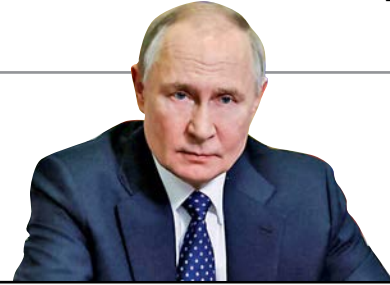


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 1 APRIL 2025



WEATHER

Max: 37.4°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/Min temp. 36/23°C

ASTROGUIDE

Viswastu: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Shukla Chavithi till 2.34 am (Wednesday)
Star: Bharani till 11.08 am
Varjyam: 10 pm to 11.26 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.40 am to 9.29 am; 11.08 pm to 11.55 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Shawwal 2, 1446 H
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.32 am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.41 pm
Maghrib: 6.30 pm
Isha: 7.09 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.10 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM
MOONRISE 8.11 AM
MOONSET 9.42 PM

COUNTER POINT



Our voters are requesting a public holiday on April 1st to celebrate 'Fools' Day!'

BRIEF

Toll charges for ORR increase

Hyderabad: People travelling on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway got a relief with the Highways Authority of India reducing toll rates, the Outer Ring Road (ORR) users will have to shell out more toll from April 1. The hike was announced as part of annual revision of the user fee rates. Car users will have to pay ₹1 extra for every 10-km on ORR compared to previous year. Heavy vehicles must pay ₹5.6 per 10 km.

Warangal Maoist killed in Chh'garh

Warangal: Security forces killed a top female Maoist leader, Renuka alias Banu, in a fierce encounter in the dense forests along the Dantewada-Bijapur border in Chhattisgarh on Monday. Renuka had been active in the Maoist movement for nearly 35 years, and a reward of ₹25 lakh had been placed on her head. The operation was spearheaded by a team of the DRG following intelligence reports indicating a Maoist presence near Nelgoda, Akeel, and Belnar.

Places of Worship Act plea in SC today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is set to hear on Tuesday a petition contesting the constitutionality of a key provision within the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 - a law that mandates the religious character of a place of worship remain as it was on August 15, 1947. A bench led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar will examine the plea filed by law student Nitin Upadhyay. The plea specifically challenges Section 4(2) of the 1991 Act.

India's external debt at \$718 bn

New Delhi: India's external debt increased by 10.7 per cent to USD 717.9 billion at the end of December 2024 from USD 648.7 billion in December 2023, as per the data released by the finance ministry. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, there is a 0.7 per cent increase in external debt.

WORLD | 10

Russia trying for peace in Ukraine

SPORTS | 12

Mumbai beat Kolkata in IPL game

TABLOID

Dark shines

Rijiju appeals to Oppn to participate in debate Centre likely to table Waqf Bill tomorrow

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

With just four days remaining in the Parliament's Budget Session, speculation is growing that the government may introduce the controversial Waqf Amendment Bill on Wednesday.

Union minister of minority and parliamentary affairs Kiren Rijiju on Monday confirmed that the Bill is "ready," and urged Opposition members to engage in debate on the floor of the House.

Rejecting concerns about the legislation's constitutional validity, Rijiju accused the Opposition of



Kiren Rijiju

misleading Muslims by claiming that mosques, burial grounds and lands would be seized once the Bill is passed.

Citing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) as an example, Rijiju noted no Muslim lost citizenship

following the law's introduction.

The minister stated he would announce the Bill's introduction date in the Lok Sabha after discussions with the Business Advisory Committee. "We have to discuss it with the BAC and the Lok Sabha Speaker to determine an appropriate slot," he said, noting that an official announcement will only be made in Parliament. Rijiju appealed to Opposition parties to fully examine the legislation and participate in a thorough debate.

Page 9: Rijiju: JPC received around 97L suggestions

Prayer time



Muslims offer namaz on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr at Mir Alam Idgah, Bahadurpura in Hyderabad on Monday. — P. SURENDRA

Def Min supports DRDO's projects

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Amid ongoing concerns about delays and cost overruns in crucial defence projects, the ministry of defence has defended the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), citing the inherent complexities and uncertainties in research and development.

"Given the complexities and uncertainties involved in developing state-of-the-art defence technologies, accurately estimating the exact time and cost for completion of projects is a continuous process," the ministry informed Parliament last week. The ministry's clarification follows a December 2022 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report highlighting significant delays and cost escalations in high-priority

military projects handled by DRDO. The CAG had noted that several projects were prematurely declared successful despite not achieving all their intended objectives.

Responding to these findings, the ministry emphasised that DRDO identifies research areas based on strategic documents such as the Long-Term Technology Perspective Plan (LTPP), Long-Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP), DRDO Five-Year Plan, vision documents, and technology roadmaps.

Further, the ministry explained that DRDO focuses on designing and developing critical, advanced and complex systems typically avoided by private industry due to associated high risks and costs. The CAG report pointed out significant delays in 119 of the 178 mission mode projects reviewed.

India steps up relief ops in Myanmar

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

India intensified its humanitarian efforts in Myanmar on Monday, stepping up relief and rescue operations under "Operation Brahma." Indian rescue teams, including personnel from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), have been deployed to assist thousands of Buddhist monks trapped or affected by the disaster.

NDRF teams began rescue operations at the 'U Hla Thein' monastery, where approximately 170 monks remain stranded. Relief supplies are also being provided to around 2,000 Buddhist monks who, although safe, lack basic amenities. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised India's role as a first responder in the region.

Vanguard picks Hyd to set up 1st GCC in India

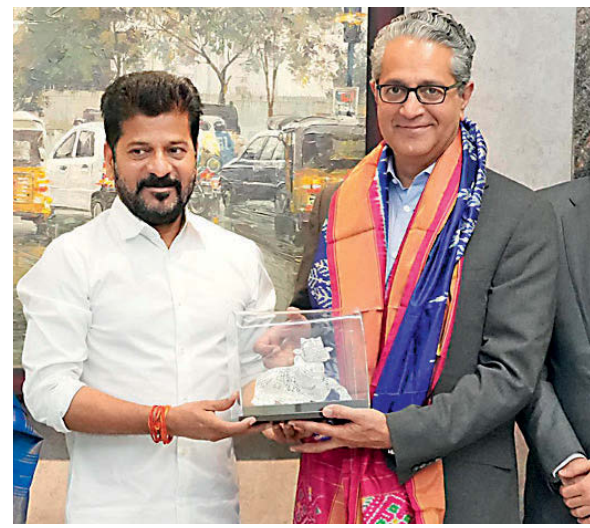
US investment firm to hire 2,300 employees for city office

MOULI MAREEDU | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Vanguard, one of the world's most respected investment management companies, on Monday announced its decision to establish its first Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad, joining a long list of global business conglomerates which set up their offices in the city.

The announcement was made after the company's representatives had a fruitful discussion with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. It strengthens Hyderabad's position as the hub of GCCs with several multinational companies such as Amgen, Elly Lilly, Mariot, McDonalds announcing their entry into Hyderabad.

Welcoming Vanguard to Hyderabad, Revanth Reddy said he was delighted to welcome Vanguard to join the irresistible and unstoppable Hyderabad Rising vision. As part of Telangana Rising, they are shaping Hyderabad into a



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy presents a memento to Vanguard chief executive officer Salim Ramji in Hyderabad, on Monday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

GCC hub for the world across domains and Vanguard's endorsement would further strengthen their global positioning.

Vanguard, which operates under a unique, investor-owned structure,

manages global assets worth \$10 trillion and serves more than 50 million investors, will formally open its Hyderabad office later this year, and will employ 2,300 members over the next four years.

The senior delegation from the company, led by its CEO Salim Ramji, and CIO and MD of IT division, Nitin Tandon, chief HR officer John Couture, and principal, head of GCC Venkatesh Natarajan, met the stat's delegation led by the Chief Minister.

Vanguard said it would look to hire engineers with a special focus on AI, data and analytics, and mobile engineering at its Hyderabad facility.

"We are excited to be adding talent who will focus on AI, mobile, and cloud-based technologies that drive our business outcomes and deliver a world-class experience for our clients. Hyderabad was a great obvious choice for us because of its diverse talent pool, quality of living, an ecosystem of tech expertise and innovation mindset and the friendly policies of the Telangana government," said Ramji.

Page 3: Vanguard GCC will be innovation hub

BRS double standards on UoH land stand exposed

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The Bharat Rashttra Samithi (BRS) appears to have adopted double standards in the controversy over whether 400 acres of land which Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy decided to auction — belonged to the state government or University of Hyderabad.

BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao on Monday extended solidarity with the agitating UoH students and cried foul over the Chief Minister's decision denying the university of its land. However, documentary evidence available with Deccan Chronicle revealed that



The 400 acres at Gachibowli is being levelled by the authorities, on Monday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

the previous BRS government in the past vehemently argued that the university had no right over 534 acres including the one allotted to IMG Bharata. The previous BRS government even went to the extent of arguing in the Telangana High

Court that UoH doesn't require 1,700 acres at all. It proposed to take back at least 160 acres and develop six parcels out of it and allot to different educational institutions.

Page 7: BRS wanted to take back 159 acres of UoH

Women shine in Group-1 results

MRIITKA BANERJEE | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Women have claimed the top places in the Group-1 results announced by the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TG-PSC). Six of the top 10 general merit positions went to women candidates. In the top 50, women accounted for nearly half and 41 women featured in the top 100.

At the top of the list stands Hyderabad's Lakshmi Deepika Kommirreddy, a doctor who finished her MBBS from Osmania Medical College

who decided against a medical career abroad and instead stayed back to write UPSC and state service exams.

Dadi Venkataramana from Nalgonda secured second place with 535.5 marks. Tejaswini Reddy was placed fourth overall and first in Multi-Zone 1. The fifth-rank went to Krithika Siddala from Meerpeta.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, the topper Lakshmi Deepika said, "I had scheduled my US residency exam. Everything was ready. But I realised leaving didn't suit who I was," she said. The deci-

sion to change in track came early, while still eligible to attempt civil services without compromising on age limits. It allowed her to commit fully. Her preparation wasn't structured around classroom lectures or crash courses. She prepared independently and mainly anchored by her UPSC study plan, with minor additions for the state-specific syllabus. "About 80 to 85 per cent of what I'd studied for UPSC worked here," she said.

Page 2: Pick a career that excites you, says Hyd topper

EASY | CONNECT Road linking Begumpet Railway Station expected to ease traffic congestion

24 link roads to be built in Phase 1 in Hyd

PRATHYUSH NALLELLA | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited (HRDCL) has begun works for the first phase of construction of link roads in the city. Works are being planned for 24 main link roads across the city within the first phase, with an estimated budget of ₹487.74 crore.

Among the 24 link road projects, HRDCL is also developing the link road connecting Raj Bhavan

Road to the R&B Guest House near Begumpet Railway Station, and another road linking Begumpet Railway Station, Prakashnagar and the Brahmanwadi railway track.

Locals said that the areas between Prakashnagar, Brahmanwadi, Kundan Bagh and Mayur Marg near Begumpet face heavy traffic, which bottles up the colony lanes on a daily basis. Residents and passengers who commute in these high-density areas

are expecting the link road project might ease traffic flow, especially during rush hours.

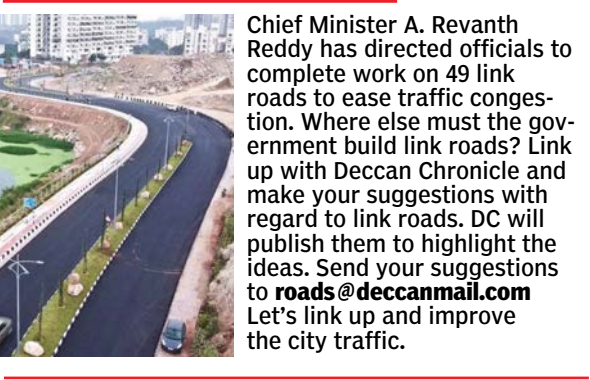
Deepika, a resident of Brahmanwadi, said "It will definitely be problematic when the road is being laid, but the new roads will reduce the distance between areas, and traffic will become much smoother."

HRDCL is planning on bringing new technologies like Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) and soil stabilisation to make sure the roads are durable

and will last longer. The contractors will have two years to complete the construction after the agreement. The phase one of the link road works include projects like Vanasthalipuram to Old Hayathnagar via Saheb Nagar, Ameenpur village to HMT Colony in Miyapur, ORR service road to Chevella road via Kismatpur, Badangpet Main road to Turkayamjal via Nadergul and 20 other projects.

Page 2: Hyd developing link roads in phases

Link up with DC



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to complete work on 49 link roads to ease traffic congestion. Where else must the government build link roads? Link up with Deccan Chronicle and make your suggestions with regard to link roads. DC will publish them to highlight the ideas. Send your suggestions to roads@deccanmail.com. Let's link up and improve the city traffic.

A parliamentary report highlighting the non-filing of "Immovable Property Returns" (IPRs) by dozens of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, has prompted a recommendation for stricter penalties and corrective measures. The findings were presented on March 27 as part of the Parliamentary Standing Committee report for the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT).

According to the report, 91 IAS officers did not file their IPRs in 2024, and 73 failed to do so in 2023. The panel noted that vigilance clearance - required for key postings - was denied to 15 IAS officers in 2023, 12 in 2022, and 14 in 2021 due to the non-filing of returns. To address the issue, the committee proposed creating a centralised compliance monitoring mechanism, backed by a dedicated task force within the DoPT, to track the filing status of all IAS officers.

Panel for penalising errant IAS

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA | DC
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

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EVENTS TODAY

- Ugadi Vasanthotsavulu 2025: Kathak performance by students of Srivalli Rao**
Time: 5.30 pm
Venue: Shilparamam
- Workshop on learning flute**
Time: 5 pm
Venue: Our Sacred Space
- Workshop on pottery wheel**
Time: 11 am
Venue: Kclay Pottery Studio
- Kids Summer Camp (Fun and creative activities for boys and girls)**
Time: 10 am
Venue: Raagasudha Chandrika
- Summer Camp on learning piano, violin**
Time: 10 am
Venue: Trinity School Of Piano and Keyboard
- UPCOMING EVENTS**
- Djembe African drumming workshop**
Date : April 5, 6 pm
Venue: Vyaami Srena Cafe, Jubilee Hills

TGNPDC BEGINS CONSUMER FEEDBACK CELL

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The Telangana Northern Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TGNPDCL) has launched a consumer feedback cell to further improve service quality for power consumers, company's chairman and managing director Karnati Varun Reddy announced here on Monday.

As part of this initiative, a random selection of 60 consumers per day will be contacted to gather their feedback on four key service parameters. Over a month, feedbacks will be collected from around 1,800 consumers to assess service efficiency and customer satisfaction. The key service parameters for consumer feedback include, timely Release of new connections, behaviour of officials and staff, resolution of consumer complaints and prevention of corrupt practices. Based on this feedback, officials including the operations and maintenance staff and section officers will evaluate and rate it.

Link BHEL to ORR Exit 4, Bachupally

Underpass linking Uppal to Ramanthapur likely to ease traffic woes in eastern Hyderabad

EASE TRAFFIC AT BANJARA HILLS

I appreciate DC for taking up this initiative to seek people's suggestions on link roads. It is extremely difficult for people to travel from a junction on Road No 2 to Virinchi Hospital on Road No 1. A flyover for this stretch with a landing at Taj Deccan junction could ease traffic congestion immensely. Though a flyover was supposed to be constructed linking KBR Park to Mugdha Junction sometime back, it will not serve the purpose unless it was extended up to Virinchi Junction with an exit at Taj Deccan junction.

— D. Goutham, Banjara Hills

ORR-RRR LINK

We need a link road between Talakondapally and Ravichedu as it will connect Outer Ring Road and Regional Ring Road.

— Dr L. Raj Kumar Padkal, Talakondapally

BHEL LINK TO ORR

We need two link roads connecting BHEL Circle to ORR Exit No 4 and Bachupally. Both the link roads can pass through Sridevi theatre and Ameenpur lake. These link roads will ease traffic congestion on the NH-65 main road, and will provide an alternative route to people.

— Hari, Ameenpur, Sangareddy Dist

WIDEN BHEL ROAD

The government should widen BHEL Circle-to-ORR-Exit 4 road into a 150-foot road via Ilapur Thanda, to accommodate the rapid growth of the Ameenpur municipality. The existing road infrastructure may not be sufficient to handle the increasing traffic demand, potentially leading to congestion and inconvenience for residents and com-



muters. It will allow people living in the nearby areas to have seamless access to the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and reach their workplaces more efficiently.

— Sridhar R. Hyderabad

COMPLETE TRACK CROSSINGS

The government should complete the incomplete service roads on Outer Ring Road at railway track crossings at places like Gowdavalli, Ghatkesar among others.

— M. Rajashekhar Reddy, Hyderabad

UNDERPASS AT UPPAL

Uppal crossroads is one of the most congested junctions in Hyderabad. Though traffic police have been regulating vehicular flow by enforcing long detours from Uppal to Ramanthapur, it did not solve traffic jams. The best solution for this issue could be construction of an underpass linking Uppal and Ramanthapur directly.

— Dr. R. Bhuvan Anand, Uppal

WIDEN MILITARY DAIRY FARM ROAD

In my opinion, the government should widen Military Dairy Farm Road — from NH44 Bowenpally Junction to Shameerpet Road at Lal Bazaar Junction — into a 120-foot road. It should also widen Gunrock Road — from MCME South Gate tri-junction to TGSPDCL signals — as a 100-foot road, which will give a smooth diversion from Lalbazar traffic signals to Rajiv Rahadari.

— Ashok Kumar Mandi, Bowenpally



HYDERABAD DEVELOPING LINK ROADS IN PHASES FOR BETTER CONNECTIVITY

FROM PAGE 1

The phase two will include link road projects like Mallapur Crossroad to Kurmlaguda, Dammaiguda to Nagaram connecting ECIL, NH-44 to Industrial area at Ram Reddy Nagar via Fossagar Lake at Jeedimetla, roadway connecting Neopolis layout at Kokapet to Pipeline road and 21 other projects.

LINK ROADS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN UP IN TWO PHASES

Phase-I	Phase-II
1. Injapur Road to Munaganoor Road.	1. RCI crossroads to Srisailem Highway.
2. Vanasthalipuram Road to Old Hayathnagar Road via Saheb Nagar Road.	2. Mallapur Crossroad to Kurmlaguda.
3. Badangpet-Nadergul Main Road to Nadergul Road.	3. Kurmlaguda to Nadergul
4. Thorur to Nagarjuna Sagar Road.	4. Firing Katta to NTR statue road.
5. Govt. Upper Primary School to Kokapet.	5. NTR statue to Dammaiguda road.
6. Inner Ring Road to DLRL Colony via TKR College Road.	6. NTR statue to dumping yard.
7. Ameenpur village to HMT Colony in Miyapur.	7. NTR Statue to Vampuguda Road in Jawahar Nagar Corporation.
8. Raj Bhavan Road to R&B Guest House.	8. Rampally cross road to Survey No. 421(Near HP Petrol Pump).
9. Link road from Begumpet Railway station, Prakash Nagar to Brahmanwadi.	9. Yamnampet to Nagaram Municipal boundary.
10. Quthbullapur road to Pipeline road via St. Anthony's High School at VENNALAGUDA CHERUVU	10. Cherlapally to ORR service road via Karimguda.
11. Quthbullapur Road to Pipeline road via Godavari Homes.	11. Cherlapally BSNL Office to Rampalli Junction.
12. Babu Ghat Bridge to P&T Colony East Side of Esa River.	12. Dammaiguda to Nagaram road connecting to ECIL.
13. Bachupally VNR College to Nizampet Potti	13. Cherial JNNURM housing colony to Ahmadguda RGK connecting to link road 82.
	14. Shamsabad Railway Crossing to Dharmagiri Road.
	15. Shamsabad Bus Stop on NH 44 to Rallaguda Road.
	16. NH-44 Dondupally Junction to ORR Service Road.
	17. Kothur Railway Crossing to Kummarguda Junction.
	18. Kothur Y Junction to Vinayak Steel.
	19. NH-44 to Industrial area at Ram Reddy Nagar via Fox Sagar lake at JEEDIMETLA
	20. Hanuman Temple to Aparna Hill Park via Gangaram Cheruvu.
	21. Hanuman Temple, Kaiser Nagar to Mithilaganar.
	22. Pragathinagar to Mahadevpura Veterinary Hospital via Yellamma Banda.
	23. Link road connecting ORR Service Road with the existing road at MANCHIREVULA
	24. Link road connecting Neopolis layout, Kokapet to Pipe Line road Kokapet.
	25. Link Road Connecting from Beerappa temple to Pipeline Road/Radial Road No. 5 via Green space project.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE PROPERTY

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✓DTCP PLOT for Sale in Malkapur Village near to industrial park 634 Sq.Yds S/W Corner Vijayawada Highway Rate:7000/- Negotiable Owner plot Near to ramoji film city Call: 9290143049 (W/2425/AT001048)

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WANTED SENIOR Experienced Sales Manager Age: 35-45 years, Tamil Speaking will be preferred. Send Resume to hr@manchukonda.com Manchukonda Prakasham Industries India Pvt Ltd. Panjagutta, Hyderabad- 500082. Ph:040-44507070 (HYHA/2425/C06714)

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Pick exciting career: Topper

FROM PAGE 1

Lakshmi's academic discipline came from medicine. The patience required to sit through long hours and the rigour of retaining volume after volume of information lent themselves naturally to public service preparation. "Competitive exams test your patience more than anything else," she added. That endurance isn't new to her. She has faced failure before. A few UPSC attempts didn't yield the outcome she wanted, and in 2023 she cleared the Andhra Pradesh Group-1 exam and was allotted the MPDO post in the non-local category. She gave it up to focus on UPSC again and has appeared for two interviews already. She used the same window of preparation to complete an MBA in Hospital Management through a distance programme. Last year, she secured a spot in Osmania University's law programme through the Telangana Lawcet. Her academic path, while diverse, is threaded with intentionality, from schooling at DAV Public School to junior college in Narayanguda and medical school in Hyderabad. Her father, a recently retired senior audit officer in the Accountant



Lakshmi Deepika Kommireddy

General's office, and her mother, a homemaker, have been the major support system in her long arc of preparation.

