



The Pioneer

Paper with passion since 1864

RNI No. TELENG/2018/76469

*LATE CITY VOL. 7 ISSUE 185 | *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PUBLISHED FROM: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN VIJAYWADA



Islamist terrorists, Pak handlers need to be destroyed:
Tharoor

COME TOGETHER TO BUILD A RESILIENT, STEEL-STRONG INDIA: PM



Samantha and Raj Nidimoru fuel relationship

RUMOURS



QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

Why didn't these so-called secular intellectuals fail to respond to the incident that shook the nation? The terror attack in J&K was shocking. Why are the so-called secular intellectuals not speaking out about this attack? Do they not have any love for this country? Why isn't Stalin, Kamala Hassan and Prakash Raj speaking about the Jammu and Kashmir incident? The Modi Government will take action against terrorists. Priyanka Gandhi's husband Robert Vadra should stop slandering the BJP. Vadra's comments are strongly condemned



— Raghunandan Rao, BJP MP

P2

DON'T MISS...

Ailments linked to WTE Plant

A comprehensive fact-finding report has sounded alarm bells over severe health and environmental issues linked to the Jawahar Nagar Waste to Energy (WTE) plant. The report, compiled by a joint team of civil society organisations and health experts, reveals significant health impacts on local residents, with data pointing to an increase in respiratory illnesses, contaminated water sources and declining quality of life in surrounding villages. A Waste-to-Energy (WTE) plant is a facility that incinerates municipal solid waste to generate ...

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'Pak handlers need to be destroyed'

Asserting that this is not the time for a domestic blame game over the Pahalgalam terror attack, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday said Islamist terrorists and their Pakistani handlers need to be destroyed and that 'we must all support our government' in doing whatever it judges best to achieve this. He also asserted that India's commitment to Kashmiri integration and communal harmony must not be diluted. At least 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed and several...

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Stock markets break 7-day rally

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty reversed their seven-day uptrend and settled lower on Thursday amid profit-taking and disappointing fourth quarter earnings of Hindustan Unilever. Selling in blue-chips IICI Bank, Bharti Airtel and a largely muted trend in Asian and European equities also dragged the markets down. The 30-share BSE benchmark declined 315.06 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 79,801.43. During the day, it dropped 391.94 points or 0.48 per cent to 79,724.55...

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CSK vs SRH: Battle of survival

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) will eye a crucial turnaround at home when they face an equally desperate Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in a battle of survival in the Indian Premier League here on Friday. Both sides have endured a turbulent season, notching just four points from eight games, and must now win all remaining fixtures to keep their slim qualification hopes alive. Known to make the most of home conditions, five-time champions CSK find themselves in uncharted territory ...

-SPORTS



Return home immediately, India asks Indians in Pak

Revokes visas issued to Pak nationals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday announced revoking all visas issued to Pakistani nationals from April 27 and advised Indian nationals residing in Pakistan to return home at the earliest as tensions between the two countries escalated over the Pahalgalam terror attack that killed 26 people.

New Delhi also announced suspending visa services to Pakistani nationals with immediate effect as part of the retaliatory measures over the cross-border links to the worst terror strike on civilians in India since the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

Continued on Page 2



India briefs envoys of G20 nations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday briefed New Delhi-based envoys of almost all G20 nations and those from its strategic partners on the dastardly Pahalgalam terror attack and its link to cross-border terrorism, people familiar with the matter said.

Continued on Page 2

Hyd district MLC polls vote counting today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All arrangements for the counting of Hyderabad district local bodies MLC elections have been completed, said Returning Officer Anurag Jayanti. The counting will begin on Friday (April 25) at 8 am. Adequate security arrangements and sufficient hands have been arranged for the vote counting, he added.

Election observer Surendra Mohan visited the counting centre at the GHMC office and inspected the arrangements.

He gave suggestions regarding the security of ballot boxes, video recording and security. Counting tables, CCTV cameras and security have been arranged for the counting of votes. The Returning Officer said that all steps have been taken to ensure that the counting of votes is conducted transparently and as per election rules.

The Additional Commissioner of the Election Department, Alivelu Mangatayaru, and officials attended the programme.



Cong fooled everyone, people will march to Elkathurthi: Kavitha

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Lashing out at the Congress Government, BRS MLC Kavitha declared that it had failed to complete even 16 meaningful projects during its 16-month rule.

Meanwhile, as preparations for the BRS Silver Jubilee public meeting on April 27 at Elkathurthi reached the final stage, Kavitha visited the venue and reviewed the arrangements.

Continued on Page 2

TAC clears TG's Sithamma Sagar SRLIP irrigation project

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 158th meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Secretary Debashree Mukherjee and CWC Chairman Mukesh Kumar Sinha, recommended clearance of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the integrated Sithamma Sagar and SRLIP project.

The clearance is being hailed as a landmark for the state, particularly as this is the first integrated multi-purpose project to be cleared after the state's formation, which provides both irrigation facilities as well as hydropower.

Telangana officials Principal Secretary Rahul Bojja, ENC (G) Anil Kumar, SE Kothagudem Srinivas Reddy, and DD(GB) S. Subramayam Prasad represented the state at the meeting. After detailed discussions, the committee unanimously recommended the project for final TAC approval.

The Rs 19,955-crore project aims to use 67.05 TMCs of water (equivalent to 1898.644 MCMs) to irrigate



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7.87 lakh acres and provide drinking water through lift irrigation via 11 pump houses powered by 757 MW of electricity.

The scheme will benefit Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, and Mahabubabad districts and also stabilise the existing command areas of NSP, Wyr, Paleru and other minor irrigation schemes by offsetting the 25 per cent

Medigadda collapse caused by systemic failure: NDSA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) has sounded a warning over the safety and sustainability of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project's key components — the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages — after a committee of experts exposed lapses in its design, construction and quality control.

The Committee's report, finalised in December 2024 and chaired by former CWC Chairman J. Chandrashekhar Iyer, reveals that all three barrages are facing

- Signs of damage appeared immediately after 2019 elections
- Annaram Sundilla location changed without geo-technical investigation



structural distress, with Medigadda's Block 7 on the verge of collapse due to piping-induced subsidence.

The report warns that undiscovered holes in the cut-offs across all the three barrages could trigger future failures, demanding a comprehensive geotechnical reassessment, structural modelling, and rehabilitation.

Continued on Page 2

'No Pakistani in Hyd Miss World contest'

NAVEENA GHANATE
naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

The Miss World contest in Hyderabad, scheduled in May, will not have contestants from Pakistan.

While nearly 140 countries are likely to participate in the international beauty pageant, Pakistan is not among them. Principal Secretary Tourism Smita Sabharwal confirmed, "We do not have them (Pakistan) as participants."

After the Pahalgalam attack, India has cut diplomatic ties with Pakistan. Hyderabad will host the 72nd 'Miss World 2025' event from May 7 to 31.

With contestants from all over the world arriving in the city, the spotlight is also on the event's security arrangements. Addressing concerns, Smita assured that robust measures are already in place. "We have a detailed security plan, with all levels of security, tagging all individ-



ual participants and their safety. It's been put into operation," she said.

It may be mentioned here that India decided that Pakistani nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) visas. Any Pakistani national currently in India has been asked to leave India.

India withdrew its defence attachés from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. These posts in the respective High Commissions are now deemed as annulled.



Pak pauses Simla pact, talks tough on Indus Treaty

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Thursday put Simla Agreement and other bilateral accords with India on hold, suspended all trade, closed its airspace for Indian airlines and said any attempt to divert the water meant for it under the Indus Water Treaty will be considered an Act of War.

Islamabad also closed the Wagah border post, cancelled visas given to Indians under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) and asked military advisers at the Indian High Commission to leave -- mirroring steps taken the previous evening by India over the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Pakistani announcements followed a meeting here of its National Security Committee chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in response to the Indian decision on Wednesday to suspend the Indus Water Treaty and downgrade diplomatic ties with Islamabad.

Continued on Page 2



age to the victims of the attack at the beginning of the prime minister's speech.

He said people lost their sons, brothers and husbands and noted that the victims belong to different parts of India, be it Bengal, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha and Bihar.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

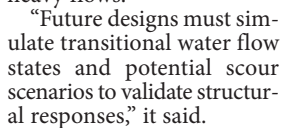
Speaking at the ceremony, Poultry India President Uday Singh Bayas hailed the Chief Minister's leadership during the recent bird flu scare in Hayathnagar.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government reiterated its commitment to ensuring the safety of all Telanganites and promised continuous monitoring until all those affected return safely.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

- NDSA for comprehensive geotechnical, geophysical studies
- Review mathematical and hydraulic modelling: NDSA



Perhaps the most urgent demand is for a robust quality assurance mechanism to be embedded in all future repair works. The report cited serious lapses in concrete quality, cut-off wall construction, and poor

bereaved families. Party leaders have urged everyone to join the march and show

In a strong nudge to the Telangana Government, the report pushed for interdisciplinary collaboration between design engineers, geologists, hydraulic experts and dam safety officers.

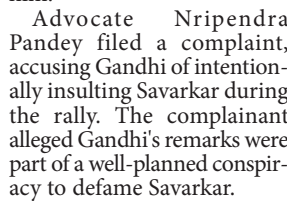
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

He said that people are waiting to see former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao, and so there is a chance that a large number of people would attend the public meeting. Reacting to IAS officer Smita Sabarwal's post, which connected to the Kanche Gachibowli land issue, Danam said that there was nothing wrong with her post. "She described the actual condition in Kanche Gachibowli. The report was not intended to attack the government," he said.

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

trace of development under Revanth's rule. There is only corruption, suppression, false cases, arrests, and land grabbing. Under KCR, we saw welfare reach every home and joy in every eye. Today, under the Congress, it is only crisis and despair."

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

He added that had the BRS been invited, it would have used the platform to offer constructive suggestions, reiterating the party's long-standing stance of putting the nation above politics in matters of terror and external threats.

Continued from page 1

Envoys of G20 member nations such as the US, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Australia, Indonesia and China attended the

Continued from page 1

She also blasted those questioning the need for a silver jubilee celebration for the BRS. "Some are mocking the event. But let me tell you. The BRS became a national party to serve the entire nation."

Continued from page 1

Both upstream barrages — Annaband and Sundilla — exhibit repeating symptoms: dislodged concrete blocks, washed-away wearing coats, and re-emerging seepage despite frequent grouting.

She also blasted those questioning the need for a silver jubilee celebration for the BRS. "Some are mocking the event. But let me tell you. The BRS became a national party to serve the entire nation."

Later, he answered questions of several leaders and Home Minister Amit Shah interjected wherever required. After the meeting, sources said troops were present in Pahalgam but not deployed as local authorities were not informed about tourists being taken to Baisaran by tour operators.

Cracks ranging up to 300 mm, reinforcement failures, and distortion in the gantry structure were found. Satellite imagery showed silt build-up and inactivity of spillway gates around pier 17, indicating improper usage and the lack of timely intervention. Contrary to initial claims,

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

“Why are these so-called secular intellectuals not responding to the incident that shook the nation? The terror attack in Kashmir was shocking. Why are secular intellectuals

Raghunandan said the incidents taking place in the joint Medak district over the last two days are painful and that some people from a community are disrupting law and order. He said that the Revanth Government should think about madrasas in Telangana.

Continued from page 1

It said medical visas issued to Pakistani nationals

"All existing valid visas issued by India to Pakistani nationals stand revoked with effect from April 27. Medical visas issued to Pakistani nationals will be valid only till April 29."

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CITY EVENTS

Kuchipudi Dance Programme
By Deepanjali
Venue
Ravindra Bharathi
April 25, 8 pm.

Hindustani Classical Music
Solo Harmonium Performance
By Rahul Deshpande
Venue
Lamakaan
April 25, 7:30 pm.

Idea Open House
Ideate, Validate, Create
Venue
T-Hub Foundation
April 25, 5 pm.

Electrovenza 2k25
Hack Sprint
Venue
Muffakham Jah College Of Engineering And Technology
April 25, 9:30 am.

Osmania University
Foundation Day Walk
Venue
Osmania University College Of Arts & Social Sciences (Tourist Spot)
April 25, 6:30 am.

Live Performance
By Harish N Martin (Band)
Venue
Stone Waters - Kitchen & Lounge
April 25, 8 pm.



National BC Welfare Association president and Rajya Sabha MP R Krishnaiah addressing a meeting on Thursday

BCs demand 42% quota before elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

National BC Welfare Association president and Rajya Sabha MP R Krishnaiah demanded that BC reservations be increased to 42%. He criticised Panchayati Raj Minister Seethakka for not mentioning BC reservations while announcing local body elections.

In a meeting on Thursday, Krishnaiah pointed out that elections were delayed for over an year due to the BC reservation issue, which is still unresolved. "How can elections be held without addressing it?" he asked, warning the government not to proceed without a solution.

Krishnaiah warned of strong protests if the reservation percentage is not raised. He threatened a hunger strike with 1,000 people and said ministers and MLAs would be stopped from moving freely.

He stated that although BC reservations were announced to be increased from 20% to 40%, no government order has been issued.

While it was said the proposal would be sent to the Centre after passing it in the Assembly, nothing has happened.

Krishnaiah explained that under Article 243-D6, State governments have the power to increase BC reservations in local bodies.

The Assembly passed the law, and the 50% reservation cap has been lifted in some cases by the Supreme Court. He noted there will be no legal or constitutional hurdles.

He demanded the elections be cancelled until the issue is resolved and also called for a constitutional amendment to allow BC reservations in jobs and education, similar to that in Tamil Nadu.

TG sizzles: IMD issues Orange Alert for heat wave

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana is currently facing an intense heatwave, with temperatures soaring above 45 degrees Celsius in many areas. According to Telangana Weatherman, Nizamabad recorded 45.4 degrees Celsius, Jagtial 45.3, Adilabad and Nirmal 45.2, Mancherla 45.1, Asifabad 45, Nalgonda 44.9, Kamareddy 44.6, Peddapalli 44.5, Karimnagar 44.4, and Sircilla 43.9.

In Hyderabad, the highest temperature was recorded at IS Sada at 42 degrees Celsius. Other areas such as Habsiguda, Musheerabad, Shaikpet, Lingampally, Madhapur, Balanagar, and Jeedimetla all saw temperatures of 41 degrees Celsius. Nacharam reached 41.8, Ziauguda 41.7, Mettuguda 41.5, and both Khairatabad and Tirumalagiri recorded 41.2 degrees Celsius.

The extreme heat also triggered scattered thunderstorms on Thursday evening in Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Medak, Siddipet, Sircilla and Asifabad. In Hyderabad's outskirts, severe storms were reported in Insapur, Rudraram, Kandi, Mokila and Shankarpally. The storm later on moved toward Patancheru, Kollur and Tellapur.

IMD Hyderabad has issued an Orange Alert for a heat-wave and warm night conditions until 27 April. These are likely to affect isolated areas in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherla, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Medak and Kamareddy.

A Yellow Alert has been issued for warm nights in Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Siddipet, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet and Jogulamba Gadwal districts.



MISSING 5-YEAR-OLD RESCUED

Five arrested in Hyd for child trafficking

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chandrayangutta Police rescued a five-year-old girl who had been kidnapped and arrested five individuals involved in an organised child-trafficking racket operating across Hyderabad and with links to Mumbai.

The victim, daughter of Akram Saadi, was abducted on April 20 from near the Gandhi statue, Chandrayangutta. Following a complaint from the family, police swiftly registered a case and launched an intensive investigation.

Reviewing CCTV footage across multiple locations, the police traced the movements of the suspects and identified their residence.

A couple, Syed Javeed Pasha and his second wife Shaista Parveen, were taken into custody.

During interrogation, they confessed to abducting the child and selling her for Rs 1.3 lakh to a woman named Parveen Banu in Uppal.

Acting on this lead, police rushed to the location and successfully rescued the girl. At the time of rescue, Parveen Banu was allegedly in the process of reselling the child to two individuals - Sunitha Kumari and Rajendra Prasad - who were also arrested on the spot.

TMREIS achieves overall 88% in Inter second year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS) president Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi announced that 88% of students passed the Intermediate second year exams and 80% passed the first year exams in the 2025 Intermediate Public Examinations.

