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants, must be read along with the salient feature contained in the second page of the communication, which provides for random selection of both State Government and Central Government employees," it said.

AP HC directs Notice to YSRC Leader Srihari, Seeks Statement



Vijayawada: The Andhra Pradesh High Court has directed Nallapadu police to serve notice to YSRC general secretary Pudi Srihari under Section 35(3) of the BNSS and record his statement in a case related to alleged controversial social media posts. A single-judge Bench headed by Justice Y. Lakshmana Rao heard a petition filed by the YSRC leader seeking to quash cases registered against him at Nallapadu and Kothapeta police stations. Also Read - Non-Kapus Unhappy With Jana Sena In Allocation Of Posts Public prosecutor M. Lakshmi Narayana submitted that the petitioner was not cooperating with the investigation. After hearing both sides, the court directed the police to proceed in accordance with law and posted the matter for further hearing on May 5. HC directs notice to murder accused Nithyananda Reddy The Andhra Pradesh High Court has directed Kadapa police to serve notice to petitioner and murder accused

Nithyananda Reddy under Section 35 of the BNSS and record his statement. Also Read - Food Prices May Rise By 10% As 19 Kg LPG Costs Surge A single-judge Bench headed by Justice Y. Lakshmana Rao heard a petition filed by Nithyananda Reddy seeking to quash the case registered in connection with the murder of realtor Pedda Dastagiri. Petitioner's senior counsel C. Raghu argued that the FIR initially did not name his client and that his name was later added for political reasons. Public prosecutor M. Lakshmi Narayana contended that the accused played a key role in the murder and had assisted others in fleeing by providing shelter and funds. The court observed that the offences invoked carry punishment of less than seven years and directed that notice be served and the petitioner's statement recorded. The matter has been posted for further hearing after the summer vacation.

Medicine makers see sharp rise in prices due to war



HYDERABAD: The ongoing conflict in West Asia has led to a sharp rise in the prices of raw materials used in medicine manufacturing, with costs increasing by 50% to 180%, raising concerns over a possible increase in medicine prices in Telangana. According to sources in the Bulk Drug Manufacturers Association of India, raw material prices have surged due to steep hikes by suppliers of chemicals and solvents used in pharmaceutical production. Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) manufacturers are currently absorbing part of the burden, and medicine prices may not immediately rise in the same proportion. Drug manufacturer said methanol, which earlier cost Rs 35 per kg, is now being sold at over Rs 100 per kg. Pharmaceutical companies are reportedly planning to increase the prices of several medicines by 20% to 100% if the trend continues. Commonly used drugs such as paracetamol, antibiotics, painkillers, insulin and steroid medicines are likely to become costlier in frexisting stocks are exhausted. He said rising input costs may also force India to increase imports from Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam and China. The Bulk Drug Manufacturers Association of India (BDMAI) said the Centre has waived customs duty on 40 chemicals and solvents used in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Manufacturers have urged government intervention. The cost of many base chemicals for APIs linked to crude and petrochemical feedstocks has skyrocketed due to West Asia tensions, prompting many chemical companies to cut down or shut production," said pharma industry analysts tracking the sector. The situation has worsened due to the Indian rupee breaching the Rs. 94 mark against the US dollar recently, hitting record lows around Rs. 94+ in late March 2026. This depreciation has significantly raised the landed cost of imported APIs, key starting materials (KSM) existing stocks are exhausted. He s), and intermediates, of which India remains heavily dependent on China for a large portion. Indian Pharma industry expert Vikas Nim informed that prices of critical inputs such as isopropyl alcohol (IPA), dimethylformamide (DMF), acetic anhydride, butyl ethanol, ammonia, naphtha, and glycerine have jumped 30% to 100% within weeks, with existing stocks are exhausted. He some cases seeing hikes as high as 200% to 300%. The price of paracetamol API, a benchmark product, has more than doubled from around Rs. 220 to Rs. 250 per kg to Rs. 450 to Rs. 600 per kg in a short span, forcing several bulk-drug manufacturers and smaller units to temporarily halt or scale down production.

existing stocks are exhausted. He said rising input costs may also force India to increase imports from Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam and China. The Bulk Drug Manufacturers Association of India (BDMAI) said the Centre has waived customs duty on 40 chemicals and solvents used in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Manufacturers have urged government intervention. The cost of many base chemicals for APIs linked to crude and petrochemical feedstocks has skyrocketed due to West Asia tensions, prompting many chemical companies to cut down or shut production," said pharma industry analysts tracking the sector. The situation has worsened due to the Indian rupee breaching the Rs. 94 mark against the US dollar recently, hitting record lows around Rs. 94+ in late March 2026. This depreciation has significantly raised the landed cost of imported APIs, key starting materials (KSM) existing stocks are exhausted. He s), and intermediates, of which India remains heavily dependent on China for a large portion. Indian Pharma industry expert Vikas Nim informed that prices of critical inputs such as isopropyl alcohol (IPA), dimethylformamide (DMF), acetic anhydride, butyl ethanol, ammonia, naphtha, and glycerine have jumped 30% to 100% within weeks, with existing stocks are exhausted. He some cases seeing hikes as high as 200% to 300%. The price of paracetamol API, a benchmark product, has more than doubled from around Rs. 220 to Rs. 250 per kg to Rs. 450 to Rs. 600 per kg in a short span, forcing several bulk-drug manufacturers and smaller units to temporarily halt or scale down production.

Rules Must Be Followed In Urban Land Ceiling Action: High Court

Hyderabad: A two-judge panel of the Telangana High Court ruled that proceedings initiated under the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 (ULC Act) without statutory authority were unsustainable in law. The panel comprising Justice Moushumi Bhattacharya and Justice Gadi Praveen Kumar dismissed a writ appeal filed by the state, affirming the order of the single judge which set aside the ULC proceedings against the writ petitioners. The case arose from a challenge to suo motu proceedings initiated by the special officer (land ceiling) in 2006 in respect of land situated in Bachupally of Rangareddy district. It was the case of the writ petitioners that they purchased the land through registered sale deeds executed in 1990 and 1993, and that the proceedings were conducted behind their back without issuance of notice. A single judge bench allowed the writ petition, holding that the authorities failed to comply with the mandatory requirements under Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, particularly with respect to issuance and service of notice prior to taking possession. It also found that the proceedings were initiated against persons who were either not the owners or were no longer alive, rendering the exercise legally untenable. In

the appeal, the state argued that the petitioners lacked locus standi, as the transferees in their favour were void under the ULC Act, and that the writ petition was liable to be dismissed on the ground of delay and laches. The state further argued that non-issuance of notice would not vitiate the proceedings. Rejecting these contentions, the panel held that the ULC Act did not confer any suo motu power on the competent authority and initiation of such proceedings without statutory backing is without jurisdiction. The panel observed that issuance of notice was mandatory, and failure to issue notice to persons in possession vitiates the entire process of taking possession. The panel further observed that alleged possession taken through a panchanama without notice and without participation of the landholders amounted only to symbolic possession. Accordingly, the panel dismissed the writ appeal. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Actress wins reprieve over reports The Telangana High Court granted interim protection to actress Venkata Aswini Reddy Koyya, restraining multiple media platforms and individuals from publishing or circulating allegedly defamatory content against her until the trial court decided her injunc-



tion plea. Justice P. Sam Koshy passed the order in a civil revision petition, setting aside the refusal of trial court to grant urgent ex parte relief and holding that continued publication could cause irreparable harm to the reputation and privacy of the petitioner. The petitioner had approached the High Court challenging an order of the Additional Chief Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad, which merely issued notice to the respondents and deferred consideration of interim relief. The suit was filed seeking mandatory and perpetual injunction against over 30 defendants, including media houses and digital platforms, alleging that they had disseminated content portraying her in a defamatory manner across television, websites, YouTube channels, and social media. Counsel for the petitioner argued that the continued circulation of such material severely damaged her personal and professional life,

particularly given her work in films, web series, and brand endorsements. Justice Koshy observed that the right to privacy, as part of Article 21, includes protection of reputation and control over dissemination of personal information, especially in the digital space where harm is immediate and difficult to reverse. Balancing this against freedom of speech, the judge held that the latter was not absolute and was subject to reasonable restrictions, including defamation. It noted that where content relates predominantly to private life and appears prima facie defamatory, interim protection is justified. Finding that continued publication would render the pending injunction application meaningless, the judge restrained respondents from publishing or broadcasting any defamatory material against the petitioner until the trial court adjudicates the interim application scheduled for May 6. The civil revision petition

was accordingly allowed, with the High Court clarifying that the trial court shall decide the injunction application independently on its merits. Kumar Jankanti of the Telangana High Court reprimanded state authorities for failing to release long-pending payments to a civil contractor despite completion of multiple pipe line works under Mission Bhagiratha programme. The judge was hearing a writ petition filed by A.K.R.V.D. Prasad, a Class-III civil contractor, who complained that payments amounting to several lakhs remained unpaid for over two years, even though the works were duly executed. The petitioner contended that the works were completed within the stipulated time and were duly verified, checked, measured, and approved by the authorities, with completion certificates issued. However, despite bills being prepared and passed, the payments were not

released, causing financial hardship and adversely affecting his business operations. On the other hand, the state attributed the delay to administrative reasons and sought time to process the payments. Justice Anil observed that when there was no dispute regarding the execution and completion of the works and once the state accepted and benefited from the work, it is under a duty to release payments within a reasonable time. Prolonged delay, the judge held, imposes an unjust financial burden on the contractor. He referred to judgement of a division bench in similar circumstance and said, the petitioner is entitled to interest at 6 per cent per annum on the delayed payments. He said that the government cannot indefinitely withhold dues after benefiting from completed works and directed the respondent authorities to release the amounts along with applicable interest.

