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HYDERABAD | SUNDAY | 20 APRIL 2025



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Devbhoomi
Uttarakhand



Shri Yamunotri
30 April, 2025



Shri Gangotri
30 April, 2025



Shri Kedarnath
2 May, 2025



Shri Badrinath
4 May, 2025



Shri Hemkunt Sahib
25 May, 2025



Green Chardham Yatra



Pushkar Singh Dhami
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

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and Greetings
to all Pilgrims



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

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NEAR GANGOTRI: Gaumukh Trek, Bhojbasa, Tapovan, Suryakund & Gaurikund, Harsil Valley, Mukhimath (Mukhba), Dayara Bugyal Trek, Gartang Gali, Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Nachiketa Tal, Dodital

NEAR KEDARNATH: Bhairavnath Temple, Vasuki Tal, Gaurikund, Triyuginarayan Temple, Chopta – Tungnath – Chandrashila, Rudraprayag, Deoria Tal

NEAR BADRINATH: Mana Village, Vyas Gufa & Ganesh Gufa, Bhimshila, Auli, Valley of Flowers, Vasudhara Falls, Charanpaduka, Tapta Kund, Narad Kund, Jyotirmath (Joshimath), Satopanth Falls, Pandukeshwar, Adi Badri Temple, Alkapuri, Hemkunt Sahib

Essential items while traveling

Raincoat	Sunglasses	Water Bottle
Mask	Glucose Biscuit	Stick
Cold Cream	Torch	Monkey Cap
Muffler	Canvas Shoes	Cash
Socks	Sanitizer	Sweater
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For Registration



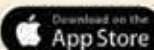
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Important Information

- Complete registration before starting the yatra (pilgrimage).
- Enter a valid mobile number during registration.
- Collect the Darshan Token at the respective shrines.
- Follow the yatra route & take rest at designated halts.
- Avoid littering—help keep the route clean & green.
- Maintain a controlled speed and park vehicles only in designated areas.
- Register your vehicle at [greencard.uk.gov.in] (<http://greencard.uk.gov.in>).
- Refrain from using single-use plastics during the yatra.

Take Special Care of your Health

- Get a health check-up at the nearest health centre before starting the yatra.
- Individuals with heart conditions or hypertension should take extra precautions.
- If you feel unwell at any point, do not continue. Seek help at the nearest medical centre.
- Carry essential medicines, a first-aid kit, and all necessary medical documents and prescriptions.

WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY JOURNEY !

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Gartang Gali

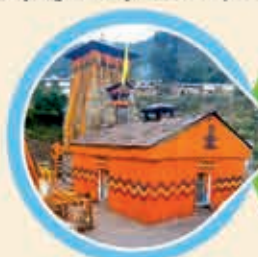
Valley of Flowers

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IN BRIEF Raja Singh hits out BRS on MLC polls

Hyderabad: BJP senior MLA T. Raja Singh lashed out at the BRS for its decision to abstain from the April 23 local body MLC election, charging that this was part of a broader conspiracy involving the Congress and BRS to facilitate a victory for the AIMIM and, by extension, hand over control of the city to the party. Reacting to the BRS announcement of staying away from the poll, Raja Singh said that the BRS was reducing opposition to the AIMIM, thereby making it easier for the party to win. This is framed as a deliberate strategy rather than political disengagement, he said and accusing the Congress and BRS of working "hand in glove".

ABVP for action on corp inter colleges

Hyderabad: ABVP-Hyderabad leaders demanded strict action against private and corporate intermediate for charging huge fees and conducting classes in holidays in violation of Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) guidelines. A delegation submitted a representation to BIE secretary S. Krishna Aditya. Pruthvi Teja, ABVP-Hyderabad secretary, asked the official to conduct online admissions to junior colleges and to prevent colleges from overcharging students.

Uttam starts paddy procurement drive

Telangana counts among top paddy producers in India

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The government on Saturday launched a large-scale paddy procurement operation for Rabi 2024-25, setting a target of 70.13 lakh metric tonnes (LMT). This follows an estimated paddy production of 127.50 LMT on 57 lakh acres, placing Telangana at the top among the country's paddy-producing states.

In Vanakulam, Telangana produced 153.5 LMT of paddy over 66.7 lakh acres. Therefore, the total for both seasons would be 281 LMTs, the highest ever in any state.

Addressing all district collectors by a video conference, irrigation and civil supplies minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government was in a situation of plenty. After a smooth and nearly flawless Vanakulam procure-



Irrigation and civil supplies minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy addresses collectors by a video conference on procuring paddy for Rabi. — BY ARRANGEMENT

ment, officials must execute Yasangi procurement with equal or greater efficiency, the minister said.

Highlighting the urgency of the procurement drive, Uttam Kumar Reddy cautioned officials to remain alert in view of the unseasonal rains reported in several districts. He said such weather fluctuations

could damage harvested or standing paddy if not procured swiftly. "This is why we must act efficiently and quickly — any delay could mean losses for our farmers," he said, urging intensified ground-level monitoring and infrastructure preparedness at paddy procurement centres (PPCs). As of April 18, around 8.51 LMT of

paddy had arrived at procurement centres, of which 5.77 LMT had been procured — 3.79 LMT of fine (sanna) variety and 1.98 LMTs of coarse (doddu) type. A total of 63,887 farmers had benefited, and payments, including bonuses, were being processed. Around 2.74 LMTs of paddy remained to be lifted from PPCs.

RAGHUNANDAN QUESTIONS KTR OVER GO 111

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

BJP Medak MP M. Raghunandan Rao lashed out at BRS leader K.T. Rama Rao, urging him to stop "hollow sympathy" over the 400 acres of Kancha Gachibowli land and instead answer for a decade of environmental and legal missteps during the BRS regime. Raghunandan Rao questioned why the BRS government had tried to convert lakhs of acres into a concrete jungle by lifting GO 111, meant to protect the Himayatsagar and Osmansagar, without conducting an environmental impact assessment.

This decision had serious environmental, legal and social consequences, particularly affecting the protection of Hyderabad's twin reservoirs, the MP said while speaking with the media. The lifting of GO 111 threatened the twin water bodies, destroyed local flora and fauna, and increased the flood risk for Hyderabadis, he said. Highlighting the construction of farmhouses in catchment areas, he asked whether damaging Hyderabad's lung space for private benefit was not an ecological disaster. "KTR must explain why his family members were allowed to construct farmhouses in ecologically fragile areas," he said.

HAPPY 82nd BIRTHDAY

Dr. P. SHANKAR RAO
Ex. Minister, Ex. MLA
A lion who lives on his own terms
KINGSIZE
Inserted by: G. Chandrasekhar Reddy
K. Manikanta Kumar
P. Bhavani Shankar, B. Anil Kumar
G. Shanthi Kumar (Near & Dear)

HAPPY 82nd BIRTHDAY

Dr. P. SHANKAR RAO
Ex. Minister, Ex. MLA
Our pillar of strength who taught us that good values, principles and deeds are the only Armour which will protect us.
Inserted by: P. Vishweshwari (Wife),
P. Shashank & P. Sudeep (Sons)
P. Sushmitha (Daughter)
P. VISHANK AVYAYAN (Grandson)

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Tomcom signs MoUs for Japanese jobs

MOULI MAREEDU | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Giving top priority to providing employment opportunities to the youth, the Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy-led delegation signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with top manpower companies in Tokyo on Saturday.

The Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Ltd. (Tomcom), a state-run organisation under the department of labour, employment, training and factories, signed MoUs

with two leading companies — TERN (TGUK Technologies Pvt. Ltd.) and Raj Group.

This collaboration is aimed at facilitating the recruitment of skilled professionals from Telangana to meet the growing workforce demands in Japan across high-demand sectors. TERN Group with its regional office in Tokyo's Shinagawa district, specialises in international recruitment for the software, engineering, and specified skilled worker (SSW) sectors within Japan. Raj Group in part-



Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Ltd signed MoUs with leading companies — TERN (TGUK Technologies Pvt. Ltd.) and Raj Group — in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

nership with Tsukui Corporation Ltd, Japan's leading nursing care employer, has been working with Tomcom for

employers have jointly indicated a requirement of around 500 personnel in the next one to two years in sectors such as health-care (200), engineering (automotive, mechanical, computer science/information technology) 100; hospitality (100); construction (including civil engineering, building works, infrastructure development, equipment handling and maintenance) 100.

This initiative is part of Tomcom's broader mission to diversify international employment avenues for the youth.

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For Furniture/Mattress dealership enquiry across Telangana, please contact 7095410833 / 8686169970

IN BRIEF

Board files case for illegal connection

Hyderabad: Water Board vigilance officials registered a criminal case against an individual for illegally drawing a water connection from the main drinking water pipeline at the O&M Division 6, Banjara Hills section. The unauthorised connection was taken at a building under construction as part of the Nims expansion project. It was spotted during an ongoing drive to remove motors from pipelines. The case was registered with the Punjagutta police against project in-charge Nagendra Babu under the BNS and the Damage to Public Property Act. As part of their 'motor-free drive', officials seized 32 illegal electric motors that were being used to draw water directly from pipelines in various areas on Saturday.

OFFICIALS DETECT HYGIENE LAPSES DURING CHECKS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Inspections carried out by the GHMC food safety wing have revealed multiple hygiene and sanitation lapses at food establishments across the city. The GHMC deployed its 'Food Safety on Wheels' testing unit in Malakpet to raise public awareness and assess food quality at local outlets. Targeted inspections were conducted in markets and commercial kitchens, it said in a statement. In the Monda Market area, officials examined mango traders and checked for compliance with food handling and storage standards, particularly given the seasonal spike in fruit sales.

At Begum Bazaar, inspections were held at three trading units.

In Banjara Hills, a cluster of food establishments came under scrutiny, including the canteen at a hospital as well as an eatery at Mehdiapatnam.

Across these locations, food safety officers observed several deficiencies in cleanliness, food handling practices, and general sanitation.

Food samples were collected from the premises for laboratory analysis under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSS Act).

Man duped of ₹9.7L in fraudulent stocks

Victim turns suspicious seeing UPI payment to meat shop

PRIYA RATHNAM | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The Hyderabad cyber-crime police have launched an investigation into an online trading scam after a 35-year-old private employee was duped of ₹9,72,276. One of the payments was shown as being made to a meat shop.

According to police, the victim was approached two weeks ago through an SMS link and an email by a fake trading platform.

The victim told the police in a complaint that he was lured with promises of high profits and manipulated into making initial investments. Once he began investing, the fraudsters began pressuring him to deposit larger amounts.

The scammers, posing as financial experts, claimed to use 'quantum AI' technology to generate high returns. The victim deposited ₹230 and was shown a small profit to build trust. This was followed by multiple transactions of ₹999, ₹540, ₹500 and later ₹2,584.

For each transaction, the victim was misled with false promises of profit and fake withdrawal processes. During one of the transactions, he grew suspicious after noticing the UPI merchant name listed as "Yawar Meat Shop."

When the victim

• Victim was lured with promises of high profits and manipulated into making investments.

• He attempted a major withdrawal of funds, the fraudsters claimed losses had occurred and blocked the request.

Delhi man held for cheating city victim

M. SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The Hyderabad cyber-crime police arrested 30-year-old Manish, an unemployed native of Delhi, for his alleged involvement in a job fraud where a city-based victim lost ₹1.47 lakh. Manish was involved in another in Karnataka, police said.

A 27-year-old woman from Hyderabad approached the cyber-crimes sleuths with a complaint stating that she had applied for a job through a job portal. Fraudsters contacted her informing they were completing the recruitment.

They asked her to select a company for employment and pay a registration fee of

₹3,000. For background verification, they demanded ₹10,999. She did not pay.

On December 26, 2024, they informed her that she had been selected for the job and asked her for ₹42,670 for medical insurance and ₹35,000 for security procedures.

After making payments, they claimed that the payment gateway was stuck and kept postponing the job process repeatedly.

She realised that this was a cyber fraud, having paid a total of ₹1.49 lakh.

Based on her complaint, cybercrime police booked a case under the IT Act and the BNS and took up investigation which led to the arrest of Manish.

attempted a major withdrawal of funds, the fraudsters claimed losses had occurred and blocked the request, warning that any withdrawal would impact

future earning opportunities. They then began to threaten and pressure him to invest more. Realising the scam, the victim reported the matter to the police.

POLICE ARREST 2 FOR CHEATING ON GULF JOBS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, APRIL 19

Nandipet police on Saturday arrested Pabba 'Dundigal' Swapna of Annaram and Bijjam Subba Reddy, owner of Sridevi Travels, for allegedly duping some 70 youths of approximately ₹6 lakh each with false promises of Gulf-based employment.

The arrests follow directives from police commissioner P. Sai Chaitanya, under whose instructions Counter-Corruption Squad (CCS) and Nandipet teams had earlier detained Argula Bhojaram on April 12 in the same racket.

Investigators say the quartet, joined by Dondigala Bhumes (alias Pabba Bhumes Reddy), Mocha Raju and Arepally Mahesh — all linked to Armour travel agencies — posed as general and finance managers in multiple Gulf states to lure applicants. After collecting fees and issuing counterfeit visas, the gang arranged for victims to travel overseas. After the jobseekers spent six months abroad, they were forcibly repatriated, leaving them stranded.

WORKER KILLED IN COMPOUND WALL COLLAPSE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

A 55-year-old daily wage labourer died when a compound wall collapsed on him at an under-construction site in the Mahalaxmi Layout Road in Dullapally on Friday.

The deceased was identified as Bolli Chennayya, a resident of Thipudampally in Atmakur mandal of Wanaparthy district. Co-workers and local residents alerted emergency services.

Petbasheerabad police, along with 108 ambulance personnel, reached the site but Chennayya had died by then.

Petbasheerabad police have registered a case and are investigating whether negligence or violation of safety norms led to the collapse. Officials are also examining if the builder adhered to construction safety protocols mandated under the law.

Fire at Nims triggers panic

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

A minor fire at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (Nims) on Saturday evening triggered panic, especially after claims surfaced on social media alleging fire-crackers were found at the scene. The claims were denied by officials.

The fire broke out at around 4.20 pm on the fifth floor of the trauma block. No patient was present at the time, and the fire was contained quickly by fire department personnel who were summoned to the site. No casualties were reported.

The Panjagutta fire station

dispatched a five-member crew led by fire officer Bandla Ramesh, equipped with a multi-purpose tender (MPT). Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Ramesh said, "We found that the fire was spreading through electric cables, likely caused by a short circuit." Though the fire was brought under control swiftly, the rubber insulation from the wiring produced dense smoke, filling the floor.

"Our team used extinguishers to control the fire and clear the smoke," he added. On the claims about the presence of firecrackers, Ramesh said the team did not find any such items at the site but said that the matter would be

looked into. Nims later issued a statement confirming the fire in a non-patient care area and said that hospital services remained unaffected.

The hospital's internal emergency response team, along with fire personnel, contained the situation.

The cause has been identified as a probable electrical short circuit, and a detailed inspection is underway.

Nims additional superintendent Laxmi Bhasker denied the claims of fire crackers and told *Deccan Chronicle*: "After observing the claims, I along with the staff and the fire police officials searched the place but found nothing."

ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਜਨਮ ਸਵਾਰ ਦਰਗਹ ਚਲਿਆ॥
ਸਦੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਜਾਇ ਸਦਾ ਪਿਛ ਮਲਿਆ॥
Spending this life fruitfully gurmukh goes to the other world.
There in the true court (of lord) he gets his true place.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

SARDAR VARINDER SINGH LAMBA

His life was a testament to the power of family and community, inspiring all who knew him to live with purpose and kindness.

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Harjinder Kaur Lamba
Brother and Sister In-Law
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Son In-Law and Daughter
Arbinder Singh and Sonia Kaur Kohli
Sons and Daughters In-Law
Harminder Singh and Manninder Kaur Lamba
Kamaldeep Singh and Damanjeet Kaur Lamba
Kanwarjeet Singh and Ishmeet kaur Lamba

HC declines relief in fee case

L. RAVICHANDER
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Justice K. Lakshman offofdisposed of a writ petition filed by a parent challenging the alleged denial of access to education for his two minor sons by an international school at Nanakramguda, due to non-payment of fees. While the court refrained from granting relief, it provided liberty to the petitioner to approach the competent authority. The petitioner alleged that the school had denied access to classes and examinations since March 3 for non-payment of fees and such actions amounted to mental harassment and violated the Right to Education Act, 2009, the Telangana Education Act, 1982, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. He pointed out that the district education officer (DEO) failed to act upon his representation made on July 23, 2024. The petitioner sought a direction to the authorities to take immediate action against the school and permit the children to continue attending classes so as not to lose the academic year. The judge noted that the school was a private entity, and no statutory duty was made to justify invoking the jurisdiction of the High Court under Article 226 in

this case. The judge ordered failed to demonstrate that the school violated any enforceable legal obligation that could attract judicial interference via a writ petition. The court disposed of the writ petition, granting liberty to the petitioner to submit a fresh representation to the DEO within one week. The DEO was directed to consider and dispose of the representation strictly as per the Right to Education Act, 2009, and Telangana Education Act, 1980.

HC ADMITS PLEA ON TEMPLE TRUSTEE ROW

Justice E.V. Venugopal admitted a writ plea challenging the appointment of a board of trustees to the Sri Yogananda Laxmi Narasimhaswamy Temple in Arvapally, Jajireddy-gudem mandal, Suryapet district. The judge is dealing with a writ plea filed by Indurthy Venkat Reddy and seven others. It was the case of the petitioners that the commissioner of endowments, through proceedings issued on April 8, appointed a set of trustees without issuing any public notification or inviting applications. The process bypassed established legal procedures, denying interested and eligible individuals, including themselves, a fair opportunity



LEGAL STORIES

to apply. The court posted the matter for further adjudication.

HC GRANTS BAIL TO ACCUSED'S WIFE

Justice J. Sreenivas Rao granted anticipatory bail to a woman accused in a financial fraud case involving over ₹18 crore allegedly collected from more than 200 victims by a private company. The judge dealt with a criminal petition filed by Baleboyina Kavitha. According to the prosecution, the complaint was filed by multiple individuals against Prakruthi Entrepreneur Private Limited and its directors, alleging that they collected large sums from the public on the pretext of providing attractive returns on investments in household product ventures. Counsel for the petitioner argued that the petitioner was falsely implicated solely on the ground that she is the wife of a co-accused and that there was no specific allegation against her in the

complaint. The petitioner also contended that she had no active role in the company's affairs and was willing to cooperate with the investigation. The judge observed that no specific allegations or material were placed on record linking the petitioner to the alleged fraud, and the judge accordingly granted conditional anticipatory bail to the petitioner.

HC SEEKS RESPONSE TO COMPENSATION CLAIM

A two-judge panel of the Telangana High Court comprising acting Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Renuka Yara ordered notices in a contempt plea complaining inaction in considering payment of ex gratia compensation to a husband who lost his wife due to a thunderbolt strike in October 2015. The panel earlier directed the state government to decide, within 60 days, payment of ex gratia compensation from the State Disaster Response Fund. The petitioner sought ₹5 lakh in relief under GO MS No.1 issued by the revenue department. It was the case of the petitioner that despite the clear directive from the court, no decision was taken within the stipulated time.

Full reports in *deccanchronicle.com*

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that my Client, is intending to purchase the below mentioned Schedule of Property from its owner Sama Mallu Reddy.

If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sale transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary proof substantiating his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute(s) within Seven (7) days from the date of this publication, failing which, my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owner as if there are no third party claims/objections/disputes in respect of the Schedule Property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained.

SCHEDULE 'A' OF PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Dry Agricultural Land totally admeasuring Ac. 3-20 Gts situated within Sy.Nos. 147/1-2 (Ac.2-38 Gts) and Sy.No. 148/1-4 (Ac.0-24Gts out of Ac.0-39 Gts), in Mansarpally Village and Gram Panchayath, Maheshwaram Mandal, Ranga Reddy District and bounded by:

Sy.No.147/1-2: North : Road, South : Sy.No.149 and Venture, East : Agricultural Land of Sama Jagann Reddy, West : Agricultural land in Sy.No.148 of Sama Mallu Reddy.
Sy.No.148/1-4: North : Road, South : Sy.No.149 and Venture, East : Agricultural Land in Sy.No.147 of Sama Mallu Reddy, West : Agricultural land of Sama Sudhakar Reddy and others and Road

Sd/- A.SATYASIRI

Advocate, Flat No.101, Rohini Apartments, Srinagar Colony Main Road, Hyderabad, Telangana 50073 | Ph: 9121008120.

ICE-CREAM SELLER ATTACKED FOR NOT BUYING PHONE, 3 ARRESTED

Hyderabad: Attapur police on Friday arrested three persons identified as Afroz, Salman and Niwas for allegedly assaulting 23-year-old ice-cream seller Anuj after he declined to buy a mobile phone that the trio was offering at a low price.

The incident occurred at around 7 pm on April 14 when Anuj, a UP native

residing in Kishannagh, was selling ice cream near Arsh Mahal. He went to purchase a cigarette from a nearby pan shop, where the trio accosted him.

When Niwas offered him the phone, Anuj refused and the trio began threatening him. When he returned to his cart, the trio allegedly attacked him.

2ND DEATH ANNIVERSARY
The memory of the righteous is a blessing
— Proverbs 10:7

Late CH.MARY GRACE
(10.07.1935 - 20.04.2023)
Retired Teacher
(W/o Late Shri T.C.Theophilus)
"Though you left us, your memories remain in our hearts forever."

Inserted by:
Mr. T.N.K. Manik Prasad, Mrs. Nirmala Gar, Col. T. David Prasad, Mr. T. Niranjan Prasad, Mr. T. Neela Prasad, Mr. T. Joshi Prasad, Mrs. T. Asunta, Dr. T. Reshmi, Mrs. T. Rajitha, Daughters-in-law, Sons-in-law, Grandchildren & Great Grand children.

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE
In Loving Memory of

Late Singi Reddy Pandu Ranga Reddy Garu
DOB : 20-4-1952 DOD : 17-10-2016
Bowenpally

"With deep regards and respects in Remembrance of a great soul"

SPR Junior College MPC, BIPC, MEC, CEC Pavan Vihar Colony, New Bowenpally, Sec-bad.

SHRADHANJALI

Dr. T. Madan
Left for HEAVEN on 15th April.
GAMPA FAMILY

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Late: KOMMA SRIRAMLOO
DOB : 20-4-1952 DOD : 17-10-2016
Bowenpally
Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad
DOB: 14-03-1934 DOD: 01-05-2024
Your love & blessings will always be in our hearts forever
Inserted By :
KOMMA FAMILY

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE
In Loving Memory of

Late Singi Reddy Pandu Ranga Reddy Garu
DOB : 20-4-1952 DOD : 17-10-2016
Bowenpally
In every step we look up to your heavenly guidance and blessings...
Inserted by :
Mr.S. Ranadhir Reddy, Director ROCKSPICE PUBLIC SCHOOL (CBSE) New Bowenpally, Sec-bad.

12th Death Anniversary

Smt. Thigulla Shobha Rani
W/o Late Thigulla Namashivaya Goud
D.O.B: 10.8.1957 D.O.D: 20.4.2013
It's been 12 years since you left us mom, but you are always in the hearts of many. You left a huge unfulfilled vacuum. Miss you so much mom.
Sons: T. Surya Satish Goud, T. Sanjay Goud, Daughter-in-Laws: T. Deepika, T. Shrawani, Daughter: T. Shailaja Grand Children and All Loved Ones.

13th ANNIVERSARY

K.R. FRANKLIN
(1954 - 2012)
Wife Mrs. K. Ethel Vasantha
Son: K.F. John Stalin
(AEE. Irrigation Dept.)
Daughter-in-law: K. Jacinth Ruhamah
Daughter: K.F. Steffi Carolin
Son-in-law: Joshua Benher & Grandchildren

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DRAW DATE: 11TH JUNE, 2025

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₹30,999/-

OPPO

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₹30,999/-

Mac Book Air M4

₹63,900*

Mac Book Pro M4

₹1,30,400*

WEATHER



Max: 36.9°C
Min: 19.8°C
RH: 51%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky.
Max/Min temp. 38/23 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Viswawasu: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Bahula Saptami till 6.55 pm
Star: Purvashada till 11.44 am
Varjyam: 8 pm to 9.39 pm
Durmuhurtham: 4.49 pm to 5.39 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HJIRI CALENDAR
Shawwal 21, 1446 H
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.54 am
Zohar: 12.25 pm
Asar: 4.39 pm
Maghrib: 6.39 pm
Isha: 7.50 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 05.56 AM
SUNSET TODAY 06.33 PM
MOONRISE 12.08 AM
MOONSET 11.17 AM

EVENTS TODAY



Hyderabad ku Line aarroun... Exhibition by Subhani
Time: 12-6 pm
Venue: Nehru Art Gallery, JNAFAU

Guru Krupa orchestra
Time: 12.30 pm
Venue: Tyagaraya Gana Sabha

Musical concert and poetry
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Saptaparni

Sri Rama Navami cultural fest
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Keys High School

Bengali New Year celebrations
Time: 10 am
Venue: Phoenix arena

SHORT TAKES

TG HAJ PANEL PLANS TO MAKE HAJ FLIGHTS SMOOTHER

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

With about 12,000 pilgrims from 17 states expected for Haj through the Shamshabad airport, minorities adviser Md Shabbir Ali said the state government would host them with utmost care and dignity. He said that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had given clear instructions to ensure every pilgrim was treated well and that no complaints should arise regarding services or facilities.

Speaking at a coordination meeting between the Haj Committees of Telangana and AP here on Saturday, Ali said: "The Telangana Haj Committee is fully prepared to make Haj a smooth and spiritually fulfilling experience for all pilgrims."

AP minorities welfare minister Md Farooq thanked the Telangana government for its hospitality and assured full cooperation from the Andhra Pradesh administration. He said that around 1,200 pilgrims from Andhra Pradesh will embark on Haj from Hyderabad this year, and the government would coordinate closely with the Telangana Haj Committee to ensure that all their requirements were addressed.

"We are grateful for the support being extended to our pilgrims and look forward to working together in the spirit of unity and service," he said.

According to the briefing, about 12,000 pilgrims from 17 states are expected to depart for Haj through the Hyderabad embarkation point. A total of 31 flights are scheduled to take off starting April 29, with seven flights bound for Madina and 24 for Jeddah.

The Telangana Haj Committee will oversee all ground arrangements including boarding, lodging, transportation, luggage handling, food, medical assistance and other services at the Haj House in Hyderabad.

● **SPEAKING AT** a coordination meeting between the Haj Committees of Telangana and AP here on Saturday, Ali said: "The Telangana Haj Committee is fully prepared to make Haj a smooth and spiritually fulfilling experience for all pilgrims."

Neta's natter

KAVITHA'S 'TOUGH' TALK EARNS SNIGGERS

Talking tough sometimes comes with a price and recently it was the turn of BRS MLC K. Kavitha attempting to regain attention following her revelation that she can be a "rowdy" type if called for. Though she did not clearly mean that she can be the dictionary definition of the word, and it was more of her willingness to get tough if needed, her comments at a BRS meeting in Banswada left several party folks wondering if it was this very "tough" image, that ended up in her losing the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In any case, her announcement that she would maintain a 'Pink Book (hit list)' to haunt political opponents, had party tongues wagging.

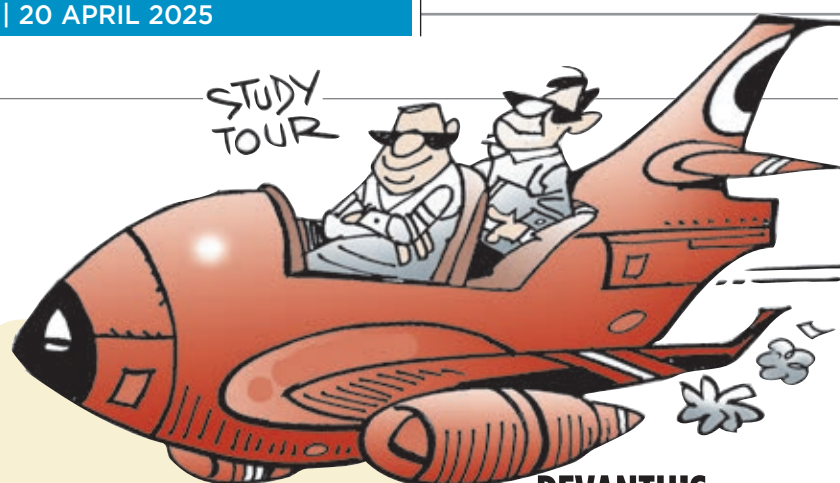
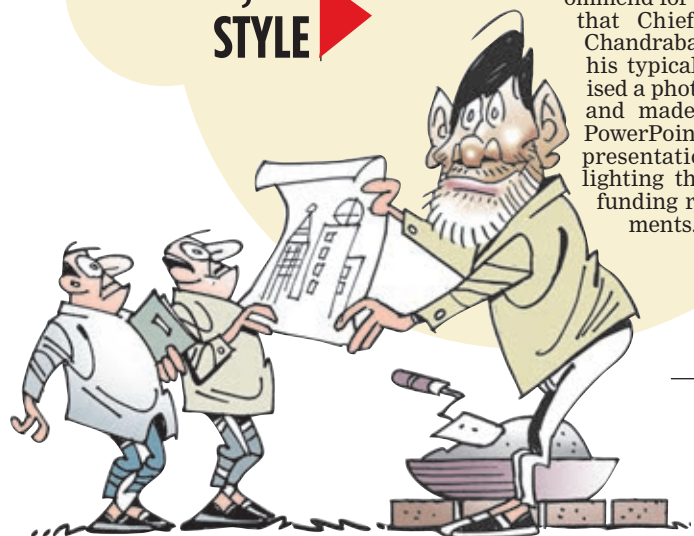
DAYAKAR EARNS IRE OF WOMEN WRONGED

The once-powerful BRS leader and former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has been wading through some unfamiliar waters ever since he lost his Palakurthy Assembly seat in the last elections to the Congress' Yashashwini Reddy, who won thanks to her mother-in-law Jhansi Reddy. With Dayakar Rao's repeated barbs at the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, it was just a matter of time before the duo hit back. The MLA, and Jhansi Reddy, are no longer mincing words when it comes to Dayakar Rao, declaring that it is time "he gave up his imaginary starring role in an imaginary soap opera." They contend that after losing the election, the former MLA is trying hard to create hurdles in development works in the constituency and warned him that their patience can only stretch so far and, that come next elections, Dayakar will yet again bite the dust.