Among the top performers in the second year is Muskan Begum (BiPC) from TMRJC Gadwal Girls 1, who secured State 4th rank with 994/1000 marks. In the first year, Mohd Farhan (CEC) from TMRJC Khairatabad Boys topped the State with 495/500 (99%). Sk Ramzan Bee and Wajeha Tabassum (BiPC) from TMRJC Kothagudem Girls 1 also secured State 1st rank with 438/440 (99.5%). In the Vocational Stream, U Hemant (MLT) from TMRJC Vemulawada Boys secured State 1st rank with 496/500 (99%).

Qureshi shared that 35 TMREIS students qualified in the JEE Mains 2025. Special coaching centres with full facilities were set up for boys and girls.

These students will now be trained further for the JEE Advanced to get into IITs, NITs and IIITs.

HEALTH CRISIS IN JAWAHAR NAGAR

Respiratory ailments linked to WTE Plant

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

A comprehensive fact-finding report has sounded alarm bells over severe health and environmental issues linked to the Jawahar Nagar Waste to Energy (WTE) plant. The report, compiled by a joint team of civil society organisations and health experts, reveals significant health impacts on local residents, with data pointing to an increase in respiratory illnesses, contaminated water sources and declining quality of life in surrounding villages.

A Waste-to-Energy (WTE) plant is a facility that incinerates municipal solid waste to generate electricity in Jawahar Nagar. It has a capacity of 24 MW and another plant with the same capacity is currently under construction.

The investigation was carried out by a coalition including Human Rights Forum (HRF), Environment Support Group (ESG), National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) and Doctors for Environment with inputs from Hyderabad Urban Lab and Thanal, an environmental research group. These organisations conducted field visits, medical camps and reviewed testimonies from affected villagers and scientific data.

Residents from villages like Dammaiguda, Keesara and Kowkoro reported increased cases of asthma, skin rashes and chronic cough. Children and elderly were found to be the most affected.

Doctors who participated in free health camps noted a high prevalence of respiratory and gastrointestinal disorders. "Symptoms clearly indicate prolonged exposure to air and water pollution," stated one doctor from Doctors for Environment.

Tests conducted on borewell and tank water samples revealed high levels of contamination, making the water unsafe for drinking or agricultural use.

"We were promised development and clean energy. Instead, our children are sick and our crops have failed," said Lakshmi, a resident of Kandlakoya village. Multiple villagers echoed similar concerns, expressing frustration over the lack of transparency and accountability.

The coalition demands an immediate suspension of operations at the WTE plant until a thorough independent health and environmental audit is conducted. It also recommends compensation for affected families and long-term healthcare monitoring.

The report has been submitted to the Telangana State Pollution Control Board, National Green Tribunal and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for urgent action.

The incineration process produces fine ash, which settles inside homes, covering furniture, electronics and household items such as sofas, dining tables, refrigerators and washing machines. This has not only caused damage to property but has also contributed to respiratory problems and skin irritation among community members. The report elaborates that many suffer from persistent throat and mouth infections, making it difficult to even speak properly. The ash and toxic pollutants released from burning waste at high temperatures are a significant cause of this. This has also led to a rise in pulmonary diseases and other chronic conditions.



The Waste to Energy plant

Two TGSCSC students clear UPSC finals, likely to be selected for IRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Commissioner of SCDD and Vice-President of Telangana Scheduled Castes Study Circle (TGSCSC) N Kshitija announced that two students from TGSCSC were selected in the Civil Services Examination 2024 conducted by UPSC. Gokamalla Anjaneyulu secured AIR 934 and Ramtenki Sudhakar got AIR 949. Both are likely to be selected for the IRS.

She shared that in the Civil Services Prelims held in June 2024, 27 students qualified and appeared for the Mains in September. Of them, three students reached the interview stage and two secured final selection.

In the recently declared Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) Group-1 results, TGSCSC students secured high ranks. B Vanaja secured 38th rank, R Mery Gold 56th, M Raviteja 66th, Kishan Patel 72nd, E Rakesh 78th, B Sravan 84th, and D Praveen 105th. Students also secured 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 10th ranks in the SC category, 2nd in ST, and 10th in BC-D. Around 35-40 students are expected to be selected for top posts like Deputy Collector, DSP, CTO and others.

Located in Banjara Hills, TGSCSC offers a 10-month free residential IAS coaching programme for poor SC, ST and BC students, selected through a State-level entrance exam announced in May/June. Since 1980, over 450 civil servants have been trained here.

Kshitija thanked Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka for their support and congratulated the successful candidates.



VCIU students protest over poor hostel conditions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Students of Veeranari Chakali Ilamma Women's University (VCIU) staged a massive protest on the campus premises on Thursday, raising serious concerns over inadequate hostel facilities and unsafe living conditions.

The protest, which began around 9 am was led by women students who alleged that their repeated grievances were being ignored by the university administration. Among the key issues highlighted were the lack of basic amenities such as water, beds and fans, as well as the presence of rats and snakes in hostel premises.

"We don't even have water facilities though the pipelines have been laid. When we try to meet the Vice-Chancellor to raise these issues, we are told that hostel matters should not be brought out," one of the protesting students said.

Students further complained that overcrowding has worsened their condition, with two students often forced to share a single bed - and in some rooms, there are no beds at all.

"We came here to study, not to suffer physically and mentally. We feel suffocated inside the rooms," said another student.

They also claimed that in older hostel buildings, rats have been falling on students while they sleep. Despite submitting a detailed representation of the problems, students said there has been no response or accountability from the university's Vice-Chancellor.



HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath visiting various encroached canals

HYDRAA chief inspects Nakka Vagu, Jangamkunta

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath conducted a field-level inspection in response to various complaints received through Prajavani on Thursday.

He examined the encroachment of the Nakka Vagu near Praneeth County in the Patancheru area. The canal, which should be 36 meters wide including the buffer zone, was found to be encroached upon up to half its width. The Commissioner directed the parties concerned to submit documents related to construction approvals. He instructed that if the canal does not meet regulatory width standards, the encroachments must be removed.

Upon receiving a complaint about encroachment on a plot in Masjid Banda area, claiming it as Jangamkunta, the Commissioner inspected the site. He also looked into a complaint about encroachment on government land in Kishta Reddy Peta under Ameenpur Municipality limits.

The Commissioner assured existing residents who have already built homes there that they need not worry, but future encroachments will be strictly prevented.

He advised locals to immediately report any irregularities occurring under the pretext of HYDRAA to the authorities.

Later, he inspected the Food Corporation of India layout in Gachibowli. The layout roads and parks were reportedly erased and used commercially in the name of conventions; the Commissioner reviewed this misuse. He also examined a complaint in Nekkampur where a wall was built under high-tension power lines, obstructing a public road.

Complaints of encroachments on community spaces and public utility areas within the Nekkampur layout were also investigated. The Commissioner reviewed encroachments on government land in Survey Number 20 of Nekkampur, Gandipet mandal.

He later visited the Gandipet lake and a complaint was examined regarding sewage from Khanapur and Nagulapalli merging into Gandipet lake via the Bulpapur canal.

Private bank manager arrested in Rs 1.22 cr cyber trading scam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a breakthrough against online financial fraud, the Hyderabad City Cyber Crime Police have arrested Deepak Kumar, a Relationship Sales Manager at ICICI Bank, Greater Noida, for his alleged involvement in a large-scale cyber trading scam. The accused was apprehended in connection with Cr. No. 923/2024, following a complaint from a victim based in Secunderabad who was defrauded of over Rs. 1.22 crore.

According to police, the complainant was lured into a fake investment scheme through a Telegram ID offering trading tips. The victim was directed to fraudulent trading applications that falsely projected high returns. Believing the scam, he transferred Rs 1,22,87,120 in multiple transactions. When he later attempted to withdraw profits, the fraudsters made excuses and demanded additional deposits, eventually cutting off all communication and threatening to block his user ID.

Cyber Crime officials uncovered that Deepak Kumar supplied multiple bank accounts to cybercriminals through Telegram in return for commissions. Working as a Relationship Manager at ICICI's Omega-I Branch in Greater Noida, Kumar allegedly facilitated fraudulent transactions worth over Rs 6 crore across 23 cases nationwide, as flagged by NCRP data.

Two mobile phones were seized from the accused during the arrest. The operation was led by Inspector K Prasada Rao, supported by SI PVS Abhishek, HC PV Srinivas and a team of constables under the supervision of ACP RG Siva Maruthi.

The Cyber Crime police have warned the public to remain vigilant against fake trading platforms and social media groups offering investment opportunities. Officials advised citizens to invest only through SEBI-approved platforms and consult SEBI-registered financial advisors.



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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div> TELANGANA STATE GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY </div> </div>															
Gazette No.06, BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM, DATED: 11.04.2025 FRIDAY GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA FORM - VII (See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30/2013) DECLARATION															
Revenue Divisional Officer & Land Acquisition Officer, Bhadrachalam, Rc. No. C/498/2024										Dated: 15.02.2025					
District Collector* Bhadradi Kothagudem Rc. No.G/ 1794 /2024 Dated: 09.04.2025										Dated: 09.04.2025					
Whereas it appears to the District Collector, Bhadradi Kothagudem that a total an extent of Ac.1.13 1/4 gts. land is required in the Bhadrachalam Village, Bhadrachalam Mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem District for public purpose, namely for the Construction Formation of Balance Flood Bank of Subashnagar Bhadrachalam.															
Therefore, declaration is made that a piece of land measuring, more or less Ac. 1.13 1/4 gts of standard measurement under Land Acquisition for the above said Balance Flood Bank in the Bhadrachalam Village, Bhadrachalam Mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem District whose land detailed description is as following.															
SCHEDULE															
Village - Bhadrachalam, Mandal: Bhadrachalam, District: Bhadradi Kothagudem															
P.D.S No.	PN SL No.	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N	S/N
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	17558	1755	Patla	Dry	0.00 14	Kali Pavan Kumar S/o Ramasubrahman	Kali Pavan Kumar S/o Ramasubrahman	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
2	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Sathyanarayana S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Sathyanarayana S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
3	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 14	Inturi Venkateswaru S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Venkateswaru S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
4	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 14	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
5	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
6	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
7	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
8	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
9	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
10	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
11	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
12	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
13	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
14	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
15	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
16	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
17	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
18	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
19	17119	1711	Patla	Dry	0.00 12	Inturi Lingappa S/o Chitra Goswami									

ACROSS THE STATES



Odisha to initiate action against infiltrators: Min

Odisha Law minister Prithiviraj Harichandan on Thursday said the government will soon initiate required action against infiltrators staying for long in the state. "A discussion with the chief minister has already been made in regard to the presence of infiltrators and required action will be taken soon," Harichandan told reporters while replying to a question in the wake of the Pahalgam terror strike in which 26 people including a man from the state, were killed. Strongly condemning the Pahalgam incident, Harichandan said: "They (Pakistani terrorists) have pinned the last nail in their coffin. The consequences will be too harsh. This is for the first time that the terrorists have gunned down unarmed and innocent visitors to the valley. The central government and all the states are solidly behind the families of the victims." Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi last month had informed the state Assembly that as many as 3,738 infiltrators mostly from Bangladesh have been identified across the state.



Manipur bandh today over 'custodial death' of youth

Joint Action Committee (JAC) formed in connection with the alleged custodial death of a 27-year-old man earlier this month has called a 24-hour-long Manipur bandh from midnight of Thursday. Khoisnam Sanajaoba was arrested in Imphal East district on March 31 along with four others for their alleged association with the proscribed outfit Kangleipak Communist Party (Nongdrenkhomba). In a statement, the JAC said it had submitted a memorandum to the governor listing a charter of demands, including an impartial investigation into the 'custodial death' of Sanajaoba, on April 17 but received no response from the government side. "The 24-hour bandh will start from the intervening night of April 24 and April 25," the statement said. The JAC asserted that Khoisnam was a "village volunteer" who was sent to Manipur Central Jail at Saijiwa on April 10 and was admitted to Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences on April 13, where he was pronounced dead.



BJP set to regain control of MCD after two years

The BJP is set to reclaim power in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) after a gap of two years, with the elections for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor scheduled to be held on Friday. With the AAP boycotting the election and the Congress reduced to a marginal presence, the BJP is expected to comfortably sweep the civic posts, solidifying its control over Delhi through the Centre, the nominated MLAs in the Assembly and now the MCD. Senior BJP leader and former Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh, who is the party's nominee for the mayoral post, told PTI that Delhiites have entrusted the BJP with the responsibility of fixing the city's problems. "AAP has already accepted its defeat. We will eliminate corruption and complete all the pending work that was stalled over the past two years," he said. He further stated that once the mayor is elected, elections for the standing committees will be held promptly. Meanwhile, AAP councillor and former Mayor Shelly Oberoi and Leader of the House Mukesh Goyal held a press conference on Thursday where they reiterated their party's decision to boycott the election.

for people across the country and indication of the belief that all was well in the volatile Valley. The dead in Tuesday's terror strike were all men, 26 lives of promise that ended in a hail of bullets. And back in their homes, families grieved for the sons, fathers and husbands they had lost, some stoic and others inconsolable. A hush fell over many villages and towns as funeral corteges wound their way to crematoriums and shops downed shutters. In Ishani village in Odisha's Balasore district, nine-year-old Tanuj Kumar Satpathy lit the pyre of his father Prashant. It was just two days ago that

India can't develop without developing its villages: Modi

PNS ■ MADHUBANI

India cannot develop without developing its villages, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday as he launched and inaugurated projects worth Rs 13,500 crore in Bihar's Madhubani, and addressed Panchayati Raj Institutions across the country.

Speaking at an event to mark National Panchayati Raj Day here, Modi also lauded the work done by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in the poll-bound state.

He said a developed Bihar is essential for a developed India, and said efforts are being made to ensure the benefits of progress reach all corners of the state. Modi said Mahatma Gandhi's idea that India cannot be developed without empowering its villages is the concept behind the Panchayati Raj system.

"Bihar is the land where Mahatma Gandhi expanded the mantra of Satyagraha," Modi said, highlighting Mahatma Gandhi's firm belief that "India's rapid development is only possible when its villages are strong".



"Today, a significant number of women from economically weaker sections, Dalits, Mahadalits, backwards, and extremely backward communities are serving as public representatives in Bihar. This is real social justice and democracy."

He said the projects launched on Thursday will boost development and generate employment opportunities in the state. "Farmers are the backbone of the rural economy, the stronger this backbone, the stronger the villages, and consequently, the nation," Modi said.

He also underscored that panchayats have strengthened social participation, remarking that Bihar was the first state in the country to provide 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayats.

"Today, a significant number of women from economically

weaker sections, Dalits, Mahadalits, backwards, and extremely backward communities are serving as public representatives in Bihar. This is real social justice and democracy," he said.

"Many steps have been taken to strengthen panchayats, and technology has also been used... More than 2 lakh gram panchayats have been linked with the internet, and more than 5.5 lakh common service centres have been established in villages," he said.

Modi said more than 30,000 new panchayat buildings have also been constructed.

He lauded the Bihar government's 'Jeevika Didi' programme and said, today, self-help groups of women in Bihar have been provided financial assistance of approximately Rs 1,000 crore.

He said this will further strengthen the economic empowerment of women and contribute to the goal of creating three crore 'Lakshpati Didis' across the country.

Modi said villages have seen the construction of houses for the poor, roads, gas connections, water connections, and toilets, bringing lakhs of crores of rupees to rural areas.

2008 MUMBAI ATTACK

Delhi court junks Rana's plea to talk to kin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday dismissed the plea of jailed 26/11 terror attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana seeking to talk to his family members.

"Not allowed," special Judge Chanderjit Singh held. Rana filed the plea through his lawyer and said talking to his family members was a fundamental right and they must be worried about his well being.

The NIA opposed the application, arguing he could share crucial information if allowed to speak with his family members. The anti-terror agency said the investigation was at a crucial stage.

On April 10, the court remanded the 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman to 18 day custody. The NIA alleged as a part of the criminal conspiracy, accused David Coleman Headley, had discussed the entire operation with Rana before his visit to India.

Anticipating potential challenges, Headley sent an e-mail to Rana detailing his belongings and assets, the NIA told



the court seeking his remand.