Food Prices May Rise By 10% As 19 Kg LPG Costs Surge



VIJAYAWADA: A steep hike of 7993 in the price of commercial LPG cylinders is set to hit the hospitality sector in Andhra Pradesh, with hoteliers indicating a likely increase of up to 10 per cent in menu prices. State-run oil marketing companies have raised commercial LPG prices three times in recent months by around 7145 on March 1,

7195 on April 1, and 7993 on May 1. In Vijayawada, the price of a 19-kg commercial cylinder has now risen to about 73,303 from around 71,970 before March. Also

Read - Non-Kapus Unhappy With Jana Sena In Allocation Of Posts Hoteliers said the surge in LPG prices has compounded rising input costs, including edible oils,

pulses, vegetables and other raw materials. Packaging costs for takeaway and delivery services have also increased. Andhra Pradesh Star Hotels Association president R.V. Swamy said the sharp increase in input costs has significantly raised the cost of food preparation. "We may have to increase menu prices by up to 10 per cent

to offset losses and sustain operations," he said. Also Read - Daily Wage Worker Dies Of Suspected Sunstroke In Konaseema Hoteliers urged both the Centre and the state government to provide tax concessions or subsidies to cushion the impact of rising costs. They said piped natural gas (PNG) has not provided adequate relief

due to price fluctuations and limited comment for relief or rationalise menus to manage costs," he said. The impact is also being felt by roadside eateries, including fast food centres, tiffin centres, shops, all of which rely on commercial LPG. The increased burden is likely to be passed on to consumers through higher food prices.

Hyderabad Police Raid Godowns for Ripening Mangoes with Chemicals

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad police along with H-FAST raided a fruit warehouse in Asif Nagar, seized seven tonnes of mangoes illegally ripened with ethylene packets. Mangoes sourced from Batasingaram market were stored in 350 trays, which were stored in a godown. A case was registered against warehouse operators Jameel and Fareed after seizing the godown. In

another raid, around 200 kg of mangoes artificially ripened with excess ethylene chemical were seized in Goshamahal. The police found the trader was using half a dozen sachets per 20 kg tray, above the FSSAI limit of five. Health experts warn such chemically ripened mangoes can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, and breathing problems.



Heatwave Plan Rolled Out in Telangana

Hyderabad: With temperatures expected to remain high till mid-June, revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Friday directed departments to step up coordinated measures to protect people from heatwave conditions. The move followed criticism over the government's delay in declaring a heatwave earlier this week. Reviewing preparedness with 20 departments at the Secretariat, the minister released the Telangana Heatwave Action Plan 2026, prepared by the disaster management department and the India Meteorological Department. He stressed uninterrupted drinking water supply over the next 45 days, directing officials to repair burnt motors within 24 hours. In Hyderabad, water is being supplied through 15,000 tankers daily. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in



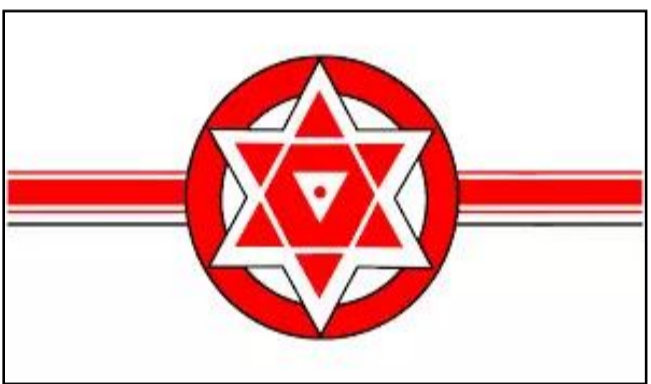
2025 Departments including panchayat raj, municipal administration, fire and health were told to work in coordination. Collectors must send reports within 15 days on disaster damage, with immediate ex gratia in case of deaths. High-risk zones identified include Nalgonda, Mancherial, Suryapet, Peddapalli, Jagtial, Khammam, Warangal, Karimnagar and

Mahbubabad. The minister ordered cooling shelters, buttermilk centres and ORS supply in hospitals. Fire safety audits and "cool wards" in hospitals were stressed. Workers in high-heat environments are to be given rotational breaks of one to two hours. Also Read - Telangana: Grieving Father Seeks Justice, Police Protection after Son's Suicide Local

bodies were asked to arrange shelters, drinking water and awareness campaigns at bus stands, markets, tourist spots and places of worship using public address systems and LED screens. Special teams from NDRF, SDRF, police and revenue departments will monitor vulnerable areas, particularly to prevent accidents involving children near water bodies.

Non-Kapus Unhappy With Jana Sena In Allocation Of Posts

Kakinada: Non-Kapus in the Jana Sena (JS) are unhappy with the party leadership as all key posts are being allocated to those from the Kapu community. Many JS leaders have been waiting for recognition and appointments to senior administrative posts, but in vain. They say two leaders are enjoying three posts each while other leaders are not being kept aside. Jana Sena's Kakinada convener Thota Sudhir is chairman of the civil supplies corporation and president of the local Durgamma Thalli temple trust board. Non-Kapu leaders alleged that he enjoyed three posts. Also Read - Food Prices May Rise By 10% As 19 Kg LPG Costs Surge The party's Kakinada district president Thummala Ramaswamy alias Babu is chairman of the district cooperative central bank and is also the Peddapuram constituency incharge. Previously, he had been appointed as chairman of Kakinada urban development authority. When the



party faced allegations on the appointments, he resigned the KUDA chairman post. Now, another leader Talatam Naga Venkata Satyanarayana (Talatam Satya) has been appointed as the chairman. This irritated non-Kapus. Also Read - Daily Wage Worker Dies Of Suspected Stroke In Konaseema Though many non-kapu leaders are silently lamenting their sidelining, some leaders are speaking out. Recently a Jana Sena leader and fishermen leader M. Gangadhar questioned the injustice to Kakinada Lok Sabha member Uday Srinivas. He said, "I and some of

my community leaders spent lakhs for the electoral victory of Jana Sena candidates, but we are being ignored in the party." "Without doing any work for the party, some leaders are taking up the posts. The Jana Sena party is doing injustice to the BC and SC leaders. I service activities too to am providing m rendering other service activities too to help the party earn a good name. But the party has not recognised my services," he stated to the MP service activities too to bitterly. Also Read - May Day Marked With Rallies Across Godavari Districts The MP could not give an answer to

the name of Pawan Kalyan to 400 poor families. I am rendering other service activities too to help the party earn a good name. But the party has not recognised my services," he stated to the MP bitterly. Also Read - May Day Marked With Rallies Across Godavari Districts The MP could not give an answer to him, it is learnt. Gangadhar said nearly 1.30 lakh BCs including 80,000 fishermen are living in Kakinada constituency. They mostly strived hard for the victory of the JS and the other alliance candidates in the last elections. candidates. "I aservice activities too to sked local leaders to arrange for me an appointment with Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan to bring the fishermen's issues to his notice. But it has not materialised so far," he said. However, some leaders in these communities are hopeful Pawan Kalyan would do justice to them in future.

Paddy Procurement For Rabi To Begin Today

Kakinada: The state government will commence procurement of paddy for the rabi season from Saturday, targeting 23 lakh metric tonnes. Civil supplies minister Nandendla Manohar, who visited Nidadavolu on Friday along with Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, said arrangements have been completed for procurement. He said 1,917 paddy procurement centres have been set up, 17,200 vehicles arranged for transportation, and 1,264 rice mills have completed bank guarantee formalities to receive paddy from farmers. Also Read - 3 Youths Killed As Bus Rans Bike Near Anakapalli The minister said the government has



taken steps to avoid issues faced during the previous rabi season and ensure smooth procurement. Rice mills have been instructed to submit self-declarations and supply adequate gunny bags to farmers. Officials will verify the

declarations and certify availability of gunny bags. He said payments will be credited directly to farmers' accounts within eight hours of uploading the paddy track sheet. He also said that steam rice will be supplied for mid-day

meals from this year. Criticising former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy over the proposed name 'MAVIGUN', he termed it inappropriate and alleged attempts to create unrest. He reiterated that Amaravati would remain

Hyderabad Police Foils Ex-BRS MLA's Son's Dubai Escape Bid at RGIA

Hyderabad: An attempt of former BRS MLA Shakeel Ahmed's son Moahammed Raheel Ameer to go abroad from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Shamshabad was foiled by the Hyderabad police, who categorically stated that he cannot leave the country when the accident case is under the investigation. With the help of officials of immigration wing at the RGIA, the police foiled Raheel's attempts to visit Dubai on Thursday. He was about to board a flight to Dubai when the

police stopped him informing that a case against him is still under investigation. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 On April 17, Raheel surrendered before the Jubilee Hills police in connection with the 2022 hit-and-run case, following court directions. The Jubilee Hills police had earlier gathered evidence of Raheel's role in the incident, where his SUV ran over a woman and killed her eight-month-old son at Jubilee Hills on March 18, 2022. After a separate accident at

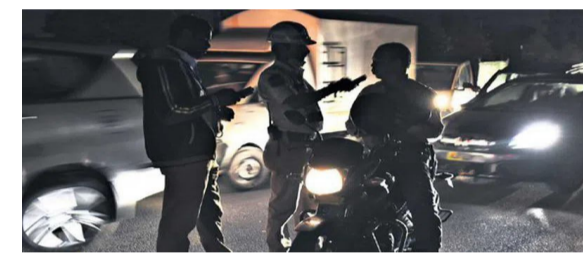


Praja Bhavan in Somajiguda, where he crashed into a barricade, Raheel was taken for a breathalyser test. In that

case, the accused reportedly attempted to evade responsibility by naming another individual. However, Punjagutta police identified Raheel as the accused using technical evidence and arrested him. During the investigation, officers found negligence by the Punjagutta police in handling the accident case. Several police officers were transferred over allegations that they had deliberately sabotaged the probe. The investigation has been prolonged as a result.