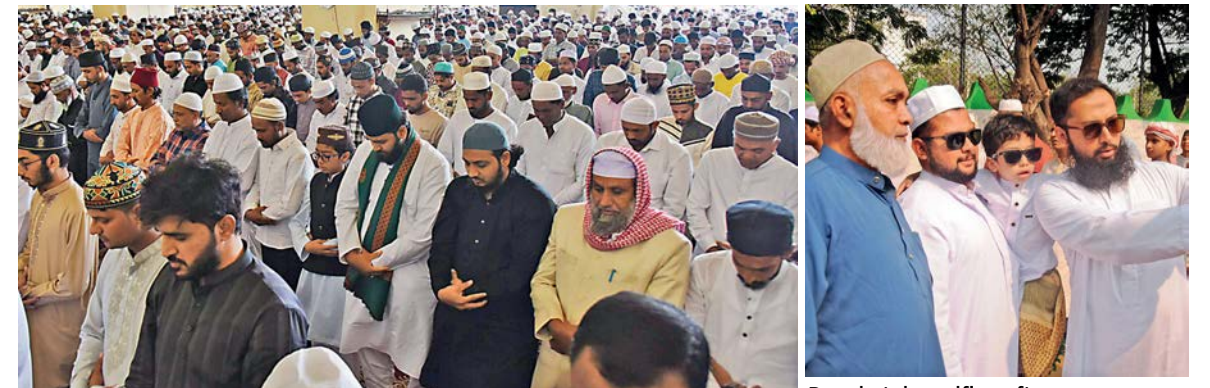
"I always just wanted to leave a mark, whether in medicine or administration." She speaks plainly, neither overly confident nor deferential. Independence, she says, is her central belief. And for young women she has just one piece of advice: "It is very important for women to be independent. So make sure that happens and pick a career that excites you, not one pushed by someone else." Gopalakrishna, who trains students for civil services, noted, "Their effort has now been rewarded. It is consistency and optimism that have finally succeeded." According to him, women are performing especially well in descriptive exams like the mains.

TGSRTC CONDUCTOR DIES, ANOTHER THREE INJURED IN ROAD ACCIDENT

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, MARCH 31

RTC depot conductor Vannapurapu Sitaram Prasad died and three other persons were injured when their TGSRTC bus hit a tanker lorry parked on the roadside at Kotha Lankalapalli of Penuballi mandal in the district in

the early hours of Sunday. The bus was going to Khammam from Sathupalli. Prasad was going to his native place in the bus, police said. The injured have been shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment and they are said to be out of danger. In all, 23 passengers were travelling in the bus at the time of the road accident.



Thousands of people attend Id-ul-Fitr prayers at Macca Masjid in the Old City on Monday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

Special prayers, piety, gaiety mark Id-ul-Fitr in Hyderabad

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Special congregational prayers, piety and gaiety marked the Id-ul-Fitr celebrations across the city on Monday. Although many opted to offer the prayers in mornings because of extreme heat conditions, over a lakh offered prayers at Eidgah Mir Alam at Bahadurpura. The prayers started at 10 am and the prayers were led by Maulana Hafeez Rizwan Qureshi, the khatib of Macca Masjid. The Chilkalguda Idgah also had a large congregation, while the Idgah at Yousufguda drew the faithful from Rehmathanagar, Krishnanagar, LN nagar and Venkatgiri. Prayers at Idgah E Qutub Shai, Qutub Shahi tombs, Golconda, started at 9.15 am, while congregational prayers at Idgah, Red Hills playground, started at 8.15 am. Meanwhile, in keeping with Id traditions, families served sheer khurma at home. Greetings and brotherhood messages flooded social media platforms. The traditional dressing, with a dash of other, friends greeting each other, irrespective of their faith, all combined to



Hyderabad MP and AIMIM party president Asaduddin Owaisi greets people on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr at Mir Alam Idgah on Monday. — P. SURENDRA

Shabbir, kin pray in Kamareddy

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Adviser to the government Mohammed Ali Shabbir and his family on Monday prayed at the Shahi Eidgah near Taisil Masjid in Kamareddy town to mark Id-ul-Fitr.

Speaking on the occasion, Shabbir said Muslims who were breaking their fast across the country were celebrating with devotion. "This is the biggest festival for Muslims. The Quran was revealed in the month of Ramzan. There

are many other special features behind this festival, such as mental and physical development. This festival begins with the sighting of the crescent moon and again ends with the sighting of the crescent moon," Shabbir Ali said.

spread the flavour of brotherhood and secular spirit. Streets in the Old City were jam-packed from late Sunday night with people indulging in last-minute shopping. Sales of the Ramzan delicacy haleem kept peaking by the hour. Many shops announced discounts to clear their stocks.

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SHORT TAKES

VANGUARD GCC WILL BE INNOVATION HUB

FROM PAGE 1

Vanguard's office in India is a significant milestone in its global expansion, which builds on a decade of partnership with third-party partners to enable it to directly access talent and increase the proportion of technology crew in its global workforce.

"As with all of our locations, we will foster an inclusive environment centered around a clear mission, meaningful work, and unique employee experience," Vanguard GCC CEO said.

Vanguard is committed to establishing an enduring technology centre in Hyderabad. The Vanguard Hyderabad office would serve as an integral part of the global organisation, become an innovation hub that will support IT mission and goals, drive AI strategy, unlock potential of our data and analytics, and support the firm's mobile-first initiatives.

Vanguard is currently designing its strategy to ensure it finds the right talent to add to its global crew with a special focus on AI, Data and Analytics, and Mobile Engineering.

SUREKHA TAKES PART IN ID CELEBRATIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MARCH 31

Endowments minister Konda Surekha joined mayor Gundu Sudharani at the Idgah in Warangal East constituency on Monday during the Ramzan celebrations.

She participated in special prayers at LB Nagar, Khila Warangal and Pochammaidan. The minister greeted the Muslim community on their month-long fasting and prayers, describing Ramzan as a time of spiritual reflection marked by sacrifice and piety. "Ramzan symbolises unity and devotion for all," she said, wishing for peace and prosperity.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, the Congress government has pledged to support the development and welfare of Muslims, she said, outlining plans to improve the infra at Idgahs and dargahs by the next Ramzan, with supervision by the municipal corporation.

Meanwhile, district administration officials and the police ensured elaborate arrangements and close monitoring of the prayer venues.

CM to leave for Delhi to push BC quota Bill

Revanth to attend 'maha dharna' by BC associations

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will head to Delhi on Tuesday evening, seeking wider support for the newly passed state legislation that grants 42 per cent reservations for Backward Classes (BCs) in education, employment, and local bodies. Accompanied by ministers, Congress legislators from BC communities, and an all-party group of MPs, the Chief Minister aims to gather national-level backing on April 2 and 3.

The primary objective of the visit is to persuade the Union government to include the 42 per cent BC quota in the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, thereby safeguarding it from judicial scrutiny. Currently, implementing this policy would raise Telangana's overall reservation level to 67 per cent, surpassing the Supreme Court's 50 per cent cap. In a bid to avoid legal challenges, the state has called on the Centre to provide constitutional protection similar to that afforded to Tamil Nadu, which implements 69 per cent total reservations.



A. Revanth Reddy

During his two-day stay in the capital, Revanth Reddy is slated to participate in a 'maha dharna' (large-scale protest) organised by BC associations on April 2. Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, is also expected to join, demanding that the Centre pass a Bill during the ongoing Budget session of Parliament. The delegation will present findings from a caste survey conducted by Telangana and highlight the need for increased representation of BC communities.

Among those accompanying the Chief Minister are Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, ministers Ponnampalabharathi and Konda Surekha, and TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud. Prominent BC legislators including

Vigilance to probe IPL free pass row

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

At a time when the government is trying to position Hyderabad as a global sports hub, the controversy over free tickets and complimentary passes during IPL matches at RGICS have compelled Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to order a vigilance probe, to be headed by its director general Kothakota Srinivas Reddy, into the murky goings on.

Another factor has been the threat coming from Sun Risers Hyderabad (SRH) that they would relocate their home venue if there is no immediate end to the harassment by the president of Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA).

The issue cropped up when SRH accused the HCA president Jagan Mohan Rao of black-

mail, coercion and threatening its staff at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium. Taking HCA's decision to lock the corporate box hours before an IPL match was to commence on March 27 quite seriously, SRH took the issue to the notice of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the IPL governing body management, especially highlighting the troubles they were facing at the behest of the HCA president.

"It is the HCA president Jagan Mohan Rao, who is resorting to threats, coercion and blackmail. Even before the IPL started, Rao threatened our staff with coercion, who, out of fear, wrote an email to him, placing on record the threat he made," a recent SRH communiqué, sent to the HCA apex council members, says.

Adi Srinivas, Birla Ailayya, Makkann Singh Raj Thakur, Vakiti Srihari, and Eerlapalli Shankarappa will also be part of the team.

TG starts rice exports to Philippines

VADREVI SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, MARCH 31

Telangana government has begun exporting rice to the Philippines from Kakinada Anchorage Port. As part of the first shipment, 12,500 metric tonnes of rice, worth ₹45 crore, will be sent, marking the start of exports under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to supply eight lakh metric tonnes.

Civil supplies minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy inaugurated the loading process at Kakinada Anchorage Port on Monday. The rice is being loaded onto a Vietnam-registered ship. The minister highlighted Telangana's leadership in paddy production, stating that the state produced 153 lakh



Civil supplies minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy flags off a ship to Philippines with Telangana rice from Kakinada port on Monday.

metric tonnes in the Kharif season and is expected to harvest another 122 lakh metric tonnes in the second crop.

Reddy noted the Telangana Civil Supplies Corporation signed a MoU with the Philippines to export eight lakh metric

tonnes of rice. The shipment is being handled by Aditya Birla Global Trading (Singapore) PTE Limited on behalf of the Philippines government.

He also emphasised that since the Congress government took office under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, several

initiatives have been launched to secure better prices for farmers. As part of these efforts, an international expo summit was held to showcase Telangana's paddy production and agricultural resources.

He added the government is ensuring fair prices for farmers, with rice allocated for domestic consumption, local markets and exports. He described the initiative as a significant boost for the farming community. Port officer Dharma Sastha and other officials were present at the event.

Earlier, district collector S. Shan Mohan, SP G. Bindu Madhav, joint collector Rahul Mena and Kakinada RDO S. Mallibabu welcomed the minister.

Fine rice to help poor: Minister

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MARCH 31

The state government's fine rice scheme was launched at a ration shop in Ramnagar Colony in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district by IT minister D. Sridhar Babu, along with Bhupalpally MLA Gandra Satyanarayana and State Trade Corporation chairman Aitha Prakash Reddy.

The minister underscored the government's commitment to supplying fine rice to families below the poverty line, promising the scheme would directly benefit society's most vulnerable segments.



Minister D. Sridhar Babu launches the fine rice scheme at a fair price shop in Ramnagar Colony of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Monday.

He also highlighted administration has successfully implemented key promises in just over a year, including this initiative.



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BJP TG leaders strategise for ensuing local body polls

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The BJP chalked out plans on going about in the ensuing local body elections and identify candidates in advance during a meeting of the state office-bearers and newly elected district presidents, here on Monday. The party has decided to focus on short-listing candidates whose prospects of winning are high, an experiment undertaken during the MLC elections.

Senior leaders including union ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar and others took part in the meeting. They also discussed the coming GHMC polls and decided to aggressively identify issues concerning different sections of the society. The newly elected MLCs were felicitated on the occasion.

The party has decided to send a fact-finding team, comprising MLAs and lawyers, to Hyderabad Central University to assess the facts that led to the unrest. Chevella MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy said the party would launch a mass agitation against the decision of



Union minister G. Kishan Reddy speaks at the state party office in the presence of minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar and senior leaders including Etala Ranjendar and R. Krishnaiah on Monday.

CALL FOR ALL-PARTY MEET ON BC BILLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

BJP MP and BC Welfare Association president R. Krishnaiah on Monday asked Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to convene an all-party meeting with participation from Backward Caste groups to discuss the effective implementation of the Backward Caste Bills

the state government to sell open government lands to raise funds. Reddy said the state government can con-

struct parks, school buildings and set up big educational institutions, if it holds open lands with it.

passed by the Assembly earlier in the month. Krishnaiah said the Constitution allows the state government to implement reservations in the local body polls. "The state Assembly has also passed a bill in this regard. The state government issuing a GO is sufficient to implement the reservations in the local body polls," he said.

Give fund details for fine rice scheme: BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Union minister of state for home Bandi Sanjay Kumar has demanded the Congress government give a detailed account of the total expenditure incurred on the fine rice scheme and the share of the state and Central governments to implement the scheme through the Public Distribution System.

Bandi Sanjay said the Narendra Modi government spends over ₹10,000 crore annually on this scheme. The Centre alone bears ₹40 per kg, covering procurement, transportation, milling and other costs. Even if the state takes a loan for procurement, the Centre repays the interest and principal. The state government, on the other hand, bears only ₹10 per kg, spending just about ₹2,000

crore. "Who is spending more on the free rice scheme? Is it the Modi government or the state government? Why won't the state government acknowledge the Centre's contribution? Why did Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy fail to acknowledge the Centre's contribution? Why didn't they thank the Prime Minister? Why is the PM's photo missing from the promotions?," he asked.

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IN BRIEF

Woman gangraped in Nagarkurnool

Hyderabad: A woman was gang raped in Urkondapeta village in Nagarkurnool district on Saturday night. The incident, however, came to light on Monday morning after the victim, aged around 30 years, approached the police. The police identified seven people, who were involved in the heinous crime, according to Nagarkurnool superintendent of Police Vaibhav Gaikwad. He said the incident occurred in an isolated area in bushes, which is 200 meters away from Sri Anjaneya Swamy temple in the village. Accompanied by her relative, the victim came to the temple to have darshan on Saturday night and stayed there. Unknown persons forcibly took her into bushes and raped her even as her relative tried to rescue her. The accused tied the victim's relative to a tree and committed the crime.

HYD POLICE NAB MAN ACCUSED IN 80 CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

City cybercrime police arrested a man, accused in 80 cases, from his hometown in Gujarat on Monday. Of these, 11 cases were booked in Telangana. Police said the accused Vyas Rutvik (26) was arrested following a breakthrough in a ₹9.5 lakh fraud case registered in Hyderabad. Rutvik was supplying bank accounts to Shivangi Sarda and Gautham Duggad, the main accused in that case. Shivangi and Gautham had posed as Motilal Oswal Securities representatives and asked the victim to download an investment application and join a WhatsApp group. Following which, the victim invested the money. When the accused ignored her calls, she enquired with the Motilal Oswal Hyderabad branch, where she found her application was fake. The trail of bank transactions led the police to Rutvik. Hyderabad police had formed a team in Ahmedabad for the arrest.

MAN FOUND DEAD NEAR TELUGU THALLI FLYOVER

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

An unidentified man was found dead at the Telugu Talli flyover at Tank Bund in the early hours of Monday. The man, who is yet to be identified, fell from the Lower Tank Bund side. He suffered grievous head injuries and died on the spot. Police issued circulars and are analysing with neighbouring police stations on missing complaints. The unidentified man, aged between 45 and 50 years, is suspected to be a beggar. Domalguda inspector D. Srinivas Reddy said, "He jumped from the Lower Tank Bund landing site and fell near the Katta Maisamma temple towards Gausshala." Efforts are on to identify him. Police shifted the body to Gandhi Hospital mortuary. Further probe is on.

Realtor held for bank a/c fraud

Victim blackmailed by cheats on phone

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Krothapalli Rithika, a real estate broker from Komapally, was arrested for providing bank accounts to a cybercrime offender in Chennai. Rithika was procuring accounts from a physiotherapist in Guntur, who is connected with NGOs for the blind and the elderly. There are 32 cases against Rithika across the country and three cases are in Telangana. She was arrested following an investigation in a case from Hyderabad. In the case, the victim was blackmailed on the phone by cheats who posed as

THERE ARE 32 cases against Rithika across India and there are three in Telangana. She was held following a probe in a case from Hyderabad.

officials from Kurla Police Station in Mumbai. The victim was accused of illegal bank transactions and money laundering. Further, they told the victim that she was under constant surveillance. The victim was manipulated into transferring ₹3.5 lakh into an account that the culprits had access to. Police said Rithika, 46, was a real estate broker from Kompally. After she got acquainted with

one Suresh from Chennai, she was supplying bank accounts. She was paid 10 per cent commission for each transaction. She procured the bank accounts from one Thota Srinivasa Rao, 58, a physiotherapist, from Guntur. He along with Jeevan Kumar and T. Raghuvver run NGOs for the blind and elderly.

They make use of the bank accounts of the elderly citizens and make money through illegal means. The police arrested Thota Srinivasa Rao, Jeevan Kumar and T. Raghuvver on March 25. Rithika was arrested on March 29 and was sent to judicial remand.

Cleaning up mess



Municipal workers are carrying out cleaning work on one of the four main roads leading up to Charminar and Macca Masjid. — P. SURENDRA

Triple murder: Cops ask for viscera samples

MOULI MAREEDU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Suspecting that the mother could have allegedly killed her daughter and two sons under Ameenpur police limits, Sangareddy police are understood to have asked the Gandhi Hospital forensic experts to preserve the viscera samples of the three bodies as authentic evidence. Days after the three children were found dead under suspicious circumstances, the Sangareddy police intensified their investigation.

However, two consecutive holidays delayed getting post-mortem reports from forensic experts. "We strongly suspect the mother's role in the murders. We are awaiting PME reports.

However, we also asked the doctors to preserve viscera samples, which will also take more time. We will proceed with the investigation based on the PME reports," police officials said.

The police also obtained medical reports about the mother, Rajitha, who is undergoing treatment. After she recovers, police are likely to question her in connection with the incident. Police have already questioned the father Chennaiah and recorded his statements.

IIIT STUDENT FROM NIZAMABAD DIES BY SUICIDE

Prayagraj (UP), March 30: A 20-year-old student of the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), who suffered from hearing impairment, has died by suicide in Prayagraj, police said on Sunday. They said the deceased has been identified as Madala Rahul Chaitanya (20), a first-year B.Tech student.

On getting information, police had rushed the injured student to the SRN Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

Public relations officer of the IIIT Pankaj Mishra said that Chaitanya was admitted to the institute in the deaf-and-mute category. He did not attend classes for the last three months and was depressed due to academic pressure, Mishra said. He said Chaitanya was from Telangana's Nizamabad district and he told his mother about the pressure of studies.

People in 2 districts fear black magic

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC WARANGAL, MARCH 31

A series of unsettling black magic ceremonies, locally referred to as 'Kshudra Pujas,' has caused widespread panic in rural areas of the erstwhile Warangal and Karimnagar districts. Residents report living in constant fear as superstitious practices disrupt daily life and stoke concerns over personal safety and agricultural livelihoods.



Locals found a black magic ritual performed on the outskirts of Venkatapur mandal in Mulugu district. — BY ARRANGEMENT

In Jangaon district, an alarming ritual was uncovered near the Dardepalli Vagu river stream on the outskirts of Palakurthi mandal. Villagers found a sacrificed black chicken, a woman's garment, and a figurine fashioned out of coloured powders. Speculation arose that these items were used to cast spells or bewitch individuals, heightening

local anxieties. In the Kodimial mandal of Jagtial district, ritualistic items such as a human-shaped figure, lemons, and turmeric were found in agricultural fields. Concerned farmers fear the looming impact on the upcoming crop season. The resulting atmosphere of dread led to laborers refusing to work, exacerbating tensions

and threatening livelihoods. Kakarlapalli in Manthani mandal reported the presence of coconuts, onions, lemons, turmeric, vermilion powder, and eggs on a road connecting Kakarapalli and Dontanapalli — common paraphernalia for black magic rituals. Wary of bad omens, residents cautioned travelers — particularly those on two-

wheelers — to avoid stepping over the objects. In Venkatapuram mandal of Mulugu district, more signs of black magic were found under a tree near a village junction. Items included turmeric, vermilion powder, lemons, a sacrificed chicken, bloodstains, and a woman's sari. Meanwhile, Karimnagar district witnessed comparable incidents near Rang-anayakula Gutta, where some locals suspect these practices are tied to hunt for hidden treasures.

