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RBI Proposes New Digital Payment Safety Rules: Big Changes Likely for PhonePe and Google Pay Users

NEW DELHI : In a major move to strengthen digital payment security, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a series of new measures aimed at curbing rising cases of online fraud. The proposed changes are expected to directly impact users of popular UPI platforms such as PhonePe and Google Pay.

With digital transactions becoming an integral part of daily life—from small purchases to large payments—the central bank's proposals seek to enhance user protection and reduce financial risks associated with cybercrime.

Key Proposed Changes by RBI

1. 1-Hour Waiting Period for High-Value Transactions

One of the most significant proposals is a mandatory delay for transactions above ₹10,000. Such payments will take up to one hour to be credited to the recipient's account.

Benefit: This buffer period will allow users to cancel transactions in case they realise they have been scammed, potentially preventing major financial losses.

2. 'Kill Switch' for Instant Account Blocking

RBI has proposed introducing a 'kill switch' feature that allows users to immediately block all digital banking services if their phone is lost or an account is suspected to be compromised.



This can be activated through mobile banking, internet banking, or IVR systems, ensuring no further transactions can take place until verification is completed.

3. Additional Verification for Vulnerable Users
To protect senior citizens and differently-abled individuals—often targeted in fraud cases—RBI has suggested extra verification for transactions above ₹50,000.

This may include approval from a trusted family member or additional authentication steps to prevent scams, especially those executed via phone calls.

4. Restrictions on 'Mule Accounts'

The central bank has also proposed stricter controls on suspicious or poorly documented bank accounts, commonly referred to as mule accounts.

Such accounts may face an annual transaction cap of ₹25 lakh unless the account holder provides valid income proof and necessary documentation.

Rising Cyber Fraud Concerns

The move comes amid a sharp rise in cyber fraud cases in India, driven by increased adoption of digital payments. Experts warn that fraudsters are increasingly exploiting unsuspecting users through phishing links, fake calls, and malicious apps.

Recent estimates suggest a steep surge in digital fraud cases over the past few years, along with a significant rise in financial losses, highlighting the urgent need for stronger safeguards.

Public Feedback Invited

RBI has invited suggestions and feedback from the public on these proposed measures until May 8, 2026, before finalising the guidelines.

Safer Digital Transactions Ahead

If implemented, these rules are expected to create a more secure digital ecosystem, ensuring that convenience does not come at the cost of safety for millions of users across India.

Disclaimer:

This article is for informational purposes only and is based on proposed guidelines by the Reserve Bank of India. The rules are subject to change after public consultation. Users are advised to follow official RBI notifications and consult their banks for accurate and updated information.

Legendary Singer Asha Bhosle Dies at 92 After Health Complications in Mumbai

MUMBAI : Asha Bhosle, one of the most iconic voices in Indian music, passed away at the age of 92 in Mumbai. She had been admitted to Breach Candy Hospital on Saturday after suffering from cardiac and respiratory issues.



tomorrow.

According to sources, the veteran singer had been unwell for the past few months and was brought to the hospital in critical condition. She was shifted to the ICU on Saturday night. Her son Anand confirmed her passing on Sunday afternoon. The last rites are scheduled to take place

Asha Bhosle leaves behind an unmatched legacy in Indian cinema. Born in 1933 into the renowned Mangeshkar family, she began her singing career at just 9 years old. She recorded her first film song in 1943 and rose to prominence in the 1950s, eventually becoming one of the most sought-

after playback singers in Bollywood.

Over the decades, she showcased remarkable versatility. Though initially known for cabaret-style songs, she later proved her depth with soulful ghazals, especially in films like *Umrao Jaan*. Her illustrious career earned her multiple honours, including seven Filmfare Awards for Best Female Playback Singer and two National Awards for songs like "Dil Cheez Kya Hai" and "Mera Kuch Saamaan." Her contribution to Indian music remains timeless and unforgettable.

27-Year-Old Woman Killed in Road Accident Near Sinhagad Road

Pune : A tragic road accident in the Raikar Mala area near Sinhagad Road in Dhayari claimed the life of a 27-year-old woman on Wednesday afternoon.

According to officials, the victim was walking

along the roadside when she was struck by a speeding car, leaving her critically injured.

She was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital, where she later succumbed to her injuries during treatment.

The incident has once again highlighted growing concerns over reckless driving and pedestrian safety in the city.

Authorities are expected to investigate the case further.

Pune Traffic Alert: Major Diversions in Pimpri-Chinchwad for Ambedkar Jayanti Processions

Pune : The Pimpri-Chinchwad Police Commissionerate has announced major traffic diversions on the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti, as multiple processions are set to take place across Rahatani.

According to officials, around 14 processions will be organised from Rahatani to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Statue Chowk (Rahatani village) between 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM. Due to the expected large gatherings along the procession routes, traffic movement will be restricted and diverted to ensure safety and smooth flow.

The order has been issued by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Vivek Patil, under provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. Movement of all vehicles will be prohibited between Rahatani Phata Chowk and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Statue Chowk (Rahatani village).