Telangana HC issues contempt notices over e-challan vehicle seizure

Hyderabad: Justice N.V. Shraavan Kumar of the Telangana High Court on Friday issued notices to senior State officials in a contempt case, after it was alleged that, despite specific court directions restraining coercive measures or seizure of vehicles during e-challan enforcement, Hyderabad traffic police forcibly seized the petitioner's vehicle. Justice N.V. Shraavan Kumar of the Telangana High Court on Friday took a serious view of an alleged breach of its earlier directions relating to e-challan enforcement,



and issued notices to senior state officials in a contempt case. The Court directed notices to the Home Secretary and the Director General of Police, Telangana, along with the Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Hyderabad, the Commissioner, and per-

sonnel of the Chikkadpally traffic police station. The matter has been posted for further hearing on June 19. The proceedings arose from a contempt plea filed by V. Raghvendra Chary, who complained that despite clear judicial directions restraining coercive

action for pending traffic challans, his vehicle was forcibly seized by traffic police in the city. Appearing for the petitioner, counsel V. Vijay Gopal submitted that the High Court had, in an earlier order passed in January, explicitly directed authorities not to resort to coercive steps such as seizure of vehicles for unpaid e-challans. Instead, the Court had mandated that enforcement agencies initiate appropriate legal proceedings by filing charge sheets before competent courts.

Telangana: Grieving Father Seeks Justice, Police Protection after Son's Suicide

Hyderabad: A grieving father of deceased Surasani Sitaram Reddy appealed to State and Central authorities for justice and sought police protection following the suicide of his son in Hussain Sagar Lake. He said his family was facing threat from his son's in-laws Speaking to ANI, Surasani Venkateshwar Reddy, father of the deceased, alleged that explicit videos involving his daughter-in-law, Renuka and another individual, Ramana Reddy, had been circulated on social media in September 2025, which deeply affected his son. "In 2018, we got him married to Renuka, from Kothapalli village in Nandyal mandal, Nandyal district," he said. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 After the marriage, they lived in Bengaluru for a year, then in Markapuram for a year, and eventually settled in Bachupally, Hyderabad. They were fine after settling down. However, in September 2025, Renuka made explicit videos with her boyfriend, Ramana Reddy, and forwarded them to him. Ramana Reddy then shared them on social media, where around 2,200 people viewed them publicly. Unable to bear this, Sitaram Reddy came to Markapuram. Renuka went to Nandyal. A month later, her elders, her father and uncle came to Markapuram to talk. After arriving, they said the girl made a mistake, please forgive her. Also Read - Hyderabad Police Foils Ex-BRS



MLA's Son's Dubai Escape Bid at RGIA "This will never happen again; we will make sure of it," he added. Reddy said that despite family-level discussions and attempts at reconciliation, tensions continued and he added that his son died after alleged harassment and mental distress linked to a marital dispute. A month later, her relatives called again and said they want to hold discussions. "When I asked my son, Sitaram Reddy, he said, 'Dad, Renuka spoke to me. The children are crying, I will adjust and live with them.'" Also Read - Man Kills Uncle over Rs.5 Lakh Loan Dispute in Narayanpet "I told him that I am 100 per cent against this. They will kill you. You cannot go back like that." In response, Sitaram Reddy said, "No, Dad. Whatever my fate is, that is what will happen. I will go." According to the father, the situation worsened in the days leading up to the incident, and on February 8, the victim allegedly posted a suicide note on social media platforms

before jumping into Hussain Sagar Lake. Also Read - Sajjanar Urges Students to Stay Alert against MBBS Seat Scammers "We thought things were running smoothly. Around Sankranti, I asked them to come to Markapuram for the festival. He said, "No, Dad. I am going to Goa. My father-in-law and others are planning to do something for those guys. I am leaving for Goa. I told him, 'No, son, they won't do anything. Just come here.' But he said his mind wasn't at peace and went to Goa." Three or four days after he returned from Goa, the girl left their 26-month-old crying baby locked in the house and left. If Sitaram Reddy hadn't been there, that child would have died too. "When he called me, I told him to file a police complaint first and then inform her father. He did, and they came over. For the next 10 to 12 days, her father, mother, and brother-in-law stayed at my son's house." Reddy said, "While they were there, on February 8th at 6 pm,

my son wrote a suicide note, posted it on Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook, and jumped into Hussain Sagar Lake and died," he added. He further said that police have so far arrested two accused persons and urged authorities to expedite the investigation and arrest the remaining individuals named in the FIR. "Following his death, we filed a complaint against 11 people. The FIR and suicide note are dated February 8, 2026. He named eight people in his suicide note. An FIR was filed against 11 people because his mother-in-law, father-in-law, and brother-in-law stayed in his house for 12 days, subjecting him to severe mental and physical torture." The authorities must speed up the investigation and arrest everyone immediately," he said. Appealing to the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, as well as the Union Home Minister, he also sought police protection for his family, alleging threats from of his daughter-in-law.

Ladakhis Took Bullets To Defend Country From External Threats, Says Home Minister Amit Shah



Srinagar: Hailing the patriotism of the people of Ladakh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said they were the first to defend the country whenever it faced threats from outside. "I am grateful for the support by Leh and Kargil. Whenever the region faced external threats, they were the first to defend the country. The army reached later," he said in Ladakh, where he has been on a two-day visit since April 30.

The home minister arrived in Leh a day ago for the inauguration of the exposition of relics of Lord Gautama Buddha at Jivetsal on Buddha Purnima. He also laid the foundation for a milk processing plant with a capacity of 10 TLPD in Kargil. "People of Ladakh were the first to receive bullets on their chests to defend the country. The entire country knows the history of Bharat Scouts from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Dwarka to Kamakhya. Every citizen of India admires and appreciates the patriotism of the people of Ladakh, their commitment to the security of the country and their commitment to remain connected with a large part of India," he said, drawing applause from the gathering. Ladakhi shepherds and local villagers were the first to detect the Pakistani intrusion during the Kargil War in May 1999. While searching for lost yaks or grazing cattle, they spotted infiltrators and promptly alerted the army. The home minister's praise for Ladakhis comes amid growing demand from Leh and Kargil groups for the resumption of talks

for statehood and the Sixth Schedule demand. The Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) and Leh Apex Body (LAB) had sought the meeting with Shah in the region, but his visit remained tied to the display of sacred Buddha relics.

Ladakhis Took Bullets To Defend Country From External Threats, Says Home Minister Amit Shah during his visit to Ladakh (PIB)

In Leh, the Home Minister met leaders from Ladakh, including climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and the Leh Apex Body Chairman Chering Dorje Lakruk, a day ago. But the meeting focused on the sacred relics and their exposition, said Dorje.

Talks between MHA and the Ladakh groups have been on hold since the last meeting on February 4. Ladakh was hived off as a separate union territory without a legislature after the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the state into two union territories. In Septemths from Jodhpur jail last month. The Home Minister said that over 4000 kilometres while bridges have seen a three-fold increase. "The development of the Union Territory has been going to Ladakh) remained closed for only 19 days this year against the preBuddha Purnima as historic and spiritual after 75 years. "When these relics came here 75 years ago, very few people were able to have their sacred viewing, experience their spiritual energy or receive the message of Lord Buddha," Shah said.

Indigenous Stealth Frigate 'Mahendragiri' Endowed With Potent Weapon System Delivered To Navy



New Delhi: Indigenous stealth frigate Mahendragiri, endowed with a potent weapon system and a cutting-edge sensor suite, has been delivered to the Indian Navy, officials said on Friday. The sixth ship of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) was delivered on April 30 at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), Mumbai. The delivery marks a "significant milestone" in achieving self-reliance in warship design and construction, the officials said. "Project 17A frigates are versatile multi-mission platforms designed to address current and emerging challenges in the maritime domain. This state-of-the-art frigate reflects a quantum leap in naval design, stealth, firepower, automation, and survivability, and stands as an admirable symbol of Aatmanirbharta in warship building," the defence ministry said in a statement. Mahendragiri -- Yard 12654 -- is the fourth ship of this class built at MDSL. Designed by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB) and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team (Mumbai), P17A frigates reflect a "generational leap" in indigenous ship design, stealth, survivability, and combat capability.

Driven by the philosophy of integrated construction, the ship was built and delivered within envisaged timelines, the officials said. P17A ships are fitted with an advanced weapon and sensor suite as compared to the P17 (Shivalik-class), they said.

"These ships are configured with Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion plants, comprising a diesel engine and a gas turbine that drive a Controllable Pitch Propeller (CPP) on each shaft, and a state-of-the-art Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS). The potent weapon and sensor suite comprises anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare systems," the statement said. Mahendragiri is the sixth P17A ship to be delivered to the Navy in the span of less than 17 months from the delivery of the first P17A frigate (Nilgiri) by MDSL on December 20, 2024. Delivery of Mahendragiri showcases the design, shipbuilding, and engineering prowess of the nation, and reflects the Navy's unrelenting focus on Aatmanirbharta in both ship design and shipbuilding, the officials said.

Rajya Sabha Member Sandeep Pathak, Who Switched Loyalties, Faces Arrest In Punjab

Chandigarh: Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak, who last week switched loyalties to the BJP along with six other Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MPs, may face arrest as two First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered against him in Punjab, reports said on Saturday. The FIRs in cases under non-bailable offences have been registered in two districts, and the police could take action at any time. Further details are awaited. The registration of FIRs comes days after seven AAP Rajya Sabha members -- Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Ashok Mittal, cricketer Harbhajan Singh, Rajinder Gupta, Swati Maliwal and Vikramjit Sahney -- announced their decision to quit the AAP and join the BJP.

