

# EYE SECRETS

English Daily

Spy in every blink

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## PM Modi is world's most popular politician: Norwegian newspaper

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been referred to as the world's most popular politician and the Prime Ministers of Nordic countries have a lot to learn from him, according to an article in Norway's leading financial newspaper Dagens Næringsliv (DN).

On May 18, Prime Minister Modi will visit Norway.

India's Prime Minister Modi will be received by King Harald, promote Indian business, meet with the Indian diaspora and attend an India-Nordic Prime Ministers' meeting.

"The Nordic Prime Ministers should listen carefully. They have a lot to learn from their Indian counterpart," the Norwegian newspaper noted.

The article, written days ahead of PM Modi's visit to Norway on May 18, said that "whilst Nordic Prime Ministers barely enjoy a domestic approval rating of 30 per cent, PM Modi stands at around 70 per cent in the polls. No leader in any major country is nearly as popular at home as PM Modi".

"PM Modi has been in power in India for more than twelve years. Should he choose to stand again, all the signs suggest he will be re-elected. A distant dream for European leaders. His (PM Modi's) success can be attributed



to rapid economic development, a winning ideology, the world's strongest political party and his own life story," the article said. It also mentions PM Modi's humble beginnings as "almost unique" in a world where nearly all Heads of state come from the upper middle class.

"He (PM Modi) has no one to thank for his career but himself -- and the Hindu nationalist movement. He is an Indian Einar Gerhardsen -- self-taught, an organiser. (Einar was Norway's former Prime Minister)," the article remarked.

It further points out that "PM Modi is himself a strong driving force

behind the Indian economy which is currently growing at seven per cent, faster than China's and far outpacing any other major economy. But at current growth rates, India's economy will quadruple by 2050. India will then be the world's second-largest economy, rivalling the US".

"It also highlights PM Modi's achievement in accelerating green growth. India is now the world's third-largest producer of solar and wind energy; no one should be surprised if they overtake the US and take second place. Last year, coal emissions in India fell for the first time," the article said.

"Western leaders can learn a

great deal from PM Modi's consistent green message. Prime Minister Modi almost never talks about global climate negotiations or emissions. He asks no one to make sacrifices for the environment. The message is that India can lift 1.5 billion people out of poverty through green growth. There is no longer a choice between the economy and the environment," the report added.

It also opines that even if secular parties were to win the next election, India's ideology will remain Hindu nationalism.

Hindu nationalism is India's answer to the question that all non-Western countries have faced since the Industrial Revolution. How to modernise without becoming like the West? Japan was the first to untangle that knot -- becoming ultra-modern, yet remaining deeply Japanese. Korea is now richer than Japan and a major exporter of Korean culture and music. China anchors its modernity in its own roots -- in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism," the article said.

The article also highlights that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is currently the world's largest political party, with more than 100 million members. The party has achieved something unprecedented in India by getting the support

across all castes as well as the rich and poor.

"Among Western analysts, it has become something of a pastime to find fault with the BJP. The critics are right in saying that the BJP stands for the unification of Hindus. But there is little evidence to suggest that there have been more conflicts between Muslims and Hindus under the BJP. There was more violence and more pogroms when the Congress Party was in power. Millions of Muslims are crossing into India from neighbouring countries; hardly any Muslims are fleeing the other way," the article said.

It also underscores that India is the only country to have chosen a democratic model which is due to the fact that democracy is deeply rooted in Indian culture and tradition. This has nothing to do with the British as other former colonies of the Raj such as Pakistan, Myanmar and the Gulf monarchies are not democracies. "In a world where Norway needs new allies for a rules-based international order and Norwegian business needs new horizons, we have much to gain from closer ties with India. But this requires us to be willing to listen, not just to lecture. Then countless win-win opportunities could open up," the article concludes.

### Pawan Kalyan fulfills promise of constructing school building in Pedapadu

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has fulfilled his pledge to build a new school in Pedapadu, Alluri Sitarama Raju district. The school building, constructed at a cost of ₹17.50 lakhs, is now ready for use.

Pawan Kalyan announced the completion during his visit to the village. On April 7 last year, he participated in the 'Adavitalli Bata' programme held in Pedapadu village, Dumbriguda Mandal, Araku constituency. During the visit, he laid the foundation stone for a road linking Chaparai to Pedapadu and inquired about local infrastructure.

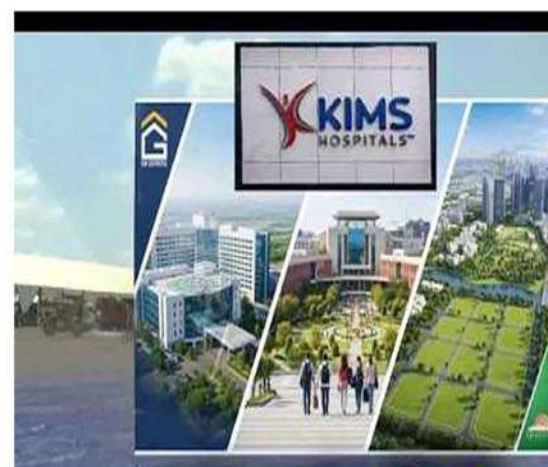
He inspected the primary school, where teacher Rangayya highlighted the poor condition of the existing building and called for a new structure. Pawan Kalyan promised to construct a new school, and now, the new building is set to welcome students from the 2026 academic year.

## CM Chandrababu performs Bhoomi Puja for KIMS Hospital and University in Nidamarru

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu visited Nidamarru in Mangalagiri Mandal today, where he performed the Bhoomi Puja for the new KIMS Hospital and laid the foundation stone for Byser Skill University.

Addressing the gathering, Naidu highlighted that creating wealth is straightforward, noting Hyderabad's rise as a national medical hub. He announced plans to provide skill development training to 100,000 people and mentioned that even medical professionals are currently learning Artificial Intelligence.

He stated the coalition's primary goal is to generate 100,000 jobs and revealed that the KIMS Hospital is scheduled to open on 13 May 2027. He also announced that Google's



operations in Visakhapatnam would begin before 15 August 2028, and expressed confidence that Amaravati would become a leading hub for

quantum computing by December, with quantum computers supplied globally from there within two years.

Naidu assured support for farmers who willingly surrendered land for the capital project, noting their continued cooperation in Phase-2 land acquisitions. He also spoke about gold mining in Kurnool, which is expected to produce 50% of the country's gold, helping to reduce reliance on imports. Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, MP Harish, and Minister Payyavula Keshav attended the event. The CRDA has allocated 23 acres in Nidamarru for the hospital and university, with officials promising modern medical services within two years.

## Minister Bharath assesses civic issues in Kurnool's 8th ward

Kurnool: State Minister for Industries, Commerce, and Food Processing TG Bharath on Tuesday emphasized the government's commitment to transparent and accountable governance during his visit to the 8th Ward of Kurnool city. Participating in the "Mana Nagaram-Mana Badhyata" (Our City-Our Responsibility) programme, the Minister conducted a door-to-door outreach initiative, interacting directly with residents to understand their civic concerns and explain the various welfare schemes currently being implemented. Addressing the gathering, Minister Bharath stated that these field-level visits, conducted under the directions of Chief Minister N

Chandrababu Naidu, allow the administration to bypass bureaucratic layers and respond to public needs more effectively. He noted that the citizens of Andhra Pradesh are largely satisfied with the state's current development trajectory. However, the Minister did not mince words regarding administrative efficiency; he expressed serious dissatisfaction with the functioning of several Secretariat employees.

He warned that staff members failing to address minor grievances in a timely and responsible manner would face disciplinary action, reiterating that public convenience remains the government's top priority.



# Procure food grains on a mission mode

CM Revanth directs officials to take immediate steps to avoid delay

Hyderabad

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday directed officials concerned to take steps for expeditious procurement of paddy and other crops.

His remarks come against the backdrop of opposition protests over the alleged delay in the procurement of food grains from farmers.

Reddy, who held a video conference with district Collectors, said any negligence in the process of purchase from farmers would not be tolerated. Officials were also asked to undertake field visits to inspect the



procurement process.

He said officials should take steps to avoid any shortage of gunny bags and also workers who carry the grain bags to lorries, an official release said. In response to hardships faced by farmers

at procurement centres due to extreme heat and unseasonal rains, the CM directed officials to take measures to see that the ryots do not face any trouble.

He instructed officials to swiftly move paddy post

procurement to godowns and act against contractors who fail to arrange adequate number of lorries as per agreement.

Officials should not hesitate to file criminal cases against such contractors, he said.

He told the transport department commissioner to provide a lorry to shift procured paddy from the centres. He directed the district Collectors to take appropriate measures based on the ground situation and cautioned that the government would not hesitate to take action against the Collectors.

Reddy, who put the onus on Collectors for the smooth procurement of paddy and other crops, instructed them to send regular reports to the Chief Secretary. The Collectors can take the help of the police if necessary to ensure that the procurement process is conducted smoothly.

The opposition BJP and BRS have staged protests in the state in recent weeks over the alleged delay in procurement and the problems faced by farmers, including heat, unseasonal rains and harassment of ryots in the name of dampness.

# My words were distorted: Minister Ponnam

Hyderabad

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar clarified that his only intention in speaking regarding the case involving Union Minister Bandi Sanjay's son, Bhagirath, was to advocate for justice for the victim. He stated that his remarks focused solely on the issue of ensuring justice for the victim in this case, and that some individuals had twisted his words.

Minister Ponnam addressed the media in Hyderabad on Tuesday. He noted that he had merely suggested that Bhagirath



matter. In response, he pointed out that the victim in this case also belongs to the same community. He emphasized that his sole objective and desire was to ensure that justice is served to the victim. He asserted that, at no point, did he suggest or advocate for a compromise in this matter. He made it clear that the Congress party stands firmly behind the victim and offers them its complete support. Minister Ponnam Prabhakar affirmed that he would continue to fight until justice is delivered to the victim.

should face an inquiry in this case and prove his innocence. He mentioned that Munnuru Kapu associations had alleged that the Congress party was acting with vindictiveness in this

# Were PM, BJP not aware of forex concerns during assembly polls: Owaisi

Hyderabad

Finding fault with the Prime Minister's austerity call, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday asked why Narendra Modi and BJP did not talk about the need to save forex during the recent state elections.

He also alleged that one of the purposes of calling for austerity measures is to save dollars so that the government can "give to Trump" to purchase oil from the US.

"The question is, was the Prime Minister asking for votes during the elections without telling people that they are going to raise petrol, diesel and aviation fuel prices after the polls? And now he is presenting this as patriotism, saying that a true patriot is someone who tolerates all these hardships," he told reporters here.

The Hyderabad MP claimed that people of the country would get an "invoice" that there will be a sharp rise in prices of



petrol, diesel and aviation fuel.

He asked BJP whether it was not aware of these issues during recent state elections.

"(US President Donald) Trump says you purchase from me to overcome your energy crunch since you made the trade agreement. The PM says don't purchase gold, avoid foreign travel, and reduce consumption of edible oil. Why is he saying all this? So that he can save dollars and give to Trump in Houston. That is the real purpose. You see whether it is patriotism or not," he said.

# Cong misinterpreted PM Modi's austerity push: NRR

Hyderabad

BJP State President N Ramchander Rao strongly criticized the Congress party for allegedly misinterpreting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to people for an austerity lifestyle to face challenges in view of ongoing West Asia conflict.

PM Modi while addressing a massive public meeting yesterday here suggested people to follow some measures including restricting fuel use, gold purchase and foreign tours to face challenges in view of West-Asia conflict. Addressing a press conference at the state party office here, Rao condemned the criticism from CM Revanth Reddy and Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge asserting that the Prime Minister's call for self-reliance and financial discipline was made in the interest of the nation's future.

"The PM has urged citizens to use public transport, solar pumps, and electric vehicles while supporting 'Vocal for Local,' he said, adding that these are mea-



sures for environmental protection and fuel conservation, practiced even by world leaders in London, Singapore, and Japan," he emphasized that individual financial discipline is the bedrock of a nation's economic strength. Taking a dig at the Congress party, the BJP state chief reminded Congress leaders that their own leaders had appealed for public sacrifice by Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi when they were Prime Ministers.

While Jawaharlal Nehru had asked citizens to reduce rice and bread consumption and suggested fasting once a week. He also invited the RSS to the Republic Day parade in 1963 to honor their

service during the China war and Lal Bahadur Shastri had called for "Monday Fasts" to tackle food shortages while Indira Gandhi had promoted "Talk Less, Work More" and implemented forced sterilizations during the Emergency, he pointed out.

He further stated that Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister had said that "Money does not grow on trees" while justifying subsidy cuts. Rao reminded that even Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had appealed to the public in 1967 that "not to buy gold" for national interest and Congress leaders like P. Chidambaram asked people to stop buying gold in 2013. He questioned Congress leaders why there

was no outcry then?