Heavy and large vehicles will not be allowed from Kunal Hotel to Nakhate Vasti Chowk.

No entry for vehicles from Mahadev Mandir/Pimple Saudagar Police Chowki towards Rahatani Phata.

Traffic will also be restricted from the T-point near Jeevanjyoti Hospital towards



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Chowk.

Alternative Routes:

Vehicles from Rahatani Phata towards Rahatani village should use the Kalewadi Phata route.

Traffic from Kunal Hotel and nearby areas should also be diverted via Kalewadi Phata.

Vehicles from Mahadev Mandir/Pimple Saudagar Police Chowki should take the P.K. Chowk route.

Commuters near Jeevanjyoti Hospital should use the P.K. Chowk route for onward travel.

The restrictions will be in effect from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM, or until traffic conditions normalize. Emergency service vehicles will be exempted from these restrictions.

Authorities have urged citizens to cooperate and use the designated alternative routes to avoid inconvenience.

Maharashtra Govt To Launch First ZP-Run CBSE School In Khanwadi

PUNE, a major step toward improving access to quality education in rural areas, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis is set to inaugurate the state's first Zilla Parishad (ZP)-run school affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education in Khanwadi village of Purandar taluka on April 11.

Named 'Jyoti-Savitri', the institution represents a significant shift in the public education system by combining the national CBSE curriculum with the local Zilla Parishad framework. The initiative aims to provide students from rural and economically disadvantaged backgrounds access to high-quality, English-medium education aligned with national standards.

The project has been developed under a corporate social responsibility (CSR) model, with major financial support from Fiat India Automobiles Pvt Ltd, along with contributions from the district planning committee and the Pune Zilla Parishad. Spread across a 12-acre campus provided by the state government, the school features modern facilities such as digital classrooms, science and computer laboratories,



and dedicated spaces for experiential learning. A residential hostel is also nearing completion and is expected to be operational from the next academic year.

The school has already started functioning with classes from kindergarten to Class 2, enrolling around 260 students. Over time, it plans to expand up to Class 12 and accommodate nearly 2,000 students. From the upcoming academic year, a residential facility will be introduced starting from Class 6, initially with limited intake.

Students will receive free education along with meals, uniforms, and other essential

support, making the initiative especially beneficial for underprivileged families.

The academic and operational framework is being supported by Crystal House India, while administrative control will remain with the Zilla Parishad. A dedicated monitoring system involving experts has also been established to ensure quality standards.

According to Zilla Parishad CEO Gajanan Patil, the campus includes 24 classrooms, advanced laboratories, digital learning tools, a library, and sports facilities. Additional support such as breakfast, lunch, uniforms, and transport will also be provided. He added that the hostel facility is in its final stages of construction.

Officials say the initiative draws inspiration from social reformers like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, aiming to promote inclusive and equitable education. With senior leaders expected at the inaugural ceremony, the school is being viewed as a pilot project that could transform rural education in Maharashtra by bridging the gap between government schooling and national-level academic standards.

Pune: Residents Protest NIBM-Kondhwa DP Road Plan, Cite Serious Safety Risks



Pune, Residents from NIBM, Undri, and surrounding areas staged a protest near Bizzbay Mall on Saturday evening, opposing the proposed Development Plan (DP) road connecting NIBM Road to Kondhwa Road, citing major safety concerns.

The demonstration, held at around 5:30 PM, saw participation from several housing societies and local citizens who raised objections to the road's design and alignment. Protesters warned that the planned merging point near Bizzbay Mall could become a traffic bottleneck, increasing congestion and raising the likelihood of accidents.

Residents expressed particular concern over the

steep gradient of the proposed stretch. According to a road safety assessment conducted by Global Traffic Solutions, the 375-metre section has gradients ranging between 10.6% and 13.7%, significantly higher than the 4% limit recommended by the Indian Roads Congress. Such steep slopes, they said, could lead to brake failures, especially in heavy vehicles like tankers and construction trucks.

Locals also pointed to multiple safety hazards, including blind spots, poor visibility, and uneven road surfaces. They fear that vehicles descending from the elevated section may lose control at the junction, posing a serious threat to motorists and pedestrians. The area already witnesses

heavy traffic, with over 63,000 vehicles passing through the nearby intersection daily. Between 2022 and 2024, at least 13 accidents, including four fatalities, have been reported in the vicinity, further intensifying concerns. Residents also highlighted the poor condition of existing roads in the area, including potholes and debris, arguing that adding another risky stretch could worsen commuting conditions.

Officials from the Pune Municipal Corporation have stated that the concerns will be reviewed. Meanwhile, residents have demanded a redesign of the project and urged authorities to consider safer alternative routes that prioritise commuter safety over rapid execution.

Third Consecutive Accident Involving Heavy Vehicle And Bike In Mohammadwadi Raises Concern



PUNE : A fresh accident involving a two-wheeler and a heavy vehicle has been reported near Lavanya hotel - KP Stellar society in Mohammadwadi, intensifying concerns over road safety in the area.

This marks the third such incident within a week. Earlier, two fatal accidents involving water tankers occurred on NIBM Road and in Wanowrie, where bikers lost their lives after being hit by heavy vehicles.