Speaking to DC, G. Ramesh of Jana Vignana Vedika warned that certain people exploit superstitions and, in extreme cases, even resort to human sacrifices, creating widespread panic. He emphasises the need for increased education and awareness to protect rural communities from harmful beliefs and predatory practices.

Cops arrest 3 for reckless driving in JH

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Filmnagar Police arrested three individuals for reckless driving and damaging a motorbike in Jubilee Hills. The driver was found under the influence of alcohol and


without a driving licence. The arrest took place on Friday (March 28) when a car was being driven by 28-year-old B. Raj Kiran who lost control and rammed into a parked two-wheeler. According to the police complaint by Hashmathullah

Khan, an employee at Saboo Ceramic Pro, a Swift Dzire car crashed into his parked two-wheeler. The driver Raj Kiran was found to be intoxicated. He also did not possess any driving licence. Kiran was accompanied by

B. Mallikarjun, 21, and K. Snehit, 24; both were arrested for consuming alcohol and involvement in the incident. Filmnagar police seized the car and appealed the public to avoid driving under the influence of alcohol.

<p>OBITUARY</p>  <p>Shri C.A. MAHEEDHAR DOB: 10/05/1948 DOD: 31/03/2025 It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing away of Shri CA Maheedhar, a beloved father, husband, brother, uncle and family member Om Shanti... RSPV : 986855551 (S/2425/D01193)</p>	<p>2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY</p>  <p>CHERIYAN It has been 2 years since you left us with your sweet memories. "Forever in our hearts, your love remains our guiding light". Inserted by: Gigi, Kunnumol Jijo and Chinamma. (S/2425/D01192)</p>	<p>SHRADHANJALI</p>  <p>Late MANDEEP SINGH ARORA DOD: 28.03.2025 Inserted by: AHUJA & GUJLANA FAMILY (A/2425/D00062)</p>	<p>4th DEATH ANNIVERSARY</p>  <p>Smt. A. DURGA DEVI W/o Late A.K. Menon DOD: 16-04-2021 "Your absence brings a deep pain to our hearts, but your memory remains a symbol of strength and a guiding light, inspiring us to keep your legacy alive". Inserted by: Sons: Anil, Prem Daughters-in-law: Priya, Bindu & All Family Members. (S/2425/D01185)</p>
<p>15th DEATH ANNIVERSARY</p>  <p>JUSTICE C. SRIRAMULU (Chairman All India Judges Association) 17-06-1929 - 07-04-2010 Inserted by: J. MANJULA RAO & FAMILY C.PRADEEP KUMAR & FAMILY</p>	<p>4th Death Anniversary</p>  <p>Shri Narendra Kumar Doshi DOB: 24.02.1946 - DOD: 01.04.2021 We miss you every moment in our life, your presence continues to surround us, in our hearts, you are always there. In Grief by: Rajul Doshi (wife) Hitesh, Hiren, Hetal, Rushab, Kevin, Vansh, Vidhi Ph: 9248044444, 9346412340</p>	<p>11th Death Anniversary</p>  <p>Sri Kathili Srinivas Rao (Mama) 11th Death Anniversary is on April, 1st, 2025 My uncle was cremated at Bansilalpet Cremation Services A loving Soul, Tender and Kind, what a Beautiful Memory you left behind Inserted by: The Kathili & Rajpet Families (+ 1-631-339-4915) Email: durgaprasadrj@gmail.com</p>	<p>IN LOVING MEMORY OF Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. Psalms 116:15</p>  <p>D.O.B: 14.10.1940 D.O.D: 28.03.2025 Late. Mrs. B. L. Padma Purushotham Garu Let us come together to honor her memory and the love she shared with us all. Your presence will be deeply appreciated. Memorial service will be held on 01-04-2025, Time: 6pm onwards at Hill Men High School, Road No.14, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. Please consider this as a personal invitation Ph : 9866359485, 9849363449</p>
<p>SHRADHANJALI</p>  <p>Late MANDEEP SINGH ARORA DOD: 28.03.2025 Inserted by: Sdn & Sd. INDERJEET SINGH ARORA & FAMILY (A/2425/D00061)</p>	<p>4th DEATH ANNIVERSARY</p>  <p>Smt. A. DURGA DEVI W/o Late A.K. Menon DOD: 16-04-2021 "Deeply missed but forever cherished, your blessings continue to inspire us, as we hold your memory close and feel the pain of your absence". Inserted by: Grand Children: Sudeep, Poojitha (USA), Harshita (USA), Siddharth and Shreyas. (S/2425/D01186)</p>	<p>FOURTH ANNIVERSARY</p>  <p>Mrs Dakshayani Amma DOD: 1st April 2021 Selfless soul are always loving and kind, Such are memories you leave behind, You fell asleep without goodbye, But memories of you will never die. Inserted by: T.P. BABU MOHAN, FAMILY & RELATIVES</p>	<p>Uthavna 4th Day Ceremony</p>  <p>Joghesh Kumar Rikhy DOD - 30th March 2025 Joghesh Kumar Rikhy S/O Late Bankeylal Rikhy Uthavna 4th Day Ceremony 1st April 2025 3.30 to 5.00 PM, Gurudwara Sahib Hargobindpuri, Amberpet. Inserted by: Anil, Anoop, Rajesh Rikhy (Brothers) Chaya Rikhy (Wife) Ankit, Aakriti (Children) Mob:9000226962</p>

IN FOND MEMORY 12th ANNIVERSARY



Sri A. BALA KUMAR
4th October 1941 - 1st April 2013

Daddy, you are always in our hearts. We miss you every day.

Always Yours :
Bagi, Madhavi, Suneetha, Seenu, Nanna and SNL FAMILY

SHORT TAKES

GHMC MOPS UP RECORD ₹2,012 CR PROPERTY TAX

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has collected an unprecedented ₹2,012.36 crore property tax for the financial year 2024-25 with the period between Sunday noon and Monday 6 pm alone fetching ₹158 crore. It is likely to swell before the closure.

The corporation had set a target of ₹2,000 crore this fiscal. Incidentally, this marks the highest property tax collected in a fiscal since the corporation's formation.

The amount also includes ₹465.07 crore collected under the one time scheme (OTS) till Monday 6 pm. In the previous financial year, the civic body had raked in ₹1,917 crore.

In a statement, GHMC commissioner K. Ilambarthi said that this feat was achieved by the collective efforts of the entire team, from the bill collectors to the zonal commissioners.

Like in the previous fiscal, the three highest tax collections were reported from Serilingampally, Jubilee hills and Khairatabad circles.

SHOP OWNER FINALLY PAYS PROPERTY TAX DUES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

A shop owner who was dragging his feet since long to pay property tax dues, on Monday, took the advantage of one time settlement (OTS) scheme and paid ₹17,20,652 to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The GHMC adopted a tactic to force him to pay the property tax dues. The municipal officials dug up road in front of his establishment on Friday as part of an "enforcement action". The shop is located in Chandanagar.

According to officials, the 40-year-old property had accumulated dues of ₹30,36,926 over the years.

After opting for the OTS scheme, the shop owner Anand Rao and others benefited from a waiver of ₹13,16,274. The defaulter paid the remaining amount of ₹17,20,652. On Friday, the GHMC officials arrived at the commercial establishment on Chandanagar Main Road and dug up a trench in front of the shop to halt business activities.

Chandanagar deputy commissioner P. Mohan Reddy stated that the action was taken due to the long-pending tax dues as well as ignoring the multiple reminders. However, the trench was filled on Sunday after the payment of dues.

"Our action forced the owner to settle the pending tax dues immediately," said P. Mohan Reddy, deputy commissioner, Chandanagar.

"The dispute dates back to a tax reassessment during the erstwhile BRS regime, which the owner had challenged in the High Court. The court had directed both the parties to settle the issue amicably. But the matter was not resolved and payments were not made. The dues went up to over ₹30 lakh", the official further said.

Inter-state poachers killed tigers in state

13 persons nabbed, some with Telangana connection

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Tigers in Telangana that have gone missing, or have been unaccounted for over the past several years, particularly in the erstwhile Adilabad district, may have well fallen prey to a well-organised gang of poachers with evidences collected by investigating officials confirming that a key member of the gang, and some others, had visited Bellampalli in Mancherla district. During the investigations, officials also discovered some evidence that some of the gang members, or their associates, had also been to the Kawal Tiger Reserve.

A nationwide investigation into tiger poaching, which also revealed Telangana connection to the poachers, resulted in the arrest of 13 persons, while 16 more have been named in the chargesheet filed last week in the case before the Judicial Magistrate First Class in Rajoura in Maharashtra.

Among those arrested and remanded to judicial custody is Sonu Singh Bawaria, who the investigators, based on call data records, found had been to Bellampalli in Mancherla district where he, along with some other associates of his, stayed for some time. Following this, investigators also found what has been described as "indirect" evidence, that either this group, or others associated with it, had been to Kawal Tiger Reserve.

However, forest officials in Telangana said they were not aware of Sonu Singh and his accomplices coming and staying in Bellampalli, or going to the Kawal Tiger Reserve.

Incidentally, following a tip-off from their Maharashtra counter-

SAVE FOREST, SAVE WILDLIFE



Forest officials display the skin of a tiger, which they seized in Asifabad. — FILE PHOTO

- **GANG** first exposed in 2023 when skin of tiger killed in Gadchiroli in Maharashtra found in Assam along with 19 kg of tiger bones from five poachers.
- **29** named as accused in the chargesheet filed by Maharashtra forest officials, 13 including three persons from the north-east, arrested.
- **DIGITAL** transactions of around ₹8 crore discovered, one transaction traced to Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.
- **TIGER** poaching gang members stayed in Belampalli in Asifabad district, also went to Kawal Tiger Reserve.
- **GANG** with members and associates from north-eastern states, believed to have poached tigers in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana.
- **SUSPECTED** members of the gang caught in Kagaznagar, forensic evidence found tiger blood under nails of their hands, currently out on bail.

parts, forest officials from Asifabad on February 4 this year, arrested 12 persons from a train heading to Chennai.

While one of the men travelling with this group escaped when the train was stopped at Kagaznagar railway station for a search and arrest operation, four men and eight women were taken into custody and a day later were produced in court.

"We collected forensic samples from all of them, and the reports have shown that five of them had remnants of tiger blood under their fingernails. All those given bail hail from Madhya Pradesh, and have been issued notices to appear before the court for a hearing that was postponed last week. If they do not appear for the next hearing, then we will seek arrest orders," Asifabad district forest officer Neeraj Kumar Tibrewal said.

It may be recalled that the Kawal Tiger Reserve did not have any resident tiger for several years, and all the tigers present in the now KB Asifabad and Mancherla districts in the forest areas that have been declared as 'tiger corridor' stretches connecting tiger reserves and wildlife sanctuaries in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh to forests in northern Telangana districts.

Some of these tigers, have in the past few months, even found their way further south in the state, into the forests of Mulugu, Bhadrachalam, Kothagudem, Peddapalli, and Karimnagar districts.

Since the corridor forest areas lack protection as in the case of a reserve or a sanctuary, it is feared that some of the tigers that have gone missing from Asifabad and Mancherla districts and routinely claimed as returning to Chhattisgarh, may have fallen prey to this gang of poachers.

The two districts are estimated to have some seven to nine tigers, but according to sources, at least six to 10 have been missing from these areas, as well as from the rest of the erstwhile Adilabad district in the past few years. These include a mother and two cubs, with the rest of this tiger family, a male and two other cubs, falling prey to poisoning in January 2024.

One of the officials closely involved with the investigation into the poaching gang and its activities in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, said this group has been focusing not on tiger reserves but in tiger bearing areas, such as the corridor forests, and in areas adjacent to protected areas where people are not in favour of having tigers moving about.

Toll charges for ORR increase, Hyd-Vij NH users to get relief

NABINDER BOMMALA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

While people travelling on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway got a relief with the Highways Authority of India (NHAI) reducing toll rates, the Outer Ring Road (ORR) users will have to shell out more toll from April 1. The hike was announced as part of annual revision of the user fee rates.

Car users will have to pay ₹1 extra for every 10 km of commute on the ORR compared to previous year. Heavy construction vehicles need to pay ₹5.6 per 10 km, while three-axle commercial vehicles need to pay ₹3.8 extra per 10 km compared to previous year.

Currently, the user fee is being collected by IRB Golconda Expressway Pvt.Ltd (IGEPL) at all 21 toll plazas on ORR interchanges. The number of interchanges will increase in future.

The toll rate for vehicles such as car, jeep, van, light motor vehicle (LMV), sports utility vehicle (SUV), multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) was ₹24.4 per 10 km compared to ₹23.4 in 2024-25.

For the Light Commercial Vehicle (LCV) or mini bus, the toll would increase by ₹39.4 per 10 km compared to ₹37.7 per 10 km previous year, which is an increase of ₹2 per 10 km. For bus or 2-axle trucks, the toll will be ₹70 per 10 km compared to earlier rate of ₹66.9 and for the 3-axle commercial vehicles, it is ₹90.1 per 10 km compared to ₹86.3 in 2024-25.

Similarly, for heavy construction machinery or earth moving equipment or 4, 5, 6 axle trucks, the toll will be ₹129.6 per 10 km this year as against ₹124 in 2024-25. For the oversized vehicles (7 or more axles), the toll collected would be ₹157.8 per 10 km compared to ₹150.9 per 10 km. People can also check the prices

2025-26 USER FEE RATES AT ORR TOLL PLAZAS

CAR, SUV, VAN, ETC: ₹24.4 per km	Light Commercial Vehicle (LCV) or mini bus: ₹39.4 per km	Bus/ 2-axle truck: ₹70 per km	Three-axle commercial vehicle: ₹90.1 per km
Heavy machinery or 4/5/6 axle trucks: ₹129.6 per km			
OVERSIZED VEHICLES (7 OR MORE AXLES): ₹157.8 per km.			

for daily and monthly passes by visiting <https://www.hmda.gov.in/>.

While ORR users are shelling out more money, three toll plazas on National Highway No. 65 between Hyderabad and Vijayawada have reduced their toll fees.

The toll fee at Panthangi toll plaza was reduced to ₹80 for cars, jeeps, vans, and Light Motor Vehicles for a single journey from ₹95, while it was reduced to ₹115 from ₹145 for a return journey.

The toll fee for Light Commercial Vehicles, minibuses, and goods vehicles was also decreased to ₹125 from ₹150 for a single journey, while the toll fee was reduced to ₹190 from ₹230 for a round trip.

The toll fee for buses and two-axle trucks was also reduced to ₹265 from ₹315 for a single journey, while it was decreased to ₹395 from ₹470 for the return journey.

The toll fee at Korlaphad toll plaza in Nalgonda district was also reduced. The toll fee of ₹130 for cars, jeeps, vans, and Light Motor Vehicles was decreased to ₹120 for a single ride, while it was reduced to ₹180 from ₹195 for a return journey. The toll fee for Light Commercial Vehicles was also decreased to ₹195 from ₹205 for a single ride, while it was reduced to ₹295 from ₹310 for a return journey.

toll fee for Light Commercial Vehicles was also decreased to ₹195 from ₹205 for a single ride, while it was brought down to ₹295 from ₹310 for a return journey.

Similarly, the toll fee for buses and trucks was also decreased to ₹430 from ₹410 for a single ride, while the fee was reduced to ₹615 from ₹640 for a round trip. The toll fee for vehicles with up to three axles was also decreased to ₹450 from ₹655 for a single journey, while the fee was reduced to ₹675 from ₹995 for a return journey.

The toll fee at Chillakallu toll plaza in Andhra Pradesh was also reduced to ₹105 from ₹110 for a single journey, while it was decreased to ₹115 from ₹160 for a return journey for cars, jeeps, vans, and Light Motor Vehicles. The toll fee of ₹350 for a single journey and ₹520 for a return journey would be collected for buses and trucks, as against the earlier toll charge of ₹355 and ₹530, respectively. The toll fee for vehicles with three axles was reduced to ₹380 from ₹542 for a single journey, while for a return journey, it was reduced to ₹700 from the earlier ₹820.

WATER BOARD RESTORES SUPPLY IN 5 HRS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The disruption in water supply in some parts of the city on Monday morning due to a short-circuit was rectified within five hours, said officials at the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB). An issue with the electrical cable at the Alibad reservoir led to a short-circuit at around 5.30 am that halted 100 HP pumps.

HMWS&SB MD Ashok Reddy ordered the officials to fix the issue urgently, considering the Ramzan celebrations.

Beat the heat



A group of women wear caps to protect themselves from intense heat at Old City in Hyderabad on Monday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

P. SRINIVAS | DC NALGONDA, MARCH 31

Farmers in Kammarigudem saved their paddy crops by collectively funding and installing a high-powered pump to draw water from a nearby flood canal into the village's irrigation tank. Their effort and self-reliance has inspired neighbouring communities.

In recent months, groundwater levels in Kammarigudem plummeted drastically, leading to the drying of agricultural pump sets. The depletion was further aggravated by the drying up of the local irrigation tank, which spans 18 acres. Faced with the imminent threat of crop failure, the farmers decided to act on their own.

Pooling together a voluntary contribution of around ₹5 lakh, they pur-

chased a 20 HP pump set. Over one and a half months, they systematically pumped water from the flood canal into the irrigation tank. Once refilled, the tank significantly boosted the groundwater table within a 1.5-kilometre radius. As a result, over 3,000 acres of paddy fields in K u m m a r i g u d e m, Govindannagudem, and

Thummalagudem — all reliant on borewell irrigation — were saved from withering.

This success not only ensured a bountiful harvest but also bolstered the farmers' confidence in their collective strength.

"The increased groundwater level has helped us avoid a drinking water shortage," said farmer Mallikanti Raju, noting that it also prevented the distress sale of cattle during summer. "My two acres of farmland were on the brink of drying up, but now they're thriving."

Another farmer, Devireddy Saidi Reddy, praised the spirit of volunteerism and cooperation: "We didn't wait for government assistance. When a young farmer suggested the idea, we all contributed money and made it happen."

'Don't name family members without evidence'

L. RAVICHANDER HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Justice Juvvadi Sri Devi of the Telangana High Court on Monday reiterated that general accusations without specific evidence should not be used to implicate family members in a dowry harassment case.

The judge made this observation while quashing criminal proceedings against the in-laws of a woman who filed a dowry harassment complaint, citing insufficient evidence to prosecute them.

The judge was dealing with a criminal petition filed by the in-laws, where the petitioners contended that they resided separately from the complainant and her husband and had no direct involvement in any alleged harassment.

The case was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Dowry Prohibition Act. The complainant, who married the primary accused on June 19, 2021, alleged that she was subjected to both mental and physical harassment by her

husband and his family, who demanded additional dowry. Based on her complaint, the police filed charges against the husband's parents, brother, sister, and brother-in-law. The judge observed that the complaint was lodged after an unexplained delay, raising questions about its legitimacy.

Furthermore, it found that the allegations against the in-laws were vague and lacked any specific overt acts that could sustain a criminal prosecution against them. The judge emphasised that in cases involving matrimonial disputes, a preliminary inquiry is necessary, particularly when complaints are delayed. The judge pointed out that the investigating officer, in this instance, failed to conduct such an inquiry before registering the FIR, which was contrary to established legal guidelines.

PIL ON NALA LANDS ENCROACHMENT IN HC

A two-judge bench of the Telangana High Court took



LEGAL STORIES

on file a Public Interest Litigation challenging alleged encroachment of non-agricultural land (NALA) lands at Gandhi Chowk, Atmakur, Wanaparthy district.

The bench, comprising acting Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Renuka Yara, was dealing with a PIL filed by Basireddy Santhosh Reddy. The petitioner argued that state functionaries have failed to take any action against the alleged encroachers despite making several representations to them.

The petitioner also pointed out that unofficial respondents are in illegal occupation of lands and have made unauthorised constructions on the same. Earlier, the bench said that the petitioner had not disclosed his public-spirited

antecedents and accordingly granted time to amend his affidavit. On Monday, the bench ordered notices to respondents and directed the state to file its response within four weeks.

BAHADURPURA MURDER CASE: COURT ACQUITS 2

The Telangana High Court set aside the conviction of two individuals in the 2013 Bahadurpura murder case, highlighting contradictions in witness testimonies and serious procedural lapses in the investigation.

The bench, comprising Justice K. Surender and Justice E.V. Venugopal, allowed the criminal appeal filed by Razzak Khan and Raheem Khan who were arrayed as accused 1 and 3 respectively challenging the life sentences imposed by the trial court under Section 302 IPC.

The case pertains to the brutal stabbing of a man near Rama Theatre, Bahadurpura, on June 6, 2013, allegedly due to a longstanding property dispute. The trial court con-

victed the appellants while acquitting two other co-accused due to lack of evidence. However, the High Court found multiple inconsistencies in the prosecution's case, particularly in the testimony of the sole eyewitness on whom the case heavily relied.