Except for Swati Maliwal, six other MPs represent Punjab in the Upper House. Since seven out of 10 AAP Rajya Sabha MPs have jumped ship together with a strength of two-thirds, none of them is expected to attract disqualification under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, commonly known as the anti-defection law. Had Raghav Chadha or any other MP acted alone, he would have risked losing his Rajya Sabha seat under the anti-defection law. However, it does not apply when at least two-thirds of the members of a legislative party merge with another one.

After the defection of Rajya Sabha MPs, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday won the confidence motion in a

special one-day Assembly session, sending a clear message that attempts to destabilise the government have failed. Declaring the mandate in the 117-member House as a reflection of enduring public trust, Chief Minister Mann said that the AAP's support base remains intact and will translate into an even bigger mandate in 2027. Positioning AAP as a resilient national force unaffected by defections, the Chief Minister asserted that the party "represents people's trust that cannot be broken", while warning that institutions such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are being misused in ways that undermine the Constitution envisioned by Babasaheb Ambedkar.



During the proceedings, 88 AAP MLAs were present in the House, while two party MLAs were abroad and two were in jail. In addition, two MLAs were port and unity of the AAP government. Moving the confidence motion and addressing the Assembly, the Chief Minister said that attempts were being made to destabilise the government through misinformation, but the people of

Punjab continue to stand firmly with it. Meanwhile, CM Mann has announced that he will meet President Droupadi Murmu on May 5 to raise the issue of what he described as "illegal" and "unlawful defection" by seven Rajya Sabha MPs, including six from Punjab, while asserting that such "actions amount to a betrayal of the people's mandate". Chief Minister Mann

told the media here on April 29 that they have received confirmation from the Rashtrapati Bhawan, and on May 5, "we will meet the President of India to raise the issue of illegal and unlawful defection by seven Rajya Sabha MPs". These MPs who have disrespected the mandate of the people deserve no mercy as they are the traitors of Punjab and Punjabis, he quoted as saying.

No Dual Gas Connection: Households With Access To PNG Will No Longer Be Permitted To Retain Domestic LPG

New Delhi: Tightening oversight in domestic fuel sector, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has ordered identification of households with both LPG and PNG connections after banning dual ownership to curb misuse and better target subsidies. As per a recent gazette notification titled - the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Amendment Order, 2026 - households with access to Piped Natural Gas (PNG) will no longer be permitted to retain domestic Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connections, effectively ending dual ownership. The notification states that no person having a PNG connection and also having domestic LPG connection will retain a domestic LPG connection, or take refills of domestic LPG cylinders from any

government oil company, or through their distributors. Such persons will be required to immediately surrender their domestic LPG connection. LPG consumers are requested by the government to use digital booking platforms, avoid visiting distributors and encourages them to use alternate fuels such as PNG and electric or induction cooktops, the order stated. All citizens are requested to make necessary efforts to conserve energy in their daily use during the current situation, it stated. Supply Management Measures: According to the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, despite the ongoing geopolitical situation, the government has ensured that 100 per cent supply is being made to domestic LPG, domestic PNG and CNG (Transport). The government has



already implemented several rationalisation measures on both the supply and demand side, including enhancing refinery production, increasing the booking interval from 21 to 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas and prioritising sectors for supply. The states have been advised to facilitate new PNG connections for domestic

and commercial consumers. Coordinated Efforts with States/UTs and Institutional Mechanisms: State governments are empowered under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and LPG Control Order, 2000 to monitor supply and act against hoarding and black marketing. The government of States/UTs have to play a primary role in monitoring and regulating

supply situation of essential commodities including Petrol, Diesel and LPG. The Centre has reiterated the same via multiple letters and VCs to all States/UTs, it said. Enforcement and Monitoring Actions: Enforcement actions continue across the country to curb hoarding and black marketing of LPG. Yesterday, more than 2300 raids were conducted across the

country. PSU Oil Marketing Companies have strengthened surprise inspections and imposed penalties on 342 LPG distributorships and suspended 73 LPG distributorships till yesterday. The new prices are New Delhi (Rs 3,202); Mumbai (Rs 3,024); Kolkata (Rs 3,202); Chennai (Rs 3,237); Bengaluru (Rs 3,152); Bhubaneswar (Rs 3,238); Guwahati (Rs 3,293); Chandigarh (Rs 3,092.5); Jaipur (Rs 3,099); Lucknow (Rs 3,194); Patna waiting for the elections to concluded, wasted no time to increase the price. A whopping increase of nearly Rs 1,000 on commercial cylinders will affect crores of Indians who rely on food from small eateries for sustenance. Similarly, crores of small food businesses will have to bear the burden of this hike," he said.

CBI Raids CGHS Office; Top Official, Private Assistant Detained

Meerut: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raided the residence and office of a top administrator of the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) in Meerut on Thursday evening. According to the CBI, a team arrived at a CGHS hospital -- located near Suraj Kund in Meerut -- and its administrative offices, around 5 pm on Thursday evening. The team interrogated Natasha Verma, who is posted at the

facility as the Additional Director, for nearly 19 hours. Later, the team departed for Ghaziabad with Natasha Verma and her Private Assistant. Natasha was allegedly demanding kickbacks to facilitate a private hospital's affiliation with the CGHS. According to Additional Director General of Police, Meerut Zone, Bhanu Bhaskar, a racket involving extortion within the CGHS



office has been busted. According to officials, the CBI has also recovered some bribe money. On a tip-off, the CBI laid a trap to catch the accused. During the trap proceedings, both the accused -- the Private Assistant

Director, the agency said. According to a CBI spokesperson, the federal probe agency immediately registered a case on April 30 against both, for facilitating the transfer of a CGHS staff from the Meerut office to Meerut. Additional Director General of Police (Meerut Zone), Bhanu Bhaskar said that several aggrieved parties had approached the CBI directly with their

complaints, following which a trap was laid. Based on concrete evidence and a preliminary investigation, the CBI has taken Natasha Verma into custody. Earlier Arrests conducted a raid at the same place, taking into custody the then Additional Director Ajay Kumar and office superintendent Lavesh Solanki. Cases were subsequently registered against both persons under the Prevention

A Plane Carrying Pickleball Players Crashes In Texas Hill Country, Killing All 5 On Board



Wimberley: A small plane carrying pickleball players crashed among trees in Texas Hill Country, killing all five people aboard, authorities said Friday. The crash happened around 11 p.m. Thursday in Wimberley, a city about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of Austin, the Texas Department of Public Safety said. "The pilot and four passengers on board were pronounced deceased on scene," Sgt. Billy Ray told reporters. Names of the victims were not immediately released by authorities, though the Amarillo Pickleball Club in Amarillo, Texas, said they were members who were flying to a tournament. An unidentified woman wiped her eyes and fanned her face with her hands as she stood behind yellow police tape near the crash site Friday afternoon. A man consoled

her. The plane, a Cessna 421C, took off from Amarillo and was headed to New Braunfels National Airport, according to the flight history. Aerial photos posted online by the Austin American-Statesman showed the aircraft destroyed in a wooded area. Ray said federal authorities were leading the investigation. Stacey Rohr, who lives nearby, said she was in bed when she heard a crash and "felt everything vibrate." "It was so close I felt like it was the back of my place up in flames," said Rohr, who immediately called her landlord. The players were heading to a pickleball tournament at the Cranky Pickle in New Braunfels, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northeast of San Antonio, said Martin Robertson, head pro at the venue. He said they canceled the tournament

Friday and plan to say a prayer before they start Saturday and honor the players who died. "We're very heavy hearted, heartbroken from this," he said. "The pickleball community is very tight knit. Everybody knows everybody." Dan Dyer, president of the Amarillo Pickleball Club, said he'd played many games with four of the five people who were killed.

"I've handed them medals. They were excellent players. They were out to win some games," Dyer said. "Every weekend there are dozens of tournaments. Some people get the bug; others don't. But once they do, they'll travel for a tournament." Dyer said a second plane was traveling to the event from Amarillo at the same time. Authorities said it landed safely at the airport in

New Braunfels. "I haven't heard anything from him," the pilot of the second plane said, according to Air Traffic Control audio. A controller responded: "He started to move erratically and now his track is disappeared from the scope. So we want to make sure everything's all right with him." At least one pilot in the area confirmed the troubled plane's locator emergency device had emitted a distress signal. The controller called 911. It was mostly cloudy in the New Braunfels area shortly before the crash and there was a thunderstorm two hours later, the National Weather Service said. Wimberley, with a population of about 3,000, and New Braunfels, with a population of about 116,000, are tourist destinations in the Texas Hill Country.

US To Withdraw 5,000 Troops From Germany In Next 6-12 Months, Fulfilling Trump's Threat

Washington: The United States will withdraw about 5,000 troops from Germany in the next six to 12 months, the Pentagon said Friday, fulfilling President Donald Trump's threat as he clashes with the German leader over the U.S. war with Iran. Trump had threatened to withdraw some troops from the NATO ally earlier this week after Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the U.S. was being "humiliated" by the Iranian leadership and criticized Washington's lack of strategy in the war. Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement that the "decision follows a thorough review of the Department's force posture in Europe and is in recognition of theater requirements and conditions on the ground." Germany hosts several U.S. military facilities, including the headquarters of its European and Africa commands, Ramstein Air Base and a medical center in Landstuhl, where casualties from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were treated. U.S. nuclear missiles are also stationed in the



country. The number of troops leaving Germany would be 14% of the 36,000 American service members stationed there. News of the troop withdrawal drew swift pushback from Democrats in Congress as well as a hawkish Washington think tank. They said the move will benefit Russian President Vladimir Putin and weaken U.S. security interests. The withdrawal "suggests American commitments to our allies are dependent on the president's mood," said Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. "The president should immediately cease this reckless action before he

causes irreversible consequences for our alliances and long-term national security," Reed said. Bradley Bowman, a scholar at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the U.S. military's presence in Germany and elsewhere in Europe "not only strengthens deterrence against additional Kremlin aggression but also facilitates the projection of American military power into the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Africa." Trump ignored questions from reporters about the withdrawal on Friday as he boarded Air Force One in Ocala, Florida, following a rally to tout his economic agenda. Trump made a similar threat in his first term,

saying he would pull about 9,500 of the roughly 34,500 U.S. troops who were then stationed in Germany, but he didn't start the process and Democratic President Joe Biden formally stopped the planned withdrawal soon after taking office in 2021. The mercurial U.S. leader has mused for years about reducing the American military presence in more than a year that the U.S. troops deployed after Russia launched its all-out war on Ukraine in February 2022 would be first to leave. European security at the Royal United Services Institute, or RUSI, in London, said Europe is more concerned about issues like a U.S. redeployment of Patriot missile systems and ammunition from Germany to the Middle East. In October, the U.S. confirmed that it would reduce its troop presence on NATO 1,500-3,000 troops TO's borders with Ukraine. The move to cut 1,500-3,000 troops came on short notice and unsettled NATO ally Romania, where the military organization runs an air base.