Local residents have expressed growing alarm over the frequent movement of water tankers and trucks through residential zones, alleging that repeated warnings to authorities have gone unaddressed. They claim that unchecked heavy vehicle traffic, especially during peak and late hours, has made the roads increasingly unsafe for commuters.

Following the latest incident, residents have renewed their demand for immediate intervention, including stricter traffic regulation, speed control measures, and rigorous checks on heavy vehicles operating in the area.

Citizens have urged authorities to take swift action to prevent further accidents, warning that continued inaction could lead to more serious consequences.

Pune Civic Body Suspends Two Engineers After STP Failure Pollutes Pashan Lake, Triggers Fish Deaths

PUNE, The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has suspended two engineers from its Sewerage Maintenance and Repair Department following a serious environmental lapse that led to pollution in the Pashan Lake area.

According to official orders issued by the Municipal Commissioner's Office, the action was taken after a site inspection on April 10 revealed that the Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) in the Pashan Lake vicinity was non-operational. As a result, untreated sewage was directly discharged into the lake.

The discharge of untreated wastewater caused severe foul odor in the surrounding area and led to contamination of the lake water. Authorities also reported a large number of dead fish found floating in the lake, highlighting the gravity of the situation.

Termining the incident as "extremely serious," the civic



administration has initiated departmental inquiries under the provisions of the Maharashtra Municipal Corporation Act, Section 56(2)(f). Both officials have been placed under immediate suspension pending investigation.

As per the suspension orders, the officials must strictly adhere to service conduct rules during the suspension period. The department has been directed to expedite the inquiry process. They will

be entitled to subsistence allowance as per rules, and the suspension will be recorded in their service books. Additionally, they are not permitted to leave municipal limits without prior approval from the competent authority.

The incident has once again raised concerns over infrastructure maintenance and environmental monitoring in Pune, particularly around ecologically sensitive areas like Pashan Lake.

EDITORIAL

Asha Bhosle Is Gone, But Her 'Bad Girl' Anthems Live On

The year is 1971, Helen is dancing in a blingy red dress, with a faux Big Ben in the background, in Caravan, a thriller directed by Nasir Hussain. It's described as the last word in cabaret by several writers. But for Asha Bhosle fans, it was the first glimpse of modernity, with the chorus "Monica My Darling" continuing to be echoed in popular culture, most recently in last year's Dhurandhar in the Reble rap song, 'Run Down the City', set in a Karachi night club. The singer of the original song, Asha Bhosle, is no more, but her "bad girl" voice will live forever. Before the rise of the modernists in Hindi film industry music, composers like OP Nayyar and RD Burman, both of whom had long partnerships with Bhosle, the good girl voice was epitomised by Lata Mangeshkar, Bhosle's elder sister, with voices like that of Geeta Dutt being used for drink-sodden, late night songs. But Bhosle was the first to bring a rare sensuousness into modern Hindi music, represented in yet another blockbuster from 1971, 'Dum Maaro Dum', in the film Hare Rama Hare Krishna. The song was originally to be sung by Usha Uthup, whom the director Dev Anand and music composer RD Burman first heard at The Oberoi in New Delhi. The song soon became the anthem of rebellious youth, with its incendiary lyrics written by Anand Bakshi: "Duniya ne humko diya kya/Duniya se humne liya kya (What has the world ever given us/What have we ever taken from the world)." It was pictured on Zeenat Aman as Jasbir/Janice in Kathmandu, wearing a marigold necklace, dark glasses on her hair, and resting her head on Gautam Sarin's broad shoulders, supposedly lost in a drug haze. For those who grew up in the 1970s, Asha Bhosle was the voice of cosmopolitanism, which was showcased later in her global collaborations, from singing flirtatiously with Brett Lee ('You're the One for Me', 2007) to Boy George ('Bow Down Mister', with Bhosle chanting a 'Hare Krishna' mantra, 1991) to the British band Gorillaz on The Shadowy Light (along with Ajay Prasanna and Aman and Ayaan Ali Bangash) as late as early this year. She was the voice of Zeenat Aman shimmying in 'Chura Liye Hai Tumne' in Hindi cinema's first modern multistarrer Yaadon Ki Baarat, directed by Nazir Hussain; as much as she was the voice of Parveen Babi in the self-designed body hugging silver gown in Shaan (1980), singing 'Pyaar karne wale'. It wasn't a coincidence that both Aman and Babi were unique in breaking the good girl/bad girl binary that was the fate of women in Hindi cinema till then. But Bhosle had range as well, as she displayed to the surprise of many in Umrao Jaan (1981), where she sang Rekha's lovelorn ghazals penned by Shahryar and set to music by Khayyam. Anyone who can listen to 'Dil cheez kya hai/Aap meri jaan lijiye' (What is my heart/You can take my life as well) without a lump in her throat can only have a heart of stone. The iconic song contains multitudes - not merely Umrao Jaan's tragic life, but also the heartbreaks of Rekha and Bhosle. Despite her upbeat attitude to life, Bhosle's life was strewn with loss and longing, whether it was her abusive first husband Ganpatrao Bhosle, her long struggle to establish herself in an industry where her sister was already the reigning queen of music, her enduring love affair with RD Burman cut short by his untimely death at 54, the suicide of her daughter Varsha and the death by cancer of her eldest child Hemant. But whether it was in concerts or in rehearsals, rarely did she display her wounds. Bhosle's voice created stars. Remember Tanha tanha, composed by AR Rahman, and shot on Urmila Matondkar in a variety of flowing minidresses by the beach in Ram Gopal Varma's Rangeela (1995)? Or Gracy Singh in Lagaan (2001) singing the feisty 'Radha kaise na jale' in a duet with Udit Narayan? And it solidified stars such as Madhubala, oozing mischief and playfulness with songs such as 'Haal kaisa hai janaab ka' from Chalti ki Naam Gaadi (1958) and 'Aaiye Meherban' from Howrah Bridge (1958).