ANITHA LETS BYGONES BE BYGONES

Then and now. Times change and so do circumstances and AP's home minister Vangalapudi Anitha has emerged as a perfect example of this. Anitha, when in the Opposition, was known for declaring that cops who arrest her would face the consequences later. Now that she heads the police department, things appear to have changed as demonstrated at an event in Tunni where she felicitated the constable who arrested her in the past, and served her notices during her time in the Opposition. She praised the constable for performing her duty, and declared that she bore no grudges, and urged the police to continue fulfilling their responsibilities with integrity.

SOFTENING UP A FINANCE CHIEF, AP STYLE



KANCHA ROW NIXES A FOREIGN JUNKET

Flights of fancy have a way of getting grounded. The latest to experience this is a top official of the Telangana forest department who was all set to fly to the distant land of Australia, just a few weeks before retirement, ostensibly on a study tour of mining in that country. Everything was organised and set, but then it was time for the best laid plans to, well, go awry. The sudden eruption of the Kancha Gachibowli land issue meant an immediate cancellation of the tour, and boomeranging of the planned trip to Australia.

CONGRESS COLD WAR TURNS A HOT AFFAIR

It may be a sizzling hot summer in Adilabad district but there is a frigid cold war brewing between two Congress MLAs, K. Premeasagar Rao from Mancherla, and Gaddam Vivek from Chennur, both aspiring for a place in the Revanth Reddy Cabinet. With word doing the rounds that the expected Cabinet expansion is now on the back burner, and Vivek, considered a front-runner until recently, Premeasagar Rao's recent indirect attacks on the Chennur MLA, have prompted a cold war between the two. Both have been at pains to explain just how much they have served the party amidst the new-found uncertainty over additional Cabinet picks by the Chief Minister.

PAST CATCHES UP WITH VEERRAJU

Expecting a reward for hard work is all but natural but in politics things apparently work differently. This is the piquant situation that former AP BJP president Somu Veerraju finds himself in. Now MLC, Veerraju, at a recent meeting in Rajamahendravaram, said that party cadres want to see him as a minister. He recalled how in 2014, he gave up on a MLA ticket from

Rajamahendravaram and told Chandrababu Naidu that he (Veerraju) had to ensure victory for allied candidates from three constituencies and that would mean him not testing and focusing on the greater good. He went on to say that had he contested he would have won, and that he told Naidu that then he would have to be made a minister. But that was then. Now, the long-nursed ambition of

becoming a minister appears to be back, but his past history of pillorying Naidu when Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was in power, may prove the proverbial slip between the cup, and the lip.

● **VEERRAJU RECALLED** how in 2014, he gave up on a MLA ticket from Rajamahendravaram and told Naidu that he (Veerraju) had to ensure victory for allied candidates.

C.M. RAMESH DUMPS A SWEET STORY

Election promises turning into bitter pills for the voters appear to have come true for sugarcane farmers of Anakapalle who were promised by their now MP, C.M. Ramesh, during the election campaign, that he would secure ₹200 crore from the Central government to revive defunct sugar mills, a promise that resonated deeply with the community. But with nothing moving on this front, the people are turning increasingly unhappy and complain that their MP no longer even wants to listen to their woes, and is now apparently focused on issues related to a steel plant owned by a very large industrial group.

AT TTD, LOOKING FOR DIVINE INTERVENTION

Can divine intervention help two individuals overcome apparent differences between them? If there was any such hope, at least it does not seem to be working in the case of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam's chairman B.R. Naidu, and executive officer J. Syamala Rao. Following allegations over deaths of cows in the TTD's goshala, the two held separate media conferences over two days, targeting former TTD chairman Bhumana Karunakar Reddy's comments on the issue. The not-joining-hands-during-a-crisis is not new for the two running the TTD. Back in January after the stampede death of six devotees, the two blamed one another at a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. Though Naidu had made it clear that there was no place for egos in the Lord's work, the message did not appear to have sunk in yet.

HARD WORK FOR NAIDU'S PAT

There is nothing quite like bending the back to get some work done, especially if it can result in a pat on the back from the Chief Minister. And doing precisely this has been AP's water resources minister Nimmala Ramanaidu who recently donned the role of a mason for construction of a pedestal for a Dr B.R. Ambedkar statue in Palacole in West Godavari district. Ramanaidu joined the workers in centring works, and even cut iron rods to set up scaffolding for the pedestal, laying the cement-concrete slab and finally ended the job by garlanding the statue on April 14. Ramanaidu had previously received some pats on his back from Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for monitoring relief work after the Budameru Vagu

Contributions from Md Ilyas, Narender Pulloor, Laxmi Pranathi, L. Venkat Ram Reddy, Puli Sharath Kumar, P.V. Prasad, Avinash P. Subramanyam, Sampat G. Samritan, Balu Pulipaka, Vadrevu Srinivas, Pillalamarri Srinivas, Aruna.

Protests til Waqf Act lifted: Owaisi

Protests to be similar to farm laws agitation

NEERAJ KUMAR AND
BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19



AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi addresses the AIMPLB meeting at Darussalam against Waqf Act on Saturday. — P. SURENDRA

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday declared that there was no going back in the battle against the Waqf Amendment Act and the movement would not stop until the BJP government at the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi took back the legislation.

Addressing a massive public meeting under the aegis of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) in Hyderabad, Owaisi said the struggle against the Waqf Act was inspired by farmers who fought against the four controversial agriculture laws, and forced Modi to withdraw them.

"This movement will not stop until this black Waqf law is withdrawn," Owaisi said, adding that the BJP government was "threatening courts by spreading rumours that a religious war would break out if the Waqf law was stopped."

"Nothing of that sort will happen," Owaisi declared. "Muslims are a law-abiding people. The Muslims have proved this during the Babri Masjid dispute in the courts. We will abide by the law of the land. But we will not stop until the Waqf Act is taken back."

The AIMIM leader, who spoke after AIMPLB president Maulana Khaled Saifullah Rehmani's address, said "Modi is trying to create a rift in the Muslim community, trying to sow discord between Shia, Sunni, and Dawoodi Bohra sects. The Dawoodi Bohras have realised how Modi is trying to lure them. We are fighting for everyone. There are no political interests in this battle."

Owaisi called on all Muslims to take part in the protest programmes planned by the AIMPLB.

Owaisi said Modi has been going after the Muslim community ever since he came to power. First it was the law against triple talaq with which he tried to misguide women. Then came the Citizenship Amendment Act, and the UAPA, and each of these were

CAMPAIGN DATES

- AIMPLB's 'Save Wakf-Save Constitution' campaign in Telangana, AP
- April 30, 9 pm: 10-minute 'Batti Gul' lights-out protest.
- May 18: City-level meeting with local minority and secular leaders. To be followed by similar meetings in all districts.
- May 22: Women's public gathering, after evening prayer, at Idgah Bilal Hockey Ground, Masab Tank.
- May 25: Human chain protests in Hyderabad, all districts after afternoon prayers.
- June 1: Dharna from 3 pm to 5 pm. Women's protest at NTR Stadium in Hyderabad; main protest at Dharna Chowk. Similar protests in all districts.
- Public meetings: To be held in all districts. Women specific programmes in Mahbubnagar, Khammam, Warangal, Zaheerabad, Nizamabad, Nirmal, Adilabad, Jagtial, Kamareddy.

designed to create rifts within the Muslim community and society.

"The UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act) was brought in to harass innocent people. Now, he is coming with Uniform Civil Code and wants to take away Sharia

which was even protected by Dr B.R. Ambedkar in the form of Muslim personal laws," Owaisi said.

Asking the gathering to turn on the lights on their mobile phones, to which they immediately responded, Owaisi said he hoped that these lights will open the eyes of the BJP. "The beauty of Bharat," he said, "is not Narendra Modi but the beauty of Bharat is its unity, brotherhood. Our fight is against political forces that want to decimate the Muslim community, the forces which have forgotten that it was Muslims who fought against the British for 200 years," Owaisi said.

AIMPLB president Maulana Rehmani called the Waqf Act "a dangerous law" that paved the way for illegal occupation of Waqf properties, including those occupied by top businessmen who built their mansions and hotels on the land. "If this Act is not opposed, Waqf will face serious losses. The Macca Masjid is 300 years old, and under the new laws, the government can declare that it is not a Waqf property, can say that no prayers can be held there, and that it is just a tourist spot. Such are the provisions in this law. This is how dangerous the law is," Rehmani said.

The makers of the Waqf Act were ignoring history, of many Hindu rulers giving land for building mosques and other facilities, just as many Muslim rulers gave land for Hindu organisations and for temples as was with the case of the Nizam of Hyderabad, he said.

B'nagar sitaphal ripe for GI tag, TG on global map soon

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Telangana's celebrated Balanagar sitaphal, renowned for its sugar-sweet pulp, is a step away from securing a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, with the final field inspection scheduled for April 22 across orchards in Mahbubnagar, Rangareddy and Vikarabad districts.

Traditionally harvested from wild groves and sold by itinerant vendors on Hyderabad's outskirts, the fruit shot to fame after its pulp became a flagship flavour at the iconic Moazzamjahi Market ice-cream parlour in the 1950s.

The medium-sized green custard apple contains 29.6 per cent carbohydrates, 5.2 per cent protein and 19.4 per cent vitamin C — nutrient levels that surpass most other varieties. The variety is marked by its adaptability, high yields.

A GI tag will give branding rights for Balanagar sitaphal, especially as demand for custard-apple pulp and powder surges in the ice-cream industry. A GI tag is given to products linked to a specific geographical location. It is a certification of the product's quality, reputation, or characteristics that are unique to its place of origin.

Dr Saidaiah Pidigam, dean of the College of Horticulture, Mojerla, and principal investigator for the GI project, said a report will be filed with the Chennai-based GI registry immediately after the visit. "Once approved, the growing region will be officially demarcated, bringing global recogni-

A SWEET STORY

● Final inspections to give geographical indicator (GI) tag to Telangana's celebrated Balanagar sitaphal to take place on April 22.

● Balanagar sitaphal is renowned for its sugar-sweet pulp.

● It is mostly grown in Mahbubnagar, Rangareddy and Vikarabad districts.

● It is harvested from wild groves and sold by vendors on Hyderabad's outskirts.

● The fruit is behind the flagship flavour of the iconic Moazzamjahi Market ice-cream parlour.



The Balanagar custard apple contains **29.6%**, 5.2% protein and 19.4% Vitamin C.

If granted, the GI tag for Balanagar sitaphal will raise Telangana's tally to 19.

● GI tag is given to products linked to a specific geographical location. It is a certification of the product's quality, reputation, or characteristics that are unique to its place of origin.

tion and premium prices to local growers," he noted. The GI bid has financial backing from Nabard, which sanctioned a ₹12 lakh for pre-registration studies, filing fees and post-registration promotion. "We view the Balanagar sitaphal as a holistic rural-development project," said Swati Tiwari, Nabard's deputy general manager, adding that the bank has supported 116 GI products nationwide, including Telangana's Pochampally Ikat. Intellectual-property

practitioner Subhajit Saha, whose firm IPRAS is preparing the application, said up to a dozen more Telangana products could be filed within a year. "Authorised-user certificates will give farmers, foragers and processors exclusive branding rights, especially as demand for custard-apple pulp and powder surges in the ice-cream industry," he explained.

If granted, the GI tag will raise Telangana's tally to 19 and turn this once humble forest fruit into a certified symbol of regional pride.

SHORT TAKE

PAL KILLS MAN FOR GOLD CHAIN, HIDES BODY IN SUMP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

What began as a man missing case took a gruesome turn when Musheerabad police discovered the body of 59-year-old Satnam Singh hidden in an underground water sump at a house in Bhoiguda. The victim had been reported missing 5 by his nephew Gundep Singh.

The family had last seen Satnam Singh on April 4, leaving a mechanic's shop. Subsequently, his phone was switched off. Acting on the complaint, police scanned CCTV footage which led them to a locked house in Bhoiguda. Upon breaking open the door, they found Satnam Singh's body concealed in a water sump beneath the kitchen floor.

The body bore visible injuries, indicating a murder.

The house belonged to Nayan Chandra Nayak, a friend of the deceased. Police said the two had fallen out over a financial dispute.

Satnam Singh had reportedly given Nayak his gold chain when the latter was in need. When Singh began asking for its return, Nayak hatched a plan to kill him.

Police said Nayak lured Satnam Singh to his house, attacked him fatally and then fled to Goa with the gold chain. A special team formed under central zone DCP K. Shilpavalli tracked down Nayak in Goa. He was arrested and brought back to Hyderabad.

Parsi Dharamshala bags heritage award

Property plays role in preserving culture

SHRIMANSI
KAUSHIK | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

In a fast-changing cityscape, a quiet corner of Secunderabad boasts of timeless tradition and community care. The Parsi Dharamshala on Mahatma Gandhi Road has been a site hosting Parsis and non-Parsis for a while now. It was presented with the Intach Heritage Award for its contribution to heritage and cultural preservation.

Originally the private residence of Khan Bahadur Seth Edulji Sorabji Chinoy and his wife Bai Pirojbai, the property was transformed into a dharamshala in 1889 to serve as a resting place for Zoroastrians visiting Hyderabad.

Khan Bahadur Edulji, second son of Sorabji Pestonji Chinoy, was a respected figure in the Parsi community, while Pirojbai was known for her quiet strength and philanthropy.

The Chinoy family's commitment to community was reflected in the evolution of the space. The Bai Pirojbai Chinoy Hall, built in 1893, became an elegant hub of social gatherings and



Trustees of the the Parsi Dharamshala at Secunderabad (from left) Darius Chenai, Sohrab Chinoy and Jamshed Chinoy. — BY ARRANGEMENT

cultural exchange. It was followed by the addition of the Jamshed S. Chinoy Hall in 1919 and the Edulji S Chinoy Pavilion in 1929.

These structures have hosted countless Navjotes, weddings, and meetings over the decades, forming a vital part of the social fabric of Hyderabad's Parsi community.

Today the dharamshala continues to offer the warmth and hospitality envisioned by its founders, albeit with modern upgrades such as air-conditioned rooms and enhanced amenities.

The essence of the place remains the same.

Said Jehangir Bisney, a member of the community, "The Parsi

Dharamshala has stood as a testament to the history of Parsi Zoroastrian community of the twin cities for over a century.

A majority of Parsis had their Navjote (thread ceremony) and married in this dharamshala, celebrating some of their most precious moments here. It holds a very significant place in the hearts and minds of Parsis."

Receiving the Intach Heritage Award, Sohrab Chinoy, one of the trustees said, "We are very grateful for this award. The property has a special place in the hearts of the Parsi community. Its recognition as a heritage building is a matter of great pride for us."



The building was constructed between 1934 and 1939 under the patronage of last Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

OU Arts College third trademarked landmark

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

DC EXCLUSIVE

Osmania University's iconic Arts College building was officially registered as India's third trademarked structure on Saturday evening, joining the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel (2017) and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The certificate of registration will be handed over to university authorities on Monday.

Constructed between 1934 and 1939 under the patronage of the last Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan, and designed by Belgian architect Monsieur Jasper, the heritage edifice has been a defining feature of Hyderabad's academic and aesthetic landscape since its inauguration in 1939.