Comparing development works between the UPA and NDA governments, he said Foreign Exchange Reserves increased from \$304 billion (2014) to \$655 billion today and India moved from the 10th largest to the 5th largest economy globally.

The BJP chief noted that while petrol prices have skyrocketed in the US (59 per cent) and Canada (43 per cent) due to West Asian tensions, the Indian government has kept prices stable. He added that while neighboring countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka face fuel rationing, India remains secure due to proactive governance. He urged the public to voluntarily follow the PM's suggestions such as prioritizing domestic tourism over foreign travel and buying Indian-made goods to further strengthen the economy.

"The BJP works with a 'Nation First' ideology, while Congress prioritizes 'Power First.' Politics should never come before the welfare of the country," Rao emphasized.

# Nine held for attacking cattle transporters, police in Hyd

Hyderabad

Nine people were arrested here for allegedly assaulting and injuring cattle transporters and police personnel after "unlawfully" stopping a vehicle carrying oxen, police said on Tuesday.

The incident happened on the intervening night between May 11 and 12 at the Kothapet crossroad. Some persons stopped the vehicle, which was carrying eight bulls with their owners, and the animals were going for a film shooting at Purani Haveli, a release from the Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate said.

The mob created a nuisance on suspicion that the animals were being taken for slaughter and wrongfully restrained the vehicle occupants, abused and assaulted them and attacked the police personnel who reached the spot after receiving the information, it said.

Subsequently, when the police personnel were shifting the vehicle along with bulls in order to drop it at a goshala for safe custody, some of the group members followed on two-wheelers and overtook the vehicle and stopped it on

the road. They then pelted stones at the vehicle and police party, causing severe injuries to police personnel, including an Inspector of Police. The vehicle was also damaged.

Police brought the situation under control and registered a case under relevant sections of the BNS against those involved in the incident.

Police later apprehended nine accused persons and produced them before a city court, which sent them for judicial custody.

Efforts are being made to identify and apprehend the rest of the accused, police added.

Police further said that within the limits of the Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate, seven police checkpoints have been functioning round-the-clock since May 7.

Police appealed to the public that any information related to cow transportation may be shared with the police for appropriate action and warned that no individual or group shall take the law into their own hands or create law and order problems based on rumours or suspicion.

# NTA cancels...

Earlier in the day, the NTA, in a statement on X, said the decision to cancel the exam was taken in the interest of maintaining transparency and preserving trust in the national examination system.

The examination was conducted on May 3 across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad with nearly 23 lakh candidates appearing nationwide with a turnout of 96.92 per cent.

The agency said the inputs received, taken together with findings shared by law enforcement agencies, established that the "present examination process could not be allowed to stand".

Later, talking to reporters, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh said, "Paper leaks must end with immediate effect. It is unfortunate that we are at this stage. This is a matter of concern for the children of our country, for their parents, and for the entire ecosystem."

"I understand that more than two lakh people were involved in the examination system. This is distressing for everyone involved. We take responsibility for what has happened; it was wrong. We are cancelling it and preparing to conduct it again with the assurance that such incidents will not be repeated."

# Students question...

mindset to keep preparing when everything feels like it is falling apart," Das added.

Lamenting the cancellation of the exam, a student from Dehradun said the NEET preparation involves "so many sleepless nights".

"It feels really bad. We worked so hard," the student said. In Shimla, Sonakshi

Pandit, sister of a NEET aspirant, questioned the credibility of the NTA.

"Why should students suffer for the incompetence of the NTA which failed to ensure secrecy of examination papers," Pandit, who is also preparing for NEET, said and demanded that the medical entrance exam be conducted by the AIIMS-Delhi.

"I have seen my brother working very hard for the past three years. He was expected to get 686 marks in NEET 2026 which implies that he could have been among the top three in Himachal Pradesh," she said.

In 2024 too, the NEET paper was leaked but it seems the NTA did not learn any lesson from that incident, Pandit said. Another Shimla student Medayansh, who appeared in NEET 2026, said, "The students are stressed. The examination should be re-conducted only in areas where the paper was leaked."

Meanwhile, a massive protest organised by the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) broke out outside the Shastri Bhawan in the national capital on Tuesday against the alleged paper leak in NEET-UG.

Several members of the Congress party's student wing were seen participating in the protest, while holding placards that read 'PM compromised, paper compromised', 'paper leak, Modi sarkar weak', and 'doctor ki degree bikau hain' (doctor's degree is for sale).

# Oppn demands...

At a press conference, he alleged "political patronage" in paper leaks, saying the NEET question paper was leaked four times in the past nine years and none of the accused were punished.

He said that paper leaks did not happen out of nowhere, as he alleged complicity of higher ups, and accused the government of toying with the future of lakhs of students.

# KCR focuses on...

context, a prolonged discussion is currently underway regarding the dissolution of the existing committees at the village, Mandal, and district levels. Reports suggest that KCR has issued directives to elect new committees to replace the current ones. It appears a decision has been made to prioritize youth who work diligently for the party when constituting these committees.

Furthermore, it is reported that KCR is strategizing with the leaders regarding the upcoming MPTC, ZPTC, and GHMC elections. It was reported that KCR also asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Telangana. The issue involving the case concerning Bandi Sanjay's son also appears to have come up for discussion. It is reported that BRS leader R.S. Praveen Kumar briefed KCR on this matter.

KCR is holding discussions with BRS leaders regarding the new party membership enrollment drive. Furthermore, it is understood that KCR has directed the leaders to wage strong struggles against the major issues currently being faced by the public and farmers. Along with the SIR process undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI), activities like voter list revision are being carried out entirely through a digital process. In this context, the BRS Party General Secretaries' meeting opined that party membership

should also be conducted through digitalization keeping the future in mind.

In the crucial meeting it was decided to appoint a Membership Coordinator for each constituency from the State Committee as well as appointing 'Membership Enrollment Coordination Committees' within two to three days for each mandal and municipal body to smoothly conduct the membership enrollment program. During the meeting it was decided that training should be given on the procedures related to the digital membership process.

# Punish my son if...

a mistake, including my son, all are equal before law. If my son made a mistake, 100 per cent he should be punished," he said.

Asserting that he would not be cowed down, Kumar said he would not spare anyone who troubled him, his party, activists and "dragged his family to the road" through their conspiracies. He drew an analogy with Lord Hanuman who performed 'Lanka Dahan' when his tail was set on fire.

He said he would tour entire Telangana to mobilize public opinion against those who allegedly made conspiracies against him. In a veiled attack on BRS, he said he would call on the families of 29 intermediate (12th grade) students who committed suicides after they failed in exams when the regional party was in power. He also said he did not give adequate time to his son as he treated the party activists as his own family and that his wife was feeling distressed

following the allegations.

The case was registered against Sanjay Kumar's son, Bhageerath on May 8 based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl, who alleged that the accused was in a relationship with her daughter and sexually harassed her.

The alleged relationship began about seven-eight months ago, police said.

Kumar's son had denied the charge and filed a complaint with Karimnagar police, alleging extortion and criminal intimidation by the teen and her parents.

# Police hunt for...

The official further said more stringent sections of the POCSO Act were invoked in the case.

The case was registered on May 8 at Pet Basheerabad police station here based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that Bhageerath was in a relationship with her daughter and sexually harassed her. The alleged relationship began about seven-eight months ago, police said.

Kumar's son had denied the charge and alleged extortion and criminal intimidation by the teen and her parents. Bhageerath had last week lodged a complaint with the police in Karimnagar, alleging that the girl, who had become acquainted with him, had invited him to family functions and group gatherings. An FIR was registered based on Bhageerath's complaint. In the complaint, Bhageerath stated that, believing the girl's family to be trustworthy, he accompanied them on visits to certain holy places as part of a group

of friends.

He further alleged that the girl and her parents later pressured him to marry her. When he rejected the proposal, the girl's parents allegedly demanded money and threatened to file false complaints against him if he failed to pay.

Bhageerath further alleged that, out of fear, he paid Rs 50,000 to the girl's father, but the family later demanded Rs 5 crore. He also claimed that they threatened that the girl's mother would die by suicide if he failed to comply.

# TN CM Vijay's trust...

party chief Edappadi K Palaniswami and these two senior leaders.

During the visit to the IUML party office, Vijay expressed his gratitude for their support and reaffirmed his commitment to safeguarding the rights of minorities. Later, IUML president K M Kader Mohideen said his party welcomed Vijay's decision to shut more than 700 TASMAL liquor outlets in the state. After a brief stay at the IUML office, Vijay proceeded to TNCC headquarters here and met senior party leaders, including Congress state president K Selvaperunthagai and the party's Tamil Nadu in-charge Girish Chodankar.

Congress Legislative party leader S Rajeshkumar, MLAs and former TNCC presidents were also present at Sathyamurthy Bhavan, the party's headquarters. The Congress, with five MLAs, was the first to provide support to TVK in forming the government. In addition, Vijay also met VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan at his residence in Chennai. Vijay, honoured the leaders with silk shawls and bouquets.

# Rupee sinks further...

Moreover, market participants interpreted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments over the weekend regarding fuel conservation and lower imports as a subtle acknowledgement that India's trade deficit and balance-of-payments pressures could worsen if crude prices remain elevated for longer.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.57 and lost further ground to touch an all-time intraday low of 95.74 against the American currency.

The USD/INR pair eventually settled at a record closing low of 95.68, down 40 paise from its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee tanked 79 paise to settle at its lowest level of 95.28 against the US dollar.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias amid uncertainties between US and Iran peace talks after the US rejected Iran's response to the US' peace proposal."

"Surge in crude oil prices and a strong dollar may further drag the rupee. However, any intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 95.30 to 96," said Anuj Choudhary, Research analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

# Right to Freedom...

their right," Gupta said. Responding to his submission, Justice Nagarathna said, "In the name of social reform, you can't breach the Right to Freedom of Religion under Article 25(1) of the Constitution."

Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, appearing for one

of the intervenors, submitted that in the context of the Sabarimala temple, the whole basis of debarring women from entry is that they are of menstrual age.

"Consider me as a 10-year-old girl. I am going with my family. Menstruation is a taboo and stigma," he said.

Justice Nagarathna then remarked, "It is a taboo, if you view it like that. If you don't consider it a taboo, it is not. The question is how you view it. How a devotee would view it, not how a non-devotee would view it."

Hansaria argued that if a social welfare legislation is made by the State, it has to be upheld and cannot be struck down on the grounds of any religious practice.

The CJJ then said, "If the people of this country, through their elected representatives, raise a common voice that this issue requires social reforms, probably the court will accept it as a social reform. But if it is against the wish and will of the people, something is thrust upon them or, as a rule of gagging them, maybe the court will interfere." Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for rationalists of the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti, submitted that rationalists are people who look at everything, including religion, through the filter of reason.

Hegde said the Constitution itself embeds rationalist values through provisions such as Article 51A(h), which imposes a duty to develop scientific temper and reformist thinking.

Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, appearing for late Swami Agnivesh, submitted that the Constitution consciously envisages reform within religions, particularly within Hinduism.

# Prisons must evolve into centres of reform: TG Gov

Hyderabad

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Tuesday said that social progress requires not only punishment but also reform, and that prisons must transform from being mere centres of incarceration into institutions that foster introspection, personality development and new beginnings.

The Governor made these remarks after inaugurating the "Feel the Jail" experiential programme and the Jail Museum at the State Institute of Correctional Administration (SICA), Chanchalguda here, a release from the Lok Bhavan said.

Shukla inspected the specially designed "Feel the Jail" cells, intended to offer visitors a first-hand understanding of prison life and the realities of incarceration.

He later inaugurated the Jail Museum and toured its various sections, which depict the history and evolution of the prison system.



The exhibits included displays on prisons during the Nizam era, the contribution of prisoners to the construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, model prison cells, as well as initiatives aimed at prisoner rehabilitation, prison industries, and the achievements of the department. The Governor also reviewed products manufactured by inmates and watched a documentary titled "Valmiki", which highlighted reformative measures being

undertaken to encourage positive behavioural transformation among prisoners.

Addressing the gathering, Shukla said the inauguration of the Jail Museum represented not merely the opening of a new facility, but a significant milestone in the state's journey towards a more humane and reform-oriented justice system.

While the display of old chains and prison cells reminded visitors of the harsh

penal systems of the past, the emphasis on skill development and prison-made products reflected a meaningful shift "from retribution to transformation," he observed.

He said the true character of a progressive society is reflected in the sensitivity and responsibility with which it seeks to reform those who have erred, adding that prisoner rehabilitation is a moral responsibility of society. The Governor

also recalled his tenure as the Prison Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Commending the Telangana Prisons and Correctional Services Department for prioritising rehabilitation alongside punishment, he described the "Feel the Jail" initiative as an innovative educational programme. Such initiatives, he said, would help inculcate respect for law, discipline and civic responsibility, particularly among the youth, while also reminding citizens of the value of freedom and the importance of abiding by the law. He expressed confidence that the Jail Museum, the fifth in the country, would emerge not only as a tourist attraction, but also as a significant platform for education, research and public awareness.