WHEN TOM CRUISE SHOWED UP AT 'ASHA'S'

It was August 21, 2021. The world was still recovering from the Covid pandemic and restaurants had barely started doing regular business. So, you can imagine how surprised the staff of Asha's, a Michelin-starred restaurant in Birmingham (one of six owned by Asha Bhosle, the singing legend and passionate cook), must have been when Tom Cruise, dressed in a Henley-style round-necked, full-sleeved tee, jeans and bombardier jacket, casually walked in with his entourage, bodyguards and all, which included Mission: Impossible writer and director, Christopher McQuarrie. Cruise was in Birmingham shooting for Dead Reckoning: Part One, the seventh installment of the multi-billion-dollar Mission: Impossible franchise, and he left the Asha's staff gobsmacked when he asked for a second Chicken Tikka Masala (CTM) after finishing the first - and he wanted the spice quotient to be amped up for this one. "The greatest compliment," said the chuffed restaurant in an Instagram post. The CTM was not all that Cruise loved at Asha's. He also had - and relished - the Palak Paneer, but at the Birmingham restaurant he will always be remembered as "two tikka Tom". No one was happier at the superstar's surprise appearance than the restaurant's owner, the singer with the jaunty voice that still gets the nation grooving and the equally accomplished cook. She took to Instagram at once and said: "I was very happy to hear that Mr Tom Cruise enjoyed his fine dining experience at Asha's (Birmingham) and I look forward to him visiting us again soon!" Cruise, meanwhile, got himself photographed outside the restaurant, its senior staff at a distance behind him out of respect for Covid social distancing norms. And that picture went viral.



A Childhood Relish
It also reminded the world about Asha Bhosle's love for cooking and eating good food, a talent she developed during her childhood spent travelling with her father Dinanath Mangeskar's peripatetic theatre company. Her constant craving to know more about the food she ate at different places stayed with her throughout her life, getting a boost when she had to plan the meals of her son Anand, who went on to launch Asha's. It may be the reason why Asha's menu has such a pan-Indian footprint. The restaurant, though, may not have happened, according to Farzana Contractor, founder and editor of Upper Crust, had the Emirati entrepreneur and royal, Sheikh Manna-bin-Halifa al Makhtoum, not read a Gulf News interview in which the singer who'll forever be remembered for 'Dum Maro Dum' and 'Mehbooba Oh Mehbooba' talked about her love

for food and her dream of opening an Indian eatery. That was in 1998-99 when Asha Bhosle was visiting Dubai for concerts. Sheikh Manna-bin-Halifa's management team contacted the singer and they got talking about the prospect of opening restaurant after her name in Dubai. Asha Bhosle could have just lent her name and go on to count her share of the earnings, but, as Contractor points out, she insisted on personally training the restaurant's opening chefs, Sachin Tilak and Salim Qureshi. **Momos, Biryani, And Everything Else**
The durability of the Dubai restaurant, which opened in 2002 with Anand helping it, and the fact that it has spread its wings to other locations internationally, only goes to show the drawing power of Asha Bhosle's eclectic table, where you could have been served everything - from momos, which Mala Sinha

(whose family had Nepali origins) taught the singer to make, to Raj Kapoor's favourite Peshawari biryani, to a delicious boneless chicken cooked with ginger, garlic and almonds in a coconut gravy, which she picked up from the lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri's wife (who, incidentally, had a formidable repertoire of Awadhi delicacies). People talk about Asha Bhosle and RD Burman's partnership being one of the most enduring in Hindi cinema - and Burman, being an epicure whose favourite was the Goan prawn curry, made demands not only on his wife's exceptional singing talent, but also on her cooking skills. Looking back at her days with him in her conversation with Contractor, Bhosle recalled how Burman, popularly known as Pancham Da, loved to entertain. "Burman saab would call and say he is bringing some people over for dinner."