Trademark agent Subhajit Saha, who filed the application on the university's behalf, explained that the registration will protect the building's distinctive façade from "copycat architecture" and prevent unauthorised commercial use of its image. "No third party may now use the Arts College building for marketing or

branding without Osmania University's permission," he said. The move follows an international trend — landmarks such as New York's Empire State Building, France's Eiffel Tower and Australia's Sydney Opera House also hold trademark status, granting their owners exclusive rights to reproduce their likeness for commercial purposes.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Mir Najaf Ali Khan, grandson of the seventh Nizam, hailed the milestone as "a proud moment for Hyderabad and Telangana," noting that his grandfather's vision for world-class education and infrastructure laid the foundation for the city's growth.

"This building stands as a testament to his foresight and to Hyderabad's emergence as a global hub," he added.

University officials — including the Vice Chancellor and Registrar — were unavailable for comment.

'Mock tests helped in spotting weak points'

FROM PAGE 1

These are based on multi-session papers and the relative performance of all those who appeared for the examination in one session.

Based on the results of JEE (Main) Paper 1 and Paper 2, the candidates will be shortlisted to appear for JEE (Advanced), a one-stop exam for admission to the 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Harssh A. Gupta, who scored 100 in the April session as well, shared said he found both papers moderately difficult. "I have been preparing from 2023 and mostly followed study modules provided by institute. Gupta added his next goal is to secure good rank in JEE advanced and pursue engineering at IIT Bombay.

"Very proud of my son for achieving top marks. His hard work paid off and I give him full credit for securing marks," said V. Venkata Ramana Reddy, father of topper Ajay

Reddy V. Ajay Reddy hails from Kurnool district Andhra Pradesh and has been studying in Hyderabad from Class 9 while taking IIT foundation classes.

Ajay Reddy said he followed the NCERT syllabus for Chemistry and Physics and dedicated 10 hours of study daily. "Physics was tough for me but with the help of faculty I managed to understand the subject," he said.

His solution when feeling stressed: Take a nap and get back to study mode. He said mock tests helped identify his weak areas. "My elder brother who is studying in IIT Kharagpur used to guide me," he said.

Bani Brata Majee who achieved 100 in the January session did not choose to appear in April to focus on his JEE Advanced. "My mentors and parents kept reminding me of my dream and their belief kept me motivated," he said. He follows a 12 hours study schedule and relaxes by spending time with family and playing.



HARSSH A. GUPTA

Vangala Ajay Reddy

Bani Brata Majee

TASK FORCE SEIZED ILLEGAL EXPLOSIVES

Hyderabad: Task force police seized unlicensed explosives from the house in of one Bosu Buchamma, wife of Venkataiah, at Namaligonda during a raid on Saturday. The team led by task force ACP A. Madhusudan and inspector K. Sridhar also detained Orsu Ramesh, an autorickshaw driver from Peddapendal, who arrived at the scene under suspicious circumstances. An inspection of Ramesh's vehicle uncovered additional explosive materials.

In total, police recovered 10 gelatin sticks, 50 detonators, 55 kg of ammonium nitrate, 2 fuse bundles. Officials said the explosives were stored without permits and may have been destined for illegal blasting.

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DECCAN
Chronicle

20 APRIL 2025



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

A parent's work
is never done

Sometimes these days I'm surprised by how quiet it is in the house. With the children and dog at home, which they are on Sundays like today, it should've been filled with the clamour of all these years — playing, squabbling, singing, watching something loud on television. But now they are in their mid-teens, they quietly go about their business without always involving Mommy. There was a time when we all had to troop to the bathroom together too, but that was a while ago now! Today, one's immersed in a whodunit whilst cocooned in her own room, and the other is at his desk in our small library, revising for his big exams ahead, without any nagging from us (never needed for his studies, but endlessly for chores!). Our dog too is growing older and snoozes for long stretches.

Of course, we still have sporadic emotional storms reverberating through our home, occasioned by sibling rows, yet another exciting achievement (long may it continue), or just the dog barking warning volleys in the garden to trespassing critters. But that's teenagers for you; the agitation can still be seismic but is intermittent compared to when they were younger.

Yet, on this Sunday, it's so quiet I can clearly hear the birds warbling, the wind rushing through the trees, *and* the ground shifting imperceptibly beneath my feet.

Unusually, I can also hear myself think. But as much as I savour this peace, I know it's a precursor to a decidedly mixed blessing. Something I've begun to dread that I never thought I would.

In less than two years, first, the eldest and then, his younger sister, will be flying the coop, and it makes me both happy for the wonderful futures I hope with all my heart (and everything else I can invest) awaits them, but also infinitely sad that my daily journey of love, nurture and laughter with my children is almost over.

It's inevitable but only another parent, perhaps a mother more than anyone, can tell you how simultaneously improbable and gut-wrenching it seems. They were, after all, an intrinsic part of me, and after two harrowing deliveries, they remained mentally and physically close to their Mom. It's no wonder then that the old adage about children feeling like essential parts of yourself walking around outside of you rings true.

Those who don't know me might hazard a guess, "She hasn't had the sense to build a life beyond her children and that's why she'll miss them so", but that wouldn't be true.

In the time we've raised them, you see, I have written four books, published by the world's best. I have taught at universities, writing regular media columns and plays as well, to become the first South Asian woman to write international operas, which toured the UK to acclaim. I mention these only to say, I have indeed filled my life with blessings, including a strong marriage.

But as most parents will tell you, raising children to be altruistic, intelligent and independent, and then letting them go to be all kinds of wonderful, is a near-impossible height to scale. Yet we all do it because we have to.

My husband and I had discussed what becoming Empty Nesters might feel like long before it was imminent. And though even the term for parents left behind by their beloved, wide-world-embracing children has a gnawing, hollow ring to it, we thought we'd welcome the freedom of our kids going off to university.

The chance to snatch some shut-eye, after the many vigilant nights of staying up with at least one kid who struggled to sleep. The freedom to catch our breath after the years of bringing up two spirited offspring very close to each other in age, without the safety net of nearby family (mine on another continent, whilst his, still counties away) or household help. With a home to run as well as our careers, though the latter was often placed on the backburner, downtime for ourselves had been parked for the preordained Empty Nesting era.

Yet now that it's nearly upon us, I'm actually glad life continues to be as frenetic as ever, the occasional quiet Sunday notwithstanding. With the older one at the A levels/Higher Secondary stage in school, all the activity, chatter, visits, and more, are about gaining admission to the best university and the exhilarating opportunities beyond it. The younger one will be sitting her first big board exams and getting into the Higher Secondary college of her choice around the same time. So, they're both at that crucial career-building stage of their lives, and we, their parents, have naturally become their social secretaries and career managers! Allowing few fallow hours to dwell on much else — certainly not the melancholy of what will be. I'll have plenty of time to actually live it.

Till then, I plan to savour every last second with my growing children while they can still be called kids, though my parents assure me that in my eyes they will always be my babies. But it won't be as easy to drop a kiss on their heads as they study, or chatter happily around the dinner table nightly, or even just listen to them breathing in their bedrooms as I fall to sleep.

It is all to do NOW.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the award-winning *Memoirs of My Body*, short story collection *Strange and travelogue* Handle With Care. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhani.

Subhani

THE FLIGHT TO
KOCHI WAS BLOWN OFF
TO DELHI DUE TO
HEAVY GALES

FLIGHT DELAYS
DUE TO STRONG
GALES

Stop US-China trade war,
manage interdependence



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

In a major escalation of its trade offensive, the United States has slapped a sweeping tariff on tariffs' taking import duties upto as much as 245 per cent on a very broad spectrum of Chinese imports, sharply intensifying tensions in the ongoing US-China trade war.

The Trump Administration unveiled the move as a "necessary reset", aimed at correcting long-standing trade imbalances and curbing what Washington calls unfair Chinese economic practices. In a striking contrast, the United States has simultaneously announced a 90-day pause of reciprocal tariffs for numerous other countries, China being the sole exception. This dual-track strategy seems designed to economically isolate Beijing while offering relief to allies and strategic partners, nudging them to align with America's broader geo-economic aims.

Yet the fallout stretches far beyond Washington and Beijing. Global markets are in turmoil, supply chains are under fresh strain, and trade flows are being disrupted just as the world economy struggles to regain equilibrium after Covid's long shadow.

Reading the Trade Chessboard: The latest tariff hike is rooted in structural tensions that have long haunted the US-China trade relationship. In 2018, the US trade deficit with China swelled to a staggering \$418 billion, driven by Beijing's export-led growth model, marked by subsidies, state-backed credit and industrial overcapacity, compounded by America's chronically low household savings rate. Even landmark efforts like the 2020 Phase One deal failed to deliver lasting resolution.

Beijing has responded in kind, matching Washington's tariffs with an equivalent 125 per cent duty on key US exports, targeting critical sectors such as agriculture, energy, and high-end manufacturing. Meanwhile, the US is tightening scrutiny on third countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, suspecting them of serving as re-routing hubs for Chinese goods. Amid this high-stakes game, Washington's 90-day tariff reprieve to strategic partners India, Japan, and select EU nations has opened new diplomatic pathways. India has launched formal negotiations with the US for a potential trade agreement.

Growth Risks, Price Surges, and Market Jitters: The economic aftershocks are already visible. The International Monetary Fund warns that further escalation could shave 0.5 percentage points off global GDP in 2025, amounting to hundreds of billions in lost output. This warning comes at a moment when global growth remains fragile, investment sluggish, and inflationary pressures persistent. One immediate consequence is a shift in inflation dynamics. As US companies pivot away from Chinese suppliers toward alternatives in Southeast Asia and Latin America, the resulting demand spike in these regions may trigger price surges. Currency volatility adds fuel to the fire, particularly the expected weakening of the Chinese yuan that could increase the cost of dollar-tied imports globally.

Financial markets, too, are rattled. The Trade Policy Uncertainty Index has spiked, reflecting growing investor unease. Past episodes offer a cautionary tale; the previous trade war cycle dampened investment in capital-intensive sectors like semiconductors, automobiles, and electronics.

The current round risks a similar chilling effect, just when the world economy can least afford it.

Realities Behind 'Decoupling' from China: One last- ing impact of the deepening rift is the accelerating reconfiguration of global supply chains. Multinationals are increasingly adopting a "China Plus One" strategy, shifting parts of their operations to countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Mexico to diversify risk. India, unfortunately, has not been able to leverage this paradigm of multinationals because of pol-

icy instability and uncertainty that creates business risk. But the notion of complete economic decoupling is more myth than reality. China remains deeply embedded in global value chains especially in high-tech sectors such as semiconductors, advanced electronics, and precision components. Final assembly may move elsewhere, but critical intermediate goods continue to originate from Chinese factories. This makes decoupling selective and sector-specific, governed by industrial dependencies and the complexity of China's manufacturing ecosystem.

Take the battery and energy storage sector. In 2024, over 70 per cent of US imports of lithium-ion energy storage systems, a pillar of renewable energy infrastructure, came from China. With tariffs on Chinese batteries now exceeding 125 pc, the US is likely to increase sourcing from treaty partners like South Korea and Japan, where tariffs remain at a relatively modest 10 pc.

Trade Rules on Shaky Ground: Beyond tariffs and retaliatory measures, perhaps the most unsettling development is the erosion of global trade governance. The World Trade Organisation (WTO), once the backbone of multilateral trade order, is increasingly sidelined. With its Appellate Body paralyzed by US opposition to appointments, the WTO's dispute-resolution function is virtually defunct just when it's most needed.

In this institutional vacuum, regional and plurilateral frameworks like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) have gained traction. While these arrangements offer some stability, they are often exclusive and lack strong enforcement mechanisms raising fears of a fragmented and uneven trad-

Multinationals are increasingly adopting a 'China Plus One' strategy, shifting parts of their operations to countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Mexico to diversify risk.

ing order. The use of national security rationales to justify economic interventions adds to the uncertainty. Tools once reserved for defending critical infrastructure such as export controls, tech bans, and foreign investment screenings are now instruments of strategic rivalry. China's recent threat to restrict exports of rare earth elements like gallium and germanium, vital for everything from smartphones to missile systems underscores how economic policy is becoming a battlefield for geopolitical confrontation.

From Trade War to Managed Interdependence? Despite the harsh rhetoric and punitive tariffs, a full-scale economic severance between the US and China remains improbable. The sheer scale of their trade volumes, investment interdependence and technological linkages points toward a more realistic paradigm, what experts call "managed interdependence".

This emerging framework envisions targeted decoupling in strategic sectors such as semiconductors, biotechnology and telecom while maintaining cooperation in less sensitive domains. For the rest of the world, particularly emerging economies, this bifurcated system presents both risks and opportunities; scope for strategic alignment, supply chain repositioning, and greater leverage in trade negotiations.

What's unfolding between Washington and Beijing is no longer a narrow bilateral skirmish. It marks the beginning of a new chapter in international commerce shaped by shifting geopolitical alignments, contested rules and fragile institutions.

Navigating this future will require more than reactive policy.

It will demand renewed thinking on global economic governance, including revitalising institutions like the WTO and crafting new rules for digital trade, green technologies and cross-border data flows.

The challenge is not just to manage conflict but to imagine and build a more inclusive, resilient and forward-looking trading system for a rapidly changing world.

Manish Tewari is a third-term Lok Sabha MP and former Union minister of information and broadcasting, Government of India. Twitter handle @ManishTewari.

LETTERS

PROTECT HERITAGE

Heritage Day aims to instill a sense of responsibility in the younger generation towards protecting the city's heritage (*Hyd celebrates Heritage Day, April 19*). It's an opportunity to celebrate and preserve Hyderabad's rich cultural and architectural heritage.

P. Karthik
Hyderabad

WAQF LAND HURDLES

In the name of Waqf land, many hurdles were created in all parts of the country for genuine landowners for decades (*Govt & SC: Waqf Act to test balance of powers, April 19*). To give a communal colour to such endeavours is meaningless.

M.V. Nagavender Rao
Hyderabad

TARNAKA JUNCTION

It's a good decision to give a 15-day trial to open the Tarnaka junction (*Tarnaka road passes 1st test, April 19*). The problem lies with the public. Jaywalkers, rash drivers, and insensible honking, must stop. Let's comply with the rules. Thanks to the traffic police for their constant efforts to innovate.

Daniel Silvanus
Hyderabad

IRS OFFICERS

The appointment of two Telugu IRS officers to the CBDT is a proud moment for the Telugu community (*2 Telugu IRS officers appointed in CBDT, April 19*). It reflects their competence, and growing national presence. Such achievements inspire young aspirants and enhance regional representation in India's top policy-making bodies.

Rekha Rao
Hyderabad

SUBHANI'S CARTOONS

Cartoons generally speak volumes with a specific meaning, sometimes sarcastically (*Subhani's line sketches get praise from visitors, April 19*). We have been observing Subhani's caricatures for so many years and often praise him through this column. Congratulations to Subhani.

N.S.K. Prasad
Hyderabad

Subhani's work captivates all segments of society, even those who may not typically appreciate art. His strong connection with his audience fosters a sense of trust between the artist and his viewers. Undoubtedly, he is a precious gem in the realm of art, as recognised by the *Deccan Chronicle*.

Susheel Kumar Gotla
Hyderabad

Email your letters to
info@deccanmail.com,
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Mahir Ali

Will Trump tariff
onslaught be a
'gift' for Beijing
in the long run?