Headley also informed Rana about the involvement of Pakistani nationals Ilyas Kashmiri and Abdur Rehman, who are also accused in the case, in the plot, it alleged.

Rana, a close associate of 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks main conspirator Headley alias Daood Gilani, a US citizen, was brought to India after the US Supreme Court on April 4 dismissed his review plea against his extradition.

On November 26, 2008, a group of 10 Pakistani terrorists went on a rampage, carrying out a coordinated attack on a railway station, two luxury hotels and a Jewish centre, after they sneaked into India's financial capital using the sea route in the Arabian Sea.

As many as 166 people were killed in the nearly 60-hour assault.

NOT TIME FOR DOMESTIC BLAME GAME

Islamist terrorists, Pak handlers need to be destroyed: Tharoor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that this is not the time for a domestic blame game over the Pahalgam terror attack, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday said Islamist terrorists and their Pakistani handlers need to be destroyed and that "we must all support our government" in doing whatever it judges best to achieve this.

He also asserted that India's commitment to Kashmiri inte-



gration and communal harmony must not be diluted.

At least 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed and several injured when terrorists

opened fire at a meadow near Pahalgam town in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday afternoon.

Tharoor said the responsibility for the horrors endured this week lies more with those who planned and carried out the killings than those who failed to prevent them. He made the remarks in a post on X as he could not return from Lakshadweep in time for the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting here. He said

he was adding his endorsement to the "strong and constructive" statement issued by the CWC.

Making four additional, inter-related points, Tharoor said the objectives of the Pahalgam attack are clear -- stop peace, derail "normalisation", destroy tourism, wreck the Kashmir economy to increase discontent there, add to the mistrust of Kashmiris, among other Indians, and increase communal polarisation in India.

Indian naval warship test-fires surface-to-air missile

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Navy's guided missile destroyer INS Surat successfully test-fired a medium-range surface-to-air missile.

The missile has a range of around 70 km, it is learnt.

"The Indian Navy's latest indigenous guided missile destroyer INS Surat has successfully carried out a precision cooperative engagement of a sea-skimming target, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the Navy's defence capabilities," the Navy said.

Pahalgam attack masterminded by Pak: Cong

Says BJP exploiting tragedy to promote polarisation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday said the cowardly Pahalgam attack masterminded by Pakistan is a direct assault on the values of our republic, even as it accused the BJP of exploiting the tragedy to promote discord and polarisation at a time unity is most needed.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC), chaired by party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, asserted that it is



imperative that a comprehensive analysis is conducted into the intelligence failures and security lapses that enabled such an attack in a Union Territory, which is directly under the purview of the Union home ministry.

The CWC, which was attended by former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, general secretaries K

C Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, among others, stated that the deliberate targeting of Hindus was done to inflame passions across the country.

The meeting at the party's 24, Akbar Road office here started with leaders paying homage to the victims of the attack by observing a moment of silence in their memory.

Teachers continue sit-in in front of the SSC office

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Around 1,000 protesting teachers, who have laid siege to the West Bengal School Service Commission (SSC) headquarters here, continued their sit-in for the fourth day on Thursday. The agitators, who launched the demonstration on April 21, vowed that their sit-in would continue till they were officially reinstated on a permanent basis in their respective educational institutions.

One of the office-bearers of Deserving Teachers Forum, Chinmoy Mandal, told PTI, "We will not withdraw our agitation till the state presents the full list of tainted/untainted



candidates before the Supreme Court by moving a review appeal and we are reinstated till we attain 60 years of age, not up to December 31 as recently ordered by the Supreme Court." "We will not withdraw till we

get written assurances that the eligible teachers won't have to sit for a fresh round of SSC recruitment test after May 30 and are permanently reinstated with their heads held high," Mandal added.

Rajasthan ex-minister held in money laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday arrested Congress leader and former Rajasthan minister Mahesh Joshi in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme, officials said.

Joshi was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by the federal probe agency in Jaipur, they said. The ED's money laundering case stems from an FIR registered by Rajasthan's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) into the scheme that aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through household tap connections.

PAHALGAM ATTACK



Drunk auto driver sends Delhi Police on wild goose chase

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An investigation involving various security agencies was launched after an anonymous caller claimed he knew a terror attack was going to take place in Pahalgam.

The call, it was later discovered, was made by a 51-year-old auto driver and a flummoxed Delhi Police by and by realised that the man was drunk and had been nettled by a challan.

"He was drunk, but different security agencies questioned him. Later, we got to know that he was annoyed over a challan issued against his vehicle," an officer told PTI on the condition of anonymity. "Preventive action has also been taken against

him. But it was clear from his questioning that he made the hoax call because of a pending challan that he was angry about," he said.

No FIR has been registered against the man so far. Security has already been tightened across the national capital following Tuesday's terrorist attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam.

Terrorists opened fire at the Baisaran meadow near the resort town of Pahalgam in Anantnag district, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

Delhi Police beefed up security across the city, especially around tourist hotspots and border checkpoints.

Editor's
TAKE

Pope Francis: A
Pope of the people

As the world awaits his funeral, it is time for the Catholic world to reflect on his legacy

The death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday marked the end of an era in the Roman Catholic Church, one shaped by humility, joy, and profound efforts to bridge divides within the Church and beyond. As his body now lies in state in the grand sanctuary of St Peter's Basilica, a sacred calm has descended over Vatican City — a moment not just of mourning, but of gratitude. From the moment of his election in 2013, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the first pope from the Americas and the first Jesuit to hold the papacy, signalled a change in tone and style. Eschewing the traditional papal apartment, he chose instead to live in the modest Casa Santa Marta, a Vatican guesthouse.

His decision was more than symbolic — it reflected his core message: that the Church should be close to the people, particularly the poor and marginalised. Pope Francis was a pope of paradoxes: deeply traditional in doctrine, yet boldly progressive in tone. He upheld the tenets of Catholic teaching while urging a shift in how they are communicated and lived. His papacy was not defined by rigid dogma but by mercy, dialogue, and pastoral care. He asked Catholics to be a “field hospital” for a wounded world.

Central to Francis' leadership was his theology of joy. He often warned against a Christianity devoid of joy — likening such faith to being “pickled in vinegar.” This joy was not naive optimism but a resilient faith rooted in love and the presence of God amid human suffering. He brought this spirit to bear on some of the most contentious issues facing the Church. Whether addressing climate change, global poverty, refugee crises, or the plight of the LGBTQ+ community, Francis consistently emphasised compassion over condemnation. His encyclical *Laudato Si'* marked a historic moment in linking Catholic teaching with environmental stewardship, while his overtures toward greater inclusion of LGBTQ+ Catholics signalled a departure from past approaches marked by silence or rejection.

As thousands queue to bid farewell in person, and millions more watch the funeral unfold across screens worldwide, the atmosphere in Rome is less one of despair and more of sacred remembrance. In the words of one Vatican observer, it is as if a beloved elder has finished their life's journey — leaving behind not just grief, but gratitude. The city has responded with reverence.

Images of the Pope flash across digital billboards with a simple message: “Grazie.” His final resting place, Santa Maria Maggiore — a church he visited before and after nearly every papal journey — underscores his identity as a pilgrim pope, always walking alongside the faithful. The death of Pope Francis also opens a new chapter. Behind closed doors, the College of Cardinals has begun its quiet conversations about the future of the Church.

As tradition dictates, white smoke will soon signal their decision to the world. But even as attention turns to the question of succession, the legacy of Pope Francis will remain etched into the conscience of the Church. He has set a precedent not easily ignored: that the papacy is not about power, but service; not about separation from the world, but deep engagement with it. For Catholics around the globe, his death is not just a loss — it is a call to carry forward the values he championed: humility, mercy, joy, and justice. Pope Francis changed the papacy. Now, the Church must discern how to build on what he began. Pope Francis leaves behind a Church forever marked by his humility, compassion, and unwavering call to joy. His papacy re-centred the mission of the Catholic Church on mercy, inclusion, and care for the vulnerable, urging believers to live their faith in action, not just words.

As the world bids farewell, his legacy offers both comfort and challenge, a reminder that faith must engage the realities of the world with love.

The conclave will choose his successor, but his influence will endure, not only in Church doctrine but in the hearts of millions who found hope and dignity through his leadership.

Soft power in retreat

For decades, the US won hearts and minds not with tanks or fighter jets, but with scholarships, foreign aid, immigration opportunities, and cultural exchange. But Donald Trump has upended the soul of America

Soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment — Joseph Nye.

In diplomacy, not every war is fought with guns, and not every ally is won with treaties. Some of the most lasting alliances, perceptions, and influences are built in classrooms, libraries, hospitals, and open-minded immigration desks. For decades, America cultivated a compelling global image not just through its military might but through an unparalleled soft power apparatus — university scholarships, fellowships like Fulbright, technological partnerships, and student exchange programmes. But under Trump's leadership, this carefully crafted image took a sharp U-turn. His decisions to defund Ivy League institutions, restrict prestigious fellowships, cut down on foreign aid, and slam doors on immigrants have not just changed policies — they've dented America's soul in the eyes of the world.

From the end of World War II to the close of the 20th century, the US balanced hard power with soft persuasion.

After Pearl Harbour and the end of the Monroe Doctrine's inward-looking policy, America stepped decisively into the global theatre. Initially, it flexed its military muscle — from Hiroshima to the Cold War nuclear stand-offs — but soon realised that tanks and warships couldn't alone win hearts. The next American invasion came with books, food aid, hospital care, and university scholarships. PL-480 food assistance, USAID, cultural exchanges, NASA tie-ups, and the brain-drain corridor became tools of soft power that made America an aspirational ideal, especially for the Global South.

But Trump's reign of ultra-nationalism, ultra-capitalism, and ultra-conservatism diluted this global goodwill. His administration's decision to roll back funding to elite educational institutions — many of which had been incubators of international leadership and liberal thought — sent shockwaves through academic diplomacy. Places like Harvard, MIT, and Stanford weren't just American educational brands; they were world laboratories of innovation, cross-cultural dialogue, and diplomacy by proxy. For many young minds across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, getting into an Ivy League school was akin to getting a golden ticket — not just to education, but to enlightenment.

When Trump questioned the utility of such universities and threatened to cut their funds, he wasn't just aiming at liberal professors or elite academia; he was hacking away at the roots of America's global intellectual tree. The Fulbright Programme, which since 1946 had created a global network of US-educated



thinkers, diplomats, artists, and professionals, saw restrictions and stagnation under Trump's regime. This wasn't just about budget lines; it was about breaking bridges that had taken decades to build.

The shift wasn't limited to academia. Trump's “America First” translated into America alone. US foreign aid took a hit, including humanitarian and development assistance that had long been a lever of influence in fragile regions. Aid wasn't just charity — it was strategy. Whether it was reconstructing post-war Europe via the Marshall Plan, aiding countries during natural disasters, or investing in public health abroad, American dollars often bought American goodwill. Cutting this lifeline left a vacuum often filled by rival powers, notably China.

Perhaps the most damaging was the policy on immigration and visas. By clamping down on H1-B visas, Trump stifled the inflow of skilled professionals — especially from India. This move hurt not only the American tech industry but also tarnished its reputation as a land that rewards merit. India, a nation that sent scores of doctors, engineers, and nurses to serve in the US found itself at the receiving end of arbitrary bans and changing visa goalposts. Indian nurses in particular, known globally for their compassion

and professionalism, were once the unsung heroes of the American healthcare system. They became unintended victims of a policy that seemed more guided by xenophobic rhetoric than economic sense.

It's ironic. America gained its comparative cost advantage and global dominance in various sectors precisely because it welcomed the world's best minds. The openness to foreign students and workers was not just humanitarian — it was deeply pragmatic. When America opened its doors, it got the world's top scientists, engineers, teachers, and healthcare professionals. This influx didn't just boost the economy; it exported American values when these individuals returned home as brand ambassadors of the American dream. Trump's decision to erect barriers where bridges once stood was not just bad economics — it was terrible diplomacy.

Soft power, unlike hard power, does not rely on fear, force, or finance alone. It thrives on attraction. A country that welcomes, educates, and employs foreigners becomes a hub of admiration. The world's image of America, diverse, democratic, and dynamic — was always more powerful than any military base. That image is cracking under the weight of Trump's authoritarian tendencies wrapped in an elected regime. The global message is clear: this is not the America we used to know.

The consequences are already visible. International student applications to American universities have dropped. Countries that once looked to America for inspiration are now

turning elsewhere. China's Confucius Institutes, European Union scholarships, and India's neighbourhood outreach are stepping into the vacuum left by the US. And this matters. In a world of multipolar influence, losing moral and cultural leadership is as fatal as losing a war. The tragedy of Trump's approach is that it reverts America to a pre-globalisation, fortress-like nation. This stands in sharp contrast to the post-Pearl Harbour awakening that pushed America into internationalism. Back then, it learned that isolationism was not just impractical but dangerous. Trump's policies drag the country back into an atmosphere of division — racially, religiously, and ideologically. His emphasis on Christian identity, his anti-immigration posture, and his trade protectionism all add up to an authoritarian flavour, coated in electoral legitimacy.

When nations drift towards ultra-nationalism and away from global collaboration, they don't just lose allies — they lose identity. The America that helped rebuild Japan and Germany, which welcomed Einstein and later Sundar Pichai, is being replaced by an America that shuts doors, silences debate, and shuns difference. In the end, Trump's war is not just on liberals or foreigners or aid budgets. It's a war on America's most valuable diplomatic currency — its image. And once that image is broken, no amount of tanks or tariffs can fix it.

(The author is Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies and Social Sciences, Pondicherry Central University, India. Views are personal)

New moon Race: Private sector takes the lead

SECOND
Opinion

BY RAJNEESH BHANDARI

This year will be a landmark year for lunar exploration, with three moon landings scheduled in quick succession that demonstrate humanity's renewed enchantment with our closest celestial neighbour. This week marks the first of these touchdowns, with Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost successfully landing on the lunar surface in Mare Crisium. This milestone is followed by plans for Japan's M2/Resilience mission and Intuitive Machines' IM-2 mission before June. These landings signal a new era of lunar exploration driven by private-sector innovation, international collaboration, and an ambitious space programme.

Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost lunar lander has achieved a soft landing on Mare Crisium, a vast basaltic plain on the moon's near side. An upright and stable landing makes Firefly the first private company to put a spacecraft on the moon without crashing or falling over — a feat where only five countries have been successful: Russia, the US, China, India, and Japan. Launched on January 15 aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9, this mission is part of NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) programme, which partners with private companies to deliver scientific payloads to the moon. This landing marks Firefly's first lunar mission and a significant win for the private sector, as the lander touched down just after

lunar dawn, giving it roughly 14 Earth days of sunlight to operate. This mission is notable for being the first US lunar landing of 2025 and for carrying 10 NASA-sponsored experiments alongside commercial payloads. It will test satellite navigation and radiation-resistant computers, which are critical for developing resilient technology for lunar habitation. Japan's M2/Resilience mission, led by space and scheduled for May/June, will deploy the RESILIENCE lander and the TENACIOUS micro-rover. This will mark Japan's second private lunar landing attempt after a 2023 failure. The micro-rover will attempt to extract water from lunar soil and split it into hydrogen and oxygen.

This could pave the way for producing life-sustaining resources on the moon, essential for long-term human presence. The third landing, Intuitive Machines' IM-2 mission, will carry a 1 — metre drill to probe for water ice. This mission aims to map subsurface ice deposits, which are crucial for NASA's Artemis programme, which plans to have a sustainable base on the moon by 2030. The moon is re-emerging as humanity's next frontier for several reasons. Strategically, it's a stepping stone to Mars. It provides a testing ground for technologies like radiation shielding and in-situ generation of critical resources like oxygen. In terms of astronomy, the moon holds clues to the solar system's history. Economically, the moon's resources, like ice for fuel and oxygen, rare earth elements, etc., could fuel a space economy. Geopolitically, nations like the US and China see lunar dominance as a symbol of technological superiority, with the US and China planning to set up manned lunar bases before 2030.

Private Sector Involvement: A New Paradigm

The success of startups like Firefly Aerospace, space and Intuitive Machines marks a shift from Government-led exploration to a commercial model.