WOMEN'S RESERVATION - A NEW DIMENSION, WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

Today, the most discussed topic in the country is women's reservation, and its importance has increased even more after the article written by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. Therefore, it is necessary that we also talk about our preparedness for this reservation. This goes back to 1993-94, when elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions were announced for the first time in Madhya Pradesh after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Since these elections were not to be held on the symbols of political parties, all leaders were preparing to field their supported candidates. I, along with the Chairman of Bhopal Central Cooperative Bank and freedom fighter Anirudh Prasad Shastri, decided that we would field our candidates in all panchayats and other places in Bhopal district. In the first phase of election preparation, when we began searching for women candidates, we faced great difficulty. Due to the amendment, 33% of the seats were reserved for women, and within that, seats were also reserved for women from the backward classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. As a result, it was difficult to find qualified and willing women candidates. One ward for the Janpad member was reserved for a Scheduled Caste woman. When we began searching the voter list for a woman candidate from that ward, we realized that the choice would have to be made from a very limited number of voters. Then we found Asha, a young woman who had studied up to the eighth grade and worked in the fields of one of our supporters. When we proposed that she contest the election, she was surprised and simply said, "As you say, Bhaiyya," but her next question was—

"What about my livelihood, and what will I have to do?" We told her that she would have to ask people for votes during the election, and after winning, she would work for the people as a Janpad member. Our supporter assured her that her job would continue. After discussing with her husband, she agreed to contest. After her nomination, during the election campaign, I closely observed the changes taking place in her as she asked for votes. I saw a glimpse of this transformation in a small public meeting. We all believed she would not be able to give a speech, but she proved everyone wrong. She spoke so well that the applause continued for a long time. In very simple yet confident words, she said: "I am a daughter of this village. When I used to walk out of my house, my feet would get covered in mud. If I win this election, I will try to ensure that no daughter of this village ever has to walk with mud on her feet again." Her words touched the hearts of everyone present. I witnessed the journey of that less-educated laborer Asha becoming Asha Devi. I saw an ordinary woman becoming a political leader, and this was happening because her competition was with other women. She lost the election, but the confidence she gained from contesting gave birth to a woman leader. Even though she wished to contest future elections, she fell behind. Today, when I analyze the situation, I feel that if she had not been required to compete with male leaders, she might at least have been working at the district level today. This is not just the story of one woman becoming a leader and then fading into anonymity. It is the story of millions of women filled with talent, determination, and energy. Over the past 30-35 years, since the demand for

women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies began, the reservation given to women in many public institutions—such as local bodies, Panchayati Raj institutions, cooperatives, corporate bodies, legal institutions, and other organizations—has given a new direction to women's participation in Indian politics. Because of women's reservation, millions of women have gained administrative and electoral experience by working in various positions. Today, there is no public platform in the country where women are not in leadership roles. Almost thirty-five years have passed since the election I mentioned. But when I look back today, I am filled with confidence that fifty percent of our population is now fully prepared to participate in law-making. Therefore, delaying the final step to advance this process is not appropriate, because today the women of the country are not only aware but also politically mature. It is natural that they should get equal opportunity to make laws in the highest policy-making institutions of the country. After years of long debate, the historic moment finally arrived in September 2023, when our Parliament passed the Women's Reservation Bill, approving the 106th Constitutional Amendment after a long and meaningful discussion. Under this law, 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies has now been ensured. We all know that until now, men have had a greater role in making laws in the country, and as a result, male thinking has dominated the laws, which is natural. This is why many important laws related to women could not be made on time. Because of this, many capable women who could have provided excellent leadership were

deprived of opportunities. Now, this law is a decisive step toward correcting that historic imbalance. Through it, women will get the constitutional right to contest elections from seats reserved for them. This will not only increase women's participation but also bring new energy and balance to the country's democracy. The Prime Minister of the NDA government, Shri Narendra Modi, has consistently emphasized that women should have received reservation much earlier, but he clearly believes that further delay is unacceptable. He has repeatedly expressed his commitment to implementing this bill under all circumstances, with the resolve to give full opportunity to women's power in democracy. This is why the belief is growing stronger that in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, we will see a large number of women in Parliament due to the 33% reservation. It is true that this amendment is linked to the processes of census and delimitation, but the determination and commitment with which efforts are being made in this direction make it clear that the day is not far when the women of India will sit in Parliament and play a decisive role in making the country's laws.

Brijmohan Shrivastava
National General Secretary
and Chief National
Spokesperson, Nationalist
Congress Party



TREATMENT OR BUSINESS? THE TRUTH BEHIND THE WHITE COAT

(When the doctor broke his silence, the dark side of the system came to the fore)
Thercent story of a young doctor has shocked society. The courage with which she spoke on camera about her reasons for leaving her job raises serious questions about not just a personal decision but the entire healthcare system. She said she was pressured to admit as many patients as possible—whether their condition was critical or not. Furthermore, patients were often kept in the ICU for longer than necessary to increase hospital bills. This is more alarming than it sounds. Because healthcare is not an ordinary service; it is a sensitive field based on trust, responsibility, and ethics. When profiteering and unethical practices take root in this field, it directly impacts human life. The state of healthcare in India is already beset by many challenges—overcrowding in government hospitals, a lack of resources, and expensive treatment in private hospitals. Consequently, ordinary citizens often turn to private hospitals, hoping for better and faster treatment. However, if they face unnecessary hospitalizations, unnecessary tests, and inflated bills, this not only creates a financial burden but also a psychological drain. The most important question in this entire matter is: Is medicine no longer a service, but a "business"? Are doctors also being subjected to pressures that distance them from the true spirit of their profession? It's important to understand that not every doctor or every hospital engages in such activities. Even today, thousands of doctors in the country treat patients with complete honesty and dedication despite limited resources. However, the corrupt policies and greed of