Telangana Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services Soumya Mishra said that the Telangana Prisons Museum has been developed as a comprehensive institution of awareness, education, research, and reflection.

# TG makes strides in EV adoption, records 91K registrations in '25-26

Hyderabad

Telangana is making strides in Electric Vehicle (EV) adoption with 91,572 new registrations and a market value of Rs 6,297 crore being recorded in the financial year 2025-26, Special Chief Secretary for Energy, Navin Mittal, stated on Tuesday. He was presenting Telangana's EV success story and execution strategy at a national conference titled 'Enabling Nationwide EV Charging Infrastructure under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme' held at Hotel Taj Yeshwantpur, Bengaluru.

Several key stakeholders from central ministries, state departments, public sector enterprises, EV manufacturers and charging infrastructure providers were present at the conference.

Navin Mittal stated that over 2.8 lakh electric vehicles have been registered in Telangana, adding that nearly five per cent of new vehicle registrations are EVs.

He said that the state currently operates 325 e-buses from six city depots and EV retrofits 240 diesel buses. Telangana is also imple-



menting one of India's largest e-bus programs, targeting 2,800 electric buses by 2030 and 12,000 by 2035, Mittal said. Moreover, the state is offering a 100 per cent exemption from road tax and registration fees for EVs. TGREDCO has also developed a single-window clearance mechanism for EV charging stations through which 1,244 approvals have been processed to date, he said.

TGREDCO also plans to deploy new Electric Vehicle Public Charging Stations (EVPCS) at 116 locations under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme, for which a sanction of Rs 10.24 crore has been obtained under Phase I.

Telangana plans to establish 6,000 EV charging and battery swapping stations by 2030 and 12,000 by 2035, Mittal said. Moreover, the state is offering a 100 per cent exemption from road tax and registration fees for EVs. TGREDCO has also developed a single-window clearance mechanism for EV charging stations through which 1,244 approvals have been processed to date, he said.

# Anti-drug affidavit must for TG inter admissions

Hyderabad

The Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TG BIE) has made the submission of an anti-drug affidavit compulsory for inter admissions 2026.

According to the admission schedule released on Monday, both students and their parents must submit the affidavit during the admission process. The board stated that admissions will be granted only after submission of the document.

As per parents of students, for a notarised affidavit, students and parents need to approach lawyers for the process, which could create inconvenience and additional burden. They are of the opinion that a simpler option, such as allowing students and parents to submit a written declaration instead of a notarised affi-



dativ, should be considered.

The first phase of Telangana inter first-year admissions 2026 will begin on Tuesday. Application forms will be available till May 31. As per the schedule, classwork for the academic year will start from June 1. The first phase of admissions must be completed by June 30.

The board directed junior colleges not to conduct entrance examinations for admissions. Admissions should be given strictly

based on marks secured in Class X examinations.

College principals have been allowed to provide provisional admissions based on online marks memos.

However, final admission will be confirmed only after submission of the original marks memo.

The board also made Aadhaar card details mandatory for all students seeking admission.

# TG eyes more nursing jobs in Germany, plans seat hike



Hyderabad

Minister of Labour, Employment, Training and Factories Dr Vivek Venkataswamy on Tuesday said that employment opportunities in Germany are a great avenue for the youth and advised nurses to treat the challenge of adapting to a new language and new environment as an opportunity for growth. He was interacting with nurses undergoing training under the Triple Win Programme conducted by Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Ltd (TOMCOM) in collaboration with the German Federal Employment Agency. The programme helps nurses with language acquisition and integration into Germany.

The Minister asked the trainees to focus seriously on

learning German and urged them to reach a level where they could comfortably read German books and understand the culture of the country they would be working in. Till now, 46 nurses have completed language training, 15 candidates have received offer letters, and seven nurses have already joined jobs in Germany, the minister said, adding that he would discuss the possibility of increasing the number of nursing colleges and seats in the State with Chief Minister Revanah Reddy.

During the session, the Minister also conducted an online meeting with nurses currently working in Germany, telling them that the success of their batch will open doors for many more candidates in the future.

# No more ticket price hikes for single screens in TG

Hyderabad

The Telugu film industry is facing a serious discussion over the survival of single screen theatres. On Tuesday, exhibitors from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh held an emergency meeting to discuss the future of theatres and the current revenue system.

The main demand from the exhibitors is simple. They want the old rental system to be removed and a percentage sharing model to be introduced for single screen theatres, just like multiplexes. Single screen theatre owners say they are struggling with heavy maintenance costs, electricity bills, staff salaries and fixed rents. Under the present rental system, theatres have to pay a fixed amount to producers or distributors, whether the film performs well or not.

Because of this, many exhibitors say they are falling



into debt. They also said that some theatre buildings can earn more money if they are rented out as godowns, but they are still running cinemas only because of their love for films. One of the major decisions taken in the meeting is about ticket prices. Exhibitors said that ticket prices in single screen theatres should not be increased, even if the government gives permission for hikes during big film releases. They said this decision is mainly for poor and middle class audiences who cannot always afford multiplex tickets. The aim is to keep cinema entertainment accessible to common people.



# Businessman, son held for assaulting traffic constable

Hyderabad

A 47-year-old businessman and a minor were arrested for allegedly assaulting a Hyderabad Traffic Police Constable while on duty in Hyderabad.

According to a press release by the Goshamahal Police, the incident took place near Labour Adda on Monday. Ved Prakash Mittal and his son were travelling on a two-wheeler when they entered into an argument with the traffic police constable for creating a nuisance on the road.



# Fire in open parking field, several vehicles gutted

Hyderabad

Several vehicles stored by an auto finance company, police and the Regional Transport Office (RTO) at an open field in Indresham, Patancheru, were gutted in a fire, on Tuesday.

Six vehicles that were damaged in the fire, including five tippers and one lorry, belonged to Sriram Auto Finance. Meanwhile, several other cars, bikes and autos that were gutted had been

seized by the police in criminal cases or by the RTO from no parking zones, an official from the Patancheru fire station said.

The vehicles stored by the auto finance company reportedly belonged to people who had defaulted on their loan payments.

The fire emerged from dry grass near one of the tippers; however, the reason for the fire is not yet known. Total damage suffered is also under investigation.



# Two killed as lorries collide, catch fire on highway

Hyderabad

At least two people were killed after two lorries collided on the Warangal-Khammam national highway at Chandru Thanda in Tirumalyapalem mandal of Khammam district on Tuesday.

One of the lorries was carrying onions, and the other was carrying coal. The collision was so severe that both vehicles caught fire, leaving the drivers with no chance of escape. Tirumalyapalem police rushed to the spot and shifted the injured lorry cleaners to a nearby hospital for treatment. A fire engine was also dispatched and brought the blaze under control.

# Govt to launch Indiramma Housing Scheme second phase on June 2

Hyderabad

Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Tuesday said the second phase of the Indiramma Housing Scheme will be launched in Adilabad on June 2, coinciding with Telangana Formation Day. Modalities for the second phase would be discussed and finalised during the Cabinet meeting scheduled on May 21, he added.

He was speaking at a review meeting on revenue and housing issues for the combined Rangareddy and Hyderabad districts at the Housing Corporation Head Office on Tuesday.

The Minister directed officials to identify suitable lands constituency-wise and



ensure that Indiramma houses are constructed within 5 to 8 kilometres of the beneficiaries' present locations.

Officials were instructed to identify government lands, slum areas, bhoodan lands and dilapidated housing colonies built under previous

schemes for the construction of houses within respective constituencies.

Stating that the government would not tolerate encroachment of government lands, the Minister warned of strict action against illegal land occupation.

# Maoist leader Narahari surrenders before police

Hyderabad

Senior Maoist leader Pasanuri Narahari alias Santosh has surrendered before the Telangana police along with his wife, officials said on Tuesday.

Narahari, a native of Telangana, is a Central Committee member of the proscribed CPI (Maoist), while his wife is a cadre of the organisation, they said.

The Telangana police had recently said only four active underground cadres from Telangana remain in various formations outside the state.

Of the four, Muppala Laxman Rao alias Ganapathi and Pasanuri Narahari are central committee members, while Jade Ratna Bai and Vartha Shekhar are state committee members.



The Telangana Police has appealed to the underground leaders and cadres of the CPI (Maoist) to renounce their armed struggle, reintegrate into the mainstream and take full advantage of the state government's policy of Surrender and Rehabilitation.

As of April 10, a total of 818 Maoists have surrendered since March 2024, police earlier said.

# Fresh scrutiny over gold ornaments donated to Anjanadri temple

Hyderabad

Confusion has surfaced over the gold ornaments worth nearly Rs 2.50 crore donated to the Anjanadri Hanuman temple by a Hyderabad-based businessman, prompting the Koppal district administration to initiate a fresh review of the submitted records and valuation documents.

District authorities have clarified that the ornaments will be formally taken under the custody of the temple committee only after completion of the panchnam process and verification of all supporting documents.



The controversy began after businessman Mahesh Reddy of AMR Private Limited, said to be a close associate of former minister Gali Janardhan Reddy, donated several gold-coated ornaments and kavachas to the temple on May 8. The offer-

ings included decorative religious items presented as a major contribution to the famous Anjanadri shrine, believed to be the birthplace of Lord Hanuman.

Representing the donors, architect and sculptor Gundachari Stapathi had

informed officials that the kavachas were made of copper and coated with 60-gauge gold sheets. According to him, the estimated weight of gold used in the ornaments was around 1,280 grams.

However, the assessment conducted by government-appointed jewellers and bank valuers reportedly presented a significantly different picture. Experts who examined the ornaments stated that the actual quantity of gold coating on the copper structures could be only around 250 to 300 grams.

The sharp difference between the donor's claim and the expert assessment

has triggered questions regarding the actual value and composition of the donated ornaments. The discrepancy has now led the district administration to conduct a detailed re-verification of all records.

Koppal Deputy Commissioner Dr Suresh Itnal had earlier issued a notice directing the donors to submit bills, invoices and certificates related to the ornaments before May 12. Following the notice, Gundachari Stapathi submitted the required documents on behalf of the businessman to the district administration on May 11.

# Late-night spot near Gandipet for adventure activities

Hyderabad

Hyderabad's adventure seekers are always searching for new weekend hangout spots. In a city where busy work schedules often leave little time for recreation, outdoor adventure spaces are offering Hyderabadis a refreshing break from routine life and Gandipet's Red Rush Adventure Park is quickly becoming one of the city's favourite destinations for outdoor fun and thrilling activities.

Located beside The Golconda Resorts and Spa, the park is attracting college groups, families, birthday parties, and office teams looking for something more exciting than the usual cafe or movie outing. The venue is open every day from 11 am



to 2 am, making it suitable for both daytime adventures and late-night group fun.

Red Rush offers several action-packed games and activities in one place. Visitors can enjoy: 1. Paintball battles, ATV off-road rides, Archery, Rifle shooting, Axe throwing, Cornhole games, Sumo wrestling, VR cricket and

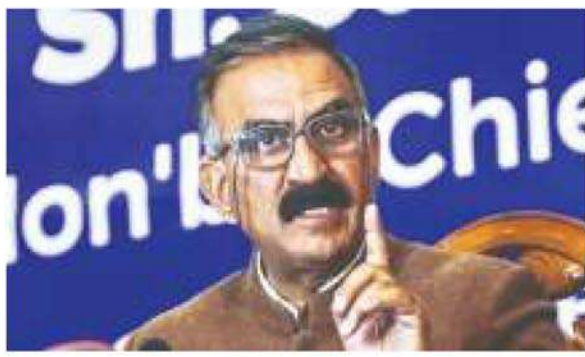
Zorb ball. Among these, paintball and ATV rides are the biggest crowd favourites. While paintball brings team competition and strategy, ATV rides offer a thrilling off-road driving experience. Sumo wrestling has also become popular because of the fun and hilarious moments it creates among groups of friends.

## CM Sukhu reviews READY-HP, emphasises resilient infra

Shimla

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Tuesday reviewed the Resilient Action for Development and Disaster Recovery- Himachal Pradesh (READY-HP) project, which was rolled out in January this year, to rebuild infrastructure damaged by disasters, enhance early warning systems, and strengthen livelihoods.

Sukhu convened a high-level meeting to review the READY-HP project, an initiative funded jointly by the World Bank and the Himachal Pradesh government. He said a total outlay of Rs 2,687 crore has been allocated for the project, describing it as a crucial initiative for strengthening disaster resilience in the state. He said that the objective of READY-HP is to support resilient disaster recovery, a



statement issued here said.