The sole eyewitness was identified as a "chance witness" with no prior acquaintance with the accused, and testified in court that he saw Razzak committing the crime. However, the court noted a crucial procedural lapse and said no Test Identification Parade (TIP) was conducted, and sole eyewitness identified Razzak for the first time in court, more than four years after the incident.

The bench deemed this delay highly improbable and unreliable.

The case of the prosecution suffered further damage due to glaring contradictions in the timeline of arrests. While other witnesses claimed that the accused were already in police custody on June 6 or 7, 2013, the Investigating

Officer asserted that the arrests took place on June 9, 2013.

The court found this discrepancy substantial enough to cast doubt on the credibility of the prosecution's version of events.

Another critical factor that weighed in favour of the appellants was the unexplained delay in the First Information Report (FIR) reaching the magistrate's court. Despite being registered at 4.30 pm on the day of the incident, the FIR was delivered to the Magistrate only at 10.50 pm, even though the court was nearby.

The bench viewed this delay with suspicion, questioning the integrity of the prosecution's claims. Citing the lack of corroborative evidence, inconsistencies in the timeline, and serious procedural irregularities, the High Court ruled that the accused deserved the benefit of doubt. It set aside the conviction and ordered the immediate release of appellants provided they were not required in any other case.

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DECCAN Chronicle

1 APRIL 2025

PM's visit to RSS HQ signal of an evolving relationship

A lot of water has flowed down the Ganga between the two visits of Narendra Modi to the RSS headquarters in Nagpur: one in 2013 when he was the chief minister of Gujarat and the other on Sunday as Prime Minister of India. The latest visit was the first for a Prime Minister though Modi was not the first RSS volunteer to sit on that chair. Even Modi chose not to rush to the office of the 'volunteer organisation' which has held the Hindutva forces together in these last 11 years during his time as Prime Minister.

That the outcome of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections was not to the liking of the BJP is a generally acknowledged fact. The party went to the town declaring that it had set its eyes on winning 370 seats, the number required to pass a Bill amending the Constitution in the Lok Sabha, on its own and 400 seats for the coalition. The party was so confident of its landslide victory that party president J.P. Nadda openly said the party had come of age and may not depend on the RSS network for electioneering. Observers did not miss the signals that emanated both from the RSS and the BJP and noticed that something that existed in all the earlier election campaigns was missing this time around. The emaciated strength of the BJP in the Lok Sabha today has been attributed to that 'missing' factor.

The numbers may be down but the BJP has not gone back on its Hindutva agenda yet; in fact the third edition of the Modi government is aggressively pursuing it.

The numbers may be down but the BJP has not gone back on its Hindutva agenda yet; in fact the third edition of the Modi government is aggressively pursuing it. The noise it has been making on rolling out a uniform civil code across the nation and the treatment of minorities in states where the party runs the government best illustrate its commitment to its own agenda. The lynch mobs are out on the streets while there is a dedicated group which will look for a Hindu religious symbol under every prominent Muslim place of worship in the country.

The curious development is that the Hindutva pursuit by the BJP has come in for criticism by the RSS chief who, of late, has become an apostle of the idea of diversity.

He would even advise the Hindutva zealots against digging every mosque in search of a Shivaling.

While there apparently is a mismatch in the agenda, the two entities need each other badly to reach their common agenda. The RSS has proved that it can make electoral victory possible even in places considered impossible; the elections to the Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi Assemblies proved the point that the BJP needs the RSS network if it were to win elections. As for the RSS, it has the best ally in power to pursue its agenda to make India a Hindu nation based on one Hindu culture.

While the RSS plays a slow game, the BJP, a political party engaged in an electoral democracy, does not have the luxury; it needs to fight daily battles and earn quick results. The immediate agenda of the party is to win Bihar Assembly elections, followed by the one in Uttar Pradesh. The Prime Minister's visit must be seen as a thanksgiving gesture for the showing in the last three Assembly elections, for a different result would have compromised his government's position a lot, and also a reminder of the job to be completed in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It works well for both the players to be together, and seen to be so, too.

Waive ATM fee for small sums

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to accept the demand of banks to allow a marginal increase in fees for ATM withdrawals. The practice of banks charging customers for using ATMs beyond the permissible limit began in 2014. Initially, the ATM fee for transactions beyond the permissible limit was ₹20, which was revised to ₹21 in 2019 and has now been hiked to ₹23.

Banks sought an increase in ATM fees on the grounds of rising maintenance costs at ATMs. Though the hike effected is merely ₹2 per transaction, it reflects a lack of motivation among bank managements to find innovative solutions to their problems.

According to RBI data, as of January 2025, India had 2,16,706 ATMs, mostly located in prime areas. Banks could have earned additional revenue by allowing their non-banking group companies, with interests in insurance or mutual funds, to use the space to promote their products. They could have also explored the possibility of monetising ATM slips to subsidise operational costs. Since the introduction of UPI payments, digital transactions have soared in India, while cash withdrawals from ATMs have been steadily declining. Over 57 crore cash withdrawal transactions were made at ATMs in 2022, but the number dropped to 52.72 crore in 2023 and further plummeted to 48.83 crore in 2024.

In this scenario, transaction fees could discourage people from using ATMs, adversely affecting the poor, senior citizens, and digitally-handicapped individuals who prefer cash transactions due to growing digital frauds. If a customer wishes to withdraw ₹200 from an ATM after exhausting the permissible limit, they would be charged a fee of ₹23, which amounts to over 10 per cent of the cash withdrawn. The RBI should, therefore, consider waiving ATM fees for small cash withdrawals.

DECCAN CHRONICLE
KAUSHIK MITTER
 Editor
K. SUDHAKAR
 Printer & Publisher
DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:
Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003. Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patnam, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284.
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Norms for judges: Revise or shred, choice is open...



Shikha Mukerjee

The "not meant to be exhaustive but illustrative" list of what judicial officers may not do, because that is what is "expected of a judge" is, by today's fast-paced times, more than a little out of date.

When obsolescence happens at DeepSeek speed, the gap between what judges should do and what they actually do invites a relook at the 1997 code, a short and sweet document listing 16 actions, summarised as the "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life", approved and adopted by the full bench of the Supreme Court, way back, when values were commonly understood and shared.

Judges, according to the list, should do nothing that "erodes the credibility" of members of the higher judiciary. Therefore, stashes of cash in outhouses on premises occupied by a person from the higher judiciary requires not only an in-house enquiry, as the Supreme Court has done regarding Justice Yashwant Varma, but an impartial investigation by an "agency" that is deemed independent. His repatriation to the Allahabad high court is a face-saving move, for him and the Supreme Court, because it confirms that has been taken, though it falls far short of the impeachment demanded by various bar associations.

Judges are being indicted by the Supreme Court of being "totally insensitive, inhuman" and of making observations that are "unknown to tenets of law". The judge in question, Ram Manohar Narayan Mishra of Allahabad high court, in the top court's view, demonstrated a "complete lack of sensitivity" on what was attempt to rape

on a minor victim. The quibbling over what parts of the body could be touched and how breaking the drawstring of pyjamas didn't constitute attempted rape may have shocked women, activists and the public at large, but then not everyone is equally sensitive and, by extension, equally human.

If the norm is for judges to "practice a degree of aloofness consistent with the dignity of his office", and keep a distance from holding forth in public on "political matters or on matters that are pending or likely to arise for judicial determination", the Supreme Court seems to have ducked doing much on the statements of Allahabad high court judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav. The judge chose to speak at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad event, where he used unparliamentary language to describe Muslims and declared his political position: "I feel no hesitation in saying that this is India and it will run as per the wishes of its majority." He used his position to endorse adoption of the Uniform Civil Code by invoking the Supreme Court indirectly, saying "the country's top court also supports it".

The judiciary can fume as it has done that hate speech "is happening because the State is impotent, the State doesn't act", but it certainly can't do more than that when state governments use bulldozers to raze the homes and establishments of people under incomplete investigation and no final decision under the law, for committing violence. On the use of bulldozers in Prayagraj, a bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said: "It shocks our conscience how the residential premises were demolished in a high-handed man-

Judges, according to "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life", should do nothing that "erodes the credibility" of members of the higher judiciary.

ner". Justice Bhuyan added: "Using a bulldozer to demolish a property is like running a bulldozer over the Constitution. It is a negation of the very concept of rule of law and, if not checked, would destroy it. The courts cannot tolerate such a process. If we tolerate it in one case, it will continue." Bulldozers are now being used not only by the State, belying the judiciary's view that the State is "impotent". Bulldozers were used, with impunity it may be added, in Nagpur hours before the court hearing on the notices on use of these wrecking machines by a State that routinely engages in violence in a manner that appears coercive and intimidating.

The point that the judiciary is probably too embarrassed to note is: who cares? Organisations like the Karni Sena, which once launched a campaign against distortions of Rajput history in the film Jodha Akbar, obviously do not. Bulldozers, under Karni Sena stewardship, were rolled out to raze the house of a Member of Parliament, Ramji Lal Suman, from the Samajwadi Party, because of his Rajya Sabha speech in which he invoked the name of a Rajput warrior, Rana Sanga. The impudence of the act seems based on a sense of immunity provided by the chanting of "Jai Shri Ram" by Karni Sena members as the bulldozers moved in.

The rules, or even the law, are made to be broken, because rule-breakers, if the Karni Sena's actions are anything to go by, are winners and doers. Aiding by the law, as victims of bulldozed homes and establishments have found out to their cost, are

the last resort of the timid, and ultimately, losers.

The judiciary can fulfilminate that using bulldozers and slapping criminal cases on free speech are tantamount to gagging "in the public domain, which is so fundamental to a free society". The issue is not how "shaky on our fundamentals" respective state governments are, but on their intent, which is political, regardless of whether it negates the very concept of rule of law and that too in the name of enforcing the law to maintain order.

This is all school-level civics, or what is officially "Social and Political Life" under the National Council of Educational Research and Training design. Under the separation of powers and the principle of checks and balances, there are three verticals. The legislatures, where laws are made and governments are meant to be held to account, have in the era of brute majorities been reduced to extensions of the executive, leaving the judiciary as the only bulwark in "might is right" situations.

The judiciary can decide on what is lawfully right or wrong, but the executive calls the shots, because implementation is a power that is exclusive to government. As is evident, the judiciary is increasingly less effective, as the concept of "wishes of the majority" sneaks in, as a deterrent, even though it is the "last resort". Unknown tenets are being written and are in the process of evolving into the new and known tenets.

The judiciary, under the old order, was the keeper and upholder of the law. The Supreme Court has time and again been challenged by a wilful executive, as in the "bail and not jail is the norm" practice. But who cares about old norms? New norms prevail, dictated by the wishes of the majority, and what prevails is then the law.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist based in Kolkata

LETTERS

TRAFFIC POLICE

It was pathetic to see an old woman pleading with the police not to seize flowers she was selling (Tough rule, March 29). If cops are interested in clearing pavements, why do they ignore motorcycle mechanics who encroach pavements?

Kerfegar Antia
Hyderabad

WATER OUTAGE INFO

I am surprised to see Osmansagar and Himayatsagar still being used for drinking water needs of Hyderabad (HMWS&SB sets up water supply outage dashboard to improve ops, March 31). The previous government had declared them unfit for human consumption.

Koona Naveen
Secunderabad

AMBEDKAR

Ambedkar has often clarified that he is not the sole architect of the Constitution (Modi visits RSS Hq, invokes Ambedkar, March 31). Ignoring others in this titanic work is nothing but dishonouring them.

N.S.K. Prasad
Hyderabad

CAUTION ON FINE RICE

Finely polished and processed rice is not good for rich or poor as a staple diet as it is a well-established to cause metabolic diseases like diabetes (KCR didn't even think of fine rice for poor: Revanth, March 31). Politicians often ignore policymakers' inputs to gain popularity.

Dr Sridevi G.
Secunderabad

Politicians are making people lazy by giving freebies. When people get free rice to eat, free house to live, then what will they work for? They can be used for development.

Harish Kumar Agarwal
Hyderabad

Parties must stop accusing Opposition for the good governance. When they are lamenting on the previous government for leading the state to bankruptcy, why distribute fine rice by paying more?

Mekala Gopinath
Hyderabad

MOHANLAL SORRY

Mohanlal is neither the director nor script writer of the movie to apologise (Mohanlal apologises on film row, March 31).

V.S. Prakash Rao
Hyderabad

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com.



Aakar Patel

Don't just 'reject' USCIRF's report, refute allegations on specific points

Each year, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom names those nations whose governments engage in or tolerate "particularly severe" violations of religious freedoms, especially of minorities. It calls such nations "Countries of Particular Concern" and it asks the US state department to sanction individuals and institutions in these nations.

This year these are Afghanistan, Burma, China, Cuba, Eritrea, India, Iran, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam.

India first came on the list in 2020 and has been on it each year ever since.

In the 2020 report, USCIRF said that "India took a sharp downward turn in 2019. The national government used its strengthened parliamentary majority to institute national-level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims". It said the Narendra Modi government's prejudice against India's Muslims was showing through India's actions on citizenship laws, cow slaughter, Kashmir and conversions. The report noted the Supreme Court's Ayodhya ruling and the conduct of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. It recommended to then US President Donald Trump that he designate India as a Country of Particular Concern "for engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act". It sought sanctions

against India. The response from our ministry of external affairs was as follows: "We reject the observations on India in the USCIRF Annual Report. Its biased and tendentious comments against India are not new. But on this occasion, its misrepresentation has reached new levels. It has not been able to carry its own commissioners in its endeavour. We regard it as an organisation of particular concern and will treat it accordingly." India did not respond to a single accusation or deny any of the facts.

The reference to "carry its own commissioners" is about dissenting notes from two of the commissioners, Gary Bauer and Tenzin Dorjee, who agreed with the other seven commissioners that the situation in India was problematic but did not want it to be designated a CPC.

The next year, 2021, the report noted India's "disinformation and hateful rhetoric - including from government officials - often targeted religious minorities, continuing familiar patterns" during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This time there were no dissents and from here on, each of the four years under President Joe Biden, there have been none. In 2021, the Government of India did not respond. This has been the pattern since, and sometimes India has hit out and at other times been silent. In the 2025 report, released on March 25, the USCIRF said among other things that the Trump administration should "impose targeted sanctions on individuals and entities, such as Vikas Yadav and RAW, for

their culpability in severe violations of religious freedom by freezing their assets and/or barring their entry into the United States".

Within hours, our ministry of external affairs put out a statement that called the report "biased and politically motivated" and attempting to "misrepresent isolated incidents and cast aspersions on India's vibrant multicultural society reflect a deliberate agenda rather than a genuine concern for religious freedom". It said that: "In fact, it is the USCIRF that should be designated as an entity of concern."

One wishes that the Indian government does designate USCIRF formally and sanctions it because it is true that it is not free from bias. The USCIRF refers to itself as a "bipartisan" body, meaning both Republicans and Democrats are represented on it, and it advises the US state department. But it is partisan in other ways. USCIRF reports make no reference to the genocide in the Gaza Strip and the apartheid practised by Israel on Palestinians, including Christians, because that is inconvenient for the US government.

It would have been better for India to have responded to the specific allegations. But in our part of the world, who says something is as important and perhaps even more important than what is being said. We should have responded specifically, particularly because it may not necessarily be true that the people saying it are biased or politically motivated against us. This is how the 2021 USCIRF report on India ended:

"Individual Views of Commissioner Johnnie Moore":

"I love India. I have floated early in the morning down the Ganges in Varanasi, walked every alley in Old Delhi, stood in awe of the architecture in Agra, sipped tea next to the Dalai Lama's temple in Dharamsala, circled the shrine in Ajmer, and looked in awe at the Golden Temple. All along the way, I have met Christian brothers and sisters who serve the poor selflessly, often in difficult circumstances.

"Of all the countries in the world, India should not be a country of particular concern. It is the world's largest democracy and it is governed by a pristine Constitution. It is diversity personified and its religious life has been its greatest historic blessing.

"Yet, India does seem to be at a crossroads. Its democracy - still young and freewheeling - is creating through the ballot box difficult challenges for itself. The answer, of course, is for India's institutions to draw upon their rich history to protect their values. India must always resist allowing political and inter-communal conflict to be exacerbated by religious tensions. India's government and people have everything to gain and absolutely nothing to lose from preserving social harmony and protecting the rights of every one. India can. India must."

The writer is the chair of Amnesty International India. Twitter: @aakar_patel

SHORT TAKES
MENTALLY ILL MAN DROWNS, SON DIES IN RESCUE BID

DC CORRESPONDENT
NALGONDA, MARCH 31

A man and his son drowned in Voora Cheruvu, a local irrigation tank in Allapadu of Bonakal mandal on Monday. The victims were identified as 65-year-old Phatan Yusuf Miya and his 45-year-old son Phatan Kareemulla.

According to police, Yusuf Miya, who had been mentally unsound for the past couple of years, entered the tank and slipped into the water. In a desperate attempt to save his father, his son also plunged into the water, but both were unable to get out of the water and drowned in the tank.

Local residents blamed the digging of deep pits in the tank for the tragedy. It was reported that sand had been removed from the tank using procaine and transported to a nearby brick kiln unit, which left hazardous depressions under the water. Yusuf Miya is survived by his wife and three sons. Authorities were investigating the incident.

MUSLIMS STAGE PROTEST AGAINST NEW WAQF BILL

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, MARCH 31

Muslims in Adilabad district protested on Monday against the Waqf Board Amendment Bill. Demonstrators, including many youth, marched in cities such as Uttoor, Danthanpalli, Bheersaipet, and Ichoda, donning black ribbons and holding placards to underscore their message.

The protests coincided with Id-ul-Fitr celebrations, as community members gathered at local Dargahs to offer prayers while wearing black ribbons—a symbolic gesture of dissent inspired by a call from the Muslim Personal Law Board. Community leaders argued that Waqf lands, historically donated by ancestors, were now under threat of privatisation by the Central government. They stressed that protecting these lands was a duty shared by all.

To maintain public order, a sizeable police force was deployed and strict security measures were enforced at Idgahs in Nirmal, Bhainsa and Adilabad, ensuring that the mass prayers proceeded without incident. In a show of solidarity, political figures, along with Hindu and other community leaders, joined the celebrations at the Idgah, extending warm greetings to their Muslim neighbours.

DEVADULA IRRIGATION HALTED AFTER MAJOR LEAK

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MARCH 31

The third phase of the Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme was abruptly halted following a major water leak in a newly constructed tunnel near the Dharmasagar Reservoir.

The leak, occurring just 200 metres before the water delivery system, resulted in a massive outflow from the Devannapet pump house, flooding nearby agricultural fields and severely damaging rice crops.

Farmers quickly alerted local reservoir staff upon noticing the leakage.

The staff then notified higher authorities, prompting an immediate shutdown of the water supply. Engineers were dispatched to assess the situation and confirmed the severity of the leak, though an exact timeline for repairs remains uncertain.

Authorities have indicated that the contracting agency responsible for the tunnel's construction will manage the necessary repairs.

The incident has delivered a major setback for farmers nearing the final stages of their crop cycle.

The leak is also of grave concern for the Bhagiratha water supply project, which provides drinking water to Warangal city and 270 surrounding villages. Damage to the pipeline track connected to the Bhagiratha system has raised alarms over potential disruptions in the water supply.

Local officials assured that the situation will be closely monitored in the coming days, but the unexpected disruption has caused significant distress among farmers and residents who depend on the irrigation system and water supply for their livelihoods.

UoH boycotts classes, 50 acres cleared

Tensions escalate on Sunday as police detained several varsity students, leading to heightened unrest

MRITTIKA BANERJEE | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Khaki uniforms were all over the University of Hyderabad (UoH) campus on Monday. At the northern gate, a protest placard fluttered stating, "Not an inch more. Not an inch back" with the famed mushroom rock hand-painted next to it, a clear message from the students of UoH.

Access was tight. Inside, the campus had changed overnight with 50 acres of green land cleared in a single night.

Photos released from within the campus show more than 20 JCBs in action inside the premises. They entered on Sunday and by next morning had razed large swathes of greenery.

"The entire east campus is barricaded. Three departments, mathematics, economics and management, are inside that zone. They aren't even letting in students from those departments," said HCUU general secretary Nihad Sulaiman.

Tensions rose after several students were picked up by police on Sunday

night. Nihad was among those detained and later released, but two remain incustody. Students call the charges vague. "They were booked for obstructing duties," said a union member. "One was taken yesterday and another, who went to check on the others, was also detained."

No official explanation was offered for the detentions. "Around 30 to 40 police have now pitched tents in the campus, with tear gas at hand. Any reaction from our side could worsen things," he said.

Students say officials also tried to extract undertakings on video, asking detainees to promise that they would not interfere in the land issue. "We refused," he added.

Police officials refuted the claims stating, "There are no tear gas and the police are outside the campus. If students are being denied access to departments, that's the university's doing. We're not barricading anything." Students disagree. They describe tighter surveil-



Police presence at the University of Hyderabad increased as protests continue, with authorities maintaining strict control over the campus. —K. DURGA RAO



Students protest at UoH against the sale of Kancha Gachibowli land. —DC

UNION MINISTERS CRITICISE LATHI CHARGE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Union minister G. Kishan Reddy took strong exception to the 'draconian' steps being taken by the state government regarding auction of 400 acres of land in Kancha Gachibowli.