some institutions tarnish the image of the entire profession. This step taken by a doctor—quitting his job—is not easy, especially when medical education costs lakhs of rupees and there is pressure to maintain a stable career. Standing up for one's ethics is a courageous decision. It also shows us that many people working within the system are uncomfortable with this situation, but not everyone is able to speak out openly. This problem isn't limited to hospital management, but rather, it's become part of a broader system. A complex relationship has developed between insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry, and private hospitals, in which the patient is sometimes reduced to a mere "case" or "client." The purpose of treatment shifts from improving health to maximizing revenue. Keeping patients unnecessarily in the ICU is not only financial exploitation but also a serious moral offense. In a sensitive setting like the ICU, patients and their families are already under psychological pressure. Taking advantage of this situation to inflate the bill is considered a betrayal.

Additionally, unnecessary testing and treatment are a major problem. Patients are often subjected to tests that are not immediately necessary. This directly impacts their pockets, leaving many families in debt. Another dangerous aspect of this situation is that it erodes society's trust in doctors. When people begin to believe that doctors are more concerned with their bills than with their treatment, it poses a serious threat to the entire healthcare system. The relationship between doctor and patient is based on trust, and when this trust is broken, it is not easy to rebuild it. So what is the solution then? First, it is crucial to increase transparency in the health sector. Hospitals should clearly disclose their fees, treatment procedures, and admission standards. Patients and their families have the right to know what treatment they are receiving and why. Second, the role of regulatory bodies must be strengthened. The government and relevant health authorities must ensure that ethical standards are followed in hospitals. Strict action should be taken against irregularities to prevent recurrence.

Third, doctors must also have a safe and independent work environment. If they face unethical pressure from management, they must have a robust mechanism to complain and seek justice. Whistleblower protections can also be an important step in this direction. Fourth, patients and society need to be more aware. We should be aware of our rights and ask questions when necessary. Seeking a second opinion during treatment can also be a good option. Additionally, medical education should place greater emphasis on ethics. The process of becoming a doctor should not be limited to technical knowledge, but should also include a deep understanding of human values and responsibility. Finally, it's important to understand that healthcare isn't a typical industry. It's a field directly connected to human life, where every decision impacts someone's life. While profit-making isn't wrong, it must be within ethical boundaries. The doctor who left his job to reveal this truth wasn't just making a personal decision, but holding a mirror up to society.

NSEFI Says India Poised to Become the World's Second-Largest Solar Market in 2026

New Delhi : India has achieved its fastest-ever addition of 50 GW of solar capacity in just 14 months, reaching the landmark 150 GW milestone. This marks a significant acceleration compared to the 11 years it took to reach the first 50 GW, followed by nearly three years to scale up to 100 GW. Commenting on this achievement, National Solar Energy Federation of India CEO Subrahmanyam Pulipaka said, "Solar energy was projected to reach 280-300 GW to support India's 500 GW non-fossil capacity target by 2030. With the current pace, India is nearing an annual addition trajectory of 50 GW, firmly aligning with this goal. In fact, we are now witnessing strong potential for solar capacity to exceed these projections, driven by ini-



tatives such as PM Surya Ghar, the upcoming PM KUSUM 2.0, dedicated floating solar policies, and the growing demand linked to the National Green Hydrogen Mission over the next four years." Amid shifting geopolitical dynamics, NSEFI projects that India is well on track to become the world's second-largest solar market in 2026 in terms of annual installations. "Global trends point to a potential slowdown in capacity additions across major markets such as the United States and the European Union, which are

currently competing for the second position in terms of annual installed capacity. In contrast, India continues to accelerate its renewable energy deployment and consistently outpace key milestones and will emerge as nation with 2nd largest annual installations in the coming year. India's success offers critical lessons for both developed and developing economies," Pulipaka added. "Recent policy and regulatory interventions, including viability gap funding (VGF) and provisions for non-solar hour connectivity, have laid a strong foundation.