While referring to the increasing impact of natural calamities, Sukhu said that the state witnessed 86 cloudbursts, 234 landslides and 121 flash floods between 2023 and 2025, resulting in a loss of above Rs 12,500 crore to the state. He said Himachal Pradesh is highly vulnerable to natural calamities as the state falls in the young and fragile Himalayan geological

region. The project will also focus on developing resilient public services, promoting livelihood opportunities through initiatives like green panchayats and strengthening risk informed social safety and insurance mechanisms, he said. The CM stressed the need for developing robust infrastructure to support farmers and horticulturists so that their livelihoods remain protected and resilient during natural disasters.

# Himanta takes oath as Assam CM for second successive term

4 MLAs sworn in as ministers

Guwahati

Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Assam for the second consecutive term on Tuesday, marking the formation of the third BJP-led NDA government in a row in the north-eastern state.

Four MLAs - BJP's Rameshwar Teli and Ajanta Neog, AGP's Atul Bora, Charan Boro of BPF - also took oath as ministers.

Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office to Sarma and the four legislators at a grand ceremony held at the Veterinary Ground in Khanapara area in Guwahati. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin



Gadkari, Sarbananda Sonowal, Pabitra Margherita, chief ministers and deputy CMs of BJP-ruled states and BJP president Nitin Nabin were present at the swearing-in ceremony.

The chief minister, attired in dhoti and kurta with the

traditional 'gamosa' draped around his neck, took oath in the Assamese language.

Teli, Bora and Neog did the same while the BPF minister took the oath in the Bodo language. The Prime Minister congratulated Sarma and the ministers after they were

sworn in. After the oath-taking ceremony was over, the PM greeted the people and those present on the dais before leaving the venue. "With the blessings of Maa Kamakhya, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev and the people of Assam, I took oath as the chief minister. Along with the council of ministers, we look forward to serving our people and continue to fulfil all their aspirations," Sarma said in a post on X.

Earlier, in a social media post, he said Assam will scale new heights of development in the coming days.

"Honoured to reaffirm my oath to the people of Assam as their Mukhya Sevak," he said. Neog, Bora and Boro were members of Sarma's first cabinet, while Teli, a

former Union minister, returned to state politics.

Neog was the finance minister, while Bora took care of the agriculture department and Boro held the transport department in the outgoing government.

The NDA won a record 102 seats of the 126-member assembly, including the BJP's 82 constituencies.

The BJP allies, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF), bagged 10 seats each.

Sarma thanked Modi, Shah, Nabin and the people of Assam after the swearing-in ceremony. The CM said that it was an extremely emotional moment for him as he took the oath as the chief minister of Assam for the second consecutive term.

## Unable to sell paddy, Odisha farmer seeks euthanasia

Bhubaneswar

Unable to sell his paddy at the state-run market yard, a farmer in Odisha's Bargarh district has sought permission from the government for euthanasia.

The distressed farmer, identified as Rohit Bhoi of Sahara Tikra village under Bheden block, on Monday submitted a petition to the Bargarh Collector Aditya Goyan when the officer came to hold a public grievance session.

"I want 'ichha mrutyu' (euthanasia) for being unable to sell my paddy even after waiting for six months for procurement. I am under distress and unable to afford medicine for my elderly parents and fund my children's education. Therefore, it is better to die," farmer Bhoi wrote in the petition.

The farmer said that, though procurement for the



new kharif season has already begun, his paddy from the previous season remains unsold. He has harvested around 220 packets of paddy, but the state-run 'mandi' is yet to procure them. Bhoi pointed out that cultivation is the sole source of his family's income. "I have written several letters to the district authorities, but none paid any heed towards my plight," he told the district collector. "Left with no option, I sought permission for

euthanasia," the farmer said. Odisha Cooperation minister Pradeep Bal Samanta said, "The matter came to my knowledge just now. I will immediately ask the department and the concerned district collector to take up the matter and ensure that no injustice is done to the farmer."

"If there is a problem, there is a solution. We should discuss the matter instead of seeking euthanasia or taking any extreme step. If the

farmer takes any adverse step, it will harm him, his family, the government and the state as a whole. Therefore, I will ask authorities to address the farmer's issue immediately," the minister told reporters.

Meanwhile, local Atabira MLA Nihar Mahananda said he would certainly take up the farmer's issue.

Opposition BJD came down heavily on the state government and "blamed" it for the "mismanagement" in paddy procurement for which a farmer has been seeking euthanasia.

"This is really distressing. What a government the BJP is running in Odisha? A farmer wants euthanasia, a tribal carries his sister's skeleton to the bank to get his dead sister's money, and murders have become a daily affair," said former minister and BJD MLA Arun Kumar Sahoo.

## Surrender extra vehicles, bring lunch from home

Lucknow Mayor to officials on PM's austerity push

Lucknow

Acting on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for reducing fuel consumption and promoting resource conservation, Lucknow Mayor Sushma Kharkwal on Tuesday directed municipal officials to surrender extra official vehicles and advised staff to carry lunch from home to cut unnecessary fuel use.

In a letter to Municipal Commissioner Gaurav Kumar, the mayor ordered that officials and engineers currently allotted two municipal vehicles must immediately surrender one and retain only a single vehicle to ensure rational use of fuel, accord-



ing to an official statement. Aimed at reducing avoidable vehicle movement and fuel consumption, she also instructed department heads to ask employees to avoid returning home during lunch hours and instead bring food from home, it stated.

Reiterating austerity within the system, Kharkwal further directed that official vehicles be

allotted strictly according to eligibility rules.

The mayor also set an example by ordering the withdrawal of one of the two official vehicles allotted to her, according to the statement.

The measures follow the prime minister's appeal made in the context of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, urging citizens and institutions to minimise the use of fuels such as petrol and diesel, avoid foreign travel, purchase of gold and other measures to save foreign exchange.

The municipal commissioner has been asked to ensure strict implementation of the directives and submit a compliance report, the statement added.

## New Bengal Chief Secy Agarwal vows transparent governance

Advices officers to follow rules

Kolkata

New West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Agarwal on Tuesday said that the state's bureaucracy would ensure a transparent administration and advised officers to go by the rulebook.

Agarwal, who was the Chief Electoral Officer of the state, was appointed the chief secretary on Monday. On the decision to terminate re-employment and the extension of tenure of officers beyond the normal superannuation age of 60 years, Agarwal said all policy decisions are taken by the state Cabinet, and the bureaucracy executes them.

## Self-styled godman rapes 15-year-old girl in Thane; held

Thane

A self-styled godman has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a 15-year-old girl on the pretext of performing rituals to ward off "evil spirits" from her house in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Tuesday. Shahid Mohammad Wahid Shaikh (78), a resident of Ambernath, was arrested on Monday in connection with the assault, which took place last week. According to the police, the survivor had been living with her mother in Kalyan town, following the deaths of her father and grandmother a few months ago, and Shaikh, who was acquainted with the mother, allegedly convinced them that an evil spirit was haunting their house. "Under the

pretext of performing rituals to cleanse their house, the accused gained entry into their residence. On May 2 and May 6, taking advantage of the mother's absence, the accused allegedly molested and raped the teen," an official said.

The accused has been booked under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, and the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, he said.

Shaikh was apprehended and produced before a local court, which remanded him to police custody till May 13, he said, adding that further probe is underway.

## BJP leaders arrive in big convoys despite PM's austerity appeal; opposition cries foul

Bhopal

The opposition Congress in Madhya Pradesh has slammed the BJP after leaders of the ruling party, newly appointed to state corporations, arrived in large convoys despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to reduce fuel consumption.

The state government recently made political appointments to various corporations and boards.

Saubhagya Singh Thakur, appointed as chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Textbook Corporation, arrived in Bhopal from Ujjain on Monday with his supporters to take charge of the post. Videos of his convoy, consisting of several vehicles, went viral.



Thakur later visited Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's residence with his supporters to thank the latter for the appointment.

Similarly, Rakesh Singh Jadon, appointed as Vice President of the Khadi Village Industries Board,

also arrived with a large convoy from Vidisha.

State Congress president Jitu Patwari said, "PM Modi should first follow his own message and ensure that BJP leaders also follow it. Crores of rupees worth of petrol and diesel were

spent on his roadshow yesterday. Forty chartered planes are being sent for BJP leaders and chief ministers to attend the swearing-in ceremony in Assam. Why is the prime minister's message only for the public? The war in West Asia has caused more harm to India than to Iran and the United States and the rupee is continuously weakening against the dollar, he said, blaming the Union government for the situation. State BJP secretary Rajneesh Agarwal said, "Everyone is making efforts to follow the prime minister's appeal. If there have been any shortcomings, they are being rectified. All of them (party leaders) have been urged to follow the prime minister's instructions."

## Newlywed woman found dead in bed box in Delhi

Husband on the run



New Delhi

A 28-year-old newlywed woman was found stuffed inside a bed box in a rented room in central Delhi's Nabi Karim area, police said on Tuesday, adding that her husband remains absconding.

The police said the absconding husband is now the prime suspect, as an allegation of dowry harassment had also surfaced.

The incident came to light on the night of May 8 when police received a PCR call from a landlord in the Laxmanpuri area about a foul smell emanating from a tenant's room, police said.

"A police team rushed to the spot and found the decomposed body of the woman lying on a bed inside the room. The deceased is a native of Haldwani in Uttarakhand, aged around 28 years," a senior police officer said. During an inquiry, police learnt that the woman had married Mohammad Ejaz, a resident of Vaishali district in Bihar, on April 26, and the couple moved into the Laxminagar house shortly after the marriage.

Police said both the victim and the accused belonged to the same community and had recently started living together in the Nabi Karim area.

"The husband was missing from the room when the body was recovered. He has

not been arrested so far. An FIR was registered at Nabi Karim police station, and an investigation has been initiated," the officer added.

During the probe, the woman's father levelled allegations of dowry harassment against Ejaz and his brother Sarfaraz, police said.

Following the allegations, Sarfaraz was arrested, while teams are conducting raids to trace Ejaz.

Police said multiple teams have been formed and are examining CCTV footage to reconstruct the couple's movements in the days leading up to the woman's death.

According to police sources, the couple's documents are being verified, along with the identification submitted to the landlord at the time of taking the accommodation.

Police said technical surveillance and local intelligence inputs are also being used to track the accused. "Raids are being conducted at several locations linked to the accused, including his relatives' houses and native place," the officer said.

Family members of both the deceased woman and the accused are being questioned to ascertain the sequence of events after the marriage and to verify claims related to alleged dowry harassment, he added.

# India witnessing rising number of bird-window collisions, say conservationists

New Delhi

With rising urbanisation and infrastructure development, India is witnessing an increasing number of bird-window collisions, though there is a lack of data and research on the issue, said a group of conservationists, ecologists and architects on Tuesday.

The country, which has an extraordinary avian diversity and lies at the crossroads of major global migratory flyways, is already witnessing a decrease in bird population, and bird-window collisions could be exacerbating the situation.

The issue was discussed at the first national symposium on bird-window collisions in India which was convened by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, Indian Institute of Science



Education and Research (IISER) Tirupati, the Nature Conservation Foundation, Feather Library and the Rainmatter Foundation.

These collisions happen because birds cannot perceive glass as a barrier. While during the day, birds

may see reflections of trees or the sky and strike the glass, at night, bright lights can disorient and lure them to death.

In the United States, it is estimated that more than one billion birds die annually from such collisions,

but in India, no such national assessment currently exists.

A 2025 study published in the journal *Ornis Hungarica* documented 35 bird-glass collisions in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve over a single year. The analysis

revealed that the accidents involved 22 species at two locations with two-storeyed buildings. In a statement, Peeyush Sekhsaria, architect and conservation professional, said that over the years, he had recorded hundreds of bird-window collisions across India.

"About 110 bird species were involved in these accidents and 49 of them were migratory birds," he added.

Dr V V Robin, associate professor of biology at IISER, said in a statement, "In most of the collision incidents, it has been observed that they take place when migratory birds come down while flying to rest and refuel."

A collision with a window can cause severe injury and even death. It can cause head trauma, cerebral haemorrhage, fractures and internal bleeding among birds.

THE COUNTRY IS ALREADY WITNESSING A DECREASE IN BIRD POPULATION, AND BIRD-WINDOW COLLISIONS COULD BE EXACERBATING THE SITUATION

Experts suggest that adding film, paint, screens, cords and other materials on the outside of the window can prevent such collisions.

However, in India, there is no demand for such solutions for two reasons: one, there is a lack of awareness about the issue, and two, these materials are often quite expensive.

One way to tackle this is for the government to step in, push bird-friendly building standards and codes, and subsidise the above-mentioned materials.

## 'AI cannot replace moral weight of doctor'

Vice President at AIIMS convocation

New Delhi

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Tuesday asserted that no Artificial Intelligence (AI) can replace the moral weight of a doctor at a patient's bedside and asked the medical practitioners to be "patient with patients".

Addressing the 51st convocation of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here, he said doctors should not miss the opportunity to study in prestigious institutions abroad, but they must come



back to serve their people back home. He said AI-driven technology is taking over various sectors, including medicine.