Writing on 'X', Kishan Reddy posted, "The Congress government's brazen auction of 400 acres of land would recklessly obliterate the rich flora and fauna of the region! It is heart-wrenching to hear the cries of national birds — the peacocks, as they bulldoze the region's biodiversity at midnight. The voices of students are being brutally silenced while institutes of eminence like Hyderabad Central University (HCU) are being encroached. (sic)." In a separate statement, Sanjay Kumar lashed out at the police for their indiscriminate lathi charge on students, who were protesting to protect HCU lands.

KTR assures support to UoH students

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The BRS on Monday criticised the Congress government for "brutal suppression" of students from Hyderabad Central University who have been fighting for the past few days to protect 400 acres of land, that is a lung space for the fast-growing western part of Hyderabad.

Party working president K.T. Rama Rao, speaking with reporters after a delegation of representatives from various HCU

student unions called on him at Telangana Bhavan.

Condemned the government's actions. Students highlighted the state government's alleged attempts to seize 400 acres of university land under the pretext of development.

Rama Rao assured them of BRS' support and accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's administration of prioritising real estate profits over the welfare of students, the environment, and Hyderabad's future.

lance, internal barricades, and scrutiny at entry points. "They're checking phones and cameras in the east campus; threatening us with cases. Some were

told those detained won't be released if protests continue," said a UoHSU member. The timing has raised eyebrows. A PIL by activist Uday Krishna and

NGO Water Foundation which is seeking to declare the land an ecologically sensitive zone, is pending in the Telangana High Court.

400-acre land split: No land survey, clarifies UoH

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The situation at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) turned more complicated after the university administration issued a statement on Monday denying that a land survey was conducted on its premises.

The clarification follows media reports suggesting that the university had agreed to demarcation of 400 acres of land resumed by the state government in 2006 from IMG Academies Bharata Pvt. Ltd. According to the varsity, the only action taken by revenue authorities thus far has been a preliminary inspection of the land's topography last July.

No formal demarcation has taken place, and the institution maintains that it was neither informed of such plans nor has it granted approval.

"The University of Hyderabad... has been requesting the State Government for alienation of its land.

The University will forward the representations of the stakeholders to the State Government to reconsider the points raised and request the State Government to conserve the environment and biodiversity in the area," reads the registrar's statement.

The statement also disputes a recent claim attributed to the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIC), which allegedly stated that the university had agreed to the land demarcation.

They also made it clear that under clause (ix) of statute 13, any transfer of land to the university requires the executive council's formal consent. The body includes six nominees appointed by the President of India. Such a process, the university noted, has not been initiated.



The controversial land in Kancha Gachibowli. —DC

BRS wanted to take back 159 acres

FROM PAGE 1

"Despite repeated requests of the UoH, the BRS government ignored the long pending demand of the university to alienate 1,785 acres," a senior revenue official pointed out. An expert committee appointed by the previous BRS government had also recommended taking back 159 acres from the university for giving it to other educational institutions.

"The extent of land (1,785 acres) being requested for alienation by the petitioner university is much more than its requirement," the government said in an affidavit filed before the High Court in Writ Petition No 816 of 2021. The affidavit also clearly stated that the land given to IMG Bharata and other entities was clearly demarcated and that there was no truth in the university's claim that it was in possession of the said land. Further, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), which was under Rama Rao when he was the minister for municipal administration and urban development, bulldozed its way to form a

road taking 18.30 acres of land on which the UoH claimed ownership.

When the University registrar was called for discussions which remained inconclusive, the GHMC went ahead with road leveling activity.

"The petitioner university was surprised to notice that road leveling activity was taken up by the GHMC for the formation of a road," the university counsel brought to HC's notice.

The UoH had been given an alternate land parcel of 397 acres way back in 2004 in exchange of land taken for IMG Bharata thus raising serious questions over the university's latest claims on the land that the Congress-led state government has decided to auction now.

The Panc.hanama copies of February 3, 2004, clearly showed that the university had handed over 534 acres in Survey No 25 of Kancha Gachibowli to the state government and took possession of 397 acres in Survey No 35, 36 and 37 of Gopannapally.

In both the documents, then university registrar Y. Narasimulu was a signatory.

More metal debris removed from SLBC tunnel on day 37

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Search continued in the disaster struck Srisaillam Left Bank Tunnel near Domalapatna village of Nagarkurnool district of Telangana on Monday, day 37 of the operations with officials hopeful that they may be able to find at least one more of the still missing six tunnel workers in the debris and silt in the next couple of days.

Officials said more of the final stretch of the tunnel was being cleared and silt removal was continuing.

This work is expected to gain more speed when efforts to extend the conveyor belt from the current 13.6 km point to the 13.7 km point. The collapse in the tunnel occurred at the 13.9 km point on February 22, and the last 30 metres towards the collapse zone has been



Search continues in Srisaillam Tunnel collapse for missing workers. —DC

declared as a prohibited zone.

While some of the missing workers are feared to be buried in this zone, officials said on Monday, large chunks of metal from the tunnel boring machine, that were bro-

ken and buried under the silt, and some which had to be cut from the machine, were removed and carried out of the tunnel clearing

the path for the excavators being used to lift and remove the silt.

CITY BRIEFS

2 arrested in protest

Hyderabad: Gachibowli Police arrested two persons on Monday for assaulting a public servant, criminal intimidation, rioting, and issuing threats during the protests against the development of Kancha Gachibowli land parcel. The arrested Bondugula Rohit Kumar and Erram Naveen Kumar were produced before the court on Monday and sent to judicial remand.

The protests started in Kancha Gachibowli on Sunday evening after the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIC) initiated leveling works. Students of University of Hyderabad gathered in the area and raised slogans for ceasing work.

Farmers unite to rescue Kammarigudem crops

P. SRINIVAS | DC
NALGONDA, MARCH 31

In a remarkable display of unity, farmers in Kammarigudem have successfully safeguarded their paddy crops by collectively funding and installing a high-powered pump to draw water from a nearby flood canal into the village's irrigation tank. Their collective effort and self-reliance have become an inspiration for neighbouring communities.

In recent months, groundwater levels in Kammarigudem plummeted drastically, leading to the drying of agricultural pump sets. The depletion was further aggravated by the drying up of the local irrigation tank, which spans 18 acres. Faced with the imminent threat of crop failure, the farmers decided to act on their own. Pooling together a

voluntary contribution of around ₹5 lakh, they purchased a 20 HP pump set. Over one and a half months, they systematically pumped water from the flood canal into the irrigation tank. Once refilled, the tank significantly boosted the groundwater table within a 1.5-kilometer radius. As a result, over 3,000 acres of paddy fields in Kammarigudem, Govindannagudem, and Thummalagudem — all reliant on borewell irrigation — were saved from withering. This success not only ensured a bountiful harvest but also bolstered the farmers' confidence in their collective strength. "The increased groundwater level has helped us avoid a drinking water shortage," said farmer Mallikanti Raju, noting that it also prevented the distress sale of cattle during summer.

All praise for collector

Karimnagar: Billionaire entrepreneur Anand Mahindra has lauded IAS officer D. Krishna Bhaskar for his remarkable strides in water conservation in Telangana's Rajanna-Sircilla district.

Bhaskar's strategy, which boosted ground water levels by six metres in less than four years, has been incorporated into the training curriculum at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie. Taking to X, Mahindra referred to Bhaskar's achievements as "astonishing," highlighting the urgent need to protect India's rapidly depleting water resources particularly crucial for the nation's agriculture-driven economy.

LEGAL POINT

HC sets aside trial court's order paving way for Lakshmi Parvathi to take charge of Basavatarakam trust

HC allows Balakrishna's plea against Lakshmi Parvathi

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHAR | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The Telangana High Court allowed a petition filed by actor Nandamuri Balakrishna and late Nandamuri Harikrishna, sons of N.T. Rama Rao, to set aside the trial court orders, which paves the way for Nandamuri Lakshmi Parvathi's appointment as the managing trustee of Basavatarakam Memorial Medical Trust in Banjara Hills.

As the dispute over the will was raised by the children of N.T. Rama Rao, the issue went to the trial court. The two witness-attestors, however, have since passed away. Lakshmi Parvathi filed a petition before the trial court to confirm her

TRUST DISPUTE

- Telangana High Court set aside trial court's 2018 order.
- Lakshmi Parvathi's appointment as trustee contested by Balakrishna and Harikrishna.
- Will verification disputed after witnesses passed away.
- Court cited Indian Evidence Act, non-compliance with CPC summons.
- Trial court's ruling overturned, trustee appointment remains unclear.

er rejected her application as the other witness was alive at that time. Later, the second witness also died and the trial court allowed Subbaiah's son to identify the signature and handwriting. Prasad Rao stated in his affidavit that his father had passed away nine years back and that his father informed him about the execution of the alleged will dated November 18, 1995 of which he was an attester. The said statement made a ground for Lakshmi Parvathi to be appointed as the managing trustee. This was objected to by

Balakrishna, Harikrishna and the Basavatarakam Medical Trust. They approached the High Court contending that the attester's son was neither a signatory to the alleged will nor was the will executed in his presence. Justice Radha Rani recently allowed their prayer and set aside the trial court orders on the grounds that the genuineness of the Will could only be established in the manner provided under the provision of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. As per Section 69 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872,

if no such attesting witness was found, it must not only be proved that the attestation of one attesting witness was in his handwriting. But, in this case, the son of a deceased witness was not in a position to identify the handwriting and signature on the Will document. Moreover, the court pointed out that summons under Order XVI, Rule 10 of Criminal Procedure Code had not been served to the attestors, which is mandatory for invoking section 69 of the Act. Saying so, it set aside the trial court orders.

BLOCKBUSTER MAXX SEE TODAY



SUDARSHAN 35MM-RTC X ROADS Enjoy 4k laser projection & dolby atmos 11.30,2.45,6.00,9.15PM

SVC SANGETHA70MM 11.00,2.30,6.15,9.15PM SVC EESHWAR70MM 11.15,2.30,6.15,9.15PM SVC SRILAKSHMI/INDRA NAGENDRA 11.15,2.30,6.15,9.15PM

VENKATARAMANA/PADMAYATHI 11.15,2.30,6.15,9.15PM ASIAN KONARK70MM-DSNR 11.15,2.30,6.15,9.15PM

MALLIKARJUNA70MM 11.15,2.30,6.15,9.30PM

Table listing movie showtimes for ASIAN SENSATION, PRASANTH70MM, SRIRAMULU70MM, TALLURI70MM, SRISAIRAM70MM, SVC SIVASAKTHI, MAHALAKSHMI70, BHUJANGA70MM, ASIAN JYOTHI70, RAJYALAKSHMI70, NARTHAKI70MM, SRIRAMANA COM, SUSHMA70MM, VYJAYANTHI70MM, SAIRANGA70MM, GOKUL70MM, ASIAN MUKUND, BR HITECH70MM, SREEPREMA70MM, VLS SRIDEVI70MM, SANTOSHIBPATNAM, ASIAN SWAPNA, RAGHAVENDRA70, KRISHNAALIAYABD, VENKATESWARA70, GANESH70MM

9.40,10.35,12.15,1.30,2.50,4.15,4.50,5.25,8.00,10.25PM

10.30,1.10,4.40,7.20,10.00PM

9.05,9.40,11.30,12.30,1.50,4.15,5.40,6.40,9.05,11.30PM

CCPL-10.00,11.00,1.45,4.30,7.15,7.25,10.00PM | DSL-10.00,11.00,12.45,1.45,3.30,4.30,6.15,7.15,10.00PM | MANTRA-10.00,11.00,12.45,1.45,3.30,4.30,6.15,7.15,10.00PM | SUDHA-10.30,12.00,2.45,5.30,7.55,8.15,10.40,11.00,12.45,1.30,2.15,3.30,6.15,6.15,7.45,9.00,10.30PM | MANJEERA-10.00,11.00,1.45,4.30,7.15,7.25,10.00PM

FORUM MALL-10.00,11.00,12.00,1.45,2.45,4.30,5.30,7.15,8.15,10.00,11.00PM | INORBIT-10.20,11.10,1.30,4.45,5.30,7.35,8.15,11.00PM | CENTRAL-10.15,11.00,2.10,4.40,5.05,8.05,10.55PM | RK-10.30,2.10,4.45,8.05,11.00PM | HITECH-10.15,11.00,2.10,4.40,5.05,8.05,10.55PM | L&T METRO-10.20,11.10,1.30,1.55,4.45,5.30,7.45,8.15,10.00,11.00PM | IRRUMMANZIL-10.15,11.10,1.30,1.45,4.45,5.30,7.45,8.15,10.00,11.00PM | PRISM-10.15,11.00,1.45,4.30,7.25,10.20PM | PRESTONE-10.15,2.10,4.35,8.00,10.45PM | ATRIUM MALL-10.15,11.00,2.10,5.05,8.05,10.55PM

GVK-10.20,11.00,1.45,4.30,7.15,10.00,11.00PM | GSM MALL-10.00,11.00,12.45,1.45,4.30,5.30,7.15,8.15,10.00,11.00PM

NECKLACE-10.00,10.40,12.45,1.25,2.05,7.35,8.15,10.30,11.00 | ASHOKA-10.00,11.00,1.45,4.30,7.15,10.00,11.00PM | MP MALL-10.20,1.00,1.50,4.40,7.50,10.20,10.50PM

SHALINI-11.10,2.00,4.50,7.40,10.30PM

BALANAGAR-11.10,2.00,4.50,7.40,10.30PM

CHANDANAGAR-11.10,2.00,4.50,7.40,10.30PM

MIYAPUR-10.30,2.10,4.45,8.05,11.10PM

MALKAJGIRI-10.30,2.10,4.45,8.05,11.10PM

GACHIBOWLI-8.00,9.00,10.30,1.00,1.30,3.30,6.00,8.30,11.00PM

SIVAGANGA-11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM

SHA-11.15,2.30,6.30,9.30PM

RADHIKA-10.30,1.35,4.30,7.20,10.25PM

RELEASE APRIL 4th



SANDHYA35MM-8.00AM BRAMARAMBA70MM-8.00AM LAXMIKALA-11.30AM

10.05AM 1.30PM

PRASAD'S-11.30AM

CCPL MALL | SUDHA | MANTRA MALL LULU MALL | DSL MALL

FORUM MALL | INORBIT MALL | CENTRAL | RK MALL MUSARAMBAGH | GALLERIA | IRRUMMANZIL ATRIUM MALL | IOCN HITECH | PRESTONE MALL

GVK MALL | MP MALL | ASHOKA ONE GSM MALL | NECKLACE MALL | PRISM MALL

BALANAGAR | CHANDANAGAR | SHALINI MIYAPUR | MALKAJGIRI

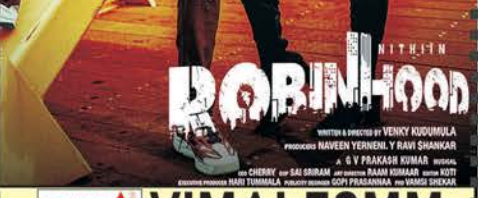
AMEERPET | SKY MALL | GACHIBOWLI

CINESQUARE | MCUBE MALL | MJR SQUARE JP MALL | CINEPLANET | CINEMART SIVAGANGA | SHA SHAHENSHA |

AMR MALL GPR MALL NEO 10.30AM

TIVOLI MALL BVK MALL

ROBBING HEARTS ALL OVER



VIMAL70MM 64 Channel Dolby atmos 4k laser projection Centrally air condition

SANDHYA70MM Enjoy 4k laser projection & Dolby atmos

RAJADHANI70MM

JAGADAMBA70MM

ARJUN70MM-KUKATPALLY

RAMAKRISHNA70MM ALANKAR70MM

RANGA70MM-JEEDIMETLA

SENSATION CINEMAS LAXMI70-SHAMSHABAD

VENKATARAMANA/PADMAYATHI

ASIAN SWAPNA VIJETHA70MM KATEDHAN BORABANDA

TALLURI70MM SAMPOORNA70MM ECIL ROADS VANASTALIPURAM

SRIKRISHNA70 SREERAMANA GOLD-AMBERPET UPPAL

SVC SRILAKSHMI INDIRA/NAGENDRA KARMANGHAT KARMANGHAT

AMB MALL AAA MALL

LAXMIKALA MOOSAPET

PRASAD'S NTR GARDENS

GRAND 3rd WEEK



RAJADHANI DELUXE-11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15 VISWANATH70-11.45,2.45,6.45,9.45

TALLURI70MM-ECIL 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15 INDIRA/NAGENDRA 2.30PM

ANJALI70MM-11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM

9.55,6.40,10.50 1.35,4.10,3.00

GPR-4.25PM NEO 4.35PM

TIVOLI 10.30AM 10.50PM

LAXMIKALA-11.30,6.25PM

RADHIKA-1.40PM MCUBE MALL-1.25PM CINEMART-1.15,7.45PM CINESQUARE-4.40,10.50PM JP MALL-4.40,10.50PM CINEPLANET-4.20PM

GACHIBOWLI-11.30,5.15PM

PRISM MALL-4.45PM PRESTONE-1.10PM ITRIUM-1.40PM MOOSARAMBAGH-1.25,7.45PM IRRUMMANZIL-1.25,7.45PM L&T METRO MALL-3.45,10.30PM ICON HITECH-4.25PM CENTRAL-8.00PM INORBIT MALL-1.55,7.45PM FORUM-11.40,4.20,10.55PM

CCPL-12.00PM MANTRA-9.45AM,11.15PM DSL-9.45AM,11.15PM LULU-12.40PM TNR-9.00,11.55,3.35,10.55PM

GVK-2.10PM/ASHOKA-7.45PM MP MALL-1.30PM GSM-10.00,4.20,10.50PM NECKLACE-1.45,7.35PM

SHALINI-1.20PM BALANAGAR-4.50PM CHANDANAGAR-1.20PM

AMR MALL GPR MALL NEO 10.30AM

TIVOLI MALL BVK MALL

BJP's call for alliance stuns AIADMK cadre

No formal party meeting held over tie-up

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 31

The open bid by the BJP to renew its alliance with the AIADMK that was snapped unilaterally by AIADMK general secretary, Edappadi K. Palaniswami in September 2023, has reportedly left the grassroots workers and functionaries at various levels confused and, despite opinion within the party remaining divided on the tie-up, there seems to be no alternative other than toeing the BJP line.

A series of recent developments, starting with Palaniswami making an unpublished visit to New Delhi and meeting BJP top brass, followed by another visit of K.A. Sengottaiyan, a senior AIADMK leader rebelling against Palaniswami, and then Union home minister Amit Shah declaring that the NDA would sweep the Assembly elections in the State in 2026, has caused the confusion. Though no formal party meeting of functionaries was held to discuss the renewal of alliance with the

BJP, the summoning of both Palaniswami and Sengottaiyan to New Delhi to meet Amit Shah and union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman left the ordinary cadre intrigued. It is said that a recalcitrant Palaniswami, who refused to give a commitment to AIADMK joining the NDA and was also not prepared to toe the BJP's line on issues like seat sharing and power sharing (in the event of the NDA winning the polls), impelled the BJP to look for an alternative strategy and zero in on Sengottaiyan.

1,021 Kerala LSGs 'waste-free' now

Thiruvananthapuram, Mar 31: Kerala minister for local self-governments M.B. Rajesh on Monday announced that at 1,021 out of 1,034 local self-governments institutions in the state have been declared 'waste-free'. In a Facebook post, Rajesh stated, "We are pleased to share that out of 19,489 panchayats and municipal wards in Kerala, 19,093 have been declared as waste-free. Likewise, 1,021 out of 1,034 local self-government institutions have achieved the same milestone."

Advertisement for movie 'KUMAR 70MM KACHIGUDA' with showtimes 11.30, 2.30, 6.45, 9.45PM.

Advertisement for movie 'UNANIMOUS BLOCK BUSTER' with showtimes 11.30, 2.30, 6.45, 9.45PM.