Silver Jubilee Celebration of Bihar Public School and Children Welfare Association Held at FDDI

Bihta: The Silver Jubilee celebration of the Bihar Public School and Children Welfare Association was held on Sunday at the auditorium of FDDI located in Amhara, Bihta. The grand event brought together prominent figures from the field of education, child welfare experts, and distinguished members of society. The event was inaugurated with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by former Vice-Chancellor of Patna University Dr. K.C. Sinha, Justice Rajendra Prasad, Bihar Hindi Sahitya Sammelan President Dr. Anil Sulabh, Nagar Parishad Chairperson Priyanka Kumari, Vice Chairperson Deepika Singh, Block Chief Malti Devi, Deputy Chief Varun Kumar, FDDI



Director Neeraj Kumar, Association President Dr. D.K. Singh, Coordinator Dr. Uday Kumar Singh, Secretary Prem Ranjan, and Bihta Public School Director Soni Singh. During the event, the achievements of the association over the years were highlighted, and discus-

sions were held regarding future plans. The program was presided over by President Shyamnandan Mishra, while State Coordinator Dr. Uday Kumar Singh conducted the proceedings. Addressing the gathering, Justice Rajendra Prasad emphasized that education

plays a crucial role in the development of human society. He stated that education is not only a means of acquiring knowledge but also a pathway to achieving justice, equality, and empowerment in society. He further noted that education today is not confined to laboratories but is

shaping new dimensions of power and global influence. FDDI Director Neeraj Kumar highlighted that students should develop contemporary, social, cultural, ethical, and democratic values, along with the ability to make decisions even in challenging circumstances. He stressed the need for providing quality education aligned with modern societal requirements and called upon private schools to play an active role in preserving the state's rich educational legacy. Dr. Anil Sulabh, President of Bihar Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, stated that a balance between theory and practice helps students develop critical thinking, analytical skills, and a deeper understanding of social concepts.

FARMER'S FAMILY ASSAULTED FOR EXTORTION IN NONSAR BAHIYAR, SIX INJURED



Bhagalpur: In a shocking incident from Nonsar Bahiyar under Asiyachak Panchayat in Sultanganj block of Bhagalpur district, a farmer's family was allegedly assaulted by local miscreants after refusing to pay extortion. Six people were reportedly injured in the attack. According to a written complaint filed at the police station by Vikas Kumar, a resident of

Dudhela village, the incident took place on April 11 while he was harvesting wheat in his field at Nonsar Bahiyar. He alleged that Bablu Mandal, Rahul Kumar, Gautam Kumar, Bagho Ram, Rudra Ram, along with others, all residents of Nonsar, and Brahmadev Yadav of Kamarganj, arrived at the spot in an inebriated state and demanded wheat as extortion. When the

demand was refused, the accused allegedly attacked Vikas Kumar and his family members with sticks, leaving several people injured. The complainant stated that he managed to escape from the spot to save his life. Upon receiving information about the incident, the police reached the area and have started an investigation into the matter. Further action is being taken based on the complaint.

Society's Strength Lies in Organization and Service: MP Brijmohan Agrawal



Raipur: Member of Parliament and senior BJP leader Brijmohan Agrawal on Sunday attended the Mandal-level annual conference organized by the Chhattisgarh Dadseena Kalar Sinha Samaj at Gram Semariya in the Arang Assembly constituency. During the event, he emphasized the importance of unity, service, and organizational strength within society. Agrawal said that people often question what society is doing for them, but trust in society grows only when society itself stands up for its members. Referring to the community's deity Lord Sahastrabahu, he said that if the Kalar society considers itself as symbolically having a thousand arms, it must also work with equal energy and dedication for collective welfare. He high-

lighted three key priorities for community development—education, marriage, and health. He stressed that supporting education of underprivileged children, helping in the marriages of needy daughters, and assisting those suffering from serious illnesses constitute true social service. He added that when society actively works in these areas, every family will connect and the organization will naturally become stronger. Discussing financial cooperation, Agrawal suggested that if each family contributes Rs 100 per month, then 5,000 families could generate Rs 5 lakh monthly and Rs 60 lakh annually. He proposed appointing 5-10 youths to collect contributions regularly by visiting households. He also announced a grant of Rs 10 lakh for the construction of

a community building, stating that it should not remain only an event venue but become a development hub offering activities such as tailoring training for women, computer education for children, and other skill-building programs. He further said that organizing an annual conference alone is not enough and continuous year-round efforts are necessary for real progress. He added that those engaged in sustained social service and development work will earn lasting respect in society. The event was attended by BJP Other Backward Class Morcha State Minister Ashok Sinha, District Panchayat President Naveen Agrawal, Yuvraj Sinha, Dashruram Sinha, Lala Ram Sinha, Arun Sinha, and several other prominent community members.

Fires broke out at two different locations in Dharampur and Mohanpur neighborhoods of Samastipur city



Samastipur: A fire suddenly broke out on Saturday in the forest within the cemetery at Dharampur Paswan Chowk in the city. The fire spread rapidly, creating panic in the surrounding area. Local residents responded quickly and tried to extinguish the blaze. The fire brigade arrived at the scene immediately and, after considerable effort, brought the fire

under control. No casualties were reported. Meanwhile, a fire caused by an electrical short circuit also occurred in the Mohanpur neighborhood on Saturday. It was reported that the fire destroyed items stored under a tree. However, the fire was brought under control in time, averting major damage. No injuries were reported in this incident either.