"But no AI can replace the moral weight of a doctor at the

bedside of a patient," he said. "Your humane touch and a few humble words can cure more than what the medicine can," the Vice-President told doctors, urging them to be "patient with patients" when they ask foolish questions. "When you explain, they will understand," he said.

Radhakrishnan noted that the opening of AIIMS in other places has taken healthcare to previously unserved areas, and people from far-off places do not have to rush to Delhi for treatment now.

## Secure early release of Indian fishermen, boats from Sri Lanka: TN CM

Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Tuesday urged the Centre to utilise all available diplomatic channels and secure early release of all Tamil Nadu fishermen and their fishing boats detained by Sri Lanka.

Their safe repatriation should also be ensured, he said. Drawing the attention of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to the arrest of six fishermen belonging to Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district by Sri Lankan navy on Tuesday, Vijay said the



fishermen ventured into the sea for fishing on May 10 and were arrested and their fishing vessel

confiscated allegedly for crossing IMBL. "It is also brought to notice that 54 fishermen are already in

Sri Lankan prison, and 264 boats have been impounded by the Sri Lankan authorities. In this regard, I request you to take up the matter with the Sri Lankan authorities through appropriate diplomatic channels to secure the release of the detained fishermen and their boats at the earliest," Vijay said in a letter addressed to Jaishankar. The Union Minister should utilise all available diplomatic channels to secure the early release and safe repatriation of all detained fishermen and their fishing boats, he said.

## Half of new Tamil Nadu Cabinet faces criminal charges: Report

New Delhi

Half of the newly sworn-in ministers of the Tamil Nadu Cabinet have criminal cases against them, while 20 per cent have assets over Rs 100 crore, said a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

According to the report, out of the 10 ministers analysed, five (50 per cent) have declared criminal cases against themselves, while three (30 per cent) ministers have declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Only one of the ministers is a woman, it said.

Two (20 per cent) ministers have more than Rs 100 crore, with Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay the richest among them with assets worth Rs 648.85 crore. The average assets of the cabinet is Rs 126.50 crore.

The minister with the lowest declared total assets is Keerthana S, who won from Sivakasi constituency, with assets worth Rs 22.57 lakh. The report added that three ministers have declared their educational qualification to be between 8th and 12th standard while seven have declared having an educational qualification of graduate or above.

An earlier report of the ADR, which analysed affidavits of the 233 winning candidates, said 126 (54 per cent) candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves, while 56 (24 per cent) face serious criminal charges.

Out of 224 MLAs analysed during the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections in 2021, 134 (60 per cent) MLAs had declared criminal cases against themselves, and 193 (83 per cent) MLAs are crorepati.

## Modi to embark on 5-nation trip to UAE and 4 European nations

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a six-day visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy beginning Friday to further deepen India's bilateral ties amid the ongoing geopolitical upheavals.

PM Modi's first destination will be the UAE, where he will meet President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan with an aim to advance the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership and exchange views on the West Asia conflict.

"The two leaders will have the opportunity to exchange views on bilateral issues, in particular energy cooperation, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Monday.

It said the visit will serve to promote the significant trade and investment linkages between the two countries. The UAE is India's third-

largest trade partner and its seventh-largest source of investment cumulatively over the past 25 years.

With the UAE hosting over 4.5 million-strong Indian community, the visit will also be an opportunity to discuss their welfare, the MEA said.

In the second leg of his trip, Modi will visit the Netherlands from May 15 to 17. This will be his second trip to the Netherlands, following his visit in 2017.

The prime minister will meet King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima, and hold talks with Prime Minister Rob Jetten. PM Modi's visit will build on the momentum of high-level engagements and close cooperation spanning diverse sectors, including defence, security, innovation, green hydrogen, semi-conductors and a strategic partnership on water, according to the MEA.

It said his visit will provide an opportunity to further deepen and expand the multifaceted partnership.

The Netherlands is one of India's largest trade desti-



nations in Europe, with bilateral trade worth USD 27.8 billion in 2024-25. The European nation is India's fourth-largest investor with cumulative foreign direct investment of USD 55.6 billion.

From the Netherlands, the prime minister will travel to Sweden at the invitation of his Swedish counterpart Ulf Kristersson for a two-day trip from May 17 to 18.

Modi had earlier visited Sweden in 2018 for the first-ever India-Nordic Summit.

The prime minister is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with PM Kristersson to review the entire gamut of

bilateral relations and explore new avenues of cooperation to enhance bilateral trade, which has reached USD 7.75 billion in 2025.

In their talks, the two sides are set to focus on boosting bilateral ties in areas of green transition, AI, emerging technologies, startups, resilient supply chains, defence, space, climate action and people-to-people ties.

"The two prime ministers will also address the European Round Table for Industry, a leading pan-European business leaders forum, along with Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission," the

MEA said in a statement.

In the fourth leg of his visit, Modi will be in Norway from May 18 to 19 to attend the third India-Nordic summit as well as to hold bilateral talks with the leadership of the country.

This will be the first visit of PM Modi to Norway. It will also mark the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Norway in 43 years.

PM Modi will call on King Harald V and Queen Sonja and hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store. Modi will also address the India-Norway Business and Research Summit along with the Norwegian Prime Minister, according to the MEA.

"The visit will provide an opportunity to review the progress made in India-Norway relations and explore avenues to further strengthen them, with a focus on trade and investment, capitalising on the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as on clean and green tech and blue economy," it said.

## Govt should offer relief, not ask people to compromise: Selja

Chandigarh

Congress general secretary Kumari Selja on Tuesday said people are already struggling with rising inflation, unemployment and mounting economic pressure and yet the Centre is repeatedly asking them to make "sacrifices and compromises" instead of offering solutions.

In a statement released here, she claimed such repeated appeals indicate that the government has failed to effectively tackle economic challenges.

The Sirsa MP further remarked that at times, people are advised to reduce the use of petrol and diesel and at other times, to limit household spending. Sometimes, they are asked to cut down on daily necessities.

"These repeated appeals clearly show that the economic burden on ordinary citizens is continuously increasing," she claimed.



The Congress leader's remarks come after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeal for austerity amid the West Asia conflict.

Emphasising that the Centre is trying to shield people from the adverse impact of the West Asia conflict, Modi on Sunday called for judicious use of fuel, postponement of gold purchases and foreign travel, among other measures to strengthen the economy.

Kumari Selja added that it is the government's responsibility to provide relief to citizens, create a stable economic environment and generate employment opportunities.

## SC directs Raj govt to introduce Rajasthani as subject in all schools

New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Rajasthan government to take affirmative and time-bound steps towards introducing Rajasthani as a subject in all schools in a phased and progressive manner.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta also directed the state to formulate a comprehensive policy for the effective implementation of the constitutional mandate relating to mother tongue-based education, particularly in the backdrop of the National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP).

The bench said the state shall take necessary measures to recognise and accord due status to the Rajasthani language as a local/regional language for educational purposes.

"The aforesaid directions are necessitated by the palpable vacuum presently operating in an area of significant constitutional importance," the bench said. "Constitutional guarantees and policy declarations, particularly those bearing upon access to meaningful and inclusive education, cannot be permitted to remain dormant for want of executive action," it said.

The top court delivered its verdict on an appeal challenging a November 2024 order of the Rajasthan High Court.

The high court had dismissed a petition seeking directions to the state

authorities, including to impart education to children in the Rajasthani or the local language.

Referring to NEP, the top court noted it accords primacy to the use of mother tongue, home language, local language or regional language as the medium of instruction, particularly at the foundational and preparatory stages of schooling. "At a more fundamental level, the right to receive education in one's mother language finds its normative basis in Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, for the guarantee of freedom of speech and expression necessarily encompasses the right to receive information in a form that is both meaningful and comprehensible," it said.

The bench said it was a matter of concern that despite such clear policy articulation by the Centre, there appears to be a substantial deficit in the actual implementation of these commitments by the State at the ground level.

"Therefore, the continued inaction and inadequacy on the part of State Government in operationalising this mandate not only undermines statutory and policy directives but also risks infringing fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution," it said.

The bench said a right that exists only on paper, without corresponding administrative will or implementation, is in effect no right at all.

## Bengal govt may look into 'Messi fiasco', irregularities : Minister

Kolkata

West Bengal Sports Minister Nisith Pramanik on Tuesday indicated that the newly elected BJP government may investigate last year's "Messi fiasco" at the Salt Lake stadium, saying files related to the controversial event have already been sought and action would be taken if any irregularities are found.

Addressing a press conference after assuming charge of the sports and youth welfare department, Pramanik said the government would examine all aspects of the episode, including ticket sales, security arrangements and alleged administrative lapses during Argentine football icon Lionel Messi's visit to Kolkata in December last



year. "What happened was extremely unfortunate and condemnable.

I have asked for the files related to the Messi incident. We will examine the matter thoroughly and then discuss it with Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari. If any corruption or irregularity is

found, necessary action will be taken," Pramanik said. The event at the Salt Lake Stadium on December 13 had descended into chaos after a large number of people entered the venue allegedly without valid access, leading to security breaches and crowd disorder.

Many spectators who had bought expensive tickets complained that they could neither properly see Messi nor enjoy the programme due to overcrowding and mismanagement.

Messi reportedly left the ground quickly amid the commotion, following which sections of angry spectators vandalised parts of the stadium.

The controversy had triggered a political storm at the time, with fingers being

pointed at the then sports minister Aroop Biswas over alleged lapses in planning and crowd management.

The police later arrested the event's principal organiser Satadru Dutta in connection with the incident. Dutta on Monday alleged that political interference, security failures and administrative lapses were responsible for the fiasco and claimed that he had been made a "scapegoat" in the controversy despite not being at fault.

Following the change of guard in the state, Dutta has also publicly criticised the previous administration and expressed his desire to bring Messi to Kolkata again in the future, besides organising a visit by Portuguese football star Cristiano Ronaldo.

## BE BRAVE AND STRONG Mamata's poetic message after poll defeat

Kolkata

In a reflective yet combative literary response to her party's recent poll defeat, Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday shared a poem titled "Be brave and strong", invoking courage, dignity and inner strength in the face of adversity. Written in simple, direct lines that are characteristic of Banerjee's political poetry, the poem comes across as both a personal reflection and a message to the demoralised TMC cadre after the BJP's victory in the just-concluded West Bengal Assembly polls that ended the party's 15-year rule in the state. "Be brave and strong," the former West Bengal chief minister wrote in the opening line. "If you are

always confident, then nobody can touch you," she wrote, while giving out a message to confront "brutes with a smile", stating -- "Your smile is your mental strength." The poem repeatedly returns to the themes of resilience, loneliness and moral conviction. "When you were born, you came alone, and when you will die, you have to be alone," it said, adding that "Your good work will work forever." The poem, penned by the firebrand leader after she suffered one of the biggest setbacks of her political career as the TMC lost the state to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and she herself tasted electoral defeat from the Bhabanipur constituency in Kolkata, gives out a message to her followers - "don't lose heart".

## Consultants are reshaping Indian political parties - but at what cost?

New Delhi

One image has become familiar in Indian politics over the past decade: a leader, beaming after an election win, flanked not just by party colleagues but also by a political consultant a new power centre in campaigns increasingly driven by data, analytics and targeted messaging, from shaping narratives to deciding candidates and booth-level outreach, these professionals have moved far beyond their initial role as communication and crisis managers. Increasingly, election victories are seen not merely as political triumphs but as proof of the consultant's strategic genius.

Their growing influence, however, has also sparked resentment within sections of the political class. The

recent defeats of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), both of which had the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) steering their campaigns, have triggered a backlash from seasoned leaders who accuse these consultants of "hijacking" the party apparatus and weakening its organic roots. Speaking to PTI, Praveen Chakravarty, chairman of the Congress's in-house data analytics department, said he finds it "bizarre" that parties are outsourcing important decision-making to people "with no skin in the game". "Unlike party functionaries, these consultants do not share in the pain and the glory in equal measure. They bask in the success but face no consequences for defeats," said



Chakravarty. More crucially, he said, the involvement of such consultants has darker implications for Indian democracy, a view echoed by political analysts. Daniel Francis, partner at Fifth Pillar - a political consulting

firm based out of Mumbai, told PTI that today every major party feels compelled to hire consultants, which operate as "part strategy room, part war machine, part perception factory". "They are the

"Mercedes" of electoral politics - premium, expensive, sophisticated, and requiring privileged space within the party structure. "This has pushed traditional party structures to the background. Consultants are often trusted more than karyakartas who have spent years building local relationships. Inside the party, many resent them as outsiders with too much influence and no ideological investment," Francis said.

In West Bengal, for instance, the I-PAC has been accused by senior TMC leaders such as Kalyan Banerjee, a four-time Lok Sabha member, of hollowing out the party's organisational network by centralising its chain of command through diktats from "Camac Street", an apparent reference to the

office of TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee who was instrumental in bringing in and gradually expanding the ambit of the I-PAC's role.