SAJID NADIADWALA'S SIKANDAR AN AR MURUGADOSS FILM IN CINEMAS NOW

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW

RAMAKRISHNA 35MM ABIDS SENSATION KHAIARATABAD

AMB CINEMAS GACHIBOWLI PRASADS MULTIPLEX NTR GARDENS

TARAKARAMA KACHIGUDA METRO THEATRE SAHAYADRI YADAGIRI

ARADHANA RING ROAD SAI RAJA MUSHEERABAD SRI LAXMI NAGAR ALWAL

CYBERABAD INORBIT MALL - MADHAPUR | SUJANA FORUM PRISTACE MALL - KPFB | ICON HITECH - MADHAPUR | NEXT GALLERIA MALL - PANJAGUTTA | IRRAM MANZIL | MUSARAMBAGH | CENTRAL MALL - PANJAGUTTA | RK MALL - BANJARA HILLS | ATRIUM MALL - GACHIBOWLI | PRESTON PRIME - GACHIBOWLI | PRISM MALL - GACHIBOWLI | GVK ONE - BANJARA HILLS | MP MALL - KACHIGUDA | GSM MALL - MADINAGUDA | SATVA NECKLACE MALL - KAVADIGUDA | ASHOKA - KUKATPALLY

LULU - KUKATPALLY | MANTRA MALL - ATTAPUR | CCPL - MALKAJGIRI | SUDHA - SHALIBANDA | DSL VIRTUE MALL - UPPAL | TNR MALL - KOMPALI

SHALINI SIVANI - DSKN | BALANAGAR | CHANDANAGAR | MIYAPUR | MALKAJGIRI

CINE PLANET - KOMPALI | CINE SQUARE - UPPAL | SIVA GANGA - DSKN | CINEPREY SHASHIKALA - MOOSAPET | SHA SHAHENSHA - CHINTAL | M CUBE MALL - ATTAPUR | RADHIKA - KAPRA | MUKTA CINEMA A2 MUR CINEMAS | SWAPNA - KATEDAN |

GACHIBOWLI | AMEERPET | SKY MALL - SANATHNAGAR

APARNA NALLAGANDLA AMR MOULALI AAA CINEMAS AMEERPET

J PRASAD (Madinaguda) | PVR-INOX CINEMAS S2 (Warangal) | GEMINI (Warangal) | ASIAN SRIDEVI MULTIPLEX (Hanamkonda, Warangal) | ASIAN USHA PRASAD (Nizamabad) | PVR VENKAT MALL (Nizamabad) | NATRAJ THEATRE (Nizamabad) | AVD MULTIPLEX (Mahaboobnagar) | AVD MULTIPLEX (Mahaboobnagar) | VITROSS (Miryalguda) | ASIAN SAI RAM (Khammam) | SVC GEMINI (Manchiryal) | MUKTA A2 CINEMAS SRINIVASA (Karimnagar) | PVR-INOX CINEMAS (Armoor) | SHETTY MULTIPLEX (Gulbarga) | PVR-INOX CINEMAS ORCHID MALL (Gulbarga) | INDIRA CINEMAS SAPNA MALL (Bidar) | MIRAJ CINEMAS (Raichur) | YADAGIRI THEATRE (Santosh Nagar) | NATRAJ (SANGAREDDY).

A RAMGOPAL VARMA MOVIE



LAXMIKALA MOOSAPET

AMB MALL AAA MALL

PRASAD'S NTR GARDENS

CCPL MALL | SUDHA | MANTRA MALL LULU MALL | DSL MALL

FORUM MALL | INORBIT MALL | CENTRAL | RK MALL MUSARAMBAGH | GALLERIA | IRRUMMANZIL ATRIUM MALL | IOCN HITECH | PRESTONE MALL

GVK MALL | MP MALL | ASHOKA ONE GSM MALL | NECKLACE MALL | PRISM MALL

BALANAGAR | CHANDANAGAR | SHALINI MIYAPUR | MALKAJGIRI

AMEERPET | SKY MALL | GACHIBOWLI

SANDHYA35MM Enjoy 4k laser projection & Dolby atmos

MEGA70MM-DSNR TALLURI70MM-ECIL

AMB MALL AAA MALL

LAXMIKALA MOOSAPET

PRASAD'S NTR GARDENS

CCPL MALL | SUDHA | MANTRA MALL LULU MALL | DSL MALL

FORUM MALL | INORBIT MALL | CENTRAL | RK MALL MUSARAMBAGH | GALLERIA | IRRUMMANZIL ATRIUM MALL | IOCN HITECH | PRESTONE MALL

GVK MALL | MP MALL | ASHOKA ONE GSM MALL | NECKLACE MALL | PRISM MALL

BALANAGAR | CHANDANAGAR | SHALINI MIYAPUR | MALKAJGIRI

AMEERPET | SKY MALL | GACHIBOWLI

CINESQUARE | MCUBE MALL | MJR SQUARE JP MALL | CINEPLANET | CINEMART SIVAGANGA | SHA SHAHENSHA |

AMR MALL GPR MALL NEO APARNA

TIVOLI MALL BVK MALL

Advertisement for 'SHEESH MAHAL 70MM-AMEERPET' with showtimes 12.00, 3.00, 6.00, 9.00.

Advertisement for 'HYDERABAD CHRONICLE' with showtimes 12.00, 3.00, 6.00, 9.00.

SHORT TAKES

CHILEAN PREZ IN INDIA TODAY, WILL MEET MODI

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Chile's President Gabriel Boric Font will begin a five-day visit starting Tuesday during which he will hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The talks on Tuesday afternoon will focus on the entire gamut of bilateral ties, trade and cooperation within the Global South. Trade ties between the two nations have been flourishing, with Chile hoping to sell more agricultural produce to India. Chilean products such as walnuts and wines are already popular in the Indian market. The visit will strengthen ties with Chile, an important nation on the South American continent.

JEE ASPIRANT JUMPS BEFORE TRAIN IN KOTA

Kota, March 31: An 18-year-old engineering aspirant, who was to appear for the JEE-Main on April 2, allegedly committed suicide by jumping in front of a moving train in Kota, police said on Monday.

This is the tenth case of suspected suicide by a coaching student in Kota since January.

Kanpur native Ujjawal Mishra was supposed to leave for Lucknow where he was allotted a centre to sit for the engineering entrance exam, Deputy Superintendent of Police (GRP-Kota) Shankar Lal.

His father, Deepak Kumar Mishra, was to reach Kota on Monday to take him and his belongings back to UP, the police said. Ujjawal had been preparing for JEE at a coaching institute here and lived in a hostel in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar area, they said.

KAMRA MOCKS COPS FOR HUNT AT 10-YR-OLD HOME

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, MARCH 31

A Mumbai police team on Monday evening visited stand comedian Kunal Kamra's Mumbai residence after he defied the third summons sent to him. Taking a swipe at the police, Kamra said he had not lived at that address for the past decade.

"Going to an address where I haven't lived for the last 10 years is a waste of your time and public resources," Kamra posted on his X handle. As per his Instagram bio, Kamra is currently in Puducherry.

The comedian has avoided coming to Mumbai after the controversy broke out over his recent show at the Habitat Comedy Club in Mumbai, where he performed a parody song targeting Maharashtra deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde calling him 'gaddar', the term often used by Uddhav Thackeray. Subsequently, Shinde's supporters vandalised the club and the hotel in which it is located.

SANGMA DIVIDED NORTHEAST, ALLEGES BIREN

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, MARCH 31

Former Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh on Monday lashed out at Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma, accusing him of meddling into the internal affairs of his state and accused him of using the Manipur situation for "political posturing".

Expressing his displeasure openly, Singh also dragged in the name of late Purno A. Sangma, former Lok Sabha Speaker and father of the Meghalaya chief minister, and posted a video of P.A. Sangma speaking in the Lok Sabha back in 2014, when he had propagated the creation of smaller states in the Northeast on ethnic lines.

Singh argued it was nothing less than a bid to divide the Northeast and put the nation's unity in danger.

The former Chief Minister, who tagged Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma in his social media post, said: "After years of effort to safeguard indigenous populations, we have begun to make real progress such as the implementation of LLP (Inner Line Permit), a hard-won achievement. Conrad K. Sangma should know that the violence was not spontaneous, it was instigated by those who feel threatened and insecure by this kind of progress".

'No need to search Modi's successor'

Fadnavis tells Raut over PM to retire claim

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, MARCH 31

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has scoffed at the speculation that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would step down in September and his successor would be from Maharashtra. Modi would continue to lead the country for many more years, he said on Monday.

"There is no need to search for his successor. He (Modi) is our leader and will continue to be. In our culture, when the father is alive, it is inappropriate to talk about succession. That is Mughal culture. The time has not come to discuss it," Fadnavis said in Nagpur.

"In 2029, we will see Modi as the Prime Minister again," the Maharashtra CM asserted.

Earlier, senior Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut claimed that RSS had summoned the Prime Minister to discuss the issue of his successor. On Sunday, the PM visited Nagpur, where he paid floral tribute to the Sangh founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar at Smruti Mandir in Reshimbagh, calling the organisation a 'banyan tree' representing India's cultural and

ideological heritage. It was his first since becoming Prime Minister 11 years ago. "September mein retirement ka application likhne ke liye shayad woh (Modi) RSS mukhyalay gaye. He has gone to the RSS headquarters to submit his retirement application," Raut said, adding that he believes the RSS wants a change in the country's leadership.

"Modi's successor will be from Maharashtra and the RSS will decide on that. From what I understand, the 'sangh parivar' wants a change in the country's leadership. PM Modi's time is over. They want a change and also



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, left, and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat during a book release event on 'Vedic Mathematics' organised by Bharti Krishna Vidya Vihar, in Nagpur on Monday. — PTI

want to choose the next BJP chief," the Sena UBT leader said.

Senior RSS leader Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi responded to Raut's claims by saying he was unaware of any discussions regarding Modi's replacement. "I don't have any such information," Joshi said when asked about Modi's possible successor being selected from Maharashtra.

PM Modi turns 75 in September this year, and ever since his last election victory, there has been speculation about his future as a prime minister because of the BJP's internal 'no election ticket above 75' rule.

Shah hails Modi for health infra

DC CORRESPONDENT
HISAR, MARCH 31

Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday said that the Narendra Modi government has uplifted India's health infrastructure by taking a holistic approach to improving the health sector across the entire country. He added that it has been improved from the primary to the tertiary level in the last decade.

Addressing a gathering after unveiling a statue of Maharaja Agrasen at the Maharaja Agrasen Medical College campus at Agroha in Hisar, he highlighted several initiatives of the Modi government in various fields. He also inaugurated the newly built ICU and laid the foundation stone for the post-graduate hostel.

He mentioned that 25 crore people have been lifted from poverty during the Modi government's tenure. Four crore



Amit Shah

houses have been built for the poor, providing shelter to 20 crore people, the home minister noted.

He also touched upon the Central government's provision of free food grains to over 81 crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, the provision of toilets to every household under the Swachh Bharat Mission, cooking gas connections to the poor, and tap water to over 15 crore households, along with making treatment worth up to ₹5 lakhs available for 60 crore people.

India denies NYT report on HAL's Russia link

New Delhi, March 31: India has rejected a report by *The New York Times* that alleged Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) supplied sensitive technology to a Russian arms agency, news agency ANI reported on Monday. The Ministry of External Affairs reportedly stated that the Indian entity (HAL) mentioned in the *New York Times* report has adhered to all international obligations on strategic trade controls and end-user commitments.

The row broke after the *New York Times* published an article — 'Major Donor to Reform U.K. Party Sold Parts Used In Weapons to Russian Supplier' — on March 28. The Reform UK party is led by Nigel Farage. "The said report is factually incorrect and misleading. It has tried to frame issues and distort facts to suit a political narrative," news agency quoted the MEA as saying. The government also

Modi to attend Bimstec meet, key maritime pact to be inked

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

The sixth summit of the heads of state/governments of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) member nations is scheduled to take place in Bangkok on Thursday. Several important documents about regional cooperation will be inked, the Bimstec secretariat, located in Dhaka, said on Monday. This will include the adoption of the Bangkok Vision 2030 document which will be the first vision document that will be adopted by the leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is attending the summit. This provides a com-



Narendra Modi

prehensive and practical roadmap for future cooperation amongst the Bimstec member states. Also on the agenda is the signing of the agreement on maritime transport cooperation, which aims at expanding maritime transport in the Bay of Bengal to enhance the transport of cargo as well as people enabling more trade and travel amongst

the member states. "The leaders will also adopt the declaration of the sixth Bimstec summit, which will reflect the vision of the Leaders as well as their decisions and directives," the Bimstec Secretariat stated.

The regional grouping comprises seven countries of South and Southeast Asia — India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The summit will be preceded by a meeting of Bimstec senior officials on Tuesday and a meeting of Bimstec foreign ministers on Wednesday.

"The theme of the summit, which is being held three years after the fifth summit in virtual mode in Colombo in 2022, is 'Prosperous, Resilient and Open Bimstec,'" the

Secretariat stated. "The summit aims at fostering collaboration among the member states to address the shared security and developmental challenges," the grouping's Secretariat stated.

"The Summit has a rich Agenda—In a rapidly evolving and uncertain global political and economic situation, the sixth BIMSTEC Summit will further reinforce the critical role of BIMSTEC, as the only regional organisation in Bay of Bengal, in forging regional cooperation to enable the member States to deal with their shared security and sustainable development challenges. ... pursues regional cooperation in 7 broad sectors."

RIJJIJU: JPC GOT AROUND 97L SUGGESTIONS

FROM PAGE 1

"A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) has conducted an unprecedented number of consultations, receiving around 97 lakh memoranda, requests, and suggestions," Rijjiu said.

According to Rijjiu, the government has considered outside viewpoints and is prepared to address any allegations made by opposition parties in a comprehensive discussion.

"Some say the Waqf Amendment Bill is unconstitutional. But Waqf rules have existed since before independence, so how can it be illegal?" Rijjiu asked, denying claims that the Bill seeks to take away property or rights from Muslims. He also implored people to identify and question leaders who propagate what he described as false rumours, referencing previous concerns raised during the CAA debate. Opposition parties have staunchly criticised the proposed legislation, labelling it a direct threat to the country's constitutional foundations. "Every Opposition party opposes it," said Congress MP Jai Ram Ramesh. The CPM echoed similar sentiments, with leader Brinda Karat calling the Bill "anti-constitutional" and "unfair to the minority community." She questioned government's intention to rush Bill through Parliament.

Id celebrations



Children celebrate after prayers on the occasion of 'Id-ul-Fitr' festival, at Idgah in Bhopal on Monday. —PTI

BJP attempting to incite communal riots: Mamata

Kolkata, March 31: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday criticised the BJP for attempting to incite "communal riots through divisive politics" in the state and asserted that the saffron camp's "ganda dharam" was contrary to the true principles of Hinduism.

The chief minister urged people to avoid falling into provocations that could fuel riots and stressed that the state government would stand with its residents, ensuring that no one could stir up

tensions in West Bengal.

Speaking at an Id prayers event on Red Road, Ms Banerjee said, "I follow the religion followed by Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. I don't follow the 'ganda dharam' made by them (BJP), they are even against the Hindu dharma."

The TMC supremo said no religion preaches animosity against another human being, but certain leaders and political parties fan hatred for their own benefits.

The West Bengal chief minister said that efforts were being made to provoke riots, urging the public to resist these attempts.

"Provocations are being made to fuel riots, but please don't fall into these traps. The West Bengal government stands with the minorities. No one can provoke tensions in the state," she said.

The CM also targeted the BJP, questioning, "If they (BJP) have problems with the minorities, will they change the Constitution of the country?" —PTI

WEATHER | ALERT

Northwest India to experience twice the usual number of heatwave days

Extreme heat between April and June: IMD

New Delhi, March 31: India is expected to experience hotter-than-usual temperatures from April to June, with more heatwave days in central and eastern India and the northwestern plains, the IMD said on Monday.

Most parts of the country will see higher-than-normal maximum temperatures, except for some areas in western and eastern India where the temperatures are expected to be normal. Minimum temperatures will also be above normal in most regions, IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said in an online press conference.

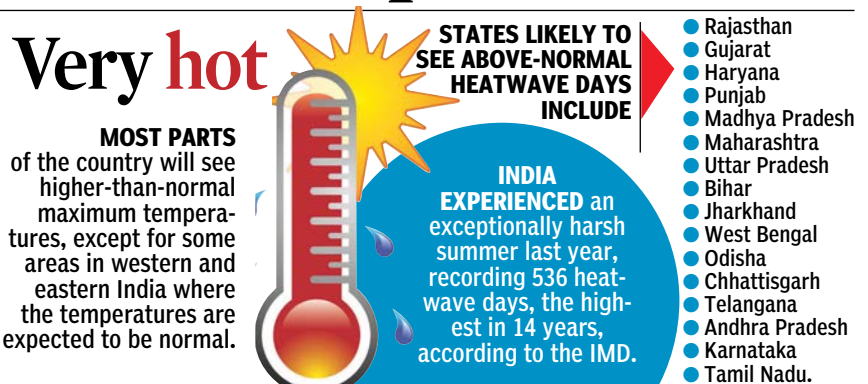
"From April to June, most parts of north and

east India, central India, and the plains of northwest India are expected to experience two to four more heatwave days than normal," he said.

Usually, India records four to seven heatwave days from April to June.

States likely to see above-normal heatwave days include Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and the northern parts of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Some states, including eastern Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh



and Odisha, are expected to have 10 to 11 heatwave days during this period, Mohapatra said.

In April, most parts of India will likely witness higher-than-usual maxi-

mum temperatures. However, some areas in the extreme southern and the northwestern regions may experience normal temperatures. Minimum temperatures

will be higher than usual across most of the country, except for a few places in the northwest and the northeast where temperatures may be normal or slightly below normal, the

IMD chief said.

Last week, the central government asked states to check if their hospitals were ready to handle heatstroke and heat-related illnesses amid a rise in temperatures.

India experienced an exceptionally harsh summer last year, recording 536 heatwave days, the highest in 14 years, according to the IMD.

Official data showed that India recorded 41,789 suspected heat stroke cases and 143 heat-related deaths during one of its hottest and longest heat waves. Experts have said India might be undercounting heat-related deaths due to lack of robust data. —PTI



Dilip Ghosh

SHOBHA YATRA IN BENGAL FOR RAM NAVAMI

SHASHI BHUSHAN | DC
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Signalling a massive Hindu outreach, the BJP in West Bengal will be celebrating Ram Navami by taking out processions — "Shobha Yatra" — in each and every town and block across the state. Speaking to this newspaper, former BJP state unit chief Dilip Ghosh claimed that the participation of Hindus in Ram Navami was "increasing every year" in the state. He declared that the scale of the celebration will be "unprecedented".

While Ghosh alleged that the plight of Hindus in the state has become similar to the "suffering Hindus" in Bangladesh, Union home minister Amit Shah accused the TMC government of using illegal immigrants as the party's vote bank. Speaking at an event, Shah said that "the Central government cannot allow such a move to succeed".

SHORT TAKES

MINE ACCIDENT IN SPAIN LEAVES 5 DEAD, 4 HURT

Madrid, March 31: An accident at a mine in Spain's northern Asturias region has killed at least five people on Monday morning and injured another four, according to the region's emergency services authority. The injured were taken to hospitals to be treated, two in helicopters and the other two by ambulance. Another two workers involved in the mine accident were unharmed, authorities said. The emergency services authority said it had mobilised three helicopters to aid with rescue operations in the Degana municipality.

CANADA PM TAKES LEAD BEFORE VOTE

Montreal, March 31: Four weeks before Canadians vote in a general election, Mark Carney has taken the lead in polls over his main rival, Conservative Pierre Poilievre. Since coming to office in January, the US leader has threatened the Canadian economy with high tariffs and repeatedly called for the country to surrender its sovereignty and become a part of the US. Experts agree that the main question facing Canadians when they cast their ballot on April 28 will be who — PM Carney or Poilievre — can push back against Trump.

JIHADIST STRIKE: MANY BURKINA SOLDIERS KILLED

Abidjan, March 31: "Several dozen" soldiers and civilian auxiliaries have been killed in a suspected jihadist attack in eastern Burkina Faso, local and security sources said. Since 2015 Burkina Faso has been plagued by jihadist violence from groups linked to the Islamic State group or Al-Qaeda. In the latest attack, a security source in Tapoa province said an Army detachment from the main city of Diapaga was targeted in a "violent attack" on Friday. The victims were regular Army soldiers and civilian volunteers.

CHARLES BACK TO DUTIES AFTER HOSPITAL STAY

London, March 31: Britain's King Charles is returning to public duties this week after he was briefly taken to hospital last Thursday when he experienced side effects from his cancer treatment, a royal source said on Monday. The 76-year-old king has been undergoing treatment since he was diagnosed with an unspecified form of cancer in February last year following tests after a corrective procedure for an enlarged prostate. However, he suffered what sources described as a "minor bump in the road" which meant he was taken to hospital.

PAK TO EXPEL 3 MN AFGHANS FROM COUNTRY

Peshawar, March 31: Pakistan plans to expel 3 million Afghans from the country this year, as a deadline for them to voluntarily leave the capital and surrounding areas expired on Monday. It's the latest phase of a nationwide crackdown launched in October 2023 to expel foreigners living in Pakistan illegally, mostly Afghans. The campaign has drawn fire from rights groups, the Taliban government, and the UN. Arrests and deportations were due to begin April 1 but were pushed back to April 10 because of the Id ul-Fitr.

DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS: ITALY'S BIRTHS AT A LOW

Rome, March 31: Italy's demographic crisis deepened in 2024 as the number of births hit a record low, emigration accelerated and the population continued to shrink, national statistics bureau ISTAT said on Monday. Italy's ever-falling birth rate is considered a national emergency, but despite Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and her predecessors pledging to make it a priority, none have so far been able to halt the drop. There were some 281,000 more deaths than births in 2024 and the population fell by 37,000 to 58.93 million.

After Trump threat, Russia trying for peace in Ukraine

Trump-Putin call could be set up at short notice: Peskov

Moscow, March 31: The Kremlin said on Monday after US President Donald Trump said he was "pissed off" with Vladimir Putin, that the United States and Russia were working on ideas around a possible peace settlement in Ukraine and on building bilateral ties.