14 IRGC Members Killed In Explosion During Ordnance Clearance In Iran's Zanzan Province: Iranian Media



Tehran: 14 members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) were killed and two others injured in an explosion while carrying out ordnance clearance operations in northwestern Iran, according to Iranian media. The state-linked Fars News Agency reported that the incident occurred in Zanzan province when unexploded ordnance detonated during a specialized clearance mission. The personnel were part of a unit assigned to remove and neutralize leftover munitions in the area, which local authorities say has posed a continuing safety threat to civilians and farmland. Fars News Agency said the region has approximately 1,200 hectares of agricultural land at risk due to the

presence of unexploded ordnance. Earlier on Thursday, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said that the Trump administration shifted from the strategy of "managing the world's energy" to "disruption", and Iran has now become the center of the "coalition against disruption." The IRGC said that the disruption project was launched by the US ongoing conflict, while to contain China, Russia and Europe. In a post on X, the IRGC said, "The Trump administration shifted from the strategy of 'managing the world's energy' to 'disruption,' and a maritime blockade began as part of the grand disruption project to contain China, Russia, and Europe; but after 20 days, this assessment is

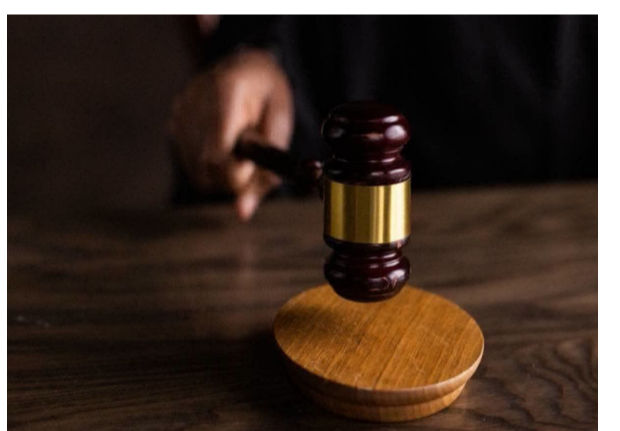
deepening in the White House that the project has failed and Tehran has become the center of the 'coalition against disruption'." Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump on Friday (local time) expressed dissatisfaction with Iran's latest proposal aimed at ending the ongoing conflict, while also casting doubt on whether a final agreement can be reached. Speaking to reporters on a White House tour, Trump said, "They want to make a deal, but I'm not satisfied with it, so we'll see what happens." He did not elaborate on the specific aspects of the proposal he found unacceptable but indicated uncertainty over Tehran's willingness to ultimately agree to a settlement. "They've made strides, but I'm not sure

if they ever get there," Trump added, while speaking on the White House's South Lawn. The US President also pointed to internal divisions within Iran's leadership, suggesting that disunity could be affecting the negotiation process. "The leadership is very disjointed. It's got two to three groups, maybe four, and it's a very disjointed leadership. And with that being said, they all want to make a deal, but they're all messed up," the US President said. His remarks come after Iran submitted its latest proposal aimed at advancing negotiations to end the ongoing West Asia conflict with the US, in response to recent amendments introduced by Washington to a draft plan aimed at ending the conflict.

Chinese National Pleads Guilty In USD 27 Million Scam

Washington: A Chinese national has pleaded guilty in a US federal court in a USD 27 million fraud and money laundering scheme targeting nearly 2,000 victims involving India-based call centres. Jiandong Chen, aka "Little Tiger," a Chinese national, is the second defendant charged in a five-defendant indictment unsealed in 2024, according to a statement by the US Attorney's Office in Southern California on Thursday. According to public documents, members of the conspiracy operated a series of technical support, bank impersonation, government impersonation and refund scams targeting elderly victims. Victims received unsolicited phone calls, emails, and pop-up ads directing them to call a phone number. Unbeknownst to the victims, those phone numbers belonged to India-based scam call centres, it said. Once a victim called the call centre, members of the conspiracy used

social engineering techniques to build trust. In many instances, the conspirators had victims download commercially available remote desktop software, which they used to access victims' computers and carry on the scams. After building trust, the conspirators induced victims to send money to members of the conspiracy in the United States—in locations throughout Southern California, Nevada and elsewhere, the statement said. The money was sent to members of the conspiracy, including Chen, most often as bulk cash via express mail packages but also as wire transfers. Certain members of the conspiracy also did in-person pickups of money directly from victims. In most instances, however, victims were duped into sending bulk cash in the mail. When that happened, members of the conspiracy would provide India-based co-conspirators a fictitious name and an address of a retail location that could accept express mail



packages. Those names and addresses were then relayed to the victims, who were instructed to express mail the bulk cash. Then, once a victim had sent the cash, Chen and his co-conspirators would use fake IDs to retrieve the packages of cash sent by the elderly victims. In his plea agreement, Chen admitted that he used fraudulent driver's licenses or IDs matching the fictitious recipient names to retrieve the victim packages containing bulk cash. Investigators identified over 2,000 elderly victims from throughout the country, including

victims in San Diego, who were defrauded and who suffered more than USD 27 million in losses over an approximately two-year period between 2021-2023. Chen and four co-defendants were charged by indictment in June 2024. In August 2024, federal agents conducted a nationwide takedown of this investigation, which led to Chen's arrest in the greater Los Angeles area. Chen faces a maximum of 40 years in prison for the conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud and an additional 20 years for money laundering.

Pakistan, China Sign An Agreement And Two MoUs To Promote Bilateral Cooperation

Islamabad: Pakistan and China on Friday signed two MoUs and a joint venture agreement covering construction machinery, animal health and medical technology. President Asif Ali Zardari attended the signing ceremony, where a documentary highlighting 75 years of Pakistan-China friendship was also screened, according to a statement by his office. In a statement, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) said that a joint venture



agreement was signed between the Sindh Livestock & Fisheries Department and China's Luoyang Modern Biology Group. It said the agreement aims to strengthen cooperation in the livestock

and fisheries sector, with a focus on improving animal health services and modern biological solutions. An MoU was signed between Al-Hassan Trade Establishment, Sany International Development, and Henan Jialong International Technology. The agreement is expected to promote the supply of construction machinery and equipment linked to CPEC projects.

Under the MoU, the three sides will also explore investment opportunities for establishing manufacturing facilities in Pakistan. Another MoU was signed in the medical technology sector between Ziauddin Hospital and Shenzhen Weibang Technology, aiming to promote the use of advanced artificial intelligence-based medical robots in clinical medicine. Zardari was on a week-long visit to China's Hunan and

India's turbulent skies

The story of Indian aviation is a gripping saga of ambition, innovation, and the harsh realities of economics and infrastructure. It is a tale not just of individual airlines' successes or failures, but also of an entire industry's struggle to balance rapid growth with sustainable profitability. The journey from a state-controlled duopoly to a vibrant, competitive market has been marked by turbulence, both literal and metaphorical, as airlines grappled with global economic shifts, regulatory changes, and the daunting task of building an aviation ecosystem from scratch.

Manish Tewari alleges "disaster" in Air India's management, calls for government takeover. Debt recovered multiple times over, claims Vijay Mallya. Indian aviation has journeyed from the euphoric days of deregulation and the rise of low-cost carriers to the current era of consolidation and strategic competition. The dream of making flying accessible to the masses, epitomised by the iconic phrase "even a person in Hawaii chappal can fly", transformed the industry but also exposed its fragility. Systemic challenges have plagued the sector, including infrastructure bottlenecks, human resource deficits, and supplier dependencies, which continue to shape its future.

When the Skies Opened The watershed moment in Indian aviation came in 1994 with the Air Corporations Act, which dismantled the state-run duopoly of Indian Airlines and Air India. This legislative change opened the skies to private players, igniting a gold rush in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A colourful array of airlines emerged, including ModiLuf, East-West, Damania, Sahara, Air Deccan, Kingfisher, SpiceJet, GoAir, and Paramount, with each vying to carve a niche in the newly liberalised market.