NASA's CLPS programme exemplifies this by outsourcing lunar delivery to firms for a fraction of traditional costs. Private sector agility accelerates mission timelines, fosters innovation, and reduces cost. At the same time, competition drives technological leaps, such as SpaceX's water-splitting experiment.

India, too, is at the cusp of developing the startup ecosystem for space technologies. Startups like Dhruva Space, Pixxel, Agnikul Cosmos, Bellatrix Aerospace, and Skyroot Aerospace are developing a host of technologies, including end-to-end satellite solutions, a constellation of high-resolution hyperspectral imaging satellites, electrical thrusters for satellites, a small satellite launch vehicle, etc.

These startups are driving India's private sector, leveraging Government support and global interest. The lunar landings will provide a wealth of scientific insights and lay the foundation for future lunar bases.

For the first time, private companies and startups are leading the charge, conducting pioneering experiments like water extraction and ice drilling. These missions will bring us closer to a future where humanity not only visits the moon but thrives there and beyond.

(The writer is an alumnus of IIT Delhi and founder of NeuroEquilibrium. Views are personal)

Leaderspeak



Every country wants to partake, even countries that have ripped us off for many, many years. China is an example, but it's not just China, European Union. They ripped us off for many, many years, and those days are over... We'll be able to lower taxes substantially.

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



Letters to the Editor

A wake-up call for National security

Madam — The brutal killing of 26 innocent people, most of them tourists, in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, has left the nation stunned. Militants disguised in army uniforms opened fire while the victims were enjoying pony rides and scenic views.

It stands as one of the most diabolical acts of terror in recent times. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi in response, questions arise about the Government's repeated claims of normalcy in the region. How did such a well-coordinated attack go unnoticed? Was this not a failure of our intelligence and security apparatus?

Reports suggest that the attack may have been carried out by ‘The Resistance Front’, an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba. If so, how were they able to infiltrate a tourist hotspot without triggering any security alerts? Where were the patrols? Why was there no surveillance in such vulnerable areas? The Government must give answers to all these questions. It is not the time for rhetoric but for real action; nab the culprits and give them an exemplary punishment. These questions demand urgent answers. As peace-loving citizens, we mourn with the bereaved families and demand accountability. May the souls of the departed rest in peace and may justice be served swiftly and decisively.

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

The transformative power of reading

Madam — Reading is more than a skill — it is a gateway to lifelong learning, personal growth, and academic success. On World Book Day, we celebrate the vital role that reading plays in shaping young minds and inspiring curiosity.

A child's attitude toward reading greatly influences their motivation to read. When children enjoy reading, they naturally want to read more.

This enjoyment, nurtured from a young age, forms the foundation of strong reading habits. Reading not only enhances vocabulary and communication but also sharpens analytical thinking and improves writing skills.

Parents play a critical role by reading with their children regularly. These shared moments help children experience the joys of storytelling, cultivating a lasting love for books.

Every child learns differently — while some may take to reading naturally, others need encouragement and exposure to find their spark. Let us instil the value of reading early, so the next generation grows up with the tools they need to succeed and the imagination to dream big.

Let us nurture a love for reading from an early age, guiding children toward knowledge, creativity, and success. With consistent encouragement and shared reading moments, we can empower young minds to embrace books, build essential skills, and unlock their full potential. As they books are our best friends. Let this friendship begin!

CK SUBRAMANIAM | MUMBAI

Nation stands united against terror

Madam — India stands united in sorrow following the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, on Tuesday, April 22, which claimed the lives of 30 innocent civilians. The nation mourns with the affected families who are enduring unimaginable pain. As countless voices across the country express solidarity, many are also demanding the severing of all sporting ties with Pakistan in the wake of the tragedy.

“This heinous act has caused irreparable harm, destroying families and striking at the heart of our society,” many said in their condolences. “Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims. May they find peace and strength in these dark times,” many people said in their emotional posts. It is a moment which can destroy all the gains humanity has made till date and plunge into negativity. But let us be sane and not spread hate. Interestingly, while bilateral cricket matches between India and Pakistan have not occurred since a one-off ODI series in 2012–13, their clashes in ICC tournaments remain the most anticipated events in global cricket. The recent ICC Champions Trophy faced turbulence, with India declining to send a team to Pakistan due to security concerns. Matches were eventually hosted at a neutral venue in Dubai. Moving forward, both the BCCI and PCB have agreed to avoid playing on each other's soil for at least three years.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

WORLD MALARIA DAY: REIGNITING THE FIGHT AGAINST MALARIA

Malaria is a life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted by the female Anopheles mosquito. Despite being preventable and treatable, it remains a major global health challenge. Since the late 1990s, the international community has renewed its commitment to eradicating malaria, preventing an estimated 2.2 billion cases and 12.7 million deaths over two decades.

Yet, the disease still claims one life every minute, with the vast majority of fatalities occurring in the African region, which accounts for 82 per cent of cases and 95 per cent of deaths. Unfortunately, malaria control efforts are being hampered in low-income endemic countries due to extreme weather conditions, armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, and economic instability.

These challenges leave millions with limited access to preventive, diagnostic, and treatment services. If not treated promptly, malaria can quickly become a severe and life-threatening illness. World

Malaria Day 2025 Theme: This year, World Malaria Day, observed annually on April 25 since 2008, is themed “Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvent, Reimagine, Reignite.” It is a global call to action that urges individuals, communities, and leaders to intensify efforts, champion innovation, and ensure sustained investment in the fight to end malaria. Common symptoms of malaria include fever, chills, sweating, headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, muscle and joint pain, anaemia, cough, and abdominal discomfort. Preventive measures such as using insect repellents, wearing long-sleeved clothing, using mosquito nets, and eliminating stagnant water around homes are vital in reducing mosquito bites and keeping communities malaria-free. We have the knowledge and tools to end malaria. The choice is ours — act now. Ending malaria is not only a health necessity but also a step toward a fairer, safer, and more prosperous future for all.

BURRA M REDDY | KARIMNAGAR

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

Terror in Pahalgam shatters India's diplomatic high

As world leaders lauded India's geopolitical ascent, the attack marked a chilling reminder that terror in Kashmir remains a calculated lever in the regional and international balance of power

FIRST
Column

JD Vance, the Vice President of the United States, arrived in India on 19 April, following a solemn stop at the Vatican, where he became the final high — ranking official to meet the late Pope Francis — an emblematic rebel of the modern Church whose death this week marked the end of a transformative papacy.

Vance's arrival was framed as an endorsement of India's ascendant geopolitical status, punctuated by public tributes to Prime Minister Modi and the deepening of the Indo-American strategic alliance. This diplomatic spectacle was further amplified by the April 9 extradition of Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Pakistani — origin Canadian linked to the 2008 Mumbai attacks, representing a rare convergence of legal triumphs between the two nations in their fight against terrorism.

Yet, this orchestration of diplomatic victories quickly unravelled, as within days of these high-profile engagements, Kashmir — a region central to India's evolving image — was once again thrust into global headlines, not by progress, but by tragedy. On April 22, a massacre in the idyllic meadows of Baisaran near Pahalgam once heralded as the face of Kashmir's resurgence, accentuated a brutal paradox: the strategic narrative of peace and prosperity was violently interrupted by terror, forcing the world to confront the enduring volatility of the region at a moment when India appeared poised for diplomatic consolidation.

On April 22, 2025, a massacre unfolded in the meadows of Baisaran near Pahalgam, often romanticised as "India's Switzerland." What had become a symbol of India's Kashmir renaissance—a picturesque site of family vacations, film shoots, and summer retreats — was reduced to a field of carnage as unidentified gunmen opened fire on a group of tourists. At least twenty-eight civilians, mostly men, were methodically executed, while women and children were reportedly spared.

The attack was not merely an act of terror, but a deeply choreographed intervention in India's domestic and international narrative regarding Kashmir. It sought not just to kill, but to provoke, destabilise, and symbolically mutilate the emerging image of a peaceful, integrated, and economically flourishing region. The timing of the attack is far too conspicuous to be dismissed as arbitrary. Beyond coinciding with the visit of the American Vice President and coming a few days after the extradition of a high — profile terror suspect, the attack occurred against the backdrop of growing international recognition of India's Kashmir policy post the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Since that constitutional transformation, Jammu and Kashmir have experienced what some argue is the beginning of a socio-economic metamorphosis. The region recorded a significant uptick in tourist arrivals, over 3.5 million in 2024 alone—and notable improvements in infrastructure, per capita income, and public order, especially relative to other northern Indian states. Critics of New Delhi's policy feared a resurgence of insur-



gency post-2019, but such forecasts had not materialised at the scale predicted. Instead, the Indian Government appeared to have successfully restrained militant mobilisation through strategic military presence, economic incentives, and political integration. In this context, the Pahalgam attack functions as a violent punctuation—an abrupt and bloody interruption in a gradually stabilising narrative.

Its deliberate orchestration, selective targeting of non-Muslim male tourists, and execution-style killings point to a calculated act of psychological and political warfare. Intelligence sources have attributed the operation to The Resistance Front (TRF), a group often described as a proxy of

Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan — based organisation responsible for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. Although the Pakistani state has officially denied any involvement, the attack bears the hallmarks



NILANTHA
ILANGAMUWA

FROM THE CHATTISINGHPORA MASSACRE IN MARCH 2000, WHERE 36 SIKH VILLAGERS WERE EXECUTED DURING PRESIDENT CLINTON'S VISIT, TO THE 2001 JAMMU AND KASHMIR ASSEMBLY BOMBING, THE 2003 NANDIMARG MASSACRE OF KASHMIRI PANDITS, THE 2017 AMARNATH YATRA AMBUSH, AND NOW THE 2025 PAHALGAM KILLINGS, THE PATTERN IS UNMISTAKABLE

of asymmetric warfare, characteristic of entities that, though ostensibly autonomous, often operate under the shadow and sanction of foreign state apparatuses. This week, newly declassified US intelligence documents, released by the National Security Archive, highlight a chilling historical continuity with the current crisis.

A 1981 memorandum warned of catastrophic consequences from an Indian strike on Pakistan's Karachi Nuclear Power Plant, with up to 20,000 latent cancer cases in Karachi due to Iodine-131 exposure. The document reflected Washington's concerns about how quickly a conventional South Asian conflict could escalate to nuclear war. This was echoed in a 1989 report by the US State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, which deemed a full-scale war between India and Pakistan "improbable," yet stressed the high risk of escalation through miscalculation, especially in the event of strikes on Pakistan's nuclear sites. By 1993, a National Intelligence Estimate suggested a one in five chance of war, noting that nuclear rivalry, cross-border militancy, and rising extremism could turn even minor skirmishes into a regional disaster. What emerges from these archival assessments is a grim continuity: terror

in Kashmir has consistently been a strategic tool wielded not merely to express ideological dissent but to force geopolitical recalibration. This is not a theatre of mindless extremism; it is a crucible of meticulously calibrated violence. From the Chattisinghpura massacre in March 2000, where 36 Sikh villagers were executed during President Clinton's visit, to the 2001 Jammu and Kashmir Assembly bombing, the 2003 Nandimarg massacre of Kashmiri Pandits, the 2017 Amarnath Yatra ambush, and now the 2025 Pahalgam killings, the pattern is unmistakable. Civilian targeting escalates in moments of diplomatic progress, suggesting an ideological commitment by militant actors to challenge not only the Indian state but also its evolving position within the global order.

The present attack comes at a moment when India is enjoying heightened diplomatic engagement with the Arab Countries and the West. Saudi Arabia, traditionally a close ally of Pakistan, has in recent years pivoted towards India as a key economic and strategic partner. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and even Iran have signalled similar recalibrations.

This realignment was most visible during the 2019 India-Pakistan standoff when the Gulf states played a critical role in de-escalation, and again when they muted their responses to India's abrogation of Kashmir's autonomy. The Kashmir issue, once a central rallying cry in Islamic internationalism, has lost its salience in the Gulf's strategic calculus. For militant organisations and their state backers, this diminishing global sympathy poses an existential challenge. Reinvigorating the Kashmir discourse through acts of horror appears to be the chosen mode of revival.

It would be naïve to view the Pahalgam massacre in isolation. The possibility of future attacks targeting soft civilian clusters—tourists, religious pilgrims, migrant workers — across other regions in South Asia cannot be discounted. Nepal's porous borders, Sri Lanka's post-conflict fragilities, and India's Northeast remain potential theatres for replication.

In the wake of this attack, Prime Minister Modi faces a dilemma reminiscent of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's conundrum following the Hamas assault in October 2023. A tempered response could be construed as weakness, emboldening adversaries and fuelling domestic political critiques of failed security assurances. Conversely, a muscular retaliation—especially if aimed at Pakistan or its proxies—risks internationalising the Kashmir dispute once again, undoing years of diplomatic effort to position it as an internal Indian matter. Moreover, in the context of escalating global multipolarity and emergent regional axes, a misstep could precipitate a broader crisis, pulling in actors far beyond South Asia.

(The writer is a columnist based in Colombo. Views are personal)

Mental Health: A silent crisis demanding urgent action

Mental well-being can no longer be treated as secondary to physical health. As Government initiatives take shape and public awareness grows, the time has come for a collective, compassionate response to protect our nation's mental health and with it, our future

There is an old saying that a healthy mind leads to a healthy body — I could not agree with it more! Ever since the pandemic, we are witnessing a steep rise in mental health related conditions. It's a matter of grave concern that a large number of people are today suffering from what is termed as unmanageable stress, depression and anxiety. It is equally concerning to note that these ailments are impacting across the age spectrum, be it students, young adults or the elderly.

When we look at the data pertaining to mental health, it is like being hit by a ton of bricks. Such is the extent of this issue that one student is committing suicide every hour in India.

Taking note of the growing suicide deaths in higher educational institutions across the country, the Supreme Court recently formed a National Task Force for a mechanism to prevent student suicide deaths on campuses and address their mental health issues.

The bench said that the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for 2021 highlights the grim reality that over 13,000 students lost their lives by committing suicide in the country.

According to the World Health Organisation, depression affects over 300 million people globally, and it is predicted to be the leading cause of disability by 2030.

In 2024, studies in India continue to reveal a significant burden of depression, with estimates indicating that over 56 million people are affected and research points to a rising trend, particularly in rural areas and among certain demographics.

Factors like rapid urbanisation, economic pressures, social isolation, and the pandemic have contributed to the increase. The Bipolar disorder landscape in India is also quite serious, about 1 in 150 persons in the country suffer from it, and quite disturbingly, 70 per cent remain untreated.

It is characterised by low mood, decreased energy, loss of interest, sleep problems, thoughts or acts of self-harm, along with episodes of mania. Research is now shedding light on the fact that 60 per cent of the people who lose their life to suicide have had a mood ailment such



as depression or bipolar disorder. This finding is significant as it points to a series of progressions before this most tragic final step.

When we look deeper into the mental health scenario in India, multiple issues that have a profound impact on mental health — come to the fore.

In the case of the students and the young, many are too busy searching for material things as the entire space for them has become extremely competitive, there is reduced focus on relaxation and unwinding, and as a result burn outs and depression encircle their lives.

In all this, the impact of the internet and social media in aggravating pressures

and setting unattainable and overambitious goals — courtesy of peer pressure, is also creating a havoc in the lives of the youth.

In the case of the elderly, we are witnessing the rise in loneliness as their children are either not living with them, due to studies or jobs, or spending much less time because of preoccupations and inability to detach from their busy schedules. There is therefore, a fear of growing old, along with increasing insecurities — about who will take care of them, when they reach their physical limits due to advancing age.

Since the pandemic, we are witnessing a renewed focus and much greater emphasis on mental health issues. They are now being increasingly considered as much of a priority as many physical issues.

The Indian Government has launched several initiatives to address mental health, including the National Tele Mental Health Programme (Tele

MANAS) and the Ayushman Bharat, HWC Scheme.

Tele MANAS provides free, 24/7 mental health support through a toll-free helpline, while the Ayushman Bharat scheme integrates mental health services into primary healthcare. Additionally, the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) are key components of India's mental healthcare services. For the elderly, the Government has launched the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHE) and the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY).

The NPHE provides comprehensive healthcare, including mental health services, to senior citizens. AVYAY supports various welfare initiatives for senior citizens, including grant-in-aid for mental health services and awareness programs. Additionally, the National Helpline for Senior Citizens (Elderline) offers support and guidance, including emotional sup-

port for those struggling with mental health issues.