Trump told *NBC News* on Sunday he was very angry after the Russian president last week criticised the credibility of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's leadership, the television network reported.

Trump said he would be forced to impose secondary tariffs of 25% to 50% on buyers of Russian oil if he felt Moscow was blocking his efforts to end the war in Ukraine. China and India are big buyers of Russian oil.

Asked about Trump's comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow was continuing to work with Washington and that Putin remained open to contacts with Trump. "A call between Trump and Putin could be set up at short notice if necessary, though no call was scheduled for this week," he said.

"We are continuing to work with the American side, first of all, to build our bilateral relations, which were badly damaged during the previous administration. And we are also working on the implementation of some ideas related to the Ukrainian settlement. This work is underway, but so far there are no specifics that we could or should tell you about. This is a time-consuming process, probably due to its complexity," Peskov said.

Since taking office in January, Trump has adopted a more conciliatory stance towards Russia that has left Western allies wary as he tries to broker an end to the war. His comments about Putin on Sunday reflect his growing frustration about the lack of movement on a ceasefire. "If Russia and I are unable to make a deal on stopping the bloodshed in Ukraine, and if I think it was Russia's fault ... I am going to put secondary tariffs on oil, on all oil coming out of Russia," Trump said.

"That would be, that if you buy oil from Russia, you can't do business in the United States," Trump said. "There will be a 25% tariff on all oil, a 25- to 50-point tariff on all oil."

Trump later told reporters he was disappointed with Putin but added: "I think we are making progress, step by step." — Reuters



A firefighter sprays water on a house destroyed in a Russian strike on a residential neighbourhood of Kharkiv, in Ukraine. — AP

● **THE TRUMP** family is set to launch a Bitcoin mining-focused venture with Hut 8 Corp., the latest expansion of the president's ties to the cryptocurrency sector. Hut 8 is launching American Bitcoin Corp. as a majority-owned subsidiary.



● **WOMEN STUDENT** leaders, who were "key drivers" in the protest against the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh last year, are among the women from around the world who will be awarded by the Donald Trump administration for their "exceptional courage, strength, and leadership". US secretary of state Marco Rubio and First Lady Melania Trump will host the annual International Women of Courage (IWOC) Awards ceremony at the department of state on Tuesday.

● **ELON MUSK** gave out \$1 million checks on Sunday to two Wisconsin voters, declaring them spokespeople for his political group, ahead of a Wisconsin Supreme Court election that the tech billionaire cast as critical to President Donald Trump's agenda and "the future of civilization."

● **ITALIAN POLICE** are probing the cause of a fire at a Tesla Inc. electric-vehicle dealership in Rome that left 17 cars damaged. A police spokesperson confirmed on Monday that an investigation was underway but declined to comment on details of the inquiry.

US tariffs likely to hit UK this week

London, March 31: The UK is expecting to be impacted by US tariffs this week, even as intensive talks continue to secure an exemption for British goods, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said.

US President Donald Trump has said that on April 2 he'll impose so-called reciprocal tariffs on nations that his administration deems to disadvantage American companies with trade barriers beyond import taxes, which could include measures such as the UK's value

added tax, a sales levy. "We've been preparing for all eventualities and are having intense discussions," Starmer's spokesman, Dave Pares, told reporters on Monday. Nevertheless, Britain expects to be "impacted" by what the Trump administration implements, he said, adding: "We're going to wait to see the detail before responding and we're going to continue to have constructive discussions." Any tariffs announced this week will come on top of levies on steel and aluminum. — Bloomberg

Historic magnolia at WH to come down

Washington, March 31: An enormous tree known as the Jackson Magnolia which has shaded the White House's South Portico for the majority of US presidencies will be taken down this week, Donald Trump said.

Arborists have struggled for years to keep alive the sickly southern magnolia, whose striking figure marks a focal point along the building's southern facade. According to tradition, the tree was planted by former president Andrew Jackson to commemorate

his wife who died just before his swearing-in in 1829. It was purportedly a sapling brought from his home in Tennessee. The tree is the oldest on the White House grounds, according to the National Park Service, which notes that starting in the 1870s most presidents began installing their own commemorative trees. "The bad news is that everything must come to an end," Trump wrote on *Truth Social*, explaining that the magnolia was "in terrible condition." — AFP

STRONG RESPONSE IF IRAN ATTACKED, WARNS KHAMENEI

Tehran, March 31: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on Monday of a forceful retaliation if the Islamic republic is attacked, following a threat by US President Donald Trump.

"They threaten to do mischief," Khamenei said of Trump's latest threat, during a speech on Id ul-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. "If it is carried out, they will definitely receive a strong counterattack."

Speaking in an interview on Saturday, Trump had said that Iran will be bombed if it does not reach a deal on its nuclear programme.

"If they don't make a deal, there will be bombing," he said, according to *NBC News*, which said he also threatened to punish Iran with what he called "secondary tariffs".

It was not clear whether Trump was threatening bombing by United States planes alone or perhaps in an operation coordinated with Israel.

Since taking office in January, Trump has reinstated his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran.

Under that policy in his first term as president, Trump withdrew the United States from a landmark agreement on Iran's nuclear programme in 2018 and reimposed biting curbs on Tehran. — AFP

15 bodies recovered after Israel fires on ambulances

Gaza City, March 31: The Palestinian Red Crescent said on Sunday it had recovered the bodies of 15 rescuers killed a week ago when Israeli forces targeted ambulances in the Gaza Strip.

Bodies of eight medics from the Red Crescent, six members of Gaza's civil defence agency and one employee of a United Nations agency were retrieved, the Red Crescent said.

It said one medic from the Red Crescent remained missing. The group said those killed "were targeted by the Israeli occupation forces while performing their humanitarian duties as they were heading to the Hashashin area of Rafah to provide first aid to a number of people injured by Israeli shelling in the area".

"The occupation's targeting of Red Crescent medics ... can only be considered a war crime punishable under international humanitarian law, which the occupation continues to violate before the eyes of the entire world," it said. In an earlier statement the Red Crescent said the bodies "were recovered with difficulty as they were buried in the sand, with some showing signs of decomposition". — AFP



Displaced Palestinians, who flee from Rafah, arrive in Khan Younis, Gaza, on Monday, after the Israeli military issued sweeping evacuation orders covering most of Rafah. — AP

Bibi summoned for testimony in Qatar

Jerusalem, March 31: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu left his corruption trial abruptly on Monday to give evidence in a separate investigation into possible ties between his aides and Qatar, Israel's public broadcaster Kan reported.

Two suspects in the probe, dubbed "Qatar-gate" in Israel, had been arrested on Monday, police said. It provided no further

details, citing a court-ordered gag on the case. Israel named former naval commander Eliyahu Sharvit as the new head of the country's domestic-intelligence agency after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed his predecessor over a series of disputes. Sharvit is set to lead the Shin Bet after 36 years serving in the Israeli military. — Bloomberg

Le Pen barred from seeking office for 5 years, gets jail term

Paris, March 31: A French court on Monday convicted Marine Le Pen of embezzlement and barred her from seeking public office for five years — a hammer blow to the far-right leader's presidential hopes and an earthquake for French politics.

Le Pen's lawyer said she would appeal the verdict but she will remain ineligible while she does and so could be ruled out of the 2027 presidential race. She was also sentenced to four years' imprisonment, with two to be served under house arrest and two suspended.

The court ruling was a political as well as a judicial tumbler for France, hobbling one of the leading contenders to succeed President Emmanuel Macron at the end of his second and final term.

So broad were the political implications that even some of Le Pen's opponents reacted by saying that the Paris court had gone too far.

But its too early to say how it will affect voters. The potential elimination of Le Pen could fire up diehard supporters, just



French leader Marine Le Pen leaves the courtroom, on Monday. — AP

immediately comment, her supporters quickly expressed disapproval. Jordan Bardella, her 29-year-old protégé who could replace her on the ballot in 2027 if she can't run, said on X that Le Pen is being unjustly condemned and that French democracy is being executed.

Hungary's populist prime minister, Viktor Orban, quickly took to social media to express his support, posting *Je suis Marine!* — I am Marine — on X.

Among political opponents of Le Pen who expressed unease was conservative lawmaker Laurent Wauquiez, who said the verdict put a very heavy weight on our democracy. The sentence could prevent Le Pen from making what would have been her fourth run for the presidency in 2027, a scenario she has previously described as a political death.

The party's most recognised figurehead and a formidable and seasoned political campaigner, Le Pen was runner-up to Macron in both the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections. — AP

WHO seeks \$8 mn as Myanmar quake aid

Geneva, March 31: The World Health Organisation said on Sunday the Myanmar earthquake was a top-level emergency as it urgently sought \$8 million to save lives and prevent disease outbreaks over the next 30 days.

The WHO said the high numbers of casualties and trauma injuries were at high risk of infection due to limited surgical capacity in the country, while the underlying conditions in Myanmar meant the quake was likely to intensify the risk of disease. "WHO has classified this

crisis as a Grade 3 emergency — the highest level of activation under its Emergency Response Framework," the United Nations health agency said in its flash appeal for funds.

The initial 7.7-magnitude quake struck near the central Myanmar city of Mandalay on Friday, followed minutes later by a 6.7-magnitude aftershock.

The quake has killed more than 1,700 people in Myanmar and at least 18 in neighbouring Thailand. In Myanmar, "preliminary assessments indicate high numbers of casual-

ties and trauma-related injuries, with urgent needs for emergency care.

Electricity and water supplies remain disrupted, worsening access to health services and heightening risks of waterborne and food-borne disease outbreaks," the health organisation said.

"Trauma-related injuries — including fractures, open wounds, and crush syndrome — are at high risk of infection and complications due to limited surgical capacity and inadequate infection prevention and control." — AFP



Rescue workers look on as heavy machinery clears the rubble at the site of an under-construction building collapse in Bangkok, two days after an earthquake struck central Myanmar and Thailand. — AFP

UK HOSTS TALKS TO TACKLE 'VILE' MIGRANT TRADE

London, March 31: Delegates from more than 40 countries gather in the UK on Monday for a summit to be addressed by PM Keir Starmer seeking to crack down on the "vile trade" in migrants. The interior ministers from France and Germany will be among those attending the two-day Organised Immigration Crime Summit in London, as the UK government struggles to contain migration numbers. — AFP

PRIVATE ASTRONAUTS Research will support future long-duration space travel to Mars

SpaceX to launch first crewed polar orbit

Cape Canaveral, March 31: SpaceX is set to launch the first human spaceflight directly over Earth's polar regions on Monday — a days-long, privately funded orbital mission, involving four astronauts.

Named "Fram2" after the famed Norwegian ship built in the 19th century for Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, the mission will feature a range of experiments, including taking the first X-ray in space and growing mushrooms in microgravity. It's hoped that the

research will support future long-duration space travel to Mars.

The crew will launch aboard a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule on a Falcon 9 rocket in a window that opens at 9.46 pm (1.46 GMT) from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. "With the same pioneering spirit as early polar explorers, we aim to bring back new data and knowledge to advance the long-term goals of space exploration," said Chun Wang, mission commander. Wang, a Maltese adven-



turer and co-founder of crypto companies f2pool and skatefish, selected the rest of the crew: Vehicle commander Jannicke Mikkelson, a Norwegian film director; mission pilot Rabea

Rogge, a robotics researcher from Germany; and mission specialist and medical officer Eric Philips, an Australian polar explorer. The team trained for eight months in preparation

for the approximately four-day trip, including a wilderness expedition in Alaska to simulate living in close quarters under harsh conditions.

Upon returning to Earth, the crew will attempt to exit the spacecraft without additional medical support — part of a study to help researchers understand how well astronauts can perform basic tasks after spaceflight.

Except for the Apollo lunar missions, Earth's polar regions have remained out of view for

astronauts, including those aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

Even on Apollo they did not fly directly over the Earth's poles. SpaceX has carried out five private astronaut missions to date — three in collaboration with Axiom Space to the ISS, and two free-flying in Earth orbit.

The first of these was Inspiration4 in 2021, followed by Polaris Dawn, which featured the first spacewalk conducted by private astronauts. — AFP

quick
BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	77,414.92 -0.25
Nifty 50	23,519.35 -0.31
S&P 500*	5,530.22 -0.91
Dollar (₹)	85.47 -0.37
Pound Sterling (₹)	110.76 0.05
Euro (₹)	92.08 0.35
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	89,964▲1,158 1.30
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.54 1.24
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.579 -0.017
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.190 -0.065

*As of 8:30 PM IST

Primus Senior to invest ₹180 cr in housing project

Realty firm Primus Senior Living will invest around ₹180 crore to construct a luxury housing project in Bengaluru. The project Primus Sangama, which is spread over 2.7 acre, will be developed in partnership with the landowner under the joint development agreement (JDA) model. Located off Mysore Road in Bengaluru, this project comprises over 300 homes, with a blend of senior-friendly and family-centric units.



Ankura Hospitals gets ₹165-crore in funding from ADB

Healthcare provider Ankura Hospitals on Monday said it has secured ₹165 crore in funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The investment is aligned with the Hyderabad-headquartered hospital chain's plans to strengthen its market presence. "The funding will allow us to enhance our pediatric, maternity and gynaecology services, expand our facilities," said Krishna Prasad Vunnam, MD, Ankura Hospitals.

Oyo CEO expects revenues to rise in March quarter

Oyo expects to register over 60 per cent year-on-year growth in revenue for fourth quarter ending March at ₹2,100 crore, founder Ritesh Agarwal said. The Oyo founder and CEO informed the company's top leadership that the sharp jump in Q4 revenue highlights the company's ability to drive sustainable, profitable growth. OYO expects profit after tax (PAT) of ₹1,100 crore for the financial year 2025-26.

Videotex to take mfg capacity to 3.2 million units

Videotex, a home-grown original design manufacturer for TV, is aiming to be a ₹1,000-crore company, doubling its topline in next four years, led by capacity enhancement and diversification into the growing appliances segment, an official said. The company, which does contract manufacturing for Indian and global brands, has plans to expand its capacity to 3.2 million units per annum, Videotex Director Arjun Bajaj said.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press at Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. #563/9/D&9/E, Behind Andhra Bank Pet Basheerbagh, Kompally, Ranga Reddy Dist. Editor: Kaushik Mitter, RNI Reg No. APENG/2008/24282. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

Gold hits ₹92,500 for 10 gram

Int'l market sees prices zoom past \$3,100 per ounce ahead of new tariffs

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, MARCH 31

The gold prices in the Delhi spot market climbed ₹350 per 10 gm to ₹92,500 as the international market saw prices zoom past \$3,100 per ounce ahead of the new tariffs by the US coming into effect from April 2. Gold gained 33 per cent and silver 24 per cent in the Indian market in financial year 2024-25. In the Delhi spot market gold went up by ₹350 per 10 gm to ₹92,500 when the market opened at 5 pm against the previous close of ₹92,150.

In the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), prices moved beyond ₹90,000 to ₹90,284 from the previous close of ₹88,800. This movement was aided by the international gold rates which crossed \$3,100 to touch \$3,120 ahead of the US tariffs coming into effect from April 2. The yellow metal had crossed \$3,000 in mid-March of this year.

Silver too moved up ₹1,03,000 lakh per kilogram in the Delhi market and ₹1,00,725 at MCX.

Both gold and silver have been rising at a fast pace

NOKIA, AMAZON END PATENT DISPUTE OVER VIDEO TECHNOLOGIES

Espoo (Finland), March 31: Nokia Oyj and Amazon.com settled a patent dispute over streaming technologies that had spread to courts across three continents. The agreement covers the use of Nokia video technologies in Amazon's streaming services and devices, resolving all patent litigation globally, the Espoo, Finland-based company said on Monday. Nokia had alleged that Amazon used its technologies in streaming services and devices without authorisation.

In February, Nokia won an injunction at a Düsseldorf court, and earlier scored a victory at the US International Trade Commission.

During the dispute, Amazon had accused Nokia of misusing its standard-essential patents by trying to block products instead of offering fair licenses, violating rules meant to ensure open competition. — Bloomberg



CK BIRLA FIRM TO INVEST ₹1,300 CR TO INCREASE SALES

New Delhi, March 31: CK Birla Group home and building material solutions firm BirlaNu plans to invest up to ₹1,300 crore in the next three years as part of its strategy to double sales in 3-4 years time, according to top company officials.

The company, which had recently renamed itself as BirlaNu Ltd from erstwhile HIL Ltd and undertaken a rebranding exercise, is also scouting for acquisition opportunities to fuel its growth, BirlaNu president Avanti Birla said.

"We are widening our positioning and going further, in a two-fold manner - in our own products and we're also looking externally at diversifying, other products (and) potential acquisitions," she said when asked about the future roadmap. Asked if any acquisitions are being considered, she said, "It is just part of our expansion when it comes to the external market, there is no particular number as such right now but we are always looking for opportunities that come to us at the right price." — PTI

PRECIOUS METALS

In MCX, prices moves beyond ₹90,000 to ₹90,284 from previous close of ₹88,800

BOTH GOLD AND SILVER made less gains in domestic market compare to international gains as rupee remained strong after RBI's intervention.

GOLD HAS moved up quite sharply and at these levels, ETF, physical as well as central bank buying may slow down. If the US government indicates that it will review the tariffs, gold may see some consolidation.

— AJAY KEDIA, MD, Kedia Commodities.



IN GLOBAL market, gold gains 39.7% in FY25 from \$2,232 to \$3,120 which is highest price gain since 1980.



in the past few months due to geo-economic concerns and fears of an impending recession triggered by the trade war. Inflationary concerns and gold-buying by central banks too have been supporting gold, said Ajay Kedia, managing director,

Commodities. Further, the US President Donald Trump's threat to Russia of imposing secondary tariffs and warning Iran with more tariffs and airstrikes if Tehran fails to reach a nuclear deal have increased the geo-political

uncertainties as well. Gold gained 33 per cent in the MCX in the fiscal year 2025, moving up from ₹67,888 as on April 1, 2024 to ₹90,284. This is the highest gain in MCX after financial year 2019-20. In the international market, gold gained 39.70 per

Haze over Trump's tariff era

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Amid the escalating trade war by US President Donald Trump, India is all set to enter into the reciprocal tariffs' rule on Wednesday (April 2), and New Delhi hopes to have an amicable trade solution between India and the US as tariffs on agriculture products is learnt to have a key focus between the two countries.

However, government sources revealed that India has already offered some tariff cuts on imports of American farm products like almonds and cranberries as a further concession to the US. This development comes after Trump's statement, saying that India is branded as a tariff king and a big abuser of trade ties.

Trump is reportedly set to launch so-called reciprocal tariffs on April 2 in 10 to 15 countries, including India, with most significant trade imbalances.

The move of the US president is to aim at rebalancing global trade and boost US manufacturing, while collecting tariff payments to fund his domestic policy priorities, including an

POSSIBLE IMPACT

FROM FY23 TO FY24, THE US WAS THE LARGEST TRADING PARTNER OF INDIA.

THE US accounts for about 18% of India's total goods exports, 6.22% in imports, and 10.73% in bilateral trade.

WITH INDIA, America has a trade surplus (difference between imports and exports), of \$35.32 billion in goods in 2023-24. It was \$27.7 bn in FY23.

extension of tax cuts from his first administration and additional tax promises made during the 2024 campaign. However, it is reported that White House hasn't yet outlined the structure, what tariffs are, how they'll be calculated, or what the targeted countries need to do to secure coveted exemptions.

IF US chose to impose separate tariffs, the additional tariff for farm products would be 32.4% and on industrial products 3.3%.

HARDEST-HIT SECTOR will be fish, meat, and processed seafood, with \$2.58 bn in exports facing a 27.83% tariff differential.

CEREALS, vegetables, fruits, and spices, valued at \$1.91 bn, face a 5.72% tariff differential, impacting rice and spice shipments.

As the bilateral farm trade between India and US is modest and stands at just about \$8 billion, the two countries work together on a trade deal, while sources said that Washington now wants to push big-ticket exports on farm products such as wheat, cotton, corn and maize — to narrow its \$45bn trade deficit with India.

cent, from \$2,232 to \$3,120 and this is gold's highest price gain since 1980. The 18.6 per cent gain recorded in the first quarter of financial year 2024-25 was the highest quarterly gain after third quarter of financial year 1985-86.

Silver too appreciated 24.25 per cent in financial year 2024-25 in MCX and 37.68 per cent in the international market. Both gold and silver made less gains in the domestic market compared to the international gains as the rupee remained strong after RBI's intervention.

According to Kedia, gold prices in the MCX may further rise to ₹92,000 per 10 gm and \$3,200 in 2025. "Gold has moved up quite sharply and at these levels, exchange-traded fund (ETF), physical as well as central bank buying may slow down. If the US government indicates that it will review the tariffs, gold may see some consolidation or profit-booking," Kedia added.

However, Bank of America (BofA) Global Research expects gold prices to climb further towards \$3,500 per ounce over the next 18 months.

US COS SLOW HIRING PLANS ON DIMMING ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

New York, March 31: The US employers probably tempered their hiring in March, just as consumers grow increasingly cautious and the economic outlook dims on concerns about the fallout from higher tariffs.

Payrolls rose by 1,38,000, below 1.51,000 increase a month earlier, according to the median projection of economists surveyed by Bloomberg.