Almost 70 years ago, the Chinese leader Mao Zedong dismissed the US as a "paper tiger". He clarified that the reference was strategic. "Regarding [American imperialism] as a whole, we must despise it. But regarding each part, we must take it seriously. It has claws and fangs. We have to destroy it piecemeal."

That diatribe dates back to 1956, long before Mao himself, by then on his last legs, welcomed Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger to Beijing. Post-Mao, China entered a new phase of economic development, condescendingly encouraged by the US, that indeed turned out to be a great leap forward. It took the capitalist road to rapid growth, attracting foreign investment to a booming economy with a well-educated, low-wage workforce and minimal risk of industrial disruption.

Decades of double-digit growth ensued, and since the start of this century China's share of global manufacturing

has shot up from six per cent to 32pc. Also, the mass production of low-value goods such as cheap garments has been overtaken by the output of cutting-edge hi-tech marvels from smartphones to e-vehicles. During roughly the same period, a bipartisan anti-Beijing trend has accelerated in Washington whereby China is increasingly seen as not just the main economic rival but also the chief strategic adversary.

The first Trump administration's high tariffs against China did not shift under Joe Biden. This month, after Donald Trump suspended his supposedly irrevocable tariffs on pretty much every country in the world (including a couple of uninhabited islands) after stock markets went into free fall, China was excluded from the reprieve. When Beijing retaliated, Trump pumped up the levy, citing its "disrespect". China has declared that it's response won't rise higher than 125pc, because that level suffices as a barrier to almost all American imports.

Then the reliably erratic US president announced an exception for technological products. Soon afterwards it was declared that this was only a temporary exemption and targeted tariffs would follow. It's not just China that is keen to discover whether there's any method in the madness. The whole world is on tenterhooks, and Trump says that there is a conga line of foreign leaders desperate to kowtow in order to obtain a deal before the 90-day leeway lapses.

Unlike many of his utterances, that's not entirely fiction. Many countries would indeed welcome a fair deal, and have neither threatened nor imposed reciprocal tariffs. Most have also not responded to China's invitation to join it in combating Trump's "trade tyranny". That's only to be expected of the Anglophone allies and Nato acolytes in Europe, but even the countries on President Xi Jinping's travel itinerary this week — Vietnam, Cambodia and Malaysia — will be reluctant at this

stage to incur the wrath of Washington by openly embracing Beijing as saviour.

As a repressive one-party state, China is hardly a commendable role model for the Global South. But then, unlike the US, it has rarely claimed to be a bastion of free speech, whereas Trumpian America today seems keen to emulate Chinese (or Russian/Hungarian/Argentinian/El Salvadoran) authoritarianism.

However, even a cursory observer of China's trajectory since 1949 (it wasn't officially recognised by Washington until 30 years later) can see why, despite serving as a handmaiden to US imperialism in the 1970s-80s, bowing to humiliation is not on Beijing's agenda. Unlike other associates of the US, it cannot be expected to grovel. The century of humiliation preceding the 1949 revolution has figured prominently on the same propaganda agenda that has sought to destroy memories of the Tiananmen massacre.

There is unlikely to be a near-term shift in China's often deplorable domes-

tic politics, let alone a great leap forward in redressing the disparities of wealth flowing from capitalism with Chinese characteristics. But it might win plenty more friends if it could step up to fill the international funding gaps that the demise of USAID has created. Saving hundreds of thousands of lives could serve as a reminder that all is not lost when the US opts for isolation and viable alternatives arise.

Viable complaints about China fade into insignificance when the US travels down a similar road. "In appearance it is very powerful but in reality it is nothing to be afraid of," Mao said in 1956. "It is a paper tiger ... unable to stand the wind and the rain." Mao might not have been aware of it, but Trump's determination to ignore climate change might doom America well before his administration realises that his predilections could be a gift for China in the longer term.

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SHORT TAKES



Youth Congress leaders stage a protest in front of the ED office on Saturday.

— DC

YOUTH CONGRESS PROTESTS IN FRONT OF ED OFFICE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The Telangana Youth Congress held a protest in front of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office for the filing of a chargesheet naming Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case. The protesters burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Scores of Youth Congress leaders and members shouted against the BJP government at the Centre for using central agencies for registering what they called “fake and false cases” against Congress leaders. When they tried to enter the ED office, police stopped them and detained some of them. Leaders tried to enter the office, the police detained some of them as a preventive measure.

Meanwhile, TPCC senior leader V. Hanumantha Rao said that the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre was deliberately targeting Congress leaders by registering fake and false cases. Speaking to media persons at Gandhi Bhavan, Hanumantha Rao said that the ‘National Herald’ was founded by freedom fighters during the freedom struggle.

DISCOM STAFF GEAR UP FOR SUMMER

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

To enhance coordination and address field-level challenges, the southern discom has launched a direct interaction with nearly 10,000 field staff responsible for daily operations and maintenance. Discom chairman and managing director Musharraf Ali Faruqi is leading these sessions to understand on-ground difficulties and boost team morale.

During an interaction with staff from the Hyderabad Central and Secunderabad circle, Faruqi said the power demand during this year’s Yasangi season had touched a record 17,162 MW on March 20. Despite this spike, staff had ensured uninterrupted power supply to farmers.

He highlighted that urban areas, especially Greater Hyderabad, are expected to see a significant rise in power demand later in the summer with a projected peak of 5,000 MW — up from the highest recorded demand of 4,352 MW on May 6 last year.

For this, the distribution transformer network has been strengthened over the past two months, including upgrades to power transformers. Faruqi said discom had prepared itself to minimise outages caused by natural calamities. He noted that recent disruptions across 350 feeders were resolved swiftly, thanks to senior staff responding promptly to emergencies.

To ease the burden on-field personnel, the department has rolled out automatic meter reading (AMR) systems for load monitoring of distribution transformers and high tension metering, he informed.



Shivangi, the state's first specialised women's commando unit trained in advanced weaponry and jungle warfare, join Nirmal police.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

Shivangi, state's 1st women commando

16 handpicked personnel trained in jungle warfare

PILLALAMARRI
SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, APRIL 19

The Nirmal police on Saturday inaugurated Shivangi, the state's first specialised women's commando unit trained in advanced weaponry and jungle warfare, at a ceremony here on Saturday.

The 16 handpicked Shivangi personnel underwent an intensive 45-day training regimen covering explosives handling, live firing, field signalling, map reading, unmapped navigation, surveillance and anti-insurgency tactics.

The programme was conceptualised and implemented under the leadership of SP Janaki Sharmila. Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka was present at the launch of the force.

Seethakka lauded the initiative as “a landmark step for women's empowerment in the police force” and pledged to establish similar commando teams across other districts. “Shivangi will not only bolster our security apparatus but also inspire women officers statewide,” she said. SP Janaki Sharmila described Shivangi as

15 women commandos at RGLA, first time in India

SABA ANJUM
SHAIK | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

For the first time in India, 15 specially trained women commandos, part of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), have been deployed at Shamshabad airport here, marking a major step in both strengthening airport security and promoting women's empowerment.

The women commandos come from various states and bring diverse experience to the force. They are part of a larger group of women being trained for such roles, all aged between 20 and 30 years. Among the deployed women commandos, the youngest is just 23. “Currently, nine women are on active duty, working in three

shifts for eight hours each with three commandos per shift. This is part of a trial phase and more women are undergoing training. Once they complete the course, the number of women per shift may increase to five or six,” a CISF official told *Deccan Chronicle*.

All women commandos have completed a year-long basic police training and an eight-week commando course. After that, they underwent airport specific training that focused on handling emergencies in crowded areas, using weapons in confined spaces and responding quickly to threats, all while keeping passengers safe.

Most of them have been posted in the food court and check-in areas, which are more vulnerable and see a large pres-

ence of passengers. The inner terminal area is already highly secured.

As part of their endurance drills, the women were trained to climb the 21-floor air traffic control (ATC) tower without lifts, preparing them for high stress scenarios where speed and stamina are critical. Currently, only the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGLA) has deployed these specially trained women. Though there were mentions of a similar move at Bengaluru airport earlier, officials clarified that they could not confirm details for other locations.

Officials say this move is not just about improving security, but also a clear message that women can take on any tough role with strength, skill and confidence.

“the first unit of its kind in Telangana” and expressed confidence that it would yield “tangible

results in counter insurgency and emergency response” in the coming months. Nirmal collector

Abhilasha Abhinav and senior police officials were also present at the programme.

Hailstorm forecast for 16 dists

RACHEL DAMMALA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The IMD on Saturday issued alerts for both high temperatures and thunderstorms at different parts of the state. While northern districts reeled under intense heat, thunderstorms and hailstorms were forecast for at least 16 districts on Sunday.

According to the IMD, the formation of cumulonimbus clouds — towering clouds with a flat base at a low altitude — caused sudden weather shifts post-afternoon.

After recording high temperatures in the first half of the day, many areas — including Hyderabad — began experiencing heavy rain, gusty winds, and hailstorms in the evening.

The Telangana Development Planning Society said the max temperature in most GHMC circles crossed the 40°C mark on Friday. Malakpet, Jubilee Hills, and Secunderabad each



HMDA Workers remove huge tree branches that fell down due to heavy wind on Friday night on Tank Bund road.

recorded 40.6°C. Same period last year, when several areas, including Uppal and Kapra, recorded highs above 42°C. Jagtial, Adilabad, Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherla, and Nirmal — all in north Telangana — recorded temperatures around the 43.8°C mark.

For Easter Sunday, April 20, the IMD has forecast thunderstorm activity in 16 districts, including Hyderabad,

Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Nalgonda, Khammam, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Hanumakonda, and Suryapet.

Sudden downpours and strong winds are expected to affect both urban and rural regions.

Weather experts say the erratic weather was driven by localised heating and moisture dynamics. “This fluctuation is typical of April



A pillion rider cover his face with cloth after sudden rain at Gachibowli on Saturday.

— R. PAVAN.

pre-monsoon behaviour,” a senior IMD official explained, “but what we're now seeing is a rise in intensity and unpredictability.”

The risk of lightning strikes, falling tree branches, and waterlogging remains high in storm-prone areas. With the possibility of more rain in the next 48 hours, the state's agriculture and power departments are also on standby for emergencies.

Churches welcome Easter with special sunrise services

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Come Easter Sunday, Christians will greet one another saying “Christ is Risen” and in response be greeted back with “Indeed He is Risen” as they mark the celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection on the third day after Good Friday. Pre-dawn Sunrise services began at 4 am in several churches, while Catholic congregations observed late-night vigil Masses.

In the CSI Medak Diocese, treasurer Vimal Sukumar said all parishes would hold sunrise services at larger venues alongside regular Easter liturgies.

“Bishop Ruben Mark will deliver the Easter message, highlighting Christ's victory over sin and death,” Sukumar explained, noting that faithful had journeyed from surrounding districts and the twin cities to attend the cathedral.

At St Francis of Assisi Church in Ramnagar, resident Reynold Ross joined his family for the vigil Mass, which was celebrated both inside the church and in adjacent open grounds. “The atmosphere was uplifting, with families worshipping together under the stars,” he said.

Rev. M. Joseph, associate pastor of Centenary Methodist Telugu Church, reflected on Easter's significance in Christian life: “We celebrate Christ's birth at Christmas, his death on Good Friday, and his resurrection today. Easter assures believers of new life through Jesus' triumph over death.”



Youth take part in ‘Run for Jesus’ event to celebrate unity and faith at Secunderabad.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

34 ‘Run for Jesus’ processions dot Hyd

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Nearly 1 lakh Christians turned out across the twin cities on Holy Saturday for the annual “Run for Jesus”, staging 34 simultaneous processions ahead of Easter Sunday.

The largest gathering assembled at St Mary's Basilica, Secunderabad, where Cardinal Poola Anthony flagged off the march to St George's Grammar School in Abids.

Participants proceeded on foot, motorcycles and cars — singing hymns and waving flags.

The event was held in the pre-dawn hours to avoid traffic disruption.

“I've never seen such a massive congregation of

believers,” said Lorna Mithra, visiting from Tampa, Florida.

“It was a truly marvellous sight.” Closer home, Attapur resident Priya Parker, marking her sixth rally, praised the event's atmosphere. “The constant praising of God makes the entire route come alive,” she said.

The day concluded at St George's with musical performances and messages from church leaders. Founder Paul Devapriyam Pulla noted that careful coordination with city authorities and complete permissions have helped the rally grow in size and spirit each year. “Our aim is a peaceful, prayer-filled celebration — and that's exactly what we delivered today,” he said.

Parents upset kids’ Haj visa cancelled

V. SHIVANI REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The Haj visas of 291 children, aged less than 12, were cancelled in India because of Saudi Arabia's new rule that cites health risks for children due to heat and overcrowding during the pilgrimage. The cancellation has affected 38 children from Telangana, which left the families in disappointment.

As the Haj is considered as a once in lifetime opportunity, they have no other option to leave kids. However, they are worried about safe-keeping of kids at home in their absence but they are trying to make some arrangements to keep them safe. Some parents, in the meantime, are opting out of the pilgrimage.

Telangana Haj Committee executive officer Sajjad Ali said “Due to the extreme heat and difficulties faced by pilgrims in last year's Haj, the Saudi Arabia government cancelled the visas of minors.”

This restriction is expected to continue for the next two years until Haj no longer falls in summer, he said, adding that the full refund will be processed to the children's accounts.

He said they received a few cancellation requests from the parents. In some cases, only mothers are cancelling the pilgrimage.

A parent of an infant, who asked for anonymity, shared, “We planned to leave the child in Saudi Arabia with relatives, and perform major rituals in five days. When we got to know about the reason for cancellation being high temperature and overcrowding, we took it in a positive way. It is a once in a life opportunity for us to perform Haj and it is not possible to visit multiple times and it gets difficult to go in old age. So we have decided to leave the kid with my mother,” the parent explained.

Another parent Mohammed Mazheeruddin Majeed shared, “As we got the information at the last moment, it was tough to leave an infant with someone for 45 days.” If we were informed earlier, we could have planned better, and would have performed the Haj peacefully without any tension about the kid. Now we are worried about the kid. So my spouse is planning to drop out of the pilgrimage,” he added.

“After the visa cancellation, we were blank. It was very stressful to leave a kid. Officials have recently called and assured the refund in a few days,” shared a mother of a two-year-old. However, she said they are planning to leave my kid at my mother's place.

REALTY BITES

20 acres of land under litigation sold after construction claiming to be a protected area

Illegal units of TD MLA razed by HYDRAA

PRATHYUSH
NALLELLA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The HYDRAA on Saturday removed unauthorised structures on government land at Hafeezpet that were raised by Mylavaram's Telugu Desam MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad of AP. HYDRAA stated that out of the 39.2 acres of government land at Hafeezpet in Serilingampally municipality, houses and other structures were raised on 19 acres. In the remaining 20.2 acres, the agency claimed that Vasantha Projects, owned by the MLA, had illegally subdivided the

survey number, constructed an office structure, raised sheds and rented them to different businesses.

HYDRAA commissioner A.V. Ranganath said: “While the land was under litigation, they sold almost 20 acres after construction. Now, the remaining 20 acres are also being sold out under the pretext of ULC (urban land ceiling) etc.” They took permissions under the pretext of ULC and kept the Civil Suit 14 (CS-14) issue masked from authorities, he said.