It is extremely reassuring that the highest levels of our nation — are aware and alive, to the seriousness of the situation. In fact, our hon'ble Prime Minister has led from the front with his views and possible solutions that can go a long way in addressing this critical subject. In his popular monthly program 'Mann Ki Baat', he highlighted the importance of mental health, especially among the youth in the current era, and spoke with crystal clarity about the role of physical activity, diet, yoga, along with the use of technology like artificial intelligence to elevate mental health.

This should be seen as a nudge, and it requires a collective approach that involves the families, academia and the community to create an enabling ecosystem that safeguards our students and the generations to follow. These guardrails should both protect and strengthen—protect against the perils of social media,

the pressure that it can unleash on the young and innocent, strengthen the two-way communication (candid and unreserved) between the students and their parents/families, strengthen the role of the friends, peers and the community in creating a positive environment that accepts average performance as not the end of the world, and instills the spirit of optimism.

All of these, will ensure, that the defection from failure or pressure of excelling, are dealt with most effectively. The educational institutions and their leadership also have to provide an environment where students feel motivated, encouraged and appreciated. Grades and excellence alone are not what life is all about — it's about an honest to self and best possible effort.

It's for all this, that suitable conditions have to be created. This can include counselling, dedicated presence and round the clock availability of experts who can spot the red flags and identify those who need psychological support and guidance in a timely manner, thereby, ensuring that a decline in mental faculties of the students in their institutions is drastically reduced.

This will play an impactful role in the creation of a quintessential complete establishment — one that focuses not just on the studies but also creates avenues of growth for the all-round development of its students.

In the end, we have to be mindful of the ground realities. Our journey has just started on this very long and arduous path, and it will take multiple approaches to address this key health aspect, that has a huge bearing on our country.

Mental health is a significant component of a 'Swastha Bharat' dream, and has a direct and crucial impact on national creativity and productivity. While factors that contribute to mental ailments will only increase in the coming times, it's our proactive and head-on engagement, that will ensure effective remedies.

I do believe, that well begun is half done, and that we are indeed headed in the right direction — one of hope and promise of a bright future!

(The writer is President — Corporate Affairs, ITC. Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Rupee gains 16 paise to settle at 85.29 against US dollar

After a two-day pause, the rupee gained 16 paise to 85.29 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, on weak greenback and overnight decline in crude oil prices. Forex traders said the rupee strengthened on the weak US dollar and overnight decline in crude oil prices amid slowing US business activity. The US Treasury yields also declined with the 10-year yield falling 3 basis points to 4.35 per cent. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.60 and moved between the intra-day high of 85.25 and the low of 85.67 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.29 (provisional), registering a gain of 16 paise over its previous closing level. On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 26 paise and settled for the day at 85.45 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a positive bias as weakness in the US dollar is likely to remain intact amid trade tariff uncertainties. However, risk-on sentiments in the global markets and FII inflows may support the rupee at lower levels.



Cisco bags networking gear deal from Vodafone Idea

Tech major Cisco on Thursday said it has bagged a networking gear deal from telecom firm Vodafone Idea to boost its 4G and 5G services. Vodafone Idea (Vi) last year announced an investment of Rs 30,000 crore in network expansion for which it has already roped in Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung. "Vi has announced its partnership with Cisco to transform its network infrastructure. As part of this collaboration, Vi will deploy a cutting-edge Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS)-based transport network powered by Cisco," Cisco said in a statement. The company, however, did not disclose the financial details of the deal. The MPLS technology helps in slicing networks into multiple layers for transmission of various services like voice, data, video etc.



NFCSF, IFGE to promote cane-based bioenergy

The National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF) on Thursday said it has signed an agreement with the Indian Federation of Green Energy (IFGE) to collaborate in promoting sugarcane-based bioenergy and sustainable practices in the country. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by NFCSF Managing Director Prakash Naiknavare and IFGE BioEnergy Committee Chairman and President Praj Industries (Bio Energy) Atul Mulay. According to a statement issued by NFCSF, the collaboration aims to foster innovation, policy advocacy and the adoption of practical green energy solutions, leveraging the strengths of both organisations. As per the terms of the MoU, NFCSF will share its expertise and knowledge related to the use and applications of sugarcane and its downstream by-products for green energy, facilitate access to research publications and reports, and collaborate in joint promotion and policy advocacy efforts. IFGE will actively promote sugarcane-based green energy in India and globally, organise knowledge-sharing events such as workshops and seminars in partnership with NFCSF, and facilitate stakeholder engagement with policymakers and industry leaders.

Govt working to reduce regulatory issues in logistics sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working to reduce the regulatory issues in the logistics sector to enhance ease of doing business, and attract more investments, a senior government official said on Thursday. Addressing an event here, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) joint secretary Pankaj Kumar said discussions are underway to make the PM Gati Shakti data more accessible to the private sector. "We are working to further reduce the regulatory issues (in the logistics sector) to enhance ease of doing business and attract more investments," Kumar said.

Observing that India is a complex and geographically huge country, he said logistics is all about transporting both people and goods from one place to another quickly so that lives can be saved, and businesses thrive, leading to a

better quality of life.

"You can get groceries delivered to you in 10 minutes, but cannot reach the hospital in 10 minutes," Kumar said.

He said there are several other initiatives being taken by the government to enhance the ease of doing business, and attract more investments.

"But it is not easy, and the government alone can not achieve the targeted goals. Every stakeholder, including the industry and business community, must participate to further boost the logistics sector in the country," Kumar said.

Also, speaking at the event, Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) chairperson Anita Praveen highlighted India's progress in logistics and warehousing.

"The process of warehouse licensing is being streamlined and expedited to ensure faster approvals and greater ease of doing business," she said.



Govt help to push growth of domestic comics industry: ICA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's support such as providing funding and strengthening distribution infrastructure will help the domestic comics industry achieve healthy growth, ICA said on Thursday.

Indian Comics Association (ICA) President Ajitesh Sharma said at present the domestic comic creators face challenges in distribution, financial viability, and cultural acceptance.

Initiatives like the formation of this association and Comics Creator Championship (CCC) are aimed at addressing these challenges by providing a formalised structure for creators, fostering collaboration, and promoting innovation.

The CCC provides a platform for aspiring and professional creators to showcase their talents.

The ICA's efforts aim to nurture new talent and position Indian comics as significant players on the global stage.

Sharma said that estimating the exact market size of the industry is challenging due to the unorganized distribution system.

'India, Pak trade small; now will come to halt'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Pakistan suspending all trade ties with India, including that routes through third countries, the two-way commerce will now come to a complete halt, apex exporters' body FIEO said on Thursday. Following the terror attack in Pahalgam on Tuesday, which killed 26 people, mostly tourists, India took a series of measures including immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post, used for movement of certain kinds of goods.

Besides, India has announced expulsion of Pakistani military attaches, and suspension of the Indus



Water Treaty of 1960.

In retaliation, Pakistan announced suspension of 'all trade' with India, including that routes through third countries.

Commenting on the decision of the neighbouring country, Federation of Indian

Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan said India's bilateral trade with Pakistan is minuscule and is just 0.06 per cent of India's total trade.

"We have minuscule trade with Pakistan, which is constantly declining. During



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asked the industry to come together to build a "resilient, revolutionary and steel-strong India".

Speaking at the India Steel 2025 event, the PM also said that the country needs to strengthen its global partnerships for securing raw materials and called on the industry to start extracting iron ore from unused greenfield mines to increase steel production. Terming steel as a "sunrise sector", Modi underlined the need to up production of the commodity which is the "backbone" of development, adopt newer processes, undertake innovation, exchange best practices within and also look at import substitutions in coal.

"Let us come together to build a resilient, revolutionary and steel-strong India," Modi said in his address to the steel industry participants.

He acknowledged that getting raw materials is a "major concern" for the steel sector, and urged all to strengthen global partnerships and secure supply chains.

"One major concern is raw

material security. We still depend on imports for nickel, coking coal and manganese. And hence, we must strengthen global partnerships, secure supply chains, and focus on technology upgrades," Modi said in a virtual address at the event.

Stating that there are unused greenfield mines, Modi said it is very important to their proper and timely utilisation, and warned that both the country and the industry will suffer due to this.

He said the country also needs to explore alternatives like coal gasification and better utilisation of its reserves to reduce coal imports.

The industry must be future ready, and adopt new processes, new grades and new scale,

the Prime Minister said.

Modi said the country is aiming to increase the steel production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030, from the 179 MT in FY24, and added that the per capita steel consumption is also targeted to grow to 160 kg from 98 kg at present in the same time period.

He said the country is also "advancing" the USD 1.3 trillion national infrastructure pipeline and there is "extensive work underway" to transform cities into smart cities on a large scale.

"Unprecedented pace of development in roads, railways, airports, ports and pipelines is creating new opportunities for the steel sector," Modi said, adding

that the growing number of mega projects will increase the demand for high grade steel.

He also noted that the steel used in the maiden indigenously built aircraft carrier Vikrant and the Chandrayaan mission was manufactured locally.

The PM said the country aspires to build modern and large ships with an eye on the export market, and added that high grade steel will be needed for such initiatives.

Stating that the goal should be "zero imports and net exports" when it comes to steel, Modi pointed that the country aims to increase the exports to 500 MT by 2047, from the present 25 MT of steel.

India is not just thinking of domestic growth, but also "global leadership" in the sector, Modi said, pointing out that the world looks at India as a trusted supplier of high grade steel.

Apart from that, welfare schemes like the PM Awas Yojana and also the Jal Jeevan Mission are also helping create opportunities for the steel sector, he said.

Databricks to invest \$250 mn in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US-based data and AI company Databricks on Thursday announced its plans to invest over USD 250 million (about Rs 2,134 crore) in India over the next three years to accelerate innovation in data and artificial intelligence (AI).

The investment will fuel training, R&D, and marketing efforts, including a 50 per cent headcount boost to over 750 local employees by the end of this fiscal year, a company statement said.

The company follows a February-January calendar.

India is one of the key growth markets for Databricks, with the company's clientele, including CommerceIQ, Freshworks, HDFC Bank, Swiggy, TVS Motors, and Zepto, said Ed Lenta, Senior Vice President & GM for Asia Pacific & Japan at Databricks.



Startups, MSMEs filed 310% more patents in past 5 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Patent filings by startups and MSMEs have increased by 310 per cent in the last 5 years from 1,492 in 2018-19 to 6,120 in 2023-24, an official said on Thursday.

N Ramchander, Joint Controller, Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, further shared that in about three years over 2.4 million students and faculty across

India have been educated about IP rights through the National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission launched in 2021.

Addressing an event organised by ASSOCHAM, he informed that the filing of patent applications in India has surged by 116 per cent rising from 42,763 in 2014-15 to 92,172 in 2023-24.

"Patent grants have been an even more remarkable increase of 1,624 per cent, jumping from

5,978 in 2014-15 to 103,057 in 2023-24. India has seen biggest change in resident and non-resident distribution over past 10 years with the share of resident filing increasing from 24.8 per cent in 2013 to 60 per cent in 2024," said N Ramchander.

India's IPR policy has provided a comprehensive framework for IP creation, protection and commercialisation but continuous evaluation and updation are necessary.

The patent rules have been amended in 2024 in order to further simplify and streamline the procedure and create conducive environment for innovation and protection of Intellectual Property (IP) in India.

Also, a certification of inventorship has been introduced to enhance patenting ecosystem in India by formally recognising efforts of the inventors in the patented inventions.

Gold climbs Rs 200 to Rs 99,400/10 gm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 200 to Rs 99,400 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday following fresh buying by stockists and jewellers and a weak dollar, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity took a U-turn from the historic Rs 1 lakh mark and declined Rs 2,400 to Rs 99,200 per 10 gram on Wednesday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also increased Rs 200 to Rs 98,900 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 98,700 per 10 grams.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Wednesday said



the current trade standoff between the US and China could continue for a while.

Adding to this, there were reports that President Donald Trump signalled that China may receive a new tariff rate in the next "two to three weeks" while countries that are

currently in the negotiation phase might see reciprocal tariffs come in if negotiations are not going the way he wants.

According to commodities market experts, remarks by Trump and Bessent help revive demand for the safe-haven bullion following a corrective slide from the all-time peak.

Meanwhile, silver prices appreciated Rs 700 to Rs 99,900 per kg on Thursday. The white metal had settled at Rs 99,200 per kg in the previous close.

In futures trade, gold contracts for June delivery bounced Rs 1,046, or 1.1 per cent, to Rs 95,768 per 10

grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange.

"Gold opened with a strong gap-up of over Rs 1,000, hitting Rs 95,700 on MCX, as Comex gold held firm above USD 3,300. The renewed upside came after a sharp shift in the Trump administration's tone -- indicating that tariffs may still remain a central part of the conversation before any concrete trade talks with China begin.

"This delay in diplomatic progress, coupled with uncertainty around China's official response, continues to keep risk sentiment elevated," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

India Inc revenue growth to remain flat, profitability to widen

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India Inc's revenue growth will remain flat at about 5-6 per cent in the March quarter, but profitability will widen, a domestic rating agency said on Thursday.

An arm of Crisil Ratings said the operating profit margins are seen at 8 per cent, a widening of up to 0.60 per cent, when compared with the year-ago performance.

The agency analysed over 400 companies accounting for over 50 per cent of NSE's market capitalisation to arrive at its estimates. Some compa-

nies, especially in the information technology sector have already announced their earnings.

Improved showing by the consumer-driven sectors excluding staples will be a key contributor for the topline growth, while the bottom line will benefit from a mixed set of aspects which are unique to a sector, it said.

Crisil Intelligence's director Pushan Sharma said consumer discretionary products, services and staple services segment is expected to see 8-9 per cent on-year increase in revenue.



"This would be led by an expected 15 per cent surge in telecom services revenue resulting from significant tariff hikes implemented in the second quarter and the intro-

duction of premium 5G plans by telecom operators.

"The retail segment likely saw a robust 17 per cent growth, led by demand in the value, and food and grocery

segments, as well as an expansion of store networks," Sharma said.

The automobile sector's revenue likely grew 6 per cent as retail momentum for passenger vehicles picked up and realisations rose owing to a change in the product mix and increasing share of exports, Sharma said.

The fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) segment is expected to see 4-6 per cent revenue growth led by price hikes amid subdued volume growth, it said, adding that rural demand has been resilient and urban demand

has stayed subdued.

Overall exports revenue is likely to grow 4 per cent, including 2-3 per cent growth in IT services revenue following a marginal improvement in demand and project pick-ups and 8 per cent in the pharmaceutical sector.

In the agriculture sector, including fertilisers, revenues are likely to grow 17-19 per cent with consumption improving, following a stable summer crop acreage and higher disposable incomes stemming from better yields and remuneration for kharif paddy.



SULOGNA MEHTA
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Imagine yourself walking through the numerous galleries of the Louvre Museum in Paris. From Leonardo da Vinci's painting 'Mona Lisa' to the Antonio Canova's sculpture 'Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss', from the Renaissance masterpieces of Michelangelo and Raphael to Byzantine 'Barberini Ivory' artworks and Bernini's marble sculptures, they are coming alive before your eyes one after the other.

Awestruck and overwhelmed at this never-ending display of beauty, you keep looking at the masterpieces from the world of paintings, architecture and sculptures in the world's largest art museum. And then you feel your heart rate racing, your eyes watering, you even feel a bit giddy and get goosebumps. Perplexed? You are experiencing what is known as Stendhal's Syndrome.

From palpitations to even hallucinations, beautiful and grand works of art, architecture and museum visits can trigger strong psychological and physical reactions in people. If one experiences palpitations, goosebumps, dizziness, strong emotions, tears in the eyes, confusion or even hallucinations while looking at certain works of art, especially paintings and sculptures, they may be experiencing an aesthetic syndrome called Stendhal Syndrome.

It is named after French writer Marie-Henri Beyle, rather known by his pen name Stendhal (1783-1842). The syndrome was first diagnosed in the early 1980s. However, there is not much awareness about it.