Former TMC Rajya Sabha member Jawhar Sircar told PTI that Abhishek used I-PAC to seize control of the party, turning the consultancy firm -- initially entrusted with field surveys to gauge ground sentiment -- into a "pseudo political organisation".

Sircar said Abhishek, unlike his aunt and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, had little command over the party's grassroots network as he was not involved in its growth. "Abhishek used I-PAC to undercut Mamata Banerjee by creating a vast database of the party's organisation. A parallel structure of a shadow government was built at every level.

## Editor's TAKE

### 'TESTING' PATIENCE

Inefficiency of the establishment is legion here. Take, for instance, the situations that led to the cancellation of the NEET 2026 after reports surfaced of a leakage of the question papers. This is the umpteenth time that such a terrible scenario has unfolded, yet no preventive step followed. At stake is the future of 22 lakh students who spent tens of thousands of hours through years by way of preparations for admissions to medical colleges. The leakage allegedly took place from the highest level - the education ministry. In every such situation in the past, the complacency of the establishment turned out to be an encouragement for those who run the National Testing Agency. It is likely that they get away with their act this time too.

An investigation would follow after every such embarrassing situation, but it is rarely ever that the blame is fixed on anyone. Why they escape retribution and go scot-free is principally their political connections to the top governmental entities. The present investigations through four states and a series of arrests could at best be an eye-wash. Nothing generally comes out of any such probes, also for the reason that those at the helm are either involved or are not inclined to take corrective steps. The hapless young students are at the receiving end. The examination they wrote after long periods of strained study has been set aside. New dates would be announced for the exams, for which they have to strain their minds again. With advanced technology, it should be easy for the NTA to conduct this examination with a high sense of care. Questions can reach the examination centres with the press of a single button, which could be printed and distributed at every exam centre in a matter of a few minutes. Rather, that the sale and spread of the question papers took place through whatsapp, goes to show that the fraudsters are rather the ones who made better use of technology. That some 140 questions have been leaked and sold shows the gravity of the present situation. The transportation of the question paper bundles through vehicles with GPS and other cover by itself is not necessary in the present world. It gives scope for manipulations and leakage. Even at the printing stage, confidentiality must be zealously ensured as foul play could be expected at every turn. However, a first priority is for those at the helm to take matters with seriousness.

Malpractices, like corruption, are having a larger sway in recent years because the mechanisms that are equipped with the authority to ensure normal process are largely defunct or are not serious about their jobs. There are also occasions of fence eating the crop. The central investigating agencies, not to speak of the state-level agencies, are increasingly getting less ineffective. Incompetence of those at the helm cannot be compensated with blah-blahs from the podium. In the first place, those who know the value of education must govern the nation; not upstarts and schemers with an overdose of muscle-flexing experience. Now, short of an apology, the offer from NTA that no fresh fees would be imposed on the students to appear for the re-examination is by itself a huge provocation. When systems fail, the nation fails, the people fail.

## HANTAVIRUS, COVID, NOROVIRUS, LEGIONNAIRES

### Why are cruise ships so prone to disease outbreaks?

Cruises are sold as floating holidays, but they are also useful for understanding public health. Cruise ships are carefully designed places where many people live, eat, relax and move through the same shared spaces for days at a time.

They show how easily illness can spread when people are packed into a single interconnected environment.

Think of a cruise ship as a temporary city at sea. It has restaurants, theatres, lifts, cabins, kitchens, water systems and indoor gathering spaces. That is great for convenience, but it also means that once an infection gets on board, it can move through the ship in ways that are hard to stop.

The Diamond Princess outbreak is perhaps the best-known example. During the 2020 COVID outbreak, 619 passengers and crew tested positive for the disease. Researchers found that the ship conditions made the novel coronavirus spread more easily.

Their modelling suggested that public health measures, such as isolation and quarantine, prevented many more cases, but it also showed that an earlier response would have further limited the outbreak.

Norovirus (the so-called vomiting bug) is the infection most closely linked to cruise ships. In a review of previously published studies, researchers found 127 reports of norovirus outbreaks on cruise ships, with many linked to contaminated food, contaminated surfaces and person-to-person spread.

A more recent report from the US also showed that norovirus can spread very rapidly from person to person on a cruise ship. This helps explain why ships such as Celebrity Mercury, Explorer of the Seas and Carnival Triumph have become familiar names in outbreak reports. These were not unusual in some special way; they were simply settings where shared dining, close contact and frequent movement through common areas allowed infection to spread fast.

Food service plays a big part in this risk. Buffet-style dining, shared utensils and many people touching the same surfaces can make it easier for stomach bugs to spread. If someone is infected but does not yet feel sick, they may still contaminate food or surfaces before they realise they are unwell.

The ship's design adds to the problem. People spend time together in dining rooms, bars, lifts, corridors, theatres and spa areas. Crew members also live and work in the same environment, often in shared accommodation, so illness can move through the ship from passenger to passenger or between passengers and crew.

Ventilation also plays a crucial role. Cruise ships are not closed boxes, but they



do rely heavily on indoor spaces where people spend long periods together.

Studies into cruise ship air quality have shown that illness can spread more easily in crowded, enclosed spaces, like cabins, restaurants and entertainment venues, if the ventilation system is not up to scratch. Things like adequate fresh air circulation, specialist filters and air-purifying technology all play a role in keeping passengers safe.

Legionnaires' disease (a serious lung disease caused by bacteria) shows a different kind of risk. It is not usually spread directly from one person to another. Instead, people can get infected by breathing in tiny droplets from contaminated water systems, hot tubs or showers.

A well-known outbreak among cruise passengers was linked to a whirlpool spa, and recent reports from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have described other cruise-associated legionnaires' disease outbreaks linked to ship water systems.

Age also matters. Cruise holidays are especially popular with older adults, and many passengers have long-term health conditions that make infections more serious. A stomach bug on a cruise can lead to dehydration, and a respiratory infection can lead to pneumonia or hospital care.

Cruise ships do have medical facilities, but they are limited compared with land-based hospitals. They are built to give first aid, basic treatment and short-term care, not to manage a fast-moving outbreak on a large scale. That is why cruise health depends so much on early reporting,

quick isolation and strong cleaning practices. Other infections, such as respiratory viruses, including influenza, can spread in the same crowded indoor settings, and stomach bugs can spread through food, hands and shared surfaces.

COVID and flu exploit enclosed air and crowds. Norovirus loves buffets and sur-

faces. Legionnaires' targets water systems, which ships can't easily sterilise. Hantavirus (a severe respiratory illness spread by rodents) outbreaks on ships are rare. However, as recent news of the deaths on the MV Hondius attests, germs in close quarters find it much easier to spread.

#### How to limit your risk

AS AN EPIDEMIOLOGIST, I HAVE SEEN MANY OUTBREAKS IN HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND EVEN ON FLIGHTS. FOR TRAVELLERS, THE BEST PROTECTION STARTS BEFORE BOARDING. IT IS SENSIBLE TO CHECK WHETHER THE CRUISE LINE HAS CLEAR ILLNESS REPORTING, CLEANING AND ISOLATION POLICIES. MAKE SURE YOUR ROUTINE VACCINES ARE UP TO DATE. AND FOR OLDER ADULTS, PREGNANT WOMEN AND ANYONE WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS, CONSULT YOUR GP BEFORE TRAVELLING. ALSO, ENSURE YOUR TRAVEL INSURANCE COVERS ILLNESS-RELATED DISRUPTIONS. ONCE ON BOARD, WASHING YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER IS THE MOST USEFUL STEP FOR PREVENTING STOMACH BUGS LIKE NOROVIRUS. HAND SANITISER CAN

HELP, BUT IT DOES NOT REPLACE SOAP AND WATER. IF YOU START TO FEEL UNWELL, THE SAFEST MOVE IS TO AVOID BUFFETS AND CROWDED SHARED SPACES AND REPORT SYMPTOMS EARLY RATHER THAN TRYING TO CARRY ON AS NORMAL. CRUISE LINES HAVE IMPROVED THEIR HYGIENE AND OUTBREAK RESPONSE SYSTEMS OVER TIME, AND MANY VOYAGES PASS WITHOUT INCIDENT.

BUT THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF CRUISE TRAVEL STILL CREATES THE SAME CHALLENGE: MANY PEOPLE SHARING THE SAME MEALS, THE SAME AIR, THE SAME WATER SYSTEMS AND THE SAME COMMON SPACES. THAT IS WHY OUTBREAKS KEEP RETURNING, AND WHY CRUISE SHIPS REMAIN A USEFUL REMINDER THAT PUBLIC HEALTH IS SHAPED AS MUCH BY DESIGN AS BY GERMS.

## Revisiting a visionary of Indian journalism

A feature film was announced on the 160th birth anniversary of Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao Pantulu.

As the 160th birth anniversary of Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao Pantulu is being observed, renewed focus has turned toward one of the most influential figures in the evolution of Indian journalism and nationalist thought.

Widely regarded as the founder of Andhra Patrika, Pantulu used the power of print media during India's freedom movement to awaken political awareness and social consciousness among Telugu-speaking people. His contribution was not confined to journalism alone.

Through the creation of Amrutanjan, he also demonstrated remarkable entrepreneurial foresight, building a successful enterprise that sustained many of his larger public and nationalist ideals.

At a time when questions surrounding the ethics and purpose of media continue to dominate public discourse, Pantulu's life and work acquire renewed significance. His journey represents a rare confluence of journalism, patriotism and public responsibility.

To commemorate this landmark anniversary, filmmaker Sivalenka Pavani Prasad has initiated a feature film project titled Viswadata under the banner of Sreemukhi Movies, which seeks to revisit Pantulu's extraordinary life and contributions for contemporary audiences.

This multilingual pan-Indian film is currently in the research and screenplay development stage.

Viswadata is being directed by Madhu Ambat, the ace cinematographer and a three-time National Award winner.

The entire crew will comprise National Award winners - a rare combination in contemporary cinema. Details of the team will be announced soon, says writer-producer Sivalenka Pavani Prasad.

The film intends to trace Pantulu's transformation from a socially-conscious nationalist into a pioneering media visionary who recognised



AT A TIME WHEN QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE ETHICS AND PURPOSE OF MEDIA CONTINUE TO DOMINATE PUBLIC DISCOURSE, PANTULU'S LIFE AND WORK ACQUIRE RENEWED SIGNIFICANCE. HIS JOURNEY REPRESENTS A RARE CONFLUENCE OF JOURNALISM, PATRIOTISM AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY. TO COMMEMORATE THIS LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY, FILMMAKER SIVALENKA PAVANI PRASAD HAS INITIATED A FEATURE FILM PROJECT TITLED VISWADATA UNDER THE BANNER OF SREEMUKHI MOVIES

communication as a powerful instrument of social change.

Speaking about the project, Prasad says the relevance of Pantulu extends far beyond history books.

"Pantulu garu understood that journalism was not merely about reporting events. It was about shaping society with responsibility and purpose.

His ideals remain deeply relevant even today," he observes. The film aims to present a nuanced portrait of Pantulu by exploring his role in the freedom movement, his contribution to Telugu journalism, and the enduring influence of his ideas on Indian media culture.

Interview  
"Pantulu garu's ideals speak directly to today's media landscape"

Q: Why did you feel this was the right time to make a film on Pantulu garu?

A: The 160th birth anniversary naturally became an emotional starting point. But beyond the occasion itself, I strongly felt that his story deserves to be rediscovered by a new generation.

He was much more than a publisher or freedom fighter. He was a visionary who recognised the social responsibility of media long before it became a public debate.



SIVALENKA PAVANI PRASAD

Q: What aspect of his personality fascinates you the most?

A: His ability to seamlessly combine journalism, nationalism, and entrepreneurship. Through Andhra Patrika, he shaped public opinion, and through Amrutanjan, he created economic strength that supported his larger mission. That kind of clarity and balance is extremely inspiring.

Q: What is the core spirit of Viswadata?

A: We are not approaching it merely as a conventional biographical film. We want to capture the spirit of a man who believed that media carries moral responsibility. The intention is to make today's generation emotionally connect with those values.

Q: How important has cinematographer Madhu Ambat's encouragement been for the project?

A: Very important. At this stage of his life, his continued passion for meaningful cinema is deeply inspiring. His encouragement reassures me that stories rooted in history and values still matter.

Q: What stage is the project currently in?

A: We are presently in the research and scripting phase. Since Pantulu garu's life intersects with journalism, nationalism, and social reform, it is essential to approach the material with sincerity, depth, and authenticity.

## Eliminating undernutrition could prevent up to 2.3 million TB cases globally: Study

Addressing undernutrition could prevent up to 2.3 million tuberculosis cases worldwide, representing 23.7 per cent of infections among adults in 2023, according to a modelling study published in The Lancet Global Health journal.