At the heart of this revolution was Captain GR Gopinath's Air Deccan, which pioneered the Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) model in India. Gopinath's vision was sociological as much as commercial: to democratise air travel, making it accessible to the common man. The idea that "even a person in Hawaii chappal can fly" became a powerful metaphor for the new India, where air travel was no longer the preserve of the elite. Fares on routes like Bangalore to Hubli dropped below train ticket prices, unleashing a wave of first-time flyers, middle-class families, students, and small businessmen, who flooded airport terminals. This era was characterised by irrational exuberance. Airlines expanded rapidly, fueled by rising incomes, cheap global oil prices, and relentless optimism. The model was simple: fill seats at any cost. Fares were often priced below operational costs, and the

race for market share profits from aircraft model wasn't just about trumped profitability. The sector boomed, but the foundations were fragile. The aviation ecosystem, including airports, air traffic control, pilot training, and maintenance, struggled to keep pace with the explosive growth. Skilled personnel, from pilots to air traffic controllers, were in critically short supply. Infrastructure, especially at congested metros like Mumbai, groaned under the pressure. The Great Shakeout The initial boom was followed by a brutal reckoning. One by one, the flaws in the model proved fatal. Kingfisher Airlines, the poster child of glamour and ambition, collapsed spectacularly under a mountain of debt, its founder Vijay Mallya's dreams extinguished. Air Deccan was sold to Kingfisher and eventually faded away. Air India, the national carrier, bled billions, surviving only through government bailouts. SpiceJet, GoAir, and others lurched from crisis to crisis, saved repeatedly by promoters or The industry entered a cycle of losses, debt, and desperate mergers. The dream of making flying accessible had come at a cost — one that many airlines couldn't survive. The sector's fragility was exposed by its inability to sustain profitability amid cutthroat competition and rising costs. Amid the carnage, one airline seemed to have cracked the code: IndiGo. Founded in 2006, IndiGo eschewed the flamboyance of its peers and focused on disciplined costs and operational rigour. Its model wasn't just about low fares; it was about low, disciplined costs and operational efficiency. IndiGo's genius lay in the details: Single aircraft type (Airbus A320) for training, maintenance, and crew efficiency. Sale-and-lease-back financing, which freed up capital and provided a steady stream of

trading. Fanaticism about on-time performance and aircraft utilisation, turning planes around in 25 minutes. No-frills, standardised service that eliminated complexity and kept costs down. While competitors chased market share with aggressive discounting, IndiGo chased cost leadership with zeal. It wasn't selling a luxury experience or even a particularly warm one; it was selling a reliable, affordable utility. As others floundered, IndiGo's consistency won passenger trust and market dominance, climbing to an unprecedented 60% domestic share. Yet even IndiGo's success couldn't mask the sector's persistent, systemic gaps: Airport congestion at major hubs like Delhi and Mumbai imposed hard ceilings on efficiency. Chronic pilot shortages led to bloated and volatile HR costs, sometimes consuming 25-35% of a flight's revenue. Supplier dependency on global manufacturers (Airbus and Boeing) and engine makers created single points of failure. Regulatory instability and frequent policy changes made long-term planning difficult. The New Reality: A Hardening Duopoly The Indian aviation landscape is now shifting fundamentally. The rise of the Tata Group airlines, followed by the industry's entry into a cycle of losses, debt, and desperate mergers. The dream of making flying accessible had come at a cost — one that many airlines couldn't survive. The sector's fragility was exposed by its inability to sustain profitability amid cutthroat competition and rising costs. Amid the carnage, one airline seemed to have cracked the code: IndiGo. Founded in 2006, IndiGo eschewed the flamboyance of its peers and focused on disciplined costs and operational rigour. Its

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When the job guarantee disappears — how VB-GRAMG weakens women's work rights

For many rural women, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is more than just a government scheme. It is often the only reliable source of income they can access locally, predictably, and without having to negotiate with contractors, landlords, or male intermediaries. In our field engagements, women repeatedly described MGNREGA as their sole means of survival, given their limited social and economic privilege, weak bargaining power in labour markets, and constrained agency within families and communities. Also Read: Opinion: Shattered lives—the human cost of India's Removal of Gandhi's name from employment guarantee scheme an unpardonable crime, says KTR. It is against this lived reality that the Union government's proposal to replace MGNREGA with a new law, the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) or VB-GRAMG, must be examined. While official communication highlights an increase in guaranteed workdays from 100 to 125, media reports reveal that this numerical expansion is accompanied by a deeper restructuring of funding, governance, and entitlement. Together, these changes alter the very character of the programme. What is being presented as reform increasingly resembles a shift from a rights-based employment guarantee to a centrally managed village programme.

MGNREGA and Women: A structural relationship Women have consistently formed the backbone of MGNREGA. They account for nearly 60% of total person-days generated nationally, with States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu recording women's participation levels as high as 85% to 90%. This was not incidental. MGNREGA worked for women precisely because it recognised structural constraints such as limited mobility, unpaid care responsibilities, caste-based exclusion, and weak negotiating power in informal labour markets. By guaranteeing wage employment close to home and on demand, MGNREGA functioned as both a social protection measure and a labour market correction. For Dalit and Adivasi women in particular, it offered rare recognition of their labour as paid work rather than invisible service. Crucially, this recognition was backed by law. If work was demanded and not provided, workers were entitled to an unemployment allowance. The guarantee was enforceable, not discretionary. Policy Expansion on Paper, Erosion in Practice VB-GRAMG replaces MGNREGA's demand-driven architecture with pre-fixed, normative allocations determined annually by the Centre, alongside expenditure ceilings. Once these allocations are exhausted, the guarantee effectively ends. This shift has far-reaching gendered consequences. Under MGNREGA, demand itself created a legal obligation on the State. Under VB-GRAMG, employment becomes conditional on budgets, ceilings, and administrative discretion. When funds run out, rights run out. For women workers who already face barriers in accessing local power structures, this dilution of justiciability disproportionately weakens their ability to claim work. One Policy, Uneven Consequences Another significant departure lies in work availability. The proposed framework mandates a suspension of public works for up to 60 days during peak agricultural seasons. This is justified as a measure to prevent labour shortages in farming. However, it rests on the assumption that rural workers are uniformly cultivators who can absorb income shocks during these periods. For most women workers, this assumption does not hold. The majority do not own land. Agricultural seasons do not reduce their workload; they intensify unpaid care, subsistence, and household labour. MGNREGA's year-round availability mattered precisely because it allowed women to smooth incomes when other work was unavailable or exploitative. A uniform seasonal pause does not operate neutrally. It redistributes risk onto women whose labour remains undervalued or entirely unrecognised during so-called peak seasons. Fiscal Federalism and Shrinking of Guarantees The fiscal restructuring is equally significant. The shift from 100% central funding to a 60:40 Centre-State cost-sharing model for most States under VB-GRAMG is framed as cooperative federalism. In practice, it transfers fiscal stress downward to State governments. States with constrained finances may be compelled to ration work, with risk being reduced to procedural exercises, closer to financial audits than democratic accountability. Over the past year, we have been studying MGNREGA's impact on the ground across Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu through field engagements, worker interactions, and local-level observations. These regions, often cited as relatively better-performing States in terms of MGNREGA implementation and women's participation, offer critical insight into what is at stake when the nature of the programme changes, delay wage payments, or quietly scale back implementation. Employment guarantees that primarily benefit women, especially poor, Dalit, and Adivasi women, are often the first to be compromised under such pressures.



What was once a nationally backed right becomes contingent on State budgets and shifting political priorities. Centralised Dashboards, Weakened Local Voice VB-GRAMG also marks a governance shift. While MGNREGA entrusted Gram Sabhas and Panchayats with identifying works based on local needs, VB-GRAMG institutionalises centralised digital stacks, GIS mapping, dashboards, and automated audits. Local priorities are increasingly filtered through national templates. For women workers, this transition is not merely technical. Digital exclusion, biometric failures, and weak grievance redress mechanisms have already been documented under existing welfare architectures. Making such systems statutory risks exclusion without appeal, reducing work rural workers are uniformly cultivators who can absorb income shocks during these periods. For most women workers, this assumption does not hold. The majority do not own land. Agricultural seasons do not reduce their workload; they intensify unpaid care, subsistence, and household labour. MGNREGA's year-round availability mattered precisely because it allowed women to smooth incomes when other work was unavailable or exploitative. A uniform seasonal pause does not operate neutrally. It redistributes risk onto women whose labour remains undervalued or entirely unrecognised during so-called peak seasons. Fiscal Federalism and Shrinking of Guarantees The fiscal restructuring is equally significant. The shift from 100% central funding to a 60:40 Centre-State cost-sharing model for most States under VB-GRAMG is framed as cooperative federalism. In practice, it transfers fiscal stress downward to State governments. States with constrained finances may be compelled to ration work, with risk being reduced to procedural exercises, closer to financial audits than democratic accountability. Over the past year, we have been studying MGNREGA's impact on the ground across Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu through field engagements, worker interactions, and local-level observations. These regions, often cited as relatively better-performing States in terms of MGNREGA implementation and women's participation, offer critical insight into what is at stake when the nature of the programme changes, delay wage payments, or quietly scale back implementation. Employment guarantees that primarily benefit women, especially poor, Dalit, and Adivasi women, are often the first to be compromised under such pressures.

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India beat Chinese Taipei to enter Thomas Cup 2026 semifinals

Former champions India outplayed higher-ranked Chinese Taipei to storm into the semifinals and also assure themselves of a medal in the Thomas & Uber Cup 2026 in Horsens, Denmark, on Friday. The 2022 champions defeated a strong Taipei outfit 3-0 in the men's quarterfinals and will now face the winner of the match between Japan and France for a spot in the final.