Authorities, amid heavy police security, razed the structures to the ground. They also placed boards on



The unauthorised structures on government land at Hafeezpet that were razed by HYDRAA.

the land, stating that it was under litigation in the SC and that the site was protected by HYDRAA. Speaking to media, MLA

Vasantha Krishna Prasad said “HYDRAA gave us a notice, and I personally submitted my property documents to Ranganath.”

COMPLAINT BY CHILD, FRIENDS UNABLE TO PLAY CRICKET LED TO HYDRAA ACTION

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

A complaint by a child that he and his friends were unable to play cricket at a site at Raidurg as the land was being fenced off, led to HYDRAA quashing an alleged attempt to grab 39 acres of land.

HYDRAA officials went to the spot and found that 39 acres of government land was being encroached by Narne Estates. HYDRAA stated that although there

were boards in place about a land grabbing case pending on the land, Narne Estates had erected their own boards with their phone numbers and were advertising the sale of plots.

Authorities removed the cement walls and fencing done around the property, and erected another board stating a case on land grabbing was pending in the High Court, and that the land was under HYDRAA protection.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT, CIRCLE, SIDDIKET e-NIT No. 2/SE(R&B)/SDPT/TS/2025-26 Name of the work S. No. 1 3 No. of ER (HAM) Works in Medak District (3rd call) Total 3 No. of works Estimate Amount in Crores Rs. 4.89 Crores Rs. 4.89 Crores		
1. Bid submission closing date : 26-04-2025 @ 3.30 P.M. 2. Name & Address of the Superintending Engineer concerned : The Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle, Siddipet, Ph: 8121127730 3. Further details can be seen @ e-procurement market place https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app: Sd/- Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle, Siddipet DIPR RO No.: 555-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26		

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT, CIRCLE, SANGAREDDY e-NIT No. 2/SE(R&B)/SDDT/TS/2025-26 Name of the work S. No. 1 3 No. of ER (HAM) Works in Vikarabad District (4th call) Total 3 No. of works Estimate Amount in Crores Rs. 4.2 Crores Rs. 4.2 Crores		
1. Bid submission closing date : 26-04-2025 @ 3.30 P.M. 2. Name & Address of the Superintending Engineer concerned : The Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle, Sangareddy, Ph: 8121127730 3. Further details can be seen @ e-procurement market place https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app: Sd/- Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle, Sangareddy DIPR RO No.: 557-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26		

NPD NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED Corporate Identity Number: U40100TG2005SGC034119 Short Tender Notice No. 01/25-26 of DEE/OP/ASIFABAD Specification Nos. 01/25-26 of DEE/OP/ASIFABAD Sealed Tenders are invited by the TGNPDCL registered contractors of Asifabad District, for electrical work in details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tgnpdcl.in Sd/- Divisional Engineer, Operation Division, Asifabad. Tender Notice No.01/25-26 of DE/OPN/KOTHAGUDEM With Specification No. 01, & 02/2025-26 Sealed tenders are invited from TGNPDCL registered contractors of Asifabad District, for electrical work in details of the works in Chunchupally section of Kothagudem Division. The details of the tender can be obtained from our website www.tgnpdcl.in Sd/- Divisional Engineer Operation, Kothagudem DIPR R.O.No.: 33-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2025-26 Date: 19-04-2025		
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SHORT TAKES

13 ARRESTED IN KHALISTANI TERROR CRACKDOWN

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, CHANDIGARH, APRIL 19

Punjab Police on Saturday arrested 13 alleged members of two ISI-backed Khalistani terror modules and seized a large cache of arms and explosives, including two rocket-propelled grenade launchers with rounds, two IEDs (2.5 kg each), two hand grenades with detonators, two kilograms of RDX with remote control, five pistols (Beretta and Glock), six magazines, 44 live cartridges, a wireless set and three vehicles.

DG of Police Gaurav Yadav said both cells were directed from abroad by proscribed outfit Babbar Khalsa International through France-based Satnam Singh “Satta” and Greece-based Jaswinder “Mannu” Agwan. Counter-Intelligence Jalandhar and Batala district police dismantled the first module in Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala districts — arresting Jagroop Singh, Jatinder Singh.

SC TO HEAR PLEA ON HATE CRIME COMPENSATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

The Supreme Court will on April 23 hear a plea filed by the Indian Muslim for Progress and Reforms seeking uniform compensation for victims of hate crimes and mob lynching across India. A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Augustine George Masih will examine whether states and Union Territories have implemented relief schemes in line with the Court’s 2018 Tehseen Poonawala judgment.

In April 2023, the apex court directed the Centre, all states and UTs to file affidavits detailing steps taken to frame compensation schemes for families of lynching victims. During that hearing, petitioners’ counsel argued that although some states have adopted relief measures, there is no nationwide consistency and many jurisdictions still lack any formal scheme.

NATIONWIDE ALERT FOR CHAR DHAM PILGRIMS

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has issued a nationwide alert warning Char Dham pilgrims and tourists of a surge in online booking scams, the Union Home Ministry announced on Saturday. Fraudsters are using professional-looking but counterfeit websites, fake social-media pages, Facebook posts and paid advertisements on search engines to dupe travellers into booking non-existent services. Scammers are advertising helicopter rides to Kedarnath, guest-house and hotel reservations for the Char Dham circuit, online taxi bookings, holiday packages and religious tours. Victims who make payments via these portals often receive no confirmation, and the contact numbers provided go dead once the money is transferred.

MUSK TO VISIT INDIA AFTER TALKING TO MODI

New Delhi, April 19: Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk said on Saturday he plans to visit India later this year, following a discussion with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, suggesting renewed momentum for the electric vehicle maker’s long-awaited entry into the country. Musk announced his travel intentions in a post on his social-media platform X. Musk had been scheduled to visit India in 2023 but cancelled at the last minute, citing urgent issues at Tesla. A return trip now comes at a critical juncture: Tesla faces intensifying competition worldwide, losing market share to aggressively priced rivals such as China’s BYD Co., while its brand has become more polarising amid Musk’s public support for former US President Donald Trump. The company has also been affected by a growing tariff dispute in China, which led it to halt orders for its Model S sedans and Model X SUVs — both imported from the US. With global markets under pressure, India has emerged as a top priority for Tesla’s growth.

Kharge stands firm as Waqf battle intensifies

Calls for nationwide Samvidhan Bachao campaign for unity

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday convened a meeting of senior office-bearers in New Delhi to launch a nationwide “Samvidhan Bachao” campaign and strengthen party cadres in line with resolutions from last week’s AICC session in Ahmedabad.

The party will hold “Samvidhan Bachao” rallies across all states from April 25-30, followed by door-to-door outreach, with district observers appointed by May 31, complemented by Assembly-segment rallies to promote social, political and economic justice, and daily press conferences in state capitals on the National Herald case.

Kharge vowed that recent Enforcement Directorate actions against the party leadership would not intimidate Congress workers, pointing out that the names of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi had been included in the ED chargesheet as part of “a big conspiracy,” but stressing that “no matter whose name they put, we are not going to be afraid.”

He condemned the attachment of National Herald properties in Delhi, Lucknow and Mumbai days before the chargesheet as “an act of vendetta” and defended Young Indian — a not-for-profit under Associated Journals Limited — as protected from asset



Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge chairs a party meeting with general secretaries, in-charges and heads of all frontal organisations, in New Delhi, on Saturday. —PTI

CONGRESS LEADER KILLED, RELATIVE INJURED AS BJP WORKER RAMS CAR

Kondagaon, April 19:m A local Congress leader was killed, and his relative was injured after a BJP worker rammed his car into their motorcycle in Chhattisgarh’s Kondagaon district, police said on Saturday.

Police have taken the accused into custody in connection with the accident that occurred near Dogri Guda village on Friday evening, an official said.

He said Hemant Bhoiyar and his sister-in-law Champi were heading to the local market on a motorcycle when Puredra Kaushik, a BJP worker, rammed his car into their vehicle and fled the scene.

Bhoiyar (30), a local leader of the Youth Congress, was a panch of the Mulmula village panchayat, and his sister-in-law was the sarpanch, the official said.

Kaushik had contested for the sarpanch’s post of Mulmula village but lost the election to Champi.

Locals rushed the injured persons to the hospital, where Bhoiyar died during treatment, the official said.The official said the police have taken Kaushik into custody, but no case has been registered, and a probe is underway. Bhoiyar’s family alleged that Kaushik killed him due to a rivalry following the panchayat elections. —PTI

seizure, asserting that “BJP leaders are misleading the people by lying. We have to tell the truth to the

public.” Kharge also alleged that the timing of the ED action was “no coincidence,” likening it

INHERITED TRUTH, COURAGE FROM NEHRU: RAHUL

New Delhi, April 19: Jawaharlal Nehru’s greatest legacy was giving Indians the courage to resist oppression and claim freedom, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Saturday and added he inherited “truth and courage” from his great-grandfather — the country’s first prime minister.

In a free-wheeling conversation with party leader Sandeep Dikshit that was posted on the former Congress chief’s X handle and YouTube channel, Gandhi talks about his pursuit of truth and his willingness to stand by it no matter what the cost.

“Nehru didn’t teach us politics — he taught us to confront fear and stand for the truth. He gave Indians the courage to resist oppression and ultimately claim freedom,” he said in the post on X. “His greatest legacy lies in his relentless pursuit of truth — a principle that shaped everything he stood for,” he added.The video has been uploaded on Gandhi’s YouTube channel with the caption “Truth and Courage - What I Inherited from Nehru”. —PTI



NDRF personnel carry out rescue and relief work after a building collapsed in Mustafabad area in New Delhi, on Saturday. — PTI

11 killed as four-storey building falls in Delhi

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

In the early hours of Saturday, a 20-year-old, four-storey residential building in Mustafabad, northeast Delhi, collapsed, killing 11 people and injuring as many others, police and rescue officials said.

Around 3.02 am, officers from Dayalpur police station and teams of the National Disaster Response Force, Delhi Fire Service and volunteers rushed to Gali No. 1 in Shakti Vihar, where 22 residents — mostly families — were trapped under

the rubble. After more than 12 hours of rescue operations, 11 bodies were recovered, including the building owner Tehseen (60), his immediate family — son Nazeem (30), wife Shahina (28) and their children Anas (6), Afreen (2) and Afan (2) — as well as daughter-in-law Chandni (23), brothers Danish (23) and Naved (17), Reshma (38) and Ishaq (75).

Six survivors, among them another of Tehseen’s sons, Chand (25), were discharged from hospital after treatment; nine others, including Tehseen’s wife, remain under care. Locals told

reporters that nearby construction work and years of sewer water seepage had weakened the building’s walls, causing cracks and making the structure fragile; residents of adjacent buildings described feeling tremors like an earthquake.

MCD officials will survey the area for similarly risky structures and seal unsafe floors. Police have registered a case under sections 290, 106, 125 and 125(a) of the Penal Code against Tehseen. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta ordered a formal probe and vowed strict action against those responsible.

WB Gov visits riot-hit villages in Murshidabad

RAJIB CHOWDHURI and PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC
KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE, APRIL 19



West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose meets violence affected people during a visit to Jangipur in Murshidabad district, on Saturday. — PTI

West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Saturday visited riot-affected villages in Jangipur subdivision, promising assistance to families caught up in the recent anti-Waqf law violence.

In Zafarabad, he met relatives of Haragobinda Das and his son Chandan, who were hacked to death on April 12. Their wives, Parul and Pinki, wept as they recounted how armed mobs stormed their home and criticised the four-hour delay in police response. The governor shared the direct line to his “Peace Room” at Raj Bhavan and urged them to call him if they faced further trouble.Bose later toured Dhulian and Shamsheganj, where villagers displayed placards

INDIA DIRECTS CHGOs TO COMPLETE FORMALITIES

FROM PAGE 1

53,000 are allotted to Combined Haj Group Operators (CHGOs) — 26 private tour entities formed from over 800 operators. The reopening of Saudi Arabia’s Nusuk portal allows CHGOs to finalise arrangements for 10,000 pilgrims based on available space in Mina.

New Delhi intervened after CHGOs missed Saudi timelines for contracting Mina camps, accommodation and transport — despite repeated reminders. The Saudi haj ministry, citing safety concerns following a deadly accident last year and the extreme summer heat in densely packed ritual sites, has not extended deadlines for any country, Misri said. India has directed all CHGOs to complete their formalities “urgently” to enable the first batch of 10,000 pilgrims.

Misri noted that PM Narendra Modi, who is due in Riyadh next week on an official visit, will raise the matter directly with Saudi leadership. “The Haj pilgrimage is an important issue bilaterally,” he said, adding that both sides would discuss ways to expand the pilgrim quota. Earlier this week, India expressed its appreciation for any gesture by Saudi authorities to accommodate additional pilgrims.

BHABESH WAS MEMBER OF PUJA COMMITTEE

FROM PAGE 1

Bhabesh was a prominent voice for his community. Jaiswal’s remarks come a day after New Delhi rejected Dhaka’s criticism of India’s handling of communal violence in WB, calling Bangladesh’s comments “a barely disguised and disingenuous attempt to draw a parallel” with India’s own concerns about attacks on minorities in Bangladesh.

Modi advocates healthier India

New Delhi, April 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday pitched for a fitter and healthier India by taking small steps such as reducing oil intake and raising awareness about the adverse effects of obesity, as he lauded the Union health ministry’s efforts to mark World Liver Day.

Observed annually, World Liver Day seeks to raise awareness about liver health. The theme for this year is “Food is Medicine”. Modi said in a post on X, “Commendable effort to mark World Liver Day with a call for mindful eating and healthier living. Small steps like reducing oil intake can make a big difference. Together, let’s build a fitter, healthier India by raising awareness about obesity.” The Prime Minister was replying to Union health minister J.P. Nadda’s post urging people to pledge to reduce their edible oil intake by at least 10 per cent and embrace a healthier lifestyle, a reiteration of Modi’s call on these lines to stop obesity. Nadda also said, “Let’s also pledge to raise awareness about obesity and its growing impact on our society. Together, let’s work towards a future where healthier living is a norm, starting with the food we eat.” Small changes can lead to big results when food is treated as medicine, he said. —PTI



Narendra Modi

SHAH FOCUSES ON HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE

New Delhi, April 19: The central government is focusing on developing a holistic healthcare system, Union home minister Amit Shah said on Saturday and advised youths to focus on proper food intake, exercise and sleep so that they remain fit and contribute to the country’s development.

Addressing an event on World Liver Day, Shah said a healthy liver is the gateway to a healthy body. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, the central government has worked to create a holistic healthcare system in the country and has launched many programmes and schemes in this direction.Shah said that the health budget of the government which was Rs 37,000 crore in 2014 has now grown to ₹ 1.27 lakh crore. —PTI

Naga talks hit as founder’s son quits

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, APRIL 19

In a significant blow to the ongoing Naga peace process, Ikato Chishi Swu, son of late NSCN-IM founder Isak Chishi Swu, has announced his decision to join dissident leaders across the border in Myanmar to continue the armed struggle.

Ikato has aligned with Lt Gen (retd) Hs Ramsan and Lt Gen Absalom Raman, key figures in the dissident camp, accusing the NSCN-IM leadership of abandoning the Naga cause.