In psychiatry, Stendhal Syndrome is not formally classified as a men-

tal disorder but it is said to be a psychosomatic condition (physical illness or conditions influenced or triggered by emotional factors). It is marked by certain strong emotional and subsequent physiological responses when exposed to works of exquisite artistic beauty. Stendhal Syndrome is also called 'Of Florence' because there is an interesting connection to the Italian city of Florence or Firenze. It was

The Pioneer brings to you a fascinating deep-dive into Stendhal Syndrome — a rare yet intriguing psychosomatic response to overwhelming artistic beauty. From racing heartbeats to unexpected tears, we explore how exquisite artworks can stir intense emotional and physical reactions, as explained by leading psychiatrists. Discover why some tourists faint in Florence and how art truly has the power to move — quite literally

observed that sometimes European tourists were admitted in local hospitals with symptoms like rapid heartbeats, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations etc and these used to be triggered during their visits to museums and places showcasing wonderful works of art including paintings, architecture and sculptures.

It seems most of those who experienced Stendhal's Syndrome were European tourists visiting Italian cities of art. Interestingly, Italians themselves did not report to be suffering from any such syndromes while they travelled elsewhere.

Stendhal himself, during his Italy tour in 1817 described it as, "I had reached that level of emotion, where celestial sensations given by the arts and passionate feelings meet."

Speaking about such emotional responses to art and beauty, Dr



Shorouq Motwani, consultant psychiatrist from Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai, observes, "Usually people with a strong sense of aesthetics are emotionally stimulated by artworks. Also, sometimes a person can suffer from hallucination, confusion, disorientation or even faint if there is some kind of personal connection or some deeply personal memories of life events are triggered while viewing a particular work of art."

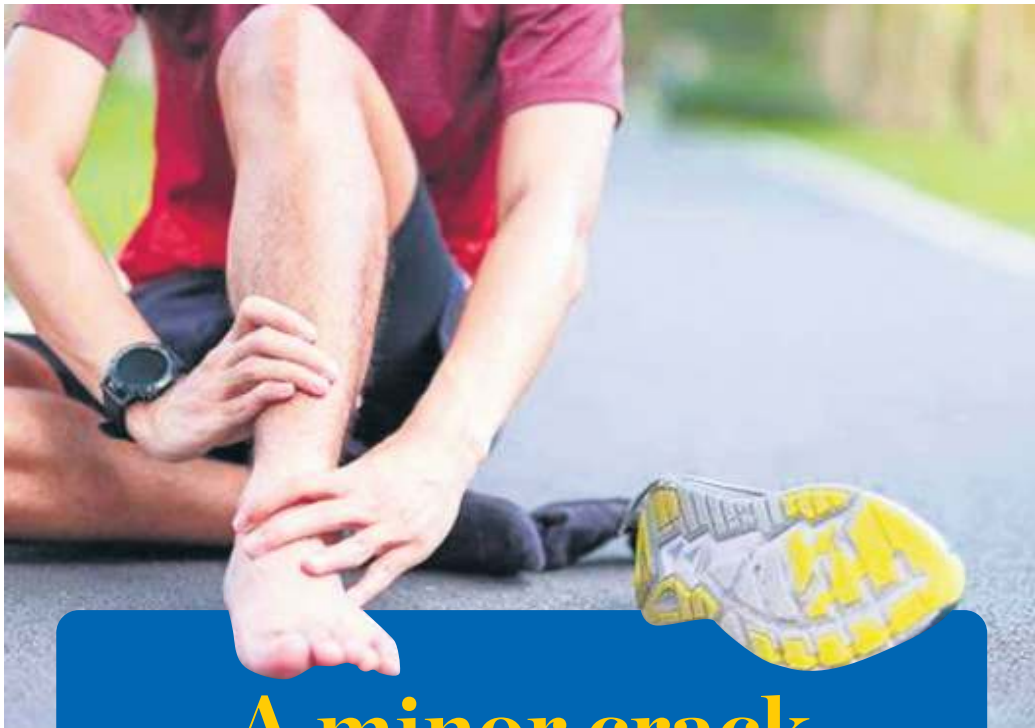
It is usually the adults who are affected by artworks but children don't display Stendhal's Syndrome given their limited understanding about a work of art. "At the most, they can feel frightened looking at a scary painting. For adults, it is the happy, mood-elevating hormones and positive neurochemicals like dopamine, serotonin, endorphin and also hormones like cortisol come into play while one admires and becomes awestruck by works of art," adds the doctor who specialises in child and adolescent psychiatry.

Explaining why Italians themselves were not affected by the symptoms unlike other tourists, Dr Charan Teja Koganti, neuropsychiatrist at KIMS hospital, Hyderabad, says, "A possible reason is that Italians grew up watching those sculptures and paintings as the country was extremely rich in artworks right

from the Renaissance era. So, their eyes and brains got used to those unlike other tourists, for whom witnessing a plethora of colourful artworks including paintings, frescoes, mosaics etc. within a short time during their visit to Italy, became an overwhelming experience."

"It is also a proven fact that art does affect the human brain and mostly generates positive feelings. All senses are stimulated to the extent of sensory overloading. People experience a range of progressing emotions starting with enthusiasm to elation to euphoria and though uncommon, can even extend to agitation and aggression. Physically, the three parameters namely blood pressure, pulse rate and heart rate variable (HRV) are affected," adds the neuropsychiatrist.

Explaining further, the doctor avers, "When a person is exposed to multiple and colourful artworks within a short span of time, the posterior aspect of the brain or the occipital lobe gets activated. Especially bright colours like red, golden, green, orange etc. stimulate the brain. The oxygen uptake goes up and the brain utilises more glucose due to high metabolism. The person may feel hungry due to rapid utilisation of the glucose by the brain. The eyes may feel strained, the overstimulated and oversaturated brain might give rise to other syndromes like dizziness, palpitations, hallucinations etc. In the process, various hormones and neurochemicals (catecholamines) are released including dopamine, norepinephrine and epinephrine or adrenaline, stress hormone cortisol etc. And that is how aesthetically beautiful art works can affect humans."



A minor crack today, a major injury tomorrow

Experts warn against the dangers of overlooking minor bone injuries

TEJAL SINHA
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Stress fractures — often brushed off as minor discomforts — can spiral into serious, long-term health problems if left untreated, warn orthopedic experts. Though they begin as small cracks in the bone, stress fractures can escalate quickly, affecting mobility, functionality and overall quality of life.

THE SILENT THREAT: HOW STRESS FRACTURES BEGIN

"Stress fractures are small cracks in your bones that occur due to repetitive force or overuse, often in weight-bearing bones, such as in your feet or legs," explains Dr. G.V. Reddy, Consultant – Orthopedics, Manipal Hospital Vijayawada. These injuries commonly affect individuals who are active, such as athletes, dancers, or people with physically demanding routines.

At the onset, symptoms may appear mild. "Early on, the pain from a stress fracture might go away with rest and not seem so bothersome, prompting some to ignore the injury. However, this complacency can be dangerous. Without treatment, the fracture can progress, even leading to a complete break," says Dr. Reddy.

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING THE PAIN

Neglecting a stress fracture doesn't just delay recovery—it invites a host of complications. "Improper healing of stress fractures, which can cause malunion (improper alignment) and nonunion (failure to heal), is another major risk of leaving stress fractures untreated," notes Dr. Reddy. These conditions can result in chronic pain, decreased mobility, and functional deficits.

In more severe cases, stress fractures may even impact nearby nerves and blood vessels. "Untreated fractures can in some cases harm nearby nerves and blood vessels, causing numbness and tingling or difficulty with blood flow," he adds. Maintaining regular physical activity on a stress fracture can worsen the injury. "It can lead to a complete break of the bone, requiring surgery to remedy," warns Dr. Reddy. "It is important to rest, immobilise and evaluate the respective part of the body to avoid further health implications and even worse."

Left unresolved, a stress fracture can lead to chronic pain and hinder basic movement. "Over time it can lead to chronic pain and would prevent you from doing your daily work, meaning mobility problems and you would need to go for other

invasive treatments. It is crucial to seek prompt medical attention to ensure proper healing and overall bone health."

REPETITIVE STRESS, REAL RISK

According to Dr. Sushanth B. Mummigatti, Consultant – Orthopaedic & Trauma Surgeon, Manipal Hospital Goa, "Stress fractures occur due to repeated stress at the same location, leading to bone fractures." While often associated with individuals who have weak bones, these injuries are not exclusive to them. "They can also develop in strong bones, particularly in athletes and military recruits," he explains.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS: DIAGNOSIS AND EARLY SYMPTOMS

Dr. Mummigatti emphasizes the importance of paying attention to early signs: "Patients typically present with pain and swelling in the affected region, especially during weight-bearing activities. The pain is often progressive, worsening over time." He notes that diagnostic imaging plays a key role in identifying stress fractures. "X-ray imaging is generally the first-line investigation for diagnosing stress fractures. However, in some cases, an MRI may be required for a more detailed assessment," says Dr. Mummigatti. "Interestingly, in the early MRI grading of stress fractures, the initial stages may not show any cortical break (fracture)."

EARLY DETECTION IS CRUCIAL

Delaying diagnosis and treatment can significantly extend recovery time. "It is crucial not to overlook initial symptoms, even if an X-ray appears normal," Dr. Mummigatti advises. "A high level of suspicion should be maintained, particularly in elderly individuals, athletes, and military personnel. Early diagnosis and treatment can lead to complete symptom resolution. However, if the diagnosis is delayed and a full fracture develops, bone healing takes longer, prolonging symptoms and delaying an athlete's return to peak performance."

TREATMENT APPROACHES

The good news? With timely medical intervention, stress fractures are highly treatable. "Management of stress fractures typically involves rest, bracing, crutches, and bone-stimulating medications to promote healing," says Dr. Mummigatti.

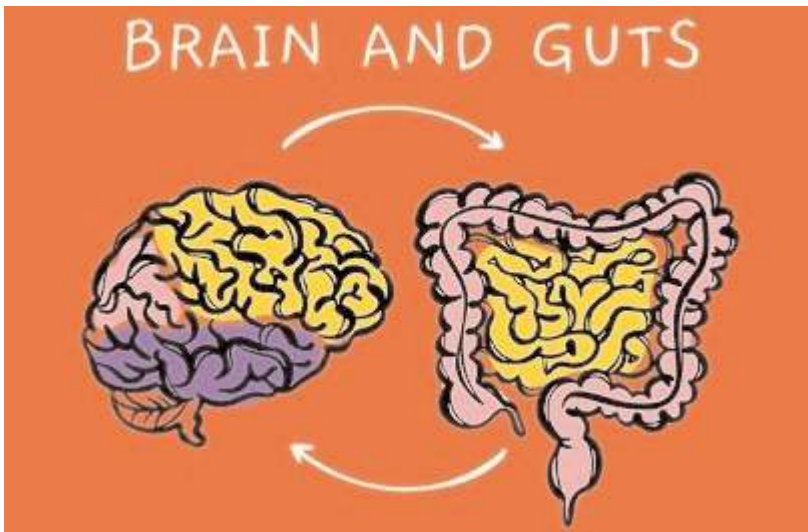
Both experts underline the need for awareness and caution. A seemingly minor crack, if ignored, can evolve into a major health setback. Recognising the early signs, seeking prompt medical care and following the right treatment plan can ensure full recovery and help prevent permanent damage.

MANAGING AUTISM THROUGH GUT-BRAIN AXIS

You must've heard doctors and other healthcare professionals refer to something known as the gut-brain axis. But what is the gut-brain axis? Simply put, it's a group of nerves that connect your gut and brain and send and receive messages back and forth. So, is there a connection between autism and the gut-brain axis?

Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition, but its expression goes well beyond the brain. A lot of evidence points to the gut-brain axis, the two-way communication network between the brain and gut microbiota that influences digestion, cognition, behaviour and mood.

Children on the spectrum frequently experience gastrointestinal (GI) issues like bloating, constipation and poor appetite. These issues can lead to poor sleep, aggression and irritability. The gut microbiota, which consists of a trillion microorganisms, plays a pivotal role. These microbes produce neurotransmitters such as serotonin and GABA that regulate inflammation and even influence the brain's structure and function through endocrine, immune and neural pathways. A latest pilot study conducted in Kerala examined the effects of probiotics on young children with autism. The two-month probiotic intervention showed



improved behaviour and gastrointestinal issues, but GI improvements were significantly higher. This matches global research that probiotics can be one tool in autism management.

Cutting-edge neuroimaging studies show that specific microbial profiles have been linked to function and brain structure changes, especially those regions associated with memory, attention and emotion. Interestingly, probiotics even modulate brain activity patterns in adults and individuals with GI disorders, showing their positive impact.

Children become more attentive, sleep better and respond more effectively to

therapy. While diet alone is not a treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it's a vital piece of the puzzle. The gut-brain axis opens a new dimension in autism care. A balanced diet with reduced processed food, an increase in fiber and the mindful use of probiotics, under professional guidance. It's a gentle reminder that sometimes, the journey to a healthier mind begins with a healthier gut.

(The author, Dr Dedeepya Puskur, is a developmental paediatrician and clinical head, at Fernandez Child Development Centre.)



Ajay Dwivedi



Tanishq has expanded its retail footprint with the launch of its grand store in Suncity and Kokapet, Hyderabad. The stores were inaugurated by Swadesh Kumar Behera, Chief People Officer and Ajay Dwivedi, Regional Business Head - South. Both new stores showcase an exquisite range of jewellery, including gold, diamonds, Kundan, Polki, and contemporary designs, as well as an exclusive wedding



Priya grace



Kushi



Sanjana

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



Iceberg Organic Ice Creams inaugurated its third outlet in Hyderabad, located in Begumpet. The launch marked the presence of renowned Indian music composer and singer RP Patnaik, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Madhapur Traffic Division, Cyberabad K. Satyanarayana, Inspector of Police (Ramgopalpet PS), T. Narsing Rao and Inspector of Police (Begumpet Traffic PS) P. Papaiah.



The Telangana Poultry Federation (TPF) and Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA)/PoultryIndia, organized a symbolic Paalaabhishekam (milk consecration) ceremony to honour Telangana Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy. The event took place at the TPF Office near Nizam College Grounds and was attended by poultry farmers from across the state.

Diamonds Reimagined

Sri Jagdamba Pearls, Hyderabad's iconic jewellery brand, has made a bold foray into the lab-grown diamond (LGD) market with the launch of Aurah, a contemporary collection of lab-grown diamond jewellery designed for today's conscious and style-forward consumer. Sri Jagdamba Pearls is a legacy brand in India's jewellery industry, proudly tracing its roots to 1924 during the Nizam era in Hyderabad. Recognized for its craftsmanship and authenticity in pearls, gemstones, gold, and diamond jewelry, Sri Jagdamba Pearls has grown from its first store, opened in 1975 on MG Road in Hyderabad, to a reputable name associated with quality and tradition, earning the trust of millions worldwide. Lab-grown diamonds are transforming the global jewellery industry, with the market projected to cross Rs 10,000 crore by 2033. The launch of Aurah represents a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity, bringing sustainability, beauty, and affordability to the forefront of fine jewellery.

Converting Airborne Water vapor into Virgin Drinking Water

Water scarcity continues to be a growing global concern, and Scalene Cybernetics Limited, a member company under Organization de Scalene Foundation is addressing this challenge with Aquaregia, an advanced water harvesting system powered by its patented Rain Tunnel Technology using a Cloud Chamber. The technology uses the saturated vapor within the thin air and creates rain within a box and transforms that water into clean, pristine drinking water. This technology has been named Aquaregia, meaning the "Royal Water" and this is a solution to drinking water without relying on any unfortunately contaminated surface water.

Transforms India's Water Pumping Industry

Across the country, water pumping stations are struggling with unplanned breakdowns, excessive energy usage, and poor maintenance practices. These inefficiencies not only affect water delivery but also contribute to significant energy waste and environmental impact. Amidst these challenges, Pump Academy Private Limited has emerged as a pioneer with its breakthrough solution, iPUMPNET—the world's only end-to-end intelligent pump management platform. iPUMPNET integrates predictive maintenance, real-time performance monitoring, and AI-driven energy optimization to ensure pumps operate efficiently and sustainably. Backed by two patented technologies, iPUMPNET uses deep learning to detect early signs of failure and optimize performance, reducing downtime and energy costs. It has been successfully deployed at critical sites, including pumping stations managed by BWSSB and BMC, showcasing its real-world effectiveness. Pump Academy's innovation has earned significant recognition from the Government of Karnataka.