India could have seen the highest reduction in tuberculosis (TB) cases if undernutrition was addressed, followed by Indonesia, the Philippines and Pakistan, researchers, including those from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, estimated.

"We estimated that eliminating moderate-to-severe undernutrition could avert 1.4 million tuberculosis episodes globally, representing 14.6 per cent of global adult incidence in 2023, while eliminating all undernutrition could avert 2.3 million episodes, representing a reduction in global tuberculosis incidence of 23.7 per cent," the authors wrote.

The findings highlight the urgent need to scale up population-level nutritional interventions, social and health benefits from which could extend beyond tuberculosis, alongside research to assess implementation strategies and impacts, they said.

This study is the first to estimate the implications of one's nutritional status on tuberculosis infection, the team said.

Undernutrition, defined in the study as a body mass index (BMI) under 18.5 in an adult, is a modifiable, socially determined risk factor for the bacterial infection.

In August 2023, findings of a 'RATIONS' trial from India published in The Lancet showed that providing nutritional support -- a monthly food basket of adequate proteins

and multi-vitamins -- to members of TB-affected households could be a cost-effective intervention to reduce incidence among members by about 40 per cent.

A 2024 systematic review and meta-analysis (an analysis of analyses), involving more than 26 million people from 43 study cohorts from high and low TB burden countries, provided estimates on how TB risk varies non-linearly with BMI.

"Available evidence shows that undernutrition is a fundamental driver of the global tuberculosis epidemic, with current WHO (World Health Organization) estimates substantially underestimating its importance," the authors said.

The 'End-TB Strategy', adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2014, is a blueprint aimed at ending the TB epidemic by 2035, focussed on reducing deaths by 95 per cent and new cases by 90 per cent, compared to 2015 levels.

The researchers said achieving global tuberculosis targets requires an integration of bio-social interventions for modifiable risk factors, alongside a continued development and equitable expansion of biomedical interventions for tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

They added that urgent research is needed to establish optimal design and implementation strategies for population-level nutritional interventions beyond tuberculosis-affected households, and to evaluate their health and economic impacts. The interventions could accelerate progress towards eradication of tuberculosis while yielding substantial wider social and health benefits, the team said.



# Principal parties shattered by the third alternative!



**M D RATNA KUMAR**  
SENIOR JOURNALIST

Two principal political parties naturally rule a particular state one after another with perfect understanding based on the mood of the electorate and then prevailed political atmosphere. Many states in Indian Union commonly witnessed this kind of political situation since decades. In the initial decades of independent India, Congress party was the only mighty political party that has ruled the country, including in almost all the states. After two decades of independence, other parties, particularly regional political outfits emerged as alternatives to the Congress party. Since then almost bipolar political system has taken shape and power sharing between those two principal political forces has been continuing till date.

On some important occasions a third alternative arose, of course as per the aspirations of the people, to fill the gap. The same has happened in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu in which a third alternative force TVK headed by popular film star Chandrasekhar Joseph Vijay emerged victorious.

Though TVK couldn't get half way mark (118) in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and short of only 11 seats, Vijay managed to get the required numbers from other political parties which are part of alliance led by the DMK. The Congress, CPI, CPI(M), IUML and CVK having electoral bond with DMK, decided to back Vijay only to avoid constitutional crisis that ultimately may have led to elections again. A rift has also been seen in Anna DMK over the issue of extending support to Vijay. Even before facing floor test, Vijay has got plus point in the way of witnessing differences of opinion in Anna DMK on his issue. DMK and Anna DMK are the only two main political parties that have been ruling the state



**THOUGH TVK COULDN'T GET HALF WAY MARK (118) IN THE TAMIL NADU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND SHORT OF ONLY 11 SEATS, VIJAY MANAGED TO GET THE REQUIRED NUMBERS FROM OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH ARE PART OF ALLIANCE LED BY THE DMK. THE CONGRESS, CPI, CPI(M), IUML AND CVK HAVING ELECTORAL BOND WITH DMK, DECIDED TO BACK VIJAY ONLY TO AVOID CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS THAT ULTIMATELY MAY HAVE LED TO ELECTIONS AGAIN**

since nearly six decades. Particularly since 1977 when the Icon of Tamil film industry Makkal Tilagam M.G. Ramachandran stormed to power by defeating DMK led by then chief minister M. Karunanidhi. MGR continued his winning spree

and settled in chief minister's seat till his death in 1987. Four years later another film star Jayalalitha proved herself as the true successor of MGR and became chief minister in 1991. Since then the real rivalry between the two

Dravidian parties has been continuing on the political canvass of Tamil Nadu.

Eversince Vijay took a political plunge at the peak of his career in films, people saw an alternative in him. This is due to the demise of

Jayalalitha and after that incident her party Anna DMK became lacklustre by being aligned with a national party BJP which is in ruling at the Centre. This situation made people to see an alternative in TVK in place of Anna DMK. The problem lies here is that the two principal parties in Tamil Nadu have refused to accept the bare truth that they would be facing an alternative to both of them in the near future.

This was the political situation in the pre-poll atmosphere in Tamil Nadu. Naturally, two big parties have a common idea that there wouldn't be a threat for both of them in future and act accordingly. If they realise the prevailing political situation now, there would be no solace for them as the third alternative emerged very strong and ensured its position even before facing floor test slated for May 13. In case the TVK stopped at a very level in numbers game and two Dravidian parties managed to join hands for formation of the government, they might have got a chance to look at TVK's situation and effectively deal the matter by any means for their political convenience. But the emergence of TVK is beyond the imagination of two Dravidian parties to ensure hassle-free political journey for them. But now it's not possible for them to get rid of the political monster that suddenly came across their way. It's not easy now for the two Dravidian parties to get control over the third alternative as the latter has emerged victorious.

But in Andhra Pradesh, a different political picture unfolded when the two principal political parties found an alternative for them, they strategically acted to avert the danger posed to them in the form of a third alternative. During the days of erstwhile undivided State of Andhra Pradesh, such a situation emerged in 2009. Just eight months prior to the elections, Telugu film star Chiranjeevi launched a political party Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) and projected himself as a third alternative to the people of AP.

Then ruling party Congress lead by chief minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy and Leader of the Opposition (LoP), former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had suffered a lot due to shifting of votes following the presence of a third alternative in the electoral fray.

## 'AI starts eating the planet: Humans now planning data centers in space'



**ARJA SRIKANTH**  
SENIOR BUREAUCRAT

A strange kind of fear is quietly spreading across the modern world. It is not the loud fear of war, elections, or inflation. It is a softer fear hiding behind shiny technology announcements and confident speeches. The fear is simple: the world may be running out of the basic physical resources needed to keep artificial intelligence growing. AI is often presented as a magical software breakthrough, something that lives inside screens and apps. But the truth is uncomfortable. AI is not just digital. AI is brutally physical. It needs massive electricity, enormous buildings, endless cooling systems, rare hardware, and industrial-scale infrastructure. The world is slowly waking up to a reality that marketing tried to hide: the "cloud" is not light. The cloud is heavy. It consumes land, water, and power like a growing industrial beast.

Every new generation of AI models demands more computing power than the previous one. This has created a global race to build larger and larger data centres. These are not small server rooms. They are giant campuses spread across acres, filled with thousands of machines running 24 hours a day. Some consume as much electricity as a small city. And now the industry is meeting a hard limit: AI growth is no longer restricted by talent or funding. It is restricted by physical supply—power grids, water availability, cooling capacity, and land.

This is why a once-ridiculous idea is now being discussed seriously in global technology circles: building data centers in space. Not just satellites that take images or send signals, but actual orbiting computing stations that process data above Earth. The fact that such a concept is no longer laughed at tells us something important. It shows the level of desperation emerging inside the AI industry. When the Earth begins to feel "too crowded" for computing, human imagination starts pointing upward. India has already taken early steps that hint at this future. On May 3, 2026, Bengaluru-based startup Galaxi launched Mission Dristi. At first glance, it looked like just another satellite launch in India's expanding private space sector. But its deeper meaning was not the satellite—it was the thinking behind it. Mission Dristi carried two types of sensors together: optical sensors and radar sensors. Optical sensors capture images like a camera, while radar sensors can "see" through clouds and darkness. By combining both, the satellite can collect more reliable and complete information. Instead of fragmented pictures from different



**THIS IS WHY A ONCE-RIDICULOUS IDEA IS NOW BEING DISCUSSED SERIOUSLY IN GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY CIRCLES: BUILDING DATA CENTERS IN SPACE. NOT JUST SATELLITES THAT TAKE IMAGES OR SEND SIGNALS, BUT ACTUAL ORBITING COMPUTING STATIONS THAT PROCESS DATA ABOVE EARTH. THE FACT THAT SUCH A CONCEPT IS NO LONGER LAUGHED AT TELLS US SOMETHING IMPORTANT**

sources at different times, it can produce synchronized observation. This makes it easier for AI to combine the data and generate clearer conclusions.

But even such advanced satellites face a serious limitation. They may capture excellent data, yet most of the heavy processing still happens on Earth. Images must be sent down, received by ground stations, transferred to data centers, and then analyzed. This takes time. And in fields like defense, disaster response, crop monitoring, border security, and infrastructure safety, time is not a minor detail. Time decides whether a crisis is prevented or merely recorded after the damage is done.

This is why Pixxel's recent announcement feels like a turning point. Pixxel, another Bengaluru-based space company, plans to launch India's first orbital data center satellite called Pathfinder, possibly as early as next year. The logic is simple but revolutionary: instead of sending raw data back to Earth, process it directly in orbit. Pixxel's plan includes working with Sarvam's AI models to analyze agriculture patterns, weather changes, and infrastructure signals directly from space. In practical terms, the satellite would no longer behave like a camera. It would behave like a floating analyst. Instead of downloading the entire book, it would send the summary. Instead of sending thousands of images, it would send alerts, predictions, and conclusions.

Once we step beyond the excitement, the real reason becomes obvious. Orbital data centers are being proposed not because engineers want to show off, but because the Earth is becoming too expensive for AI's hunger. Three pressures are tightening across the world: electricity, cooling, and land.

Electricity is the first major bottleneck. Modern AI processors consume enormous energy. Training and running advanced models requires clusters of powerful chips that operate continuously. Many countries are now discovering that data center expansion is limited not by money, but by the strength of the electrical grid. Even if a company has billions to invest, it cannot build a data center if the local power system cannot support it. AI is beginning to compete with households, factories, railways, and hospitals for the same electricity.

Cooling is the second crisis. AI machines generate extreme heat. If heat is not removed, systems fail. Traditional cooling methods are no longer enough. Many modern data centers now require liquid cooling. But liquid cooling demands water, and often in large quantities. This creates a dangerous conflict in a world already facing water stress. Using freshwater to cool machines raises political and ethical questions. On a warming planet, where water is becoming more precious than oil, spending rivers to keep computers cool begins to look irresponsible.

## How Starmer could be replaced as UK Prime Minister ?

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer is facing a battle for his job after his Labour Party suffered a calamitous set of results in local elections last week that if repeated at a general election would see it comprehensively ejected from power. Despite winning a landslide election victory in July 2024, Labour's popularity has sunk and Starmer is getting much of the blame. The reasons why are varied, including a series of policy missteps, a perceived lack of vision, a struggling British economy and questions over his judgment — especially his appointment of Peter Mandelson as UK ambassador to Washington despite the envoy's ties to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

### How to get on track

The next UK national election doesn't have to be held until 2029, but British politics allows parties to change leader midterm without the need for a general election.

Many within Labour think the only way to get the government back on track and to see off the threats from the right and the left is for Starmer to go and as soon as possible.

"We have to change and we have to do it quickly," Labour lawmaker Catherine West said. "We have to lay out a timetable and we have to turn this ship around."

Changing leaders is easier said than done. Labour, unlike the main opposition Conservative Party, doesn't have a history of ousting its leaders. There are a number of ways in which Starmer could go, with some more straightforward than others.

### The easiest way

The simplest option is that Starmer announces his intention to resign, triggering an election for the Labour leadership. A resignation could possibly come if a Cabinet delegation tells Starmer that he has lost too much support within the party, or if members of his government quit in protest.

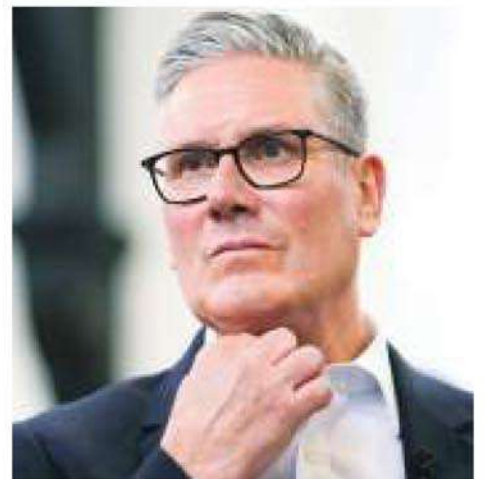
If Starmer decides to resign, the Cabinet and Labour's governing body would likely pick an interim leader to be prime minister, probably someone not running to be Labour leader. Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy could fit the bill. Under Labour's rules, candidates must have the support of a fifth of the party's House of Commons lawmakers — a number that currently stands at 81.