In a strongly worded statement, Swu expressed disappointment over the handling of peace talks since the historic 1997 ceasefire and the 2015 Framework Agreement. He alleged that the Government of India had backtracked after his father’s death, aiming only to manage the issue, not resolve it. Swu also accused NSCN-IM leaders of corruption and compromising national interests under government influence.

Although Ikato Swu did not hold a significant position in the NSCN-IM hierarchy, his departure, along with Ramsan and Raman, is seen as a serious credibility challenge for the group, particular-



Ikato Chishi Swu

● HIS DEPARTURE along with Ramsan and Raman, is seen as a serious credibility challenge for the group.Particularly among Nagas in Nagaland.

ly among Nagas from Nagaland. With the outfit’s leadership dominated by Tangkhuls from Manipur, Swu’s exit may reignite regional divides within the Naga movement.

Sources in Nagaland indicated concerns that a new faction could emerge, further complicating the fragile peace process. While the NSCN-IM has refrained from making a direct statement against Swu, internal consultations are underway to assess the impact.

Swu has vowed to continue the Naga struggle with new strategies, stating, “I am a son of the revolution... I will raise a new force until our goal is achieved.”

TECH | FRONTIER

4G, 5G connectivity enhances communication in remote areas

Army boosts connectivity in Ladakh

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

The Indian Army has extended reliable 4G and 5G mobile connectivity to some of the most remote and high-altitude outposts in Ladakh, including forward locations in Eastern and Western Ladakh, and even the world’s highest battlefield on the Siachen Glacier. For the first time, troops stationed at critical posts such as DBO, Galwan, Demchok, Chumar, Batalik and Dras can now stay in touch with their families and access real-time communication services. Army officials

described the effort as “a major morale booster for soldiers serving in isolated, winter-cut-off posts above 18,000 feet.”

The project also brings mobile signals to frontier hamlets long cut off from networks. Under a whole-of-government framework, the Army leveraged its existing optical fiber cable network in partnership with telecom service providers and the Union Territory administration of Ladakh. The Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps led the drive, installing multiple towers on military infrastructure — four key towers alone in Ladakh

and Kargil districts — culminating in the historic commissioning of a 5G mast on the Siachen Glacier. Beyond troop welfare, officials say the initiative is a major nation-building step that integrates “first villages” along the LAC into India’s digital economy. By bridging the digital divide, it is expected to stimulate local businesses, promote border tourism and enhance overall socio-economic development. “Mobile connectivity is not just a communication tool — it is now a lifeline for remote communities,” said Army spokesmen.



The equipment installed to improve 4G and 5G mobile connectivity to remote regions in high-altitude outposts in Ladakh.

SHORT TAKES

LATE K'TAKA DON MUTHAPPA RAI'S SON SHOT AT

M B GIRISH | DC
BENGALURU, APRIL 19

Ricky Rai, son of late underworld don Muthappa Rai, was injured in a firing incident near his farm in Bidadi, about 40 km from Bengaluru, around 12.30 am on Friday. Assailants fired at least three rounds at the car in which Ricky was travelling to the city. He sustained injuries to his nose and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bengaluru. Ge is out of danger and may undergo surgery later.

The assailants reportedly lay in wait on a narrow stretch of road often used by Ricky. While Ricky usually drives himself, on this occasion, he was seated in the rear seat with his gunman. The bullets narrowly missed the driver, Basavaraju. Sources said the motive behind the attack may be a property dispute involving Ricky's second wife.

ACTOR HELD IN DRUG CASE, FREED ON BAIL

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 19

The Kerala police arrested Malayalam actor Shine Tom Chacko on Saturday under sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. He was later released on bail in the evening.

The police charged Shine with sections 27(b) and 29 of the NDPS Act, which pertain to penalties for the consumption of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, as well as abetment and criminal conspiracy.

Additionally, a case was registered against him under section 238 of the BNS for destroying evidence and providing false information to protect an offender.

This case was filed at the Ernakulam Town North police station.

Vaiko's son Durai resigns from MDMK over discord

He targets party deputy general secretary Mallai Sathya

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR
and D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 19

MDMK principal secretary Durai Vaiko announced that he was quitting his party post and would not attend party meetings and discussions after attending the executive committee meeting on Sunday as he was peeved over a party leader, who he said was bringing a bad name to founder Vaiko through his statements in the media and trying to demolish the party.

Party sources said Durai Vaiko was targeting party deputy general secretary Mallai Sathya, a long-time associate of Vaiko.

Taking to social media, Durai Vaiko, who became the principal secretary in 2021, said on Saturday that he did not want to continue in the post when a party functionary, unable to accept him as the leader, was taking pleasure in defaming Vaiko.

In a three-page statement, released on social media, Durai Vaiko referred to his reluctance to join the party initially



● **IN THREE-PAGE** statement, released on social media, Durai Vaiko referred to his reluctance to join the party initially and explained how he was forced by circumstances arising out of his father's ill-health and inability to attend party engagements.

and explained how he was forced by circumstances arising out of his father's ill-health and inability to attend party engagements. When he started attending those party events, he endeared himself to the cadre, who welcomed him to lead them, he claimed.

However, the activities of a particularly leader, whom he did not name in the statement, was working indirectly to defame the party, which he was unable to tolerate, he said adding that he would put in his best to serve the people of Trichy Lok Sabha constituency, who voted for him in the 2024 elections. According to party sources, Durai Vaiko, in his address at the MDMK's trade union

wing meeting on April 12, had named Sathya and made some allegations against him, which was objected to by the other party functionaries.

After Durai Vaiko stormed out of the meeting, Vaiko had taken to the mike to pay encomiums to Sathya.

The next day, on April 13, the Trichy district unit of the MDMK resolved to remove Sathya from the party. Vaiko, however, was not pleased with the resolution by the Trichy district unit and also by some other district units in the following days and even expressed his reservations over the convening of such meetings and passing of resolutions.

Sathya, on his part, clar-

fied that he had been politically associated with Vaiko since 1993 and that he would never betray him. Only death could separate us, he said.

Ever since Durai Vaiko started attending party gatherings in 2018 and Vaiko deputed him to events on his behalf giving rise to the suspicion that the son was being groomed by the father, a section of the leaders had been objecting to the move as it was dubbed as 'dynasty politics,' an allegation against the DMK that led to Vaiko starting his own party.

When the DMK-led alliance allotted one seat for the MDMK in the Lok Sabha election in 2024, Durai Vaiko was chosen as the candidate.

He, however, refused to contest the polls on the DMK symbol, which other smaller allies agreed to. Finally the MDMK was given 'matchbox' as symbol by the EC and the MDMK cadre managed to popularise it in the constituency in the short time, enabling Durai Vaiko's triumph.



P.A.V. Srinivas



R. Manideep



Raj Charan Tej



J. Ram Charan Teja

525 students from SW schools crack JEE Main

V. SHIVANI REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

A remarkable 525 students, the highest-ever, from the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institution Society (TGSWREIS) have qualified for JEE Advanced, setting a new record for Gurukul institutions. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka expressed their pride and congratulated the students on their exceptional success. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting marginalised communities through quality education.

TGSWREIS secretary Dr V.S. Alagu Varshini attributed the success to key reforms and specialised coaching initiatives introduced under the leadership of the Chief Minister. "These initiatives provided students

with training on par with private coaching institutes. For the first time, gurukul students have scored above the 80th and 90th percentiles in national-level entrance exams," she stated.

Dr Varshini highlighted that the success was the result of focused efforts at the centres of excellence, which included experienced faculty and regular mock tests. The society had also launched specialised coaching to help students excel in the JEE Advanced exam.

Several students from the Gowlidoddi Boys College, part of TGSWREIS, shared their success stories, expressing gratitude for the faculty support and study plans. The micro-schedules provided by the institution played a key role in their preparation.

K. Charan Tej, a student from Gowlidoddi, said, "I scored 98.29 percentile,

and the micro schedule provided by Dr Varshini was immensely helpful. The faculty was always available to clear any doubts."

P.A.V. Srinivas, another top performer, noted, "Regular interaction with the principal and faculty, along with their suggestions, was invaluable. Practising previous papers and focusing on accuracy helped me achieve success."

R. Manideep credited solving model papers and taking mock tests regularly as a key factor in his achievement. "The continuous guidance and micro-schedule were crucial to my success," he said. J. Ram Charan Teja, who also excelled in the exams, emphasised, "The faculty was always available round the clock to help clear doubts. I focused on mastering concepts and practising questions to score well."

Parents protest after baby's death

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC
WARANGAL, APRIL 19

A newborn's death at the government hospital led to family members holding a protest on the national highway, demanding accountability and justice.

The infant, born to Raveli, wife of local resident B. Chandu, was delivered by a Caesarean section on Friday morning. Hospital superintendent Dr P. Jagadish said the baby was stable but devel-

oped complications. The baby died while being taken to the MGM Hospital. "This was a rare, unavoidable case," Dr Jagadish said, adding that the family, present throughout, accepted the explanation.

It was stated that relatives insisted on taking the infant's body to the highway to protest when ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Danasari Anasuya Setakka were to pass by Minister Setakka stopped, and promised an inquiry.

ONE HURT AS LORRY SMASHED INTO TOLL GATE

Warangal: A lorry rammed into the Komala toll-gate on the Warangal highway, wrecking the booth and injuring one of its employees, B. Sridhar. Police said the driver, M. Shekar of Kurnool district, was drunk. "He made no attempt to stop," an officer said. A car parked nearby was damaged.

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

SMALL PLANE CRASHES INTO RIVER, KILLS 3

Fremont (US), April 19: Three people died when a small airplane crashed into a river in eastern Nebraska Friday night, authorities said.

The plane was travelling along the Platte River and crashed into the water south of Fremont at 8.15 pm, Sgt. Brie Frank of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office said during a news conference. The bodies of three people were recovered, Frank confirmed. Authorities did not immediately release the identities of the deceased. The sheriff's office said the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board will oversee the investigation near Fremont, located about 59.5 kilometres west of Omaha.

S'PORE PIO MAN CHARGED FOR CAUSING HURT

Singapore, April 19: An Indian-origin was on Saturday charged with voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons after he slashed a man in a residential area in Singapore.

R. Nadhiban, 22, who ran naked in the Hougang housing estate, is accused of using a knife to slash 30-year-old Kaalithasan Govindaragi, also of Indian descent, on April 17 at about 1 pm at the open space car park between two apartment blocks. The victim, who was with his three-year-old son, sustained injuries on his arm and was taken to a hospital. Nadhiban was ordered to be remanded at the Institute of Mental Health for medical examination. His case will be brought up before the courts again on May 2, reported *The Straits Times*.

If convicted, he may face imprisonment of up to seven years and caning for voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons. In an earlier statement, police said a member of the public intervened to move the victim and his son from the attacker. After attacking the victim, the naked man damaged a parked vehicle before he picked up a wooden plank.

WH launches Covid website that flays WHO, Fauci, Biden

It also criticised steps like social distancing, mask mandate, lockdown

Washington, April 19: Republican U.S. President Donald Trump's White House launched a COVID-19 website on Friday in which it blamed the origins of the coronavirus on a lab leak in China while criticizing Democratic former President Joe Biden, former top U.S. health official Anthony Fauci and the World Health Organization.

The website was also critical of steps like social distancing, mask mandates and lockdowns.

Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here.

Trump began a 12-month process of withdrawing the U.S. - by far the WHO's largest financial backer - from the agency when he took office in January.

Fauci, Biden and WHO had no immediate comment. Soon after taking office, Trump also said that Fauci, who has faced threats since leading the country's COVID-19 response, should hire his own security and ended U.S. security for him.

A CIA spokesperson said in January that the CIA has assessed that the Covid-19 pandemic is more likely to have emerged from a lab than from nature. The CIA had said it had "low confidence" in its assessment and that both scenarios - lab origin and natural origin - remain plausible.

China's government says it supports and has taken part in research to determine COVID-19's origin, and has accused Washington of politicizing the matter, especially because of efforts by U.S.

Mexico confirms first human case of myiasis by screwworm

Mexico City, April 19: Mexico's health ministry confirmed the country's first human case of myiasis caused by screwworm, the government said on Friday. The case was detected in a 77-year-old woman from the municipality of Acacoyagua, in the southern state of Chiapas. She is in stable condition and receiving antibiotic treatment, authorities said. Myiasis is a parasitic infection that occurs when fly larvae infest open wounds, feeding on living tissue.

— Reuters



File pic of a staff worker taking a man's temperature at an expressway exit in Harbin, capital of China's Heilongjiang province, on February 21, 2020.

— AP

intelligence agencies to investigate. Beijing has

said there was no credibility to claims that a labora-

tory leak likely caused the pandemic.

— AFP

Nepal parl panel finds Rs14 mn graft in airport built by China

Kathmandu, April 19: A Nepal parliamentary committee has uncovered a large-scale corruption worth around Nepalese Rs 14 billion in the construction of the Pokhara International Airport, built by a Chinese company with a soft loan from China.

A report by the sub-committee under the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Representatives (HoR) led by Member of Parliament Rajendra Lingden found irregularities in the airport's construction. The report highlighted an embezzlement of approximately Rs 14 billion and called for investigations and action against senior officials involved in the project.

The Pokhara Regional International Airport was built from a loan of around Rs 22 billion from

● **THE SUB-COMMITTEE** termed it unnatural that while the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) had estimated the cost of constructing the airport at \$145 million, the contract was signed with the Chinese company to construct the project at the cost of \$215 million.

the Exim Bank of China and was completed by the Chinese company on December 29, 2022.

As per the agreement, Nepal is required to repay the loan at a 2 per cent interest rate for seven years after the completion of the airport construction and then clear the principal in the next 13 years. The sub-committee termed it unnatural that

while the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) had estimated the cost of constructing the airport at \$145 million, the contract was signed with the Chinese company to construct the project at the cost of \$215 million.

Irregularities during the project's construction also included granting tax exemptions of Rs 2.22 billion and paying Rs 320 million for removing 40 metres of Chhine Danda hill, which was never done. The sub-committee also recommended the suspension of senior officials of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, including Director General Pradeep Adhikari and others involved in the project, from the feasibility study to the completion of the construction. — PTI

Alleged assassination plot: Ecuador on maximum alert

Quito, April 19: Ecuador is on maximum alert over an alleged assassination plot against recently reelected President Daniel Noboa, the government said on Saturday.

Noboa won the race in an April 13 runoff vote, but his main rival Luisa Gonzalez has accused him of committing "grotesque electoral fraud."

A military intelligence report saying that assassins entering Ecuador from Mexico and other countries planned to carry out "terrorist attacks" against Noboa was leaked on social media this week.

"We strongly condemn and repudiate any intention against the life of the

GUNMEN KILL 12 PEOPLE AT COCKFIGHT

Quito, April 19: Criminals dressed in fake military uniforms opened fire on spectators at a cockfight in rural Ecuador, killing 12 unarmed people and wounding several others, police said.

Security footage of Thursday night's attack showed a group of at least

five men entering the arena and opening fire with automatic rifles on a crowd of dozens in the rural community of La Valencia in northwest Ecuador.

The attackers were dressed in replica military uniforms — a common tactic of criminal gangs in the country. — AFP

president of the Republic, state authorities or public officials," Ecuador's ministry of government said in a statement.

"The state is on maximum alert," it added. The government accused "criminal structures in

complicity with political sectors defeated at the polls" of hatching the plot, though it did not offer any specific names.