World No. 6 Lakshya Sen gave India a winning start as he saved two match points in the second game to beat Chou Tien Chen 18-21, 22-20, 21-17 in one hour and 28 minutes. The opening match between Sen and Chou, who had a



4-4 head-to-head record before this clash, was a topsy-turvy affair as both players overcame sizeable deficits in the first two games to take the match into a decider. While Chou fought back from 10-15 in the first game, Sen trailed 14-17 in the second before saving two match points. Sen, the two-time All England finalist, then stayed ahead in the third game with strong attacking play to hand India the first point. Former Asian champions Saikat Mukherjee and Wang Chi-Lin. Though they lost the closely-fought second game, Satwik and Chirag raised their level in the decider to register

points to take the opening game against Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin. Their third straight win over the Taipei pai. This meant Asian Championships silver medalist Ayush Shetty had a chance to wrap up the quarterfinal for India, and the 20-year-old deliv-

ered the final blow. Shetty, who had remained unbeaten throughout the group stage, outmuscled reigning All England champion Lin Chun-Yi 21-16, 21-17 in 48 minutes to kick off

celebrations in the Indian camp. Shetty had overturned a 10-12 deficit in the opening game by winning seven straight points and never looked back thereafter. He always looked in control in the second game, underlining his development as a top-class shuttler over the last few months. The result: Men: India bt Chinese Taipei 3-0 (Lakshya Sen bt Chou Tien Chen 18-21, 22-20, 21-17; Satwiksairaj Rankirengland champion Linddy/Chirag Shetty bt Chiu Hsiang Chieh/Wang Chi-Lin 23-21, 19-21, 21-12; Ayush Shetty bt Lin Chun-Yi 21-16, 21-17).

Maruti Suzuki adds 502 service touchpoints in FY26, expands network



New Delhi: India's largest automobile firm, Maruti Suzuki, on Friday said that it added 502 new service touchpoints in the financial year ended March 2026, in the highest single-year network expansion in the automaker's history, bringing its total after-sales service footprint to 5,926 touchpoints spread across 3,000 cities and towns nationwide. The newly added locations span a range of formats, including ARENA and NEXA workshops, Maruti Suzuki Sales and Service Points (MSSPs), and Service-on-Wheels, reflecting the company's push to serve customers across metros, small towns, and remote up-country markets alike. "Whether customers want to visit a workshop, opt for doorstep service, get their vehicle serviced at locations they frequently visit or require service support during a road trip, a Maruti Suzuki service touchpoint is always within reach," Maruti Suzuki India MD & CEO, Hisashi Takeuchi, said. Takeuchi added that the company intends to expand the network to approximately 8,000 touchpoints by FY2030-31. The scale of the current expansion stands in sharp contrast to the company's earlier pace of growth. The company inaugurated its first service workshop in 1983 and took roughly 14 years to reach 1,000 touchpoints by 1997. Moreover, the auto firm has recorded 5 per cent year-on-year growth in its March retail sales, while full-year FY26 volumes climbed about 3 per cent over the previous fiscal. During the month, it sold a total of 2,25,251 units — up from 1,92,984 units in the same month the previous year. Its domestic passenger vehicle sales stood at 1,69,428 units, while exports surged to 47,040 units, and sales to other OEMs reached 8,783 units. Shares of Maruti Suzuki on Thursday ended at Rs 12,632, an increase of 1 per cent, on the BSE.

Gianni Infantino Affirms At The FIFA Congress That Iran Will Participate In The World Cup

FIFA President Gianni Infantino opened his address at Thursday's FIFA Congress by affirming that Iran will participate in the World Cup and that the team will play in the United States despite the conflict between the two nations. "And the reason for that is very simple, dear friends, is because we have to unite. We have to bring people together. It is my responsibility. It is our responsibility," Infantino said. "Football unites the world. FIFA unites the world. You unite the world. We unite the world." In an indication of how fraught the situation is with Iran's participation in the World Cup, representatives from the Iranian soccer federation were denied entry into Canada this week. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand said it was her "understanding" that the Iranian officials were turned away, following a report by Tasnim, an Iranian news agency associ-

ated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The report said Iranian soccer federation president Mehdi Taj and two other officials were denied entry at Toronto's airport. Earlier in the week at the Asian soccer federation's congress in Vancouver, Iran's participation in the World Cup or whether the team's matches should be moved out of the United States was not addressed. At the roll call for the FIFA Congress where all nations were named, Iran was announced as absent. Outside the event at the Vancouver Convention Center there was a small group of protestors holding Iranian flags.

Infantino has not wavered on Iran's participation in the World Cup or in its matches in the United States. At one point, Iran asked to move its games to Mexico, but that request was rejected. The World Cup starts



on June 11 and the final is scheduled for July 19 with games in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Canada prepares to welcome the world. In contrast to concerns about an immigration crackdown in the United States ahead of the World Cup, Canadian officials speaking at the FIFA Congress stressed the nation's diversity. "Canada has always been more than just a country on a map. It is a meeting place of cultures, languages, ideas and

dreams. People from every corner of the world have come here with their stories, their traditions, their talents and their hopes together. These stories don't disappear. They become part of who we are," said Peter Augruso, the president of the Canadian Soccer Association. Concerns about ticket price In his address to the congress, Infantino briefly addressed complaints about the costs of tickets to World Cup matches, but his comments were directed at the heads of the member

associations and not "We sold 100% of the inventory that we put on the market, which is more or less 90% of the global inventory so far. And of course, we are always putting tickets on the market," Infantino said. "There are expensive tickets, yes, and there are also affordable tickets. And what is important is that all the revenues that we generate from the world go back to you, go back to the entire world and finance football in all of your countries."

Cost concerns

Earlier this week, FIFA announced it would pay out an additional \$100 million to the nations playing in the World Cup to help cover higher-than-expected costs. The FIFA Council agreed Tuesday to increase the basic payments to each federation by \$2 million to a minimum of \$12.5 million. The governing body is expecting revenue of at least \$11 billion for the tournament. Member associations had appealed to soccer's governing body to raise prize money because of cost concerns. FIFA announced in December that the winner of this year's World Cup will receive \$50 million from a \$655 million prize pool. Argentina earned \$42 million for winning the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, an increase from the \$38 million awarded to France for winning the 2018 tournament in Russia. But it's less than half of what Chelsea

RBI grants approval to Emirates NBD Bank to acquire up to 74pc stake in RBL Bank



New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accorded approval to Dubai-based Emirates NBD Bank to acquire up to a 74 per cent stake in RBL Bank, paving the way for the bank to become a foreign lender. The approval from RBI came on April 1 with one year validity, RBL Bank said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. The approval follows Emirates NBD Bank, the second largest in UAE, expressing its interest in October 2025 to acquire a majority 60 per cent stake in RBL Bank for Rs 26,853 crore. As per the approval letter, the Emirates NBD (ENBD) would acquire and maintain a shareholding of at least 51 per cent of the paid-up share capital of the RBL Bank and the bank would be classified as a foreign bank in subsidiary mode, with the Investor as its parent foreign bank. "The provisions applicable to foreign banks operating in wholly owned subsidiary mode, as set out in Chapter IV of the Reserve Bank of India (Commercial Banks - Governance) Directions, 2025 dated November 28, 2025, shall be applicable to the bank, except the requirement to have at least half of the directors attending board meetings to be independent directors shall not apply," it said. The bank has been advised to suitably amend its Articles of Association and obtain approval of the RBI in this regard, and the bank will take the necessary steps accordingly, in accordance with section 12(2) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, it said. The ENBD is exempted from the requirement of single mode of presence until the Indian branches of the investor are amalgamated with the Bank, or within one year, whichever is earlier, it said. It further said that the RBI approval is subject to receipt of necessary approval from Government of India for investment beyond 49 per cent in the bank under the approval route and compliance with the relevant provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, RBI (Commercial Banks- Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights) Directions, 2025, dated November 28, 2025, provisions of the FEMA 1999, regulations issued by Securities and Exchange Board of India, and any other statutes, regulations and guidelines, as applicable. The proposed transaction remains subject to receipt of certain other regulatory approvals and customary conditions precedent as mentioned in the Investment Agreement dated October 18, 2025 entered into between the Investor and the bank, it added. NBD Bank's proposal to acquire a majority stake in private sector lender RBL Bank.

Ganguly Backs Vaibhav Suryavanshi For India Call-Up In Ireland Series

Former India skipper Sourav Ganguly has thrown his weight behind teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi for inclusion in the Indian squad for the upcoming T20 series against Ireland, citing his fearless approach and exceptional power-hitting ability. The 15-year-old left-hander, who has been opening for Rajasthan Royals in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), has emerged as one of the standout performers this season. Known for his aggressive stroke-play, Suryavanshi has impressed against top-quality bowling attacks, earning praise from cricketing experts. Even Australia's great

Allan Border, who recently watched an Eden Gardens, described the youngster as a "special talent", further highlighting the growing buzz around the teenager in international cricket circles. With India scheduled to play two T20 matches in Ireland on June 26 and 28, following the IPL, calls have intensified for Suryavanshi's immediate inclusion in the national team. Speaking at an event at the Kolkata Press Club, Ganguly said, "Vaibhav possesses a special talent; his batting is truly a sight to behold. He could certainly be included in the squad for the Ireland series. I feel that Vaibhav is ready for international



cricket. Remember, it took 24 years to produce a Sachin." It remains to be seen whether the national selection committee, headed by Ajit

Agarkar, will consider the youngster for the tour. "Much like Vaibhav, Punjab Shreyas Iyer is also currently a subject of intense discussion.

Shreyas has been in dream form during the ongoing IPL; alongside leading his team with great distinction, he has also been consistently pil-

ing up runs with the bat. I believe that Shreyas, too, should be recalled to the Indian T20 squad," he said. On India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah's dip in form, Ganguly said there was no cause for concern. "Bumrah is human. A rough patch can happen, but his ability is unquestionable. On his day, he is the best," the former left-handed batter said. Ganguly also spoke about Kolkata Knight Riders' fluctuating campaign this season, stating that the team has overcome similar challenges in the past and can still qualify for the playoffs if they win their remaining matches.