Those meeting that threshold would then have to receive the support of 5 per cent of local constituency parties, or at least three party affiliates groups such as trade unions and cooperative societies.

Eligible members of the party and affiliates would then vote for the leader using an electoral system that ranks the candidates. The winner is the first candidate to secure more than 50 per cent of the vote. King Charles III would then invite the winner to become prime minister and form a government.

### The not so easy way

Starmer insisted that he won't quit, saying that



would "plunge the country into chaos."

If Starmer doesn't resign, he could face a challenge from one or more Labour lawmakers.

The first to move was West, who said Saturday that she would try to run for party leader, if the Cabinet didn't remove Starmer by Monday.

West acknowledged that she had nowhere near the support of 81 colleagues needed to force a contest, and her move appeared to be an attempt to force more high-profile contenders to make a move.

Unlike the Conservative Party, which has a history of getting rid of leaders such as Margaret Thatcher in 1990 and Boris Johnson in 2022, Labour doesn't have that muscle memory.

No Labour prime minister has ever been dislodged, though Tony Blair announced his plan to resign in 2007 after a series of low-level resignations.

Challengers would have to meet the eligibility thresholds above, but Starmer would automatically be on the ballot.

### The potential candidates

Those considered to harbour leadership ambitions include Health Secretary Wes Streeting, former deputy prime minister Angela Rayner, who had to resign last year after acknowledging that she didn't pay enough tax on a house purchase. An investigation into that is ongoing.

Andy Burnham, the popular mayor of Greater Manchester, is widely perceived as one of the strongest candidates.

But he's not eligible to stand at present, because he's not in Parliament. Earlier this year, Labour officials blocked him from running in a special parliamentary election.

However, if Starmer indicates that he's intending to stand down — for example, at Labour's annual conference in September — a way could be found for Burnham to return to the House of Commons.

A Labour lawmaker in a relatively safe seat could quit, opening up another chance for Burnham. Winning that special election is another matter, if the latest local election results are any guide



## Anjali Sivaraman to play Amrita Sher-Gil in Mira Nair's 'Amri'

Priyanka, Jaideep also star in movie

Filmmaker Mira Nair on Tuesday announced her new film "Amri", a biopic on renowned Hungarian-Indian painter Amrita Sher-Gil, with actor Anjali Sivaraman headlining a cast that also includes Jaideep Ahlawat and Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

The biopic on Sher-Gil, a pioneer in modern Indian art who rattled the establishment with her bold imagery and life, has been something of a dream project for Nair, known for movies such as "Salaam Bombay!", "Monsoon Wedding", "The Namesake" and "A Suitable Boy".

Nair had first announced the project in 2020 but it was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time, Tanya Maniktala, who played the lead in "A Suitable Boy" was set to portray Sher-Gil. Nair also unveiled the first look of Sivaraman as Sher-Gil. The 31-year-old Kerala-born actor is known for her roles in "Cobalt Blue", "Class" and "Bad Girl".

In the film, Emily Watson will play Sher-Gil's mother, Marie-Antoinette Gottesman, Ahlawat her father, Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, Krisztian Csakvari as Victor Egan, Anjana Vasas as Indira Sher-Gil, Jim Sarbh as Karl Khandalavala and Jonas as Madame Azurie.

Jonas is also executive producing the movie, which is set across Hungary, France and India in the early twentieth century to trace the worlds of Europe and India that shaped Sher-Gil's imagination and her artistic vision.

Sher-Gil, now considered one of the greatest women artists of the 20th century, died at the age of 28 but her paintings, now highly valuable, give a glimpse into India and its women. Some of the most famous art works of Sher-Gil include "Two Women", "The Bride's Toilet", "Group of Three Girls", "The Girl in Blue", "Sleeping Woman", "Hill Women", "Hungarian Gypsy Girl" and several self-portraits.

"Amri" is currently completing production across India and Hungary.

"Every film I've made in the last several decades has been inspired by the art of Amrita Sher-Gil. She taught me how to see. She absorbed the best European training to distill the soul of India in a way that no one ever had — it is this distillation that has informed my own cinema from the beginning. The bravery of her palette, color and framing of the ordinary people of India has eternally moved me," Nair said in a media statement.

"Amri" explores Sher-Gil's coming of age as both an artist and a woman, her restless search for selfhood, her defiance of convention even to the point of scandal in her love life, and her determination to create a visual language entirely her own.

## Drishyam-3 all set for its way to theatres

Drishyam is one of the super successful films in India, which was later remade into other regional and foreign languages. Now, the third part of the franchise is all set to make its way to theatres this weekend in Malayalam.

Earlier, Venkatesh remade the film into Telugu, but this time, he is likely to step away, and the dubbed version of the Malayalam film will release in Telugu. On the other hand, there is a Hindi version of Drishyam 3, which is likely to differ from the original.

While Mohanlal and Meena played the leads in the original, the Hindi version had Ajay Devgn and Sriya Saran in the



The makers of the Hindi version claimed that they are planning to do more changes to the story. According to them, the third part in the original is more of a family drama and they wanted the Hindi version to differ from the same.

changes to the second part in the franchise for the Hindi audiences which worked to an extent.

Now, with the same confidence, the team plans to make changes to the

third part as well. Speaking in an interview, the film's producers issued a clarity over the same.

The makers of the Hindi version claimed that they are planning to do more changes to the story. According to them, the third part in the original is more of a family drama and they wanted the Hindi version to differ from the

same. Based on the tastes of the Hindi audiences, the makers want to drift slightly and make it a different screenplay.

Moreover, they are also planning to release the film on October 2nd, on which the earlier parts were also released, symbolically declaring it as a Drishyam day.

## Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan reunite for untitled comedy film



Actors Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan are teaming with filmmaker Anees Bazmee for an untitled comedy, which will release on December 4. The film is described as a "big-screen family entertainer" and is produced by Shirish Reddy and Kuldeep Rathore in collaboration with Cape of Good Films and Sri Venkateswara Creations, according to a press release.

It also features Raashii Khanna alongside Vijay Raaz and Sudesh Lehri. The

makers have recently wrapped the Kerala schedule of the film. The film marks a reunion for Kumar and Balan, who have earlier featured in 2007 horror comedy "Bhool Bhulaiyaa", and 2019 "Mission Mangal".

Kumar's latest work is "Bhooth Bangla", which released in April. He will next feature in "Haiwaan" alongside Saif Ali Khan. Balan featured in "Raja Shivaji". The film released on May 1 and is directed by Riteish Deshmukh.

## A Cannes Film Festival light on Hollywood but not lacking in star power kicks off in France

The red carpet has been rolled out at the 79th Cannes Film Festival in the South of France.

The French Riviera festival beginning Tuesday will include 12 days of non-stop world premieres before culminating May 23 with the presentation of the Palme d'Or, the festival's top honour and one of the film industry's most prestigious awards.

The festivities kick off with the opening-night film, "The Electric Kiss", a French period-comedy, and the awarding of an honorary Palme d'Or to the "Lord of the Rings" director Peter Jackson.

What isn't at Cannes has been as buzzed about as much as what is. Hollywood is largely absent this year.

While blockbusters like "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Elvis" have touched down at previous incarnations, studio films this year have been either scared away by the



possibility of a rocky reception or by the high cost of flying in A-listers to the Cote d'Azur. The closest thing in Cannes' slate is an anniversary celebration for "Fast & Furious". Speaking to members of the press Monday, Cannes artistic director Thierry Fremaux said Hollywood "is reshaping" in the midst of Paramount Skydance's pro-

posed acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery.

"I hope the studio films will come back," Fremaux said. Cannes has become better known for its lengthy standing ovations than its boos. This year, a long list of big-name filmmakers will have centre stage. Among the filmmakers set to unveil new movies are Pedro Almodovar ("Bitter

## Ranveer Singh planning something big

Ranveer Singh is reportedly gearing up for one of the most ambitious projects of his career. According to the latest Bollywood

buzz, the energetic star has joined hands with Birla Studios for a grand cinematic adaptation of The Immortals of Meluha.

The film is expected to be developed as a massive trilogy, with Ranveer likely to portray Lord Shiva on the big screen. The Immortals of Meluha, written by Amish Tripathi, is one of India's most celebrated mythological novels and the first installment of the blockbuster Shiva Trilogy.

The book series enjoys a huge fan base across the country and has long been considered ideal material for a

large-scale cinematic universe. Industry insiders say the makers are planning the project on an international scale

with top-level VFX and grand production values.

Ranveer's intense energy and larger-than-life screen presence are said to be the main reasons behind his selection for the role of Shiva. The development has already sparked massive discussions on social media, with fans eager to see how Ranveer transforms into the iconic mythological character.

If everything goes as planned, this trilogy could become one of the biggest mythological franchises ever attempted in Indian cinema. Stay tuned for more.



## Amitabh Bachchan thanks his fans, calls them 'extended family'

"This is my pride and my honour to have the blessings of the many" said Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan as he extended his gratitude to his fans. The actor shared a series of pictures of his fans on his blog on Monday. They were taken during his fan meeting session, which he holds every Sunday outside his Mumbai residence, Jalsa. During the meetings, hundreds of fans gather to catch a glimpse of an actor. "This is my pride

and my honour to have the blessings of the many. They make me believe... They make me breathe another day... They provoke me to work and to work harder and to deliver... they are my Ef... my extended family," Bachchan wrote in his post.

The actor also urged his staff to behave with the fans, who wait eagerly for him. "While explaining to those who work here about how they ought to behave toward his well-wishers, the public under-



stands that the manner in which these staff members conduct themselves is the same way I

behave," he said. "To wait for hours for such a long time and under such scorching sun is no

ordinary feat. To subsequently fail to treat them with due courtesy is simply unacceptable. The public, after all, is the embodiment of the Divine. Affection, respect, and goodwill toward them are all they truly seek. They give us so much; in return, we ought to serve as a mirror reflecting back to them nothing but love, honour, and respect," he added.

The actor will next feature in the sequel to "Kalki 2898 AD" and "Section 84."

## Two love stories getting set for grand July release



Love stories always get a good reception at the box office in the Telugu states. We have seen that several times, and two love stories are gearing up for a grand July release. One of them is EPIC, while the other one is Chennai Love Story. The surprising element is that both movies are set for July 10th as their release date.

According to the latest reports, the teams are confident in the success of their movies and hope to impress audiences. However, trade pundits say July is a dry season for releases, and it is not a welcome move to see two love stories arrive on the same day. Usually, in such cases, only one of the two films will become a hit.

On the flip side, we have seen many instances where films have become successful regardless of season, genre, or release date. The audiences would

solely opt a film based on the content.

That said, the times have changed, and viewers are very particular when choosing a film. When they have two similar films in front of them, they will pick only one.

If the releases happen on two different dates and both deliver strong content, the chances are high that both films will be embraced by the audience.

A clash at the box office can be calculated as a risky attempt for both films, and the producers should reassess the situation.

EPIC features Anand Deverakonda and Vaishnavi Chaitanya, and it is directed by Aditya Hasan. On the other hand, Chennai Love Story features Kiran Abbavaram and Gouri Priya. Ravi Namburi is the film's director. Both films are backed by big production houses.

## 'Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power' season 3 set for November debut; show renewed for season 4

Prime Video has announced that third season of "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" will premiere on November 11 and also renewed the epic fantasy series for a fourth season.

The announcement was made at Amazon's annual Upfront presentation.

The series, which launched with its first season in 2022 followed by the second chapter in 2024, brings to screens for the first time the legends of the Second Age of Middle-earth's history, set thousands of years before the events of author J R R Tolkien's "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings".

It follows an ensemble cast as they confront the re-emergence of evil across Middle-earth, from the Misty Mountains to the elf capital



of Lindon and the island kingdom of Numenor.

"From the very beginning, this series has embodied the scale, ambition, and cinematic storytelling that define Prime Video's biggest global series," Peter Friedlander, Head of

Global Television, Amazon MGM Studios, said. "We're thrilled to announce an early Season Four renewal, and continue our creative partnership with J D Payne, Patrick McKay, and the entire exceptional cast and crew."

Jumping forward several years from the events of season two, the third season is set at the height of the War of the Elves and Sauron, as the Dark Lord seeks to craft the One Ring to bind all peoples to his will and rule all of Middle-earth.

Season Three is produced by showrunners Payne and McKay, alongside executive producers Lindsey Weber, Justin Doble, Kate Hazell, and executive producer-director Charlotte Brandstrom. The series is produced by Amazon MGM Studios.

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