Ecuador's electoral council and international observers have dismissed claims of fraud in the

runoff vote, but Mexico and Colombia have yet to officially recognise Noboa's win. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has expressed support for leftist Gonzalez, who has said she will seek a recount. Mexico severed ties with the South American nation a year ago after security forces stormed its embassy in Quito to arrest a former vice president granted asylum.

Noboa, who is expected to be sworn in on May 24, faces the herculean task of uniting his violence-plagued nation, which averaged a killing every hour at the start of the year as cartels vied for control over drug smuggling routes. — AFP



SHORT TAKES

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: CANADIAN DRUMMER HELD

Los Angeles, April 19: Joseph Seiders, drummer for Canadian indie rock band *The New Pornographers*, has been arrested and charged with possessing child sex abuse materials, authorities said.

Seiders, 44, is accused of recording young boys with his phone at a Chick-fil-A restaurant bathroom in Palm Desert, California, according to the local sheriff's department. The city of about 50,000 is in the Coachella Valley. Law enforcement responded to a report April 7 of suspicious activity at the fast food restaurant.

JAPAN WARSHIPS MAKE PORT CALL IN CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh, April 19: Two Japanese warships made a port call at Cambodia's Chinese-renovated naval base on Saturday, the Japanese embassy said, the first vessels to dock at the site that has raised concerns in Washington.

The US has said the Ream Naval Base, located off Cambodia's southern coast, could give China a key strategic position in the Gulf of Thailand near the South China Sea.

Cambodian senior officials have repeatedly denied that the base is for use by any single foreign power, following US media reports in 2022.

CATTLE HERDERS KILL AT LEAST 17 IN NIGERIA

Lagos, April 19: At least 17 people were killed when suspected cattle herders attacked communities in central Nigeria's Benue State on Thursday, police said, amid a resurgence of deadly clashes between farmers and herders.

Years of clashes have disrupted food supplies from north-central Nigeria, a significant agricultural area.

The latest attacks came two days after 11 people were killed in the Otuopku area of Benue and barely a week after gunmen attacked villages and killed more than 50 people in neighbouring Plateau State.

148 KILLED AFTER BOAT CATCHES FIRE IN CONGO

Kinshasa, April 19: At least 148 people were found dead in Democratic Republic of Congo after a motorised wooden boat caught fire and capsized, media reports citing local officials said on Friday.

The boat was carrying as many as 500 passengers, including women and children, when it overturned in the Congo River located in the country's northwest region on Tuesday, as per the reports.

Boating accidents are common in Congo, where old, wooden vessels are the main form of transport between villages and are often loaded.

100 INMATES MAKE PRISON BREAK IN CHAD

Mongo, Chad, April 19: More than 100 inmates escaped a Chad prison during a shoot-out that left three people dead, and wounded a state governor visiting the facility, officials told AFP on Saturday.

The break-out occurred late on Friday when an uprising happened in the high-security penitentiary five km (three miles) from the town of Mongo, in the centre of the country.

"There are around 100 who escaped, three dead and three wounded," Hassan Souleymane Adam, secretary general of the Guera province in which Mongo is located, said.

EASTER BOMBING ANNIV: GUNMAN FIRES AT CHURCH

Colombo, April 19: A gunman fired at a church in Sri Lanka, police said on Saturday, with the country on high alert six years since Easter Sunday bombings killed hundreds.

The gunman opened fire on Friday at a church in Manampitiya, 160 km (100 miles) north-east of the capital Colombo.

The shooting damaged windows and no one was hurt, while a suspect has been arrested, police said. "Initial investigations suggest that the suspect had targeted the church due to a personal enmity with the pastor," the statement said.

Putin declares Easter truce in war, asks Kyiv to do the same

This after Trump said he's ready to give up peace efforts if no progress

RUSSIA, UKRAINE EACH GAVE BACK 246 POWs: MOSCOW

Moscow, April 19: Russia and Ukraine on Saturday held a large prisoner of war exchange, with each side handing back more than 240 prisoners, the Russian defence ministry said.

"On April 19... 246 Russian soldiers were returned from territory controlled by the Kyiv regime. In return 246 Ukrainian prisoners of war were handed over. Also as a good will gesture, 31 wounded prisoners of war were handed over in exchange for 15 wounded Russian prisoners of war needing urgent medical help," the ministry said in a statement on social media.

It comes after Trump and secretary of state Marco Rubio suggested on Friday that the administration is prepared to move on from its peace-brokering efforts unless progress is made quickly. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian air defence units were repelling an attack by Russian drones on Saturday, saying that showed true Moscow's attitude to Easter and the lives of people.

"Based on humanitarian considerations ... the Russian side announces an Easter truce. I order a stop to all military activities for this period," Putin told his military chief, Valery Gerasimov, at a meeting in the Kremlin.

"We assume that Ukraine will follow our example. At the same time, our troops should be prepared to repel possible violations of the truce and provocations by the enemy, any aggressive actions," Putin added.

The full-scale war began when Russian troops crossed across the border into Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Putin has said repeatedly that he wants an end to the war. He has demanded that Ukraine must officially drop its ambitions to join Nato and withdraw its troops from the entirety of the territory of four Ukrainian regions claimed by Moscow.

— Reuters

Russia has retaken over 99% of seized Kursk area: Army chief



An armoured vehicle of the Ukrainian Armed Forces which was destroyed by paratroopers of the Airborne Forces at the area of Chasiv Yar, Ukraine.

Moscow, Kyiv, April 19: Russia's military chief of staff Valery Gerasimov on Saturday said troops had retaken over 99 per cent of territory seized by Ukraine in the Kursk region in an incursion launched in August. "In the areas of the Kursk region where Ukraine armed force mounted an incursion, the main part of the territory... is now liberated. That's 1,260 square km, 99.5 per cent," Gerasimov told Russian President Vladimir Putin in a televised meeting.

Russia has pushed Ukrainian forces from one of their last remaining footholds in Russia's Kursk region, officials said on Saturday.

According to Russia's defence ministry, its forces took control of the village of Oleshnya, on the border with Ukraine. "Units of the 'North' military group have liberated the village of Oleshnya in the Kursk region during active offensive operations," the ministry said in a statement. The Associated Press was unable to immediately verify the claim and there was no immediate response from Ukraine.

According to Russian state news agency TASS, Russia is still fighting to push Ukrainian forces out of the village of Gornal, some 11 km south of Oleshnya. "The Russian military has yet to push the Ukrainian Armed Forces out of Gornal ... in order to completely liberate the Kursk region. Fierce fighting is underway in the settlement," the agency reported, citing Russia security agencies.

Russian and North Korean soldiers have nearly deprived Kyiv of a key bargaining chip by retaking most of the region, where Ukrainian troops staged a surprise incursion last year.

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russia fired 87 exploding drones and decoys in the latest wave of attacks overnight into Saturday. It said 33 of them were intercepted and another 36 were lost, likely having been electronically jammed. Russian attacks damaged farms in the Odesa region and sparked fires in the Sumy region overnight, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said on Saturday.

— Agencies

Suit challenges Trump's action on global students

Washington, April 19: A class action lawsuit filed on Friday asks a federal court to reinstate the legal status of international students caught up in a Trump administration crackdown that has left more than a thousand fearful of deportation.

The suit filed by several American Civil Liberties Union affiliates seeks to represent more than 100 students in New England and Puerto Rico.

"International students are a vital community in our state's universities, and no administration should be allowed to circumvent the law to unilaterally strip students of status, disrupt their studies, and put them at risk of deportation," said Gilles Bissonnette, legal director of the ACLU of New Hampshire. At schools around the country, students have seen their visas revoked or their legal status terminated, typically with little notice.

About 1,100 students at more than 170 colleges, universities and university systems have been affected since late March, according to an *Associated Press* review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records. The AP is working to confirm reports of hundreds more students affected.

Students have filed other lawsuits arguing they were denied due process. Federal judges have granted temporary restraining orders in New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Montana, shielding students from efforts to remove them from the US.

Plaintiffs in the new lawsuit, filed in federal court



Italy's foreign minister Antonio Tajani (L) meets with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araqchi at the Italian foreign ministry in Rome before Iran-United States nuclear talks at the Omani embassy.

IRAN-U.S. TO DRAW N-DEAL FRAMEWORK

Dubai, April 19: Iran and the United States agreed on Saturday to task experts to start drawing up a framework for a potential nuclear deal, Iran's foreign minister said, after a second round of talks following President Donald Trump's threat of military action. At their second indirect meeting in a week, foreign minister Abbas Araqchi negotiated for almost four hours in

Rome with Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, through an Omani official who shuttled messages between them.

Trump, who abandoned a 2015 nuclear pact between Tehran and world powers during his first term in 2018, has threatened to attack Iran unless it reaches a new deal swiftly that would prevent it from developing a nuclear weapon.

— Reuters

in New Hampshire, learned without warning their F-1 student statuses had been terminated, leaving in doubt their ability to stay in the country and finish their studies, according to the complaint.

One of them, Manikanta Pasula of India, was on the brink of getting his master's in computer science at Rivier University in New Hampshire and applying to remain in the country through a work programme for interna-

tional students. Hangrui Zhang of China had come to the US for a PhD programme in electronic and computer science at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. Now, he cannot work as a research assistant, which was his only source of income, the complaint said.

The government did not give notice it is required to provide before terminating a foreign student's legal status, the lawyers said.

— AP



Christian pilgrims light candles during the Holy Fire ceremony, at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the site where according to tradition Jesus was crucified and buried, in Jerusalem's Old City, on Saturday.

Israel's Gaza hits kill more than 90

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip), April 19: Israeli strikes in Gaza have killed more than 90 people in the last 48 hours, Gaza's health ministry said on Saturday, as Israeli troops ramp up attacks to pressure Hamas to release its hostages and disarm.

The dead include 15 people who were killed overnight, among them women and children, some of who were sheltering in a designated humanitarian zone, according to hospital staff.

At least 11 people were killed in the southern city of Khan Younis, several of them in a tent in the Mwasi area where hundreds of thousands of displaced people are living, hospital worker said. Israel has designated it as a humanitarian zone.

Four other people were killed in separate strikes in Rafah city, including a mother and her daughter, according to the European Hospital, where the bodies were brought.

Israel has vowed to intensify attacks across Gaza and occupy large security zones inside the strip. For six weeks Israel also has blockaded Gaza, barring the entry of food and other goods.

This week, aid groups raised alarm saying that thousands of children have become malnourished, and most people are barely eating one meal a day as stocks dwindle, according to the United Nations.

On Saturday, Dr Hanan Balkhy, the head of the World Health Organisation's eastern Mediterranean office, urged the new

GAZANS RESORT TO TURTLE MEAT IN FOOD HUNT

Khan Younis, Palestinian Territories, April 19: With food scarce in the besieged and war-battered Gaza Strip, some desperate families have turned to eating sea turtles as a rare source of protein.

Once the shell has been removed, the meat is cut up, boiled and cooked in a mix of onion, pepper, tomato and spices. "The children were afraid of the turtle, and we told them it tasted as delicious as veal," said Majida Qanan, keeping an eye on the chunks of the red meat simmering in a pot over a wood fire.

"Some of them ate it, but others refused," she said.

— AFP

US ambassador in Israel, Mike Huckabee, to push the country to lift Gaza's blockade so medicines and other aid can enter the strip.

"I would wish for him to go in and see the situation firsthand," she said.

In his first appearance as ambassador on Friday, Huckabee visited the Western Wall, the holiest Jewish prayer site in Jerusalem's Old City. He inserted a prayer into the wall, which he said was handwritten by US President Donald Trump.

Huckabee said every effort was being made to bring home the remaining hostages held by Hamas.

— AP

Trans rights backers rally across Britain

London, April 19: Thousands of people on Saturday rallied in London and Edinburgh in support of trans rights, after a landmark court ruling on the definition of a "woman".

Britain's Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the legal definition of a "woman" is based on a person's sex at birth, with potentially far-reaching consequences for how single-sex spaces and services are run.

In London's Parliament Square, activists, protesters, trade unions and community groups waved flags and held up banners with slogans such as "trans women are women!" and "trans rights are human rights".

"My main fear — the extremists will feel empowered by this decision," said Evee Zayas, a 32-year-old researcher from Spain, describing herself as non-binary transgender.

"Hate crimes against

(the) trans community (will) go up," Zayas added. The court ruling said single-sex spaces and services including changing rooms, toilets and women-only hospital wards "will function properly only if sex is interpreted as biological sex".

Joe Brown, a trans woman in the process of transitioning, said: "Everything in the transition is going to be harder.

"Coming here in big numbers is very important to stand against the Supreme Court decision." Brown said other fears included not being able to access health care and children being scared to come out as trans.

London's Metropolitan Police said it was investigating after seven statues "in the vicinity of the protest" were vandalised.

Last week's court ruling followed a legal battle between the Scottish government and a campaign group For Women Scotland (FWS).

— AFP

TUNISIA OPPN FIGURES GET PRISON TERMS

Tunis, April 19: A Tunisian court handed down jail sentences of up to 66 years to multiple defendants, including prominent opposition figures, for national security offences, defence lawyers said on Saturday.

The trial, criticised by rights groups and decried by a defence lawyer as a "masquerade", is of unprecedented scale with around 40 defendants. A prosecutor cited by media announced sentences ranging from 13 to 66 years for the defendants.

— AFP

PROGRESS IN | AI TECH

Robots had to navigate slopes, turns that demanded stability, battery life

China holds world's 1st robot half marathon

Beijing, April 19: China on Saturday held the world's first marathon of humanoid robots running together with human runners, showcasing progress in AI technologies amid Beijing's deepening rivalry with the US in robotics.

Twenty-one humanoid robots, accompanied by their tech handlers from top universities and firms ran over a 21-km race through Beijing's Economic-Technological Development Area. The robots in different shapes and sizes running along with humans

created a spectacle, drawing greeting from large crowds gathered on the sidewalks.

The robots were launched sequentially at intervals exceeding one metre, confined to dedicated tracks where battery swaps mirror Formula 1's pit stops. In the end, awards were distributed not just for speed but for categories like Best Endurance, Best Gait Design, and Most Innovative Form — celebrating both athletic performance and engineering ability.



State-run Xinhua news agency, which described it as the world's first such race, also released a video footage in which several robots including one wearing a black sun hat and

Sky Project Ultra robot approaches to finish line to win the world's first robot half marathon during the Humanoid Robot Half-Marathon held in Beijing, on Saturday.

— AP

white gloves ran in along with the competitors.

However, videos posted on social media showed that it was not a smooth race as some robots experienced technical hitches at

the start and even crashed.

Among 20 competing teams, Tiangong Ultra from the Tiangong Team won the race among the robots with a timing of two hours 40 minutes, slower than over an hour and two minutes clocked by Elias Desta of Ethiopia who won the men's race.

The marathon for the robots was regarded as a test of their core algorithms as they had to navigate complex terrains like slopes and turns which demanded exceptional stability, reliability, and batte-

ry life, Xiong Youjun, CEO of the Beijing Humanoid Robot Innovation Centre told Xinhua.

The China Electronics Society forecasts that China's humanoid robot market could reach approximately 870 billion yuan (about \$119 billion) by 2030. "Robots completing the race isn't the finish line. It's the starting point for industrial growth and cross-disciplinary learning," said Liang Liang, deputy director of Yizhuang's Administrative Committee.

— PTI