That would leave average job growth over the past three months at the slowest pace since October. The unemployment rate is seen holding at 4.1 per cent. The latest report card on the labor market follows data that indicate a notable first-quarter slowing in economy.

Personal spending rose last month after a January slump, disposable income growth remained soft, and March consumer sentiment sank on fears of mounting inflationary pressures. — Bloomberg

India's external debt at \$718 bn

FC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

India's external debt increases by 10.7 per cent to \$717.9 billion at the end of December 2024 from \$648.7 billion in December 2023. On a quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) basis, there is a 0.7 per cent increase in external debt from the level of \$712.7 billion at the end of September 2024, according to India's quarterly external debt report released by the finance ministry.

However, the finance ministry also said that the external debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio stood at 19.1 per cent at the end of December 2024, against 19 per cent in September 2024.

"The valuation effect is due to the appreciation of the US dollar vis-a-vis the rupee and other major currencies, such as the yen, the euro and special drawing rights (SDR), amounting to \$12.7 billion during the quarter ended December 2024," the report said.

Excluding the valuation effect, it said, the increase in external debt would have been \$17.9 billion QoQ against \$5.2 billion at the end of December 2024 over September 2024.

"US dollar-denominated debt remained the largest component of India's



external debt, with a share of 54.8 per cent in end-December 2024, followed by Indian Rupee (30.6 per cent), Japanese Yen (6.1 per cent), SDR (4.7 per cent) and Euro (3 per cent)," it added.

The report also noted that the outstanding external debt of central government declined while that of non-government sector increased at December-end 2024 over its level at September-end 2024.

"The share of outstanding debt of non-financial corporations in the total external debt was 36.5 per cent, followed by deposit-taking corporations (except central bank) (27.8 per cent), central government (22.1 per cent) and other financial corporations (8.7 per cent)," it said.

Loans were the largest component of external debt, with a share of 33.6 per cent, followed by currency and deposits (23.1 per cent), trade credit and advances (18.8 per cent) and debt securities (16.8 per cent).

UK visit: Nirmala to focus on FTA

New Delhi, March 31: Issues pertaining to the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) and bilateral investment treaty between India and the UK are expected to figure during the three-day visit of finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to London from April 8-10, official sources said.

The minister would be attending a host of meetings, including India-United Kingdom Economic and Financial Dialogue, in London.

Sitharaman is likely to hold a bilateral meeting with UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves and other British ministers. "Issues pertaining to the trade agreement and bilateral investment treaty (BIT) may also come up for discussions between the two," the official said.

On February 24, commerce and industry min-



ister Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds announced resumption of negotiations for the proposed FTA between the two countries.

The India-UK negotiations are resuming after a gap of over eight months. The talks were launched on January 13, 2022. So far 14 rounds of talks have been completed.

The two countries are negotiating on three different fronts - FTA, a bilateral investment treaty (BIT), and a double contribution convention agreement. — PTI

Renault to buy Nissan stake in JV

New Delhi, March 31: French auto major Renault on Monday said it will buy out its Japanese partner Nissan's stake in their Indian joint venture - Renault Nissan Automotive India Private Ltd.

Renault Group would own 100 per cent of Renault Nissan Automotive India Private Ltd (RNAIPL), by acquiring the 51 per cent shareholding currently held by Nissan, the company said in a statement.

The company, however, did not disclose the financial details of the transaction.

Renault Group and Nissan have entered into a share purchase agreement to this effect. Upon completion of this transaction, Renault Group would own 100 per cent of RNAIPL.

The agreement also includes an operational agreement to continue the current projects between Renault Group and Nissan, and to define future relationship of Renault Group and Nissan in India. Nissan will continue to

use RNAIPL for sourcing vehicles for India and for exports in the coming years, the statement said.

Meanwhile, Renault Group and Nissan will continue to operate jointly, Renault Nissan Technology and Business Center India in which Nissan will retain its 49 per cent stake and Renault Group will hold its 51 per cent stake.

RNAIPL would continue to produce Nissan models, including the New Nissan Magnite, the company said. — Bloomberg



NISSAN SELLS 28K CARS IN INDIA, EXPORTS 71K UNITS

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, MARCH 31

Nissan Motor India on Monday said it has delivered its best single year sales performance at a total of 99,000 plus units in FY 2024-25 in last seven years, despite multiple headwinds faced by the domestic auto industry.

In FY25, the automaker sold 28,000 units, led by the New Nissan Magnite in India and its exports crossed 71,000 units. This strong performance was delivered despite the rising consumer preference for alternate fuel vehicles in the B-SUV segment, the company said.

"India remains a strong pillar of growth for Nissan driven by the continued success of Nissan Magnite. Nissan's stated India product offensive remains intact, including the plan to introduce one all-new 7-seater B-MPV and two new C-SUVs," said Frank Torres, president of Nissan India Operations.

MONEY MATTERS

Missed payment deadlines will haunt



ADHIL SHETTY

As youths join the workforce armed with high credit eligibility, there's much curiosity in them about becoming financially savvy. But a recurring problem we see among amateur credit card users is the inability to understand the need for full and timely payment. Young professionals often underestimate the domino effect of late payments and cred-

it card balance. A missed deadline may lead to a ₹500 late fee. It is also a red flag to lenders, a debt trap in disguise, and a roadblock to future goals. Let's understand this better.

CREDIT SCORE HIT A story I share often is of the credit score damage a person took due to one missed credit card payment. While abroad, this gent couldn't repay some petty dues. He did so first thing upon his return to India. But the damage was done. In the first month, after the payment with late fees, his CIBIL score

fell from 844 to 776. Despite payment, it fell fall next month to 727.

CARD BALANCE Credit cards allow you to make a minimum payments - typically 5% of the dues. This minimum amount prevents the late payment fee. But it's not full payment. As a result, interest adds up, typically at 3-4 per cent a month. If you're paying 5 per cent back while your interest rate is 4 per cent, you've actually repaid only one per cent of dues.

As dues add up, credit score gets lower. A falling credit score indicates weakening credit health. This can be addressed with full, timely repayment.

FUTURE LOANS Late payments will haunt. At some point you may need a home loan or a business loan. If, at that point, your credit score is weak on account of lax credit card habits, you will be charged heavy interest. If your score is below 700 on account of loan settlements and

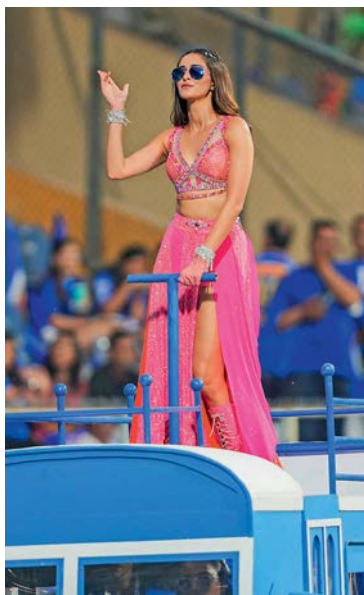
defaults, you may struggle to get any financing.

DAMAGE CONTROL Improving credit habits is easy. Act fast. Pay your dues on time and in full. Auto-pay and set up mandates for payments. Keep checking credit score once a month if you use any form of credit. Treat your dues as sacred, and your credit score as your financial report cards. Your future self, when applying for a home loan, will thank you for today's discipline.

(The author is CEO of BankBazaar.com.)

ORANGE	PURPLE
Nicholas Pooran, LSG 145	Noor Ahmad, CSK 9
Sudarshan Sai, GT 137	Mitchell Starc, DC 8
Travis Head, SRH 136	Khaleel Ahmed, CSK 6

Short takes



Bollywood actor Ananya Pandey performs before the start of the IPL match in Mumbai on Monday. — PTI

Williamson lavishes praise on RR's Rana

New Zealand batting great Kane Williamson lavished praise on Nitish Rana, calling his 36-ball 81 an "incredible knock of the highest standard" and also credited Rajasthan Royals' fielding for their six-run win over Chennai Super Kings. "Nitish is an excellent player of spin, but he got his innings started against the seam, using the pace well," Williamson, who has played for Sunrisers Hyderabad and Gujarat Titans in the past, said on *JioHotstar*. "He accessed the areas behind square nicely and perhaps came in at No. 3 due to the left-hand, right-hand combination. It was an incredible knock of the highest standard, and I think that's the key for him moving forward in this tournament," he added.

Riyan fined ₹12 lakh for slow over rate

Rajasthan Royals' stand-in Rcaptain Riyan Parag has been fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow overrate during his team's six-run victory over Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League match. RR posted 182/9 and then restricted CSK to 176/6, with Parag leading his team to their first win of the season at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in front of a home crowd on Sunday.

"As this was his team's first offence of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which pertains to minimum over-rate offences, Parag was fined INR 12 lakhs," IPL said in a release.

ASHWINI!

Kumar's record 4/24, Rickleton's 62* in MI's big win

Mumbai, March 31: Ashwani Kumar's record four-wicket haul on IPL debut and Ryan Rickleton's 62 not out powered Mumbai Indians to a commanding eight-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders here on Monday.

The 23-year-old Ashwani from Punjab's Jhanjeri became the first Indian ever to take four wickets on IPL debut as he ended with figures of 3-0-24-4 to blow away KKR's star-studded batting line-up.

With only four senior T20 matches in his kitty apart from four List 'A' games and two Ranji Trophy matches, Ashwani's rich returns heralded the domination shown by MI's seamers.

Deepak Chahar (2/19), Trent Boult (1/23) and Hardik Pandya (1/10) ensured a collective bowling performance as KKR crumbled for the lowest total of this season, rolling over for just 116 in 16.2 overs.

Even as Rohit Sharma (13) endured another forgettable outing, Ryan Rickleton (62 not out off 41 balls, 4x4s, 5x6s) made his first impact on the IPL stage as Mumbai Indians went over the line with 7.1 overs to spare.

Suryakumar Yadav hit a quick 9-ball 27 not out and ended the game with a six behind the wicket. The left-handed South African Rickleton survived initial challenges from KKR pacers to fight back with a flurry of boundaries for his maiden half-century in the competition and helping his side record their first win of the season.

Left-arm seamer Ashwani accounted for Ajinkya Rahane (11), Rinku Singh (17) and Andre Russell (5) to break the Knight Riders' back after Chahar and Boult made early inroads in the powerplay.

KKR had a forgettable start when their openers Quinton de Kock (1) and Sunil Narine (0) fell inside the first two overs and by the end of the powerplay, the visitors had limped to 41 for 4. Boult outsmarted Narine with a fuller one which swung away to clean him up in the first over. In the next over, Chahar had de Kock caught at mid-off with Ashwani timing his jump perfectly to complete a sharp grab.

Rahane hit a six and a four to counterattack but perished soon after for Ashwani's maiden wicket on his first ball.

The Punjab seamer lured Rahane outside the off and KKR skipper obliged, albeit hitting in the air with the ball flying to deep backward point to Tilak Varma, who showed quick reflexes to complete the catch after the ball popped out.



Ashwani Kumar (left) of Mumbai Indians celebrates with teammate Suryakumar Yadav after taking the wicket of Kolkata Knight Riders batter Rinku Singh during the Indian Premier League match at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday. — AP

SCOREBOARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Quinton de Kock c Ashwani Kumar b Chahar 1, Sunil Narine b Boult 0, Ajinkya Rahane c Tilak Varma b Ashwani Kumar 11, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Naman Dhir b Pandya 26, Venkatesh Iyer c Rickleton b Chahar 3, Rinku Singh c Naman Dhir b Ashwani Kumar 17, Manish Pandey b Ashwani Kumar 19, Andre Russell b Ashwani Kumar 5, Ramandeep Singh c Pandya b Santner 22, Harshit Rana c Naman Dhir b Puthur 4, Spencer Johnson not out 1. Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-4) 7. Total (all out in 16.2 overs) 116.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-2, 3-25, 4-41, 5-45, 6-74, 7-80, 8-88, 9-99.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-23-1, Deepak Chahar 2-0-19-2, Ashwani Kumar 3-0-24-4, Hardik Pandya 2-0-10-1, Vignesh Puthur 2-0-21-1, Mitchell Santner 3-2-0-17-1.

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma c Harshit Rana b Russell 13, Ryan Rickleton not out 62, Will Jacks c Rahane b Russell 16, Suryakumar Yadav not out 27. Extras (nb-2, w-1) 3. Total (for 2 wickets in 12.5 overs) 121.

Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-91.

Bowling: Spencer Johnson 2-0-14-0, Harshit Rana 2-0-28-0, Varun Chakravarthy 3-0-12-0, Andre Russell 2.5-0-35-2, Sunil Narine 3-0-32-0.

The 23-year-old Ashwani Kumar from Punjab's Jhanjeri became the first Indian ever to take four wickets on IPL debut as he ended with figures of 3-0-24-4 to blow away KKR's star-studded batting line-up.

Rutu blames poor starts for losses

Guwahati, March 31: Chennai Super Kings skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad blamed their poor starts and fielding lapses as key reasons behind their six-run defeat to Rajasthan Royals in the IPL on Sunday, marking their second consecutive loss.

Nitish Rana's blistering 36-ball 81, combined with Wanindu Hasaranga's four-wicket haul, powered RR to a hard-fought win here on Sunday.

Chasing 183, CSK lost Rachin Ravindra for duck while Rahul Tripathi got out after the power play as they finished at 176/6. They had lost their last match at home to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, a first in 17 years.

"We haven't been getting good starts, but once we do, things will be different," Gaikwad said after the match. "We also conceded 8-10 extra runs through misfields, and that's something we need to improve."

— PTI

DHONI CAN'T BAT 10 OVERS RUNNING FULL STICK: COACH

Guwahati, March 31: Mahendra Singh Dhoni can't bat 10 overs running full stick as his knee remains dodgy and the former captain decides on his batting position based on the match situation, revealed Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming. The 43-year-old Dhoni had faced criticism for batting at No. 9 during CSK's 50-run loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Chepauk last week.

On Sunday, the CSK talisman walked out at number 7 with the team needing 54 off 25 balls but could manage just 16 runs off 11 balls as they suffered a six-run loss to Rajasthan Royals. "It's a time thing. MS judges it. His body, his knees aren't what they used to be. He's moving okay but there's still a nutrition aspect to it. He can't bat 10 overs running full stick. So he will gauge on the day what he can give us," Fleming said at the post-match press conference.

"If the game's in the balance like today, he will go a little bit earlier and he backs other players when other opportunities are up. So he's balancing that. I said it last year, he's too valuable to us, (with his) leadership and wicket keeping, to throw him in at 9-10 overs. He's actually never done that. So look, from around 13, 14 overs he's looking to go, depending on who's in," he added.

— PTI

ular intervals, CSK couldn't cross the line. On batting at No. 3, the CSK captain explained that it was a pre-planned strategy. "Over the years, Ajinkya batted at three while Rayudu handled the mid-

dle overs. We thought it would be better if I came in later to steady things, while Tripathi could attack upfront.

"It was decided at the auction, and I have no problem with it. Anyway, I'm getting to bat early in every game," he said with a smile.

Meanwhile, Royals' stand-in skipper Riyan Parag, leading in his hometown, was relieved to end their Guwahati leg with a win. "We felt we were 20 short. We were going well in the middle overs but lost a couple of quick wickets. However, our bowlers executed our plans well," Parag said.

"We've had two tough games — one where we conceded 280 and another where we couldn't defend 180. This win was much needed," he added.

They were brilliant on the field with Parag taking a blinder to dismiss Shivam Dube for 18, while Shimron Hetmyer's splendid catch ended M. S. Dhoni's late blitz for 16. — PTI

POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR
RCB	2	2	0	0	4	+2.266
DC	2	2	0	0	4	+1.320
LSG	2	1	1	0	2	+0.963
GT	2	1	1	0	2	+0.625
PBKS	1	1	0	0	2	+0.550
MI	3	1	2	0	2	+0.309
CSK	3	1	2	0	2	-0.771
SRH	3	1	2	0	2	-0.871
RR	3	1	2	0	2	-1.112
KKR	3	1	2	0	2	-1.428

LSG eye 1st home win of the season

Lucknow, March 31: New skipper Rishabh Pant will be eager to make his mark as Lucknow Super Giants look to win their first home game of the season when they host an in-form Punjab Kings in the IPL here on Tuesday.

Pant, who became IPL's most expensive player in the auction last year, will be determined to justify his hefty ₹27 crore price tag after low returns as a batter in the first two games.

His captaincy at LSG started with an unfortunate loss, as they fell short by just one wicket against his former team, Delhi Capitals.

However, LSG made a strong comeback with an impressive five-wicket victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad at home, thanks to some sensational hitting by Nicholas Pooran (70 off 23) and Mitchell Marsh (52 off 31) and Shardul Thakur's (4/34) twin strikes in the third over which halted the marauding SRH batting unit.

Despite the team's success, Pant suffered a second consecutive failure with the bat, managing only scores of 0 and 15 in the opening two matches.

The Indian dasher will be keen to silence his critics and let his bat do the talking.

For the first time, Pant will face his former Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting, who has joined Punjab Kings this season. It will be a clash between the most expensive and

IPL 2025 Match: 13

April 1, 7:30 pm
BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow



Lucknow Super Giants vs Punjab Kings

Overall in IPL

46 Played 247

25 Won 113

20 Lost 134

1 No Result 0

257/5 Highest Total 262/2

Head-to-Head in IPL

Matches played: 4

LSG won: 3

PBKS won: 1

KBK SportsGraphics

second-most expensive players in IPL history, with Shreyas Iyer leading Punjab Kings.

In contrast to Pant's struggles, Iyer, who was roped in for ₹26.75 crore, led from the front with a match-winning 97 not out off 42 deliveries against Gujarat Titans.

The IPL-winning captain is relishing playing at number 3 and will look to continue in the same vein. Shashank Singh started from where he had left in the previous season, smashing boundaries at will, while Priyansh Arya made an electrifying IPL debut with a 23-ball 47 at the top for Punjab. — PTI



Lucknow Super Giants player Mitchell Marsh during a practice session in Lucknow on Monday. — PTI

MARMOUSH'S GOAL FIRES CITY INTO FA CUP SEMIFINALS

Bournemouth (England), March 31: Manchester City came from behind to reach the FA Cup semifinals for a record seventh consecutive season with a 2-1 win over Bournemouth on Sunday, but victory came at a cost as Erling Haaland hobbled off injured.

Haaland had seen a first half penalty saved before Evanilson put the Cherries in front. The Norwegian made amends by equalising four minutes into the second period before being forced off with an ankle injury. His replacement, Omar Marmoush, took just two minutes to score the winner from a second assist by the impressive Nico O'Reilly as City booked a semifinal clash against Nottingham Forest. — AFP

AYCA champions of U-17 tourney

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

American Youth Cricket Academy's Adnit Jhamb scored century as his side defeated TTDC 'A' by 57 runs to emerge champions of the AYCA-TDCA Under-17 tournament at MPS Ground in Thondupally, Shamshabad.

Batting first in the final, Adnit hammered 123 off 115 balls with 15 boundaries and one over the rope to power AYCA to 297 in 49.1 overs. He got good support from Tanush Apte (63) and Ved Malandkar (31). For TTDC 'A', Bhavesh Bera (4/57) and Manishwar

Reddy (4/62) bowled well. In reply, Sandy (46), Sukumar (44) and R. Prudvishwar (43) tried their best but TTDC 'A' were out for 240 in 42.5 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

■ **Final:** American Youth Cricket Academy 297 in 49.1 overs (Adnit Jhamb 123 — 115b, 15x4, 1x6, Tanush Apte 63, Ved Malandkar 31, Bhavesh Bera 4/57, Manishwar Reddy 4/62) bt TTDC 'A' 240 in 42.5 overs (Sukumar 44, Sandy 46, R. Prudvishwar 43, Ritvik Appidi 3/34, Bala Kathula 2/41).

SERIES AWARDS

■ **Man of the Series:** Adnit Jhamb (AYCA, 300 runs, 6 wickets & 5 dismissals); **Best Batsman:** Adnit Jhamb (AYCA, 300 runs); **Best Bowler:** Manishwar Reddy (TTDC 'A', 17 wickets); **Best Wicket-keeper:** Saharsh Swethan (AYCA, 10 dismissals).



Players of the American Youth Cricket Academy pose with the winner's trophy after beating TTDC 'A' in the final of the AYCA-TDCA U-17 tournament.

MENSIK PREVENTS DJOKER FROM HIS 100TH ATP TITLE

Miami Gardens, March 31: Novak Djokovic faced a series of obstacles in the Miami Open final: a delay of more than five-and-a-half hours before the match, an eye infection and a slippery court due to high levels of humidity following the rain. But the largest roadblock was the youth and power of 6-foot-4, 19-year-old phenom Jakub Mensik, who outduelled the 37-year-old Serbian 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4) to win his first ATP title.

Ranked 54th entering the tournament, the Czech Republic teenager plowed through Djokovic with poise and a stellar 130 mph serve. He collected 14 aces and got broken only once. Mensik bashed a service winner on match point and fell on his back. — AP

Regd. No. HQ/SD/509/2024-26

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mitter