Shah Rukh Khan And Deepika Padukone's Chemistry Has Fans Gushing - Watch

Leaked pictures from the sets of King in Cape Town, South Africa, have taken social media by storm. The images show Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone walking hand in hand during what appears to be a song sequence. The calm, scenic backdrop and their coordinated looks have made fans compare the visuals to a "Renaissance painting." The photos quickly spread across platforms, with fans praising the duo's effortless chemistry. Many commented that even in candid shots, the pair look like they are part of a carefully composed frame. Wardrobe and Styling Grab Attention

Both actors impressed fans with their styling. Deepika was seen in a flowing floral gown. The loose silhouettes subtly concealed her baby bump while adding elegance to her look. Shah Rukh Khan, on the other hand, sported a relaxed yet stylish vibe. He appeared in an unbuttoned striped shirt with a salt-and-pepper look. His rugged appearance has already sparked conversations among fans, many calling it one of his best recent looks. Deepika's Pregnancy and Work Commitment What stands out even



more is Deepika Padukone's dedication to work during her pregnancy. The actor recently announced that she is expecting her second child with Ranveer Singh. Despite this, she has continued shooting for King and reportedly for another project as well. DEEPIKA X SRK THEY LOOK SO GOOD WTH ?????? pic.twitter.com/bwe6pS w8TM— newdeep???

(@deepekachu) April 30, 2026 Sources suggest that all necessary precautions are being taken on set to ensure her safety. Fans have admired her commitment, received appreciation for looking fit. About King Directed by Siddharth Anand, King is shaping up to be a major action entertainer. The film features a strong cast, including Suhana Khan,

Abhishek Bachchan, Arshad Warsi, and Jaideep Ahlawat. The movie is especially significant as it marks Suhana Khan's big-screen debut alongside her father. With a large-scale shoot planned across locations, including South Africa, the film promises never-seen-before action sequences. King is scheduled for a theatrical release on December

OTT Releases This Weekend: Mrithyunjay, Maamla Legal Hai Season 2, Bloodhounds Season 2 & More

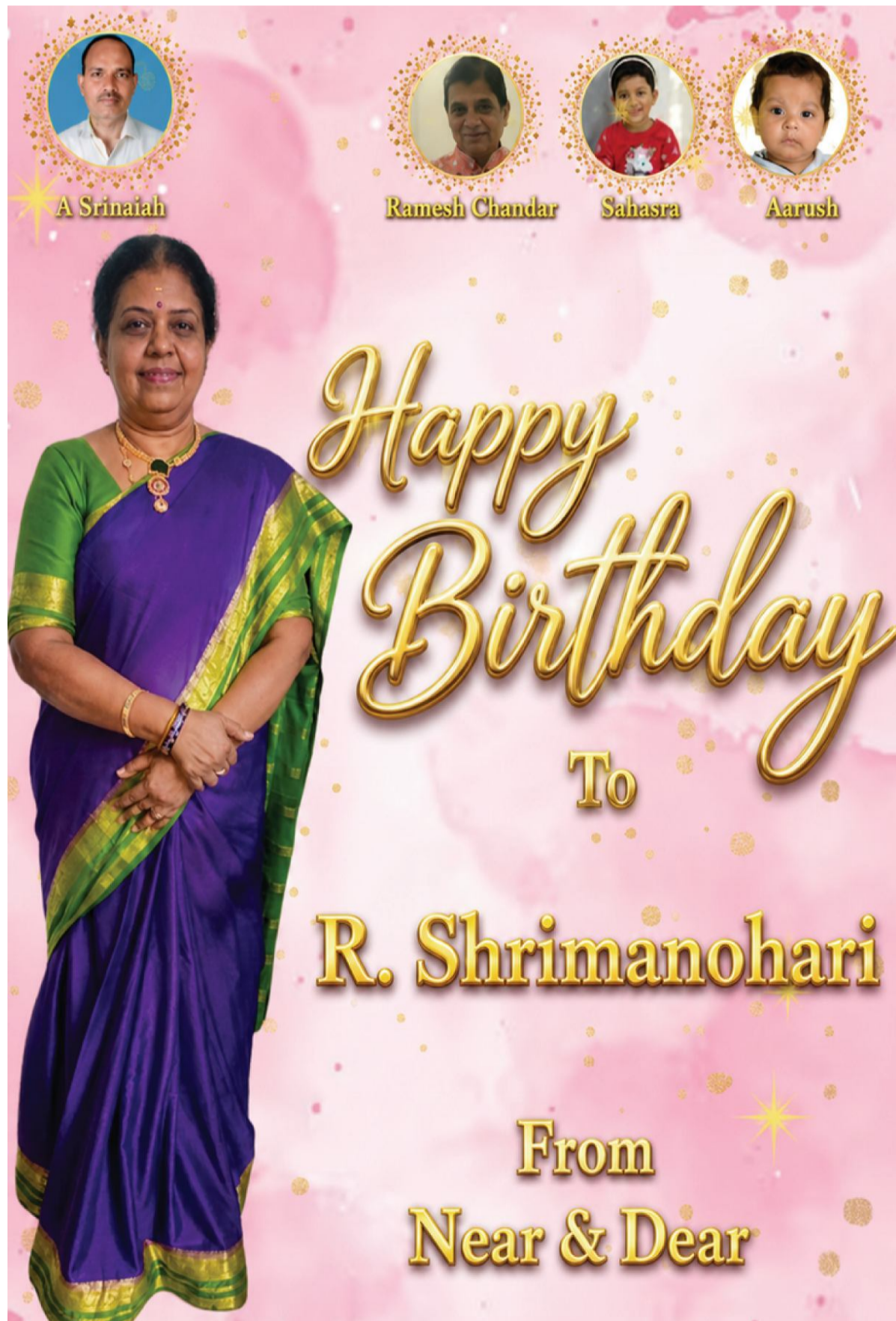


Malayalam superstars Mohanlal and Mammootty's film Patriot has taken a powerful start at the box office. Released in theatres on Friday, May 1, the action thriller film has impressed both viewers and critics, and the same is also being reflected in the movie's Day 1 box office numbers. Patriot Box Office Collection Day 1 (India/Worldwide) According to data shared by industry tracker Sacnilk, Patriot earned Rs 29.37 crore worldwide on its first day. In India, the film collected Rs 9.80 crore net across 2,636 shows. Its gross collection in the domestic market stands at Rs 11.37 crore. Overseas markets contributed significantly, with the film earning close to Rs 18 crore. These numbers clearly show the massive anticipation surrounding the

film and the global appeal of its lead stars. Occupancy Rates The film also recorded strong occupancy across shows throughout the day. Sacnilk's report suggests that Patriot maintained an overall occupancy of over 70 per cent across morning, afternoon, evening, and night screenings. Kerala led the way in terms of audience turnout. Cities like Kochi and Kozhikode reported the highest occupancy, followed by Thrissur, Kottayam, and Kollam. Outside Kerala, the film performed well too. Mumbai saw an occupancy of around 78 per cent, while Bengaluru recorded about 58 per cent. Mohanlal and Mammootty's Big Reunion One of the biggest highlights of Patriot is the reunion of Mohanlal and Mammootty after nearly 18 years. The last

time the two legends shared screen space in a full-length role was in the 2008 film Twenty:20. Although Mohanlal made a brief appearance in the 2013 film Kadal Kadannu Orators and secure the nation. Apart from the two superstars, the film also features a strong supporting cast including Fahadh Faasil, Kunchacko Boban, Nayanthara, and Revathy. The film is directed by Mahesh Narayanan, who is known for critically acclaimed films like Take Off, C U Soon, and Malik. With Patriot, he brings a gripping spy-thriller story that blends action, politics, and emotional drama. Positive Word-of-Mouth Boosting Growth Early reviews for Patriot have been largely positive. Audiences have praised the performances, especially the on-screen chemistry between Mohanlal and Mammootty. With strong word-of-mouth, Patriot is expected to maintain its momentum over the weekend.

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A Srinaiah

Ramesh Chandar

Sahasra

Aarush

Happy Birthday

To

R. Shrimanohari

From Near & Dear

Raja Shivaji X Review And Day 1 Prediction:

Raja Shivaji, directed by and starring Riteish Deshmukh, has finally hit theatres with massive expectations. The historical epic, based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, has opened to a mix of glowing praise and sharp criticism. While many are calling it a landmark film for Marathi cinema, others feel it falls short in execution despite its scale. Film critic Taran Adarsh described the movie as "power-packed" and a "magnificent tribute," praising its emotional depth and cinematic grandeur. He highlighted Riteish Deshmukh's direction as confident and immersive, and called his performance career-best. The music by Ajay-Atul and the cinematography were also widely appreciated for elevating the film's emotional and visual impact. One of the strongest aspects of the film is its ensemble cast. Riteish's portrayal of Shivaji Maharaj has been widely praised for balancing intelligence, strength,



and emotional depth. Sanjay Dutt as Aizal Khan has been described as terrifying and impactful, while Abhishek Bachchan and Vidya Balan add weight and intensity to the narrative. enelia Deshmukh, Bhagyashree, Jitendra Joshi, and others have also received positive feedback for their performances. The surprise cameo by Salman Khan as Jeeva Mahale has become one of the biggest talking points, with audiences cheering

loudly in theatres and social media buzzing with reactions. Scale, Music, and Visuals Impress The film's technical aspects are being celebrated across reviews. Cinematographer Santosh Sivan captures the Sahyadri landscape beautifully, giving the film a rich, almost painting-like quality. The action sequences, particularly the Pratapgad encounter, are being praised for their choreography and realism.

With a reported budget of around Rs 100 crore, the film clearly aims for a grand, international look. Despite the praise, not all reactions are positive. Some viewers have called the film "far from reality," pointing out weak dialogues and uneven storytelling. There are also complaints about miscasting and underwhelming VFX in certain scenes. A section of the Hindi-speaking audience seems less impressed compared to Marathi viewers, suggesting that the film may perform better regionally than nationwide. A few reactions even rated the film as low as 1.5 out of 5, calling it disappointing despite strong music.