CELEBRATING FASHION, CULTURE & CREATIVITY

Tommy Hilfiger announces Tommy Hilfiger's visit to Mumbai, India, vibrant day of fashion, cultural exchange, and connection – reinforcing the brand's presence in one of the world's most dynamic style capitals. The day began with a visit to the TOMMY HILFIGER store at Jio World Drive, located in the heart of Mumbai's luxury shopping destination, the Bandra Kurla Complex. There, Hilfiger participated in a panel discussion moderated by Indian creative force Sarah-Jane Dias and Bollywood actress, model and philanthropist Manushi Chhillar. The conversation explored style, fashion and global influence – uniting icons from both American and Indian fashion cultures. Later that evening, Hilfiger hosted a dinner at the Taj Chambers, nestled within the legendary Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. With sweeping views of the Gateway of India and the backdrop of the Arabian Sea, the intimate affair was a curated celebration of culture, glamor and style. The evening brought together India's foremost cultural tastemakers—from Bollywood icons and A-list celebrities to fashion power players, influential top-tier media, and industry insiders. Guests included Karan Johar, Sara Ali Khan, Ibrahim Ali Khan, Aditya Roy Kapur, Shikhar Dhawan and Guru Randhawa.

PILOT ORIENTATION DAY IN HYD ON APRIL 26

BA Training Academy is all set to host its Pilot Orientation Day in Hyderabad on Saturday, April 26, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Hyderabad. This free-to-attend event invites aspiring pilots and their families to gain an immersive introduction into the exciting world of aviation. Beyond offering insights into structured training modules, the program emphasizes global exposure, with key segments of the training



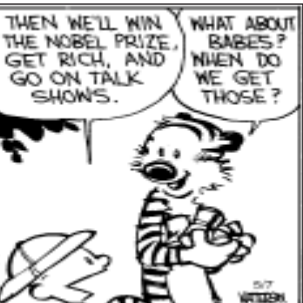
conducted in Europe. This international training environment provides students with a diverse and enriching experience, equipping them with the global perspective that is increasingly vital in today's interconnected aviation industry.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



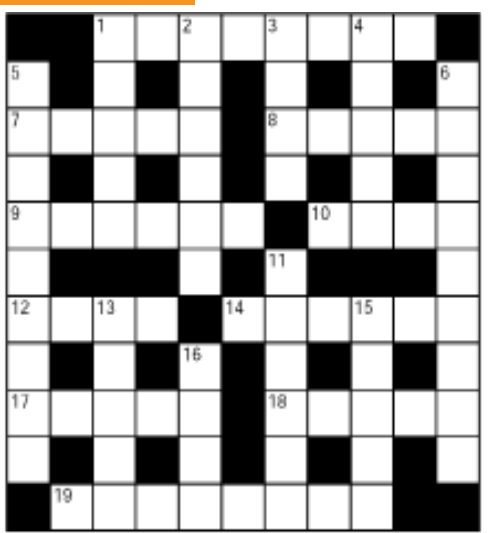
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



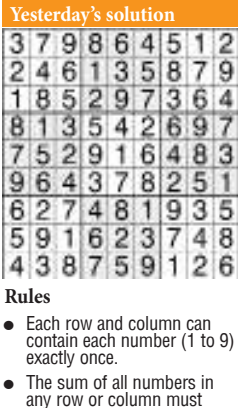
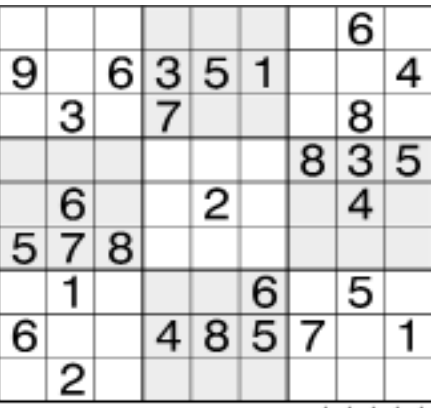
CROSSWORD



NANCY



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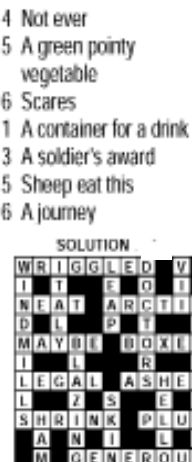
Rules
• Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
• The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

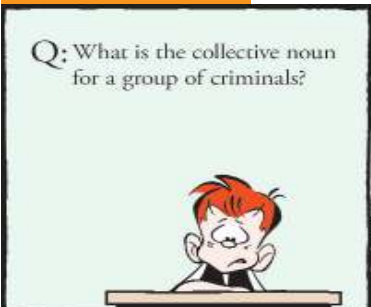
- 1 Observing
- 7 A thrown weapon
- 8 A large stream
- 9 The writer of a book
- 10 A small green creature
- 12 Weapons
- 14 Purchased
- 17 Beneath
- 18 Railway coaches pulled by an engine
- 19 Soft shoes worn indoors

DOWN

- 1 Grind this up for flour
- 2 Extreme fear
- 3 Difficult



GINGER MEGGS



SAMANTHA AND RAJ NIDIMORU FUEL RELATIONSHIP RUMOURS

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Actress Samantha is once again in the headlines, this time for her rumoured relationship with director Raj Nidimoru, of the Raj & DK duo. Though neither Samantha nor Raj has confirmed the relationship, speculation intensified after the two were reportedly spotted traveling together on multiple occasions. Samantha was seen arriving at the Mumbai airport, followed by Raj Nidimoru just minutes later. The two avoided being photographed together, seemingly to maintain a low profile.

They were also spotted in Tirupati, where both visited the temple but once again chose not to be seen together publicly. Reports claim that they took the same flight but exited separately to avoid media attention.

Raj Nidimoru co-directed *The Family Man Season 2*, which featured Samantha in a breakthrough role. The duo also collaborated on the web series *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, starring Samantha and Varun Dhawan. Sources suggest that Raj & DK are planning a Hindi film with Samantha in the lead role.

Adding fuel to the fire, sources say Samantha has shifted base to Mumbai and is reportedly receiving career advice from Raj Nidimoru regarding her future projects.



Karthik Subbaraj distances himself from *Game Changer* failure

Renowned filmmaker Karthik Subbaraj, known for hits like *Pizza*, *Jigarhanda*, *Mercury*, *Petta* and *Mahaan*, is gearing up for the release of his latest film *Retro*, starring Suriya and Pooja

Hegde. The film is set to hit theatres on May 1.

During the promotional events for *Retro*, Karthik Subbaraj was questioned by the media about the recent box office failure of *Game Changer*, the Telugu political drama directed by Shankar and starring Ram Charan. Karthik Subbaraj was credited with the story of the film, which was released during the Sankranti festival and turned out to be a major disappointment at the box office.

Addressing the issue, Karthik Subbaraj clarified that he was only involved in the initial conceptualization. "I just gave a one-liner idea like 'a humble and honest IAS officer'. That's all," he said, distancing himself from the final screenplay and execution of the project. He went on to suggest that multiple inputs from various people might have caused the screenplay and writing to deviate from the original idea.

While some critics view this as Karthik avoiding responsibility, others argue that his creative vision may have been diluted during the filmmaking process.



KARTHIK SUBBARAJ INITIALLY PENNED *RETRO* FOR RAJINIKANTH, NOT VIJAY OR SURIYA

With its grand theatrical release scheduled for May 1, *Retro*, starring Suriya and Pooja Hegde, is poised to be one of the biggest blockbusters of 2025. Directed by Karthik Subbaraj, the film has been making waves for its unique blend of romance and action. But in a surprising revelation, the director shared that the film was originally conceptualised for none other than Superstar Rajinikanth. Contrary to rumours linking the script to

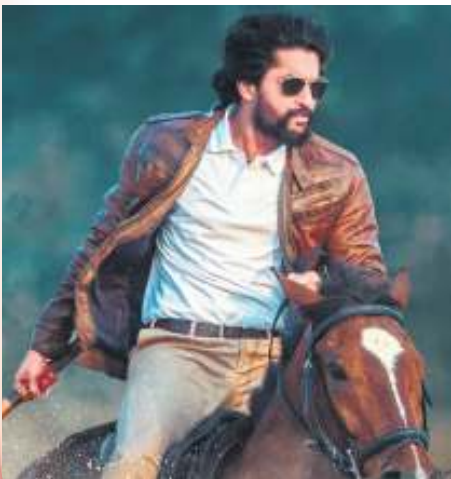
Thalapathy Vijay, Karthik clarified that the original version of *Retro* was written with Rajinikanth in mind. "This story was not written for Thalapathy Vijay sir, as being speculated. I wrote this script keeping in mind Thalaivar. Initially, it was more in the action zone to suit Thalaivar's image," said Subbaraj. The filmmaker, known for his distinct storytelling and collaborations with stars like Rajinikanth (Petta), added that the tone of the film evolved after he narrated it to Suriya. The

narrative gradually shifted from a pure action film to a romantic drama, aligning better with Suriya's on-screen persona. Interestingly, Suriya himself was curious about the film's origins. "Even Suriya sir asked me if I narrated the script to Rajinikanth sir," Karthik revealed, emphasising how strongly the original version was associated with the superstar's signature style. Previously titled *Suriya 44*, *Retro* features a

power-packed ensemble including Pooja Hegde, Karunakaran, Nassar, Prakash Raj, Joju George, Jayaram, Sujith Shankar and Singampuli. Actress Shriya Saran will also be seen in a special cameo appearance. Blending stylised romance with gripping action, *Retro* is one of the most anticipated films of the year, not only for its lead cast but also for its intriguing backstory and Subbaraj's directorial touch. While *Retro* moved on to become a Suriya-

led romantic action film, Rajinikanth fans have plenty to look forward to. The superstar is currently working on *Jailer 2* with director Nelson Dilipkumar. He is also headlining *Coolie*, an upcoming film by Lokesh Kanagaraj, which boasts an impressive cast including Nagarjuna, Shruti Haasan, Upendra and Soubin Shahir. Though Rajinikanth didn't end up in *Retro*, his cinematic universe continues to expand with several big projects underway.

Nani teases explosive surprises in *HIT 3*



As the release date of *HIT: The Third Case* (*HIT 3*) draws closer, excitement is mounting among fans. Slated for a May 1 release, the third installment in the *HIT* franchise stars Natural Star Nani.

Addressing the buzz surrounding *HIT 3* in a latest interview, especially rumours about Tamil star Karthi making a cameo appearance, Nani carefully avoided giving anything away. When asked directly, he responded with a knowing smile, "There are many interesting surprises in the film, but they are meant to be experienced in the theater only. So who is it, what is it? I think it's better not to have that conversation at this point because that's the whole point. If

it's a cameo, it's meant to be a surprise."

While he didn't confirm or deny the speculation, his comments hint that audiences might be in for a thrilling surprise.

Nani also offered a glimpse into what audiences can expect from *HIT 3*, promising a mix of intense storytelling and cinematic spectacle. According to him, one of the most exciting aspects of the film is how the plot gradually unfolds while delivering adrenaline-pumping moments typically reserved for high-octane commercial entertainers.

"How the hell this is going to unfold will be the most exciting part about *HIT 3*, and also what makes it special is the kind of theatrical moments it has—you get in a mass film where you can really cheer, root, whistle and clap kind of a moment," Nani said.

He emphasised that such elements are rare in thrillers, as they often struggle to include them organically without breaking realism. But in *HIT 3*, he believes the filmmakers have struck the right balance.

"It's very hard for those kinds of moments to happen in a thriller organically while being realistic. I think that happened with *HIT 3*," he added.

With Nani's passionate insights and the franchise's reputation for gripping narratives, *HIT: The Third Case* is shaping up to be a must-watch this summer, promising not only suspense and intensity but also the kind of crowd-pleasing highs that fans love.

Siddu Jonnalagadda refocuses efforts on *Telusu Kada* after *Jack* setback

Actor Siddu Jonnalagadda, who found massive success with *DJ Tillu* and *Tillu Square*, faced a major setback with his latest film *Jack*. Directed by Bommarillu Bhaskar and featuring Vaishnavi Chaitanya as the female lead, *Jack* failed to impress both audiences and exhibitors.

In the wake of the film's failure, Siddu is now focusing intently on his next project *Telusu Kada*, which marks the directorial debut of popular Tollywood stylist Neeraja Kona. Produced by People Media Factory, the film was initially set for a release soon, but sources now suggest a delay

as Siddu is getting involved in every aspect of the production.

"After *Jack*, he's taking no chances. He knows the audience expects punchy one-liners and high-energy dialogues from him," a source close to the team revealed. "He's now deeply involved in the script and other departments to ensure *Telusu Kada* meets those expectations."

Siddu's *Tillu Square* recently entered the Rs 100 crore club within just seven days of release, solidifying his status as a bankable star. With *Telusu Kada*, he's looking to bounce back and continue his upward trajectory.

STANDALONE



Allu Arjun is once again making headlines, not just for his stellar box-office streak with *Pushpa 2*, but also for his fresh new look as he gears up for his much-anticipated collaboration with director Atlee. The star turned heads at a family wedding, where he appeared alongside his wife Sneha Reddy and daughter Arha. Sporting a minimalist yet striking ensemble—a brown kurta paired with black trousers—Allu Arjun exuded effortless charm, fueling speculation that his appearance might hint at his look for Atlee's upcoming project.



Imanvi addresses 'lies spread by trolls' about her identity amid terror attack backlash

Actress Iman Esmail, professionally known as Imanvi, has addressed a wave of misinformation surrounding her background, following the tragic terror attack in Pahalgam. Imanvi, who is set to star alongside Prabhas in director Hanu Raghavapudi's upcoming period drama, took to Instagram to release a heartfelt statement, condemning the baseless rumours about her heritage and standing firmly against hate and misinformation.

In her note, Imanvi began by extending her deepest condolences to the victims of the Pahalgam attack, stating, "First and foremost, I want to express my most sincere and heartfelt condolences for the tragic event that took place in Pahalgam. My heart goes out to all those who lost their lives and their loved ones. Any loss of innocent life is tragic and weighs heavy on my heart. I strongly condemn the violent acts."

Amidst the tragedy, Imanvi found herself the subject of online vitriol, with several unfounded claims suggesting links between her family and the Pakistani military. Refuting the accusations, she clarified, "Nobody in my family has ever been or is currently associated with the Pakistani military in any way. These and multiple other falsehoods have been fabricated by online trolls for the sole purpose of spreading hate."

She also criticised certain media platforms for irresponsibly amplifying misinformation: "What is especially disappointing is that legitimate news outlets, journalists and those on social media failed to investigate their source material and instead have simply repeated these slanderous statements."

Imanvi's post emphasised her deep-rooted connection to India and her cultural heritage. "I am a proud Indian American who speaks Hindi, Telugu, Gujarati and English. I was born in Los Angeles, California after my parents legally immigrated to the United States as youth," she shared.

She went on to express her gratitude for the opportunity to work in the Indian film industry—a world that inspired her passion for performance and storytelling. "As someone who has Indian identity and culture running deep in my blood, I hope to use this medium as a form of

unity and not divisiveness."

Imanvi will be making her Telugu film debut opposite Prabhas in an untitled period drama directed by Hanu Raghavapudi and backed by Mythri Movie Makers. The film, set in the 1940s, blends historical fiction with alternate history, and also features legendary actors Mithun Chakraborty and Jaya Prada in pivotal roles.

An excerpt from the film's synopsis teases a gripping narrative: "This historical fiction/alternate history set in the 1940s is the tale of a warrior who rose from the shadows, emerging from a society that believed war was the only answer to the buried injustices and forgotten truths that history kept hidden from the world."

Imanvi concluded her statement on a hopeful note: "I will work hard to ensure that this legacy carries on through my work and uplifts the experiences of my Indian heritage. Lots of love, Imanvi."



CSK vs SRH: Battle of survival

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) will eye a crucial turnaround at home when they face an equally desperate Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in a battle of survival in the Indian Premier League here on Friday. Both sides have endured a turbulent season, notching just four points from eight games, and must now win all remaining fixtures to keep their slim qualification hopes alive.

Known to make the most of home conditions, five-time champions CSK find themselves in uncharted territory as they have not been able to read the wickets well at the Chepauk.

They started strong at their fortress, dominating Mumbai Indians as Noor Ahmad spun a web around the visitors. But the early promise fizzled out quickly, with three successive losses at home.

The also endured the ignominy of posting their lowest-ever IPL total at home — 103/9 against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Head coach Stephen Fleming has also voiced frustration over the Chepauk surface, which has offered more to seamers than CSK's usual spin-heavy attack.

There away form has not been any better either, with just one win in four attempts.

CSK have lacked firepower in the batting department and captain Ruturaj Gaikwad's absence due to an injury has only made it worse for the storied outfit.

MS Dhoni has returned as full-time captain. While his knee continues to limit mobility, the former Indian captain's



leadership remains invaluable.

His death-overs batting, field placements, and ability to recalibrate the bowling attack could be key in CSK's revival.

In encouraging signs, 17-year-old Ayush Mhatre made a promising debut against MI with the bat. The franchise has also roped in South Africa's Dewald

Brevis in a bid to strengthen their power-hitting department.

SRH, meanwhile, have endured an equally erratic campaign. A bright start gave way to inconsistency, with their ultra-aggressive, attack-at-all-costs strategy falling flat.

The explosive opening pair of Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, so vital last

season, have failed to hit the same heights this year.

While Sharma's brilliance secured a win against Punjab Kings, Head is yet to truly make his mark.

The heavy dependence on their top two has exposed the frailty of the middle order, which has struggled to absorb pressure, something head coach Daniel Vettori also conceded after the seven-wicket loss to Mumbai Indians.

"When Head and Abhishek don't succeed, then it's the responsibility of the other batsmen. Potentially that's what we haven't had this season around. The ability for partnerships, for one or two guys to step up," Vettori said.

TEAMS

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD: Pat Cummins (c), Ishan Kishan (wk), Atharva Taide, Abhinav Manohar, Aniket Verma, Sachin Baby, Smaran Ravichandran, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Travis Head, Harshal Patel, Kamindu Mendis, Wiaan Mulder, Abhishek Sharma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mohammed Shami, Rahul Chahar, Simarjeet Singh, Zeeshan Ansari, Jaydev Unadkat, Eshan Malinga.

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: MS Dhoni (c&wk), Dewald Brevis, Devon Conway, Rahul Tripathi, Shaik Rasheed, Vansh Bedi, Andre Siddharth, Ayush Mhatre, Rachin Ravindra, Ravichandran Ashwin, Vijay Shankar, Sam Curran, Anshul Kamboj, Deepak Hooda, Jamie Overton, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Ramakrishna Ghosh, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube, Khaleel Ahmed, Noor Ahmad, Mukesh Choudhary, Nathan Ellis, Shreyas Gopal, Matheesha Pathirana.



Boult backs Rohit Sharma, calls him world-class player

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Hyderabad

Mumbai Indians' pacer Trent Boult has backed "world-class" Rohit Sharma to play a pivotal role in the team's pursuit for a record-extending sixth IPL title, following back-to-back half-centuries that signalled his timely return to form.

The Kiwi left-arm pacer was instrumental in dismantling Sunrisers Hyderabad's famed top order, returning with a match-winning spell of 4/26 to cap MI's fourth straight win in emphatic style.

After SRH collapsed to 143/8, MI, powered by Rohit's commanding 46-ball 70, chased down the target in just 15.4 overs. The emphatic win not only boosted their net run rate but also propelled them to third place on the points table.

"I think the whole side, the whole Mumbai Indians squad possesses some world-class players and obviously Rohit needs no introduction in that regard," Boult said at the post-match media interaction.

"I am sure everyone wants to be contributing at some points, but Rohit's doing a fantastic job of late and playing nicely just at the right time. So he's going to play a huge role for us in the remaining part of the season. I think you just need to be prepared for any role," he added.

Boult also praised captain Hardik Pandya for his leadership style, calling it a refreshing experience.

"Hardik's a passionate cricketer, obvious-

ly very skilful. He's a great leader, I think. He leads from the front.

"He's a great communicator. He's one of my favourite Indian cricketers, so to get the chance to play underneath him is a great experience."

Boult, who has adjusted seamlessly into a new role after shifting from Rajasthan Royals to MI, emphasised the importance of adaptability in a long tournament like the IPL.

"At Rajasthan I was prepared to bowl at any stage of the match. I've been lucky enough to play 10 IPL seasons where it hasn't always been the same recipe every time. So I think the first thing is you've got to always want the ball.

"There's some great players in there. Obviously, (Jasprit) Bumrah needs no introduction either, so it's great to be having ball back in hand with him."

Mumbai Indians had just one win in their first five matches, and now they have four on the trot, keeping them firmly placed for a playoff berth. But Boult is not looking too far ahead.

"Momentum wasn't on our side to start with, but to turn it around to have four wins in a row was the focus, just to get a bit of momentum, a bit of rhythm. Guys playing nice cricket at certain points. We're not going to look too far ahead.

"It can quickly change. Looking forward to getting back home, playing in some conditions that we know pretty well, but there's a long way to go in this tournament," he added.

SRH need support from middle order: Coach Vettori

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Hyderabad

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) head coach Daniel Vettori admitted that a dramatic top-order collapse coupled with a wrong "assessment" of the pitch proved decisive in their a crushing defeat to Mumbai Indians.

The big-hitting SRH top order slumped to 24/4 in the powerplay, and despite a fighting partnership between Heinrich Klaasen (71) and impact substitute Abhinav Manohar (43), the hosts could only manage 143/8, a total that proved woefully inadequate on a pitch that has

already seen two 240-plus totals this season. "The toss was important — we wanted to bowl first. The wicket was different from what we'd seen before, and while we had discussed the possibility of a 250-280 surface, the conditions changed dramatically. It was tough to assess the par score early on," he said at the post-match press conference.

"Once we got through two overs, the assessment was that it was not the 250-260 wicket that this has been the last couple of games. And we obviously went out of depth." He said their strategy was to go all out in the powerplay but the plan

unravelling quickly.

"We wanted to maximise the powerplay, but unfortunately we kept losing wickets and once we realised that the surface wasn't what we anticipated, then we needed to build towards that sort of 180 score, and that unfortunately became difficult to do when you're 24/4 after the power play.

Vettori said Ishan Kishan's bizarre dismissal only added pressure to the team.

Batting at number 3, Ishan Kishan stunned everyone by walking off, indicating a faint edge, even as none of the MI players appealed and the on-field umpire was on the verge of signalling a wide.

Real Madrid beats Getafe 1-0 in Spanish league

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Madrid

Real Madrid kept pace with Spanish league leader Barcelona with a 1-0 win at Getafe ahead of the rivals' meeting in the Copa del Rey final.

Arda Güler scored a first-half goal for Madrid, which moved back within four points of Barcelona. The Catalan club edged Mallorca 1-0 on Tuesday.

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti used many reserves ahead of Saturday's Copa final in Seville. Brazil forward Endrick made his first Spanish league start with the club, and Vinicius Júnior was substituted in the second half. Jude Bellingham came off the bench in the second half.

Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga had to be replaced because of an apparent muscle injury in the final minutes and is doubtful to be available for Saturday's final. He had entered the match at halftime to



replace defender David Alaba, who also is doubtful because of a muscle ailment.

"We'll see, but it's unlikely that they will be available on Saturday," Ancelotti said.

Madrid had demoralizing losses in both "clásicos" against Barcelona this season - 5-2 in the Spanish Super Cup final and 4-0 in their first league encounter at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

Güler scored the winner with a well-placed right-footed shot in the 21st minute at the Coliseum in Getafe.

"Fortunately, I scored the goal that gave us the three points," Güler said. "We knew it was going to be a tough match. It was important to give us confidence for the final (on Saturday)."

from the 37th after Eric Bailly was sent off with a straight red card.

WILLIAMS SCORES EARLY

Iñaki Williams scored five minutes into the match to give fourth-place Athletic Bilbao a 1-0 win over Las Palmas, helping the Basque Country club to open an eight-point gap above Villarreal, which remains with a game in hand.

Las Palmas, sitting in 18th place, was coming off two wins in a row after a 12-match winless streak in the league.

Alaves moved out of the relegation zone by beating ninth-place Real Sociedad 1-0 at home with a goal by Nahuel Tenaglia in the 65th.

Liverpool must wait to clinch Premier League title after Arsenal draws with Crystal Palace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

One more point. That's all Liverpool needs to secure a record-tying 20th English top-flight title after second-place Arsenal drew 2-2 with Crystal Palace in the Premier League.

Arne Slot's runaway leaders can take care of business on Sunday by avoiding defeat to Tottenham in what is set to be a big party at Anfield. A draw or a win would ensure Liverpool cannot be caught by Arsenal with four more rounds remaining and therefore clinch a second title in five years, tying with fierce rival Manchester United on number 20 overall.

Becoming the champion in 2020 ended the storied club's 30-year title drought but Liverpool's players couldn't celebrate in front of their fans because of restrictions during the pandemic.

They'll try to make up for it this weekend. Arsenal twice squandered the lead at Emirates Stadium, with Jean-Philippe Mateta taking advantage of a defensive

error by William Saliba to score Palace's second equaliser in the 83rd and leave Arsenal 12 points behind Liverpool.

Arsenal, which started with star forward Bukayo Saka on the bench, looked vulnerable throughout against Palace, with its players perhaps having an eye on the Champions League semifinals against Paris Saint-Germain starting next week.

"We have the most important game of the season in six days," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "We need to get our energy back."

ARSENAL BATTLING TO HOLD OFF RESURGENT CITY

Arsenal has been runner-up to Manchester City in the Premier League the previous two seasons and is facing a third straight second-place finish.

However, an improving City — a 2-1 winner over Aston Villa on Tuesday — is only six points back in third place after Arsenal's 13th draw of an inconsistent campaign.

The hosts went ahead through Jakub Kiwior's header at a free kick in the third

minute, only for Palace to reply when playmaker Eberechi Eze met a corner with a brilliantly taken downward volley that skimmed off the turf and flew in off the post in the 27th.

Leandro Trossard wriggled free in the area and scored with a deflected shot in the 42nd minute to restore Arsenal's lead. Mateta, a second-half substitute, had the final say, though, by capitalising on Saliba's poor pass and floating a shot over stranded goalkeeper David Raya from around 40 meters.

PALACE SWITCHES FOCUS TO THE FA CUP

Palace remained in 12th place and has little to play for in the Premier League. It is, however, heading into an FA Cup semifinal game against Aston Villa on Saturday in better heart.

"It's important to keep this energy and confidence for the semifinal on Saturday," Palace manager Oliver Glasner said.

"It was not our goal to decide the title, it was our goal to win the game. I think a draw is a very good result.

AC Milan ruins Inter's treble bid with derby win to reach Italian Cup final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Milan

AC Milan has not achieved much this season — except when playing city rival Inter Milan.

Milan ruined Inter's bid for a treble and advanced to the Italian Cup final with a 3-0 derby win Wednesday courtesy of two goals from Luka Jovic.

It was Milan's third win over Inter this season, having also beaten the Nerazzurri in the Italian Super Cup final in January.

"It was a very important game for us. As you know we are not that good in Serie A. We had to show the quality today. We had to show the character," Jovic said. "And we showed it and we are going to Rome." And if Milan can win another trophy, coach Sergio Conceicao might have a chance at keeping his job — despite the seven-time European champion sitting ninth in Serie A.

Winning the Italian Cup — which carries a Europa League berth — could be Milan's only route to a spot in continental play for next season.

Milan advanced on 4-1 aggregate following a 1-1 first leg. Bologna brings a 3-0 lead over Empoli into the second leg of the other semifinal on Thursday.

The final is scheduled for May 14 in Rome. Inter pressed forward early on and Federico Dimarco struck the crossbar in the 23rd. But Jovic put Milan ahead 13

minutes later with a powerful header and then doubled the advantage from close range shortly after the break.

Tijjani Reijnders added another for Milan in the 85th by finishing off a full team move.

"We have a lot of belief," Reijnders said. "We have difficulties in the league but we

If Milan can win another trophy, coach Sergio Conceicao might have a chance at keeping his job — despite the seven-time European champion sitting ninth in Serie A

know this is the fastest way to reach (Europe). And if we play like we did today we can win this trophy."

It was Inter's second straight loss after the Serie A leader fell 1-0 at Bologna on Sunday. Inter will play Barcelona in the Champions League semifinals.

JUVENTUS POSTS FIRST LOSS UNDER TUDOR

Juventus wasted a chance to move back into the Champions League places following a 1-0 loss at Parma in a rescheduled Serie A match.

Parma forward Mateo Pellegrino scored

with a header in first-half stoppage time. Juventus remained fifth, one point behind Bologna, with five rounds remaining. Making matters worse for Juventus was that center forward Dusan Vlahovic came off at halftime with an apparent thigh issue. Juventus was also in fifth place when it fired Thiago Motta last month and hired Igor Tudor as its new coach for the remainder of the season. It was Juventus' first loss under Tudor, following two wins and a draw.

Cristian Chivu took over as Parma coach in February and the team is on a six-game unbeaten run that also includes a 2-2 draw with Serie A leader Inter Milan this month.

Parma-Juventus was one of four matches postponed from Monday due to the death of Pope Francis. Each game was preceded by a moment of silence to mourn the pope, who died Monday at 88.

LAZIO BACK IN 6TH

Lazio leapfrogged city rival Roma and moved back into sixth place — level on points with Juventus — with a 2-0 win at 10-man Genoa.

Valentin Castellanos and Boulaye Dia scored for Lazio after Genoa defender Sebastian Otoa was shown a direct red card in his Serie A debut for pushing down Mattia Zaccagni.

Italian teenager Federico Cina wins ATP Masters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Madrid

Italian teenager Federico Cina picked up his second ATP Masters 1000 victory by defeating Coleman Wong in straight sets at the Madrid Open, while Gael Monfils became the oldest winner in the tournament's history. The 38-year-old Monfils rallied from a poor start to defeat qualifier Borna Gojo 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 for his first win in Madrid since 2022. The 42nd-ranked Monfils is a two-time quarterfinalist at the Masters 1000 clay-court event.

"At the beginning, he served one second serve," Monfils said of Gojo. "I think he had a 94 first-serve percentage, he played great. I (let the) storm pass, then different tactics. I served more with kick and tried to play a little bit different, maybe let him go and not do so much. At the end, just run, run to the ball. It's not a pretty win, but it's a win."

The 18-year-old Cina won 7-6 (5), 6-1 to back up his victory over current No. 70 Francisco Comesaña in Miami last month, which marked his ATP 1000 debut. He saved both break points he faced against Wong and finished with 19 winners. "Before the match I was a little bit tight but after a few games I started to feel good," said the 373rd-ranked Cina, a wild-card entry who will next face American Sebastian Korda.

"It is really special to win a match at this event," Monfils next meet seventh seed defending champion Andrey Rublev, who defeated Monfils two weeks ago in the round of 32 in Monte Carlo. Alexander Bublik beat Alex Michelsen 7-6 (2), 7-6 (4), while Comesaña got past Spaniard Pedro Martinez 6-4, 6-4 at the clay-court tournament.

Nuno Borges of Portugal rallied to defeat home-crowd favorite Pablo Carreno Busta 6-7 (7), 7-6 (3), 6-3, while Arthur Rinderknech defeated Roman Safiullin 7-6 (4), 6-1. Christopher O'Connell got past Camilo Ugo Carabelli 6-3, 6-4.

RETURNING MOTHERS

Belinda Bencic, who returned from maternity leave last October, defeated Zeynep Sonmez 6-0, 6-2 on the first birthday of her daughter, Bella. Three-time Madrid Open champion Petra Kvitova, who was back from her maternity leave in February, lost 6-4, 6-0 to Katie Volynets.

Anastasija Sevastova, who has played infrequently since giving birth in late 2022, defeated Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4, 7-5. Emma Raducanu had her first win on outdoor clay since 2022, coming from a break down in both sets to beat Suzan Lamens 7-6 (4), 6-4.

The 2021 U.S. Open champion had missed most of the 2023 clay season because of wrist and ankle surgeries. She then cut short her 2024 season on the surface after losing in her Madrid opener.