House Fire Destroys Cash and Household Goods Worth Rs 50,000



Chakai: A sudden fire broke out in a house in Baratand village under Fariyatadih Panchayat of Bichkodwa police station area in Chakai block, reducing cash and household items worth around Rs 50,000 to ashes. According to the victim, Ashok Das, the incident occurred while he and his family had gone to

his daughter's house for some urgent work, leaving only his mother at home. During this time, a fire suddenly erupted in the house, engulfing one of the rooms where cash and household belongings were kept. The fire destroyed clothes, bags, suitcases, a wooden cot, and cash that Ashok Das had borrowed as a loan to repay a moneylender. All the

items were completely burnt in the blaze." He further stated that when his brother's family noticed the flames, they rushed to the spot and tried to extinguish the fire by pouring water. However, by the time the fire was brought under control, everything in one room had already been reduced to ashes. The cause of the fire is yet to be determined.

Massive Turnout at Online Satsang of Sant Rampal Ji Maharaj in Bundu, Followers Reaffirm Faith in Truth

Bundu: A grand spiritual satsang was organized in the local area under the guidance of Jagatguru Tatvadarshi Sant Rampal Ji Maharaj, drawing a large gathering of devotees. Conducted through modern technology, the event saw a significant number of followers participating via online video to listen to the spiritual discourses. The huge turnout at the venue reflected the deep faith of people in the saint and the growing acceptance of his teachings. During the satsang, followers expressed their unwavering devotion to Sant Rampal Ji Maharaj and openly discussed the "Barwala case." Supporters asserted that the saint had



been falsely implicated in cases as part of a well-planned conspiracy, but ultimately truth had prevailed. Reaffirming their faith in justice, they stated that the outcome has proven that truth may be troubled for a time but can never be defeated. Through a video message,

Sant Rampal Ji Maharaj guided his followers with a message of patience and courage. He emphasized that one should neither engage in conflict nor live in fear, but instead move forward firmly on the path of truth and humanity. His message inspired renewed energy and confidence

■ A grand spiritual satsang was organized in the local area under the guidance of Jagatguru Tatvadarshi Sant Rampal Ji Maharaj, drawing a large gathering of devotees.

among the devotees. The discourses also highlighted the need to eliminate social evils such as substance abuse, dowry practices, and superstition. The peaceful and well-organized event witnessed the participation of a large number of men and women devotees, who collectively resolved to adopt the teachings in their lives and contribute towards social reform.

Blood Donation Camp Sets Example of Humanity, Youth Show Enthusiasm for Service

Bikram: A blood donation camp organized on Sunday at Patut Chowk in the block, under the aegis of Kartavya Niswarth Seva Sansthan in collaboration with Patna AIIMS, emerged as an inspiring example of social service. The event was conducted under the leadership of the organization's founder, Amarjeet Ragh. A large number of youths, social workers, and aware citizens from the area participated enthusiastically and donated blood. The participants displayed a strong spirit of service and satisfaction through their active involvement in the campaign. Prominent atten-



dees included Bihta Nagar Adhikari, Saket Kaushik, Pranav Singh, Anil Kumar, and Osho Manish, among others. Speakers on the occasion emphasized that blood donation is not only a life-saving act but also

strengthens the values of unity, compassion, and cooperation in society. Local residents appreciated the initiative and expressed hope for the continuation of such events in the future.

“Art is a Powerful Medium of Expression, Reflection and Change”: Minister Guru Khushwant at ‘Gaura’ Exhibition in Raipur

Raipur: The third visual art exhibition ‘Gaura’ organized by the Chhattisgarh Progressive Artists Group, is being held from April 10 to April 12, 2026, at the Mahant Ghasidas Museum art gallery near Raj Bhavan in Raipur. The exhibition brings together works of 100 renowned artists from across the country, along with participation from four distinguished guest artists. The exhibition was inaugurated on April 10, 2026, by Chief Guest Guru Khushwant, Minister of Technical Education, Chhattisgarh Government, along with special guests Dr. Chittaranjan Kar, writer from Raipur, and Ved Prakash Bhardwaj, visual artist, art writer, curator and editor from New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion,



Minister Guru Khushwant said he felt proud to be part of ‘Gaura’, describing it as a celebration of the vibrant and diverse artistic spirit of Chhattisgarh. He said the

exhibition marks an important milestone as it brings together 100 progressive artists, each contributing unique vision and creativity to the cultural canvas of the

region. He further stated that the exhibition represents a dialogue between the artist and the viewer. Curator Dr. Dhruv Tiwari said that art has always been a powerful medium of expression, reflection and transformation.

He added that the objective of ‘Gaura’ is to showcase the rich artistic talent of Chhattisgarh and provide a platform for artists to share their stories, dreams and perspectives with the world. He emphasized that the exhibition is not merely a display of artworks but a dialogue between artists and audiences, encouraging deeper engagement and interpretation. He noted that the artworks on display reflect themes of identity, heritage, environment and human experience, and represent the resilience, innovation

and passion of artists. Each artwork, he said, offers a window into the artist’s inner world. Dr. Tiwari encouraged visitors to emotionally connect with the artworks and allow them to inspire thought, challenge perspectives and deepen understanding. He expressed hope that the exhibition would spark curiosity and appreciation for art and strengthen cultural connection and creative spirit. He also thanked all participating artists, organizers, sponsors and supporters for making the exhibition possible. He highlighted that the Chhattisgarh Progressive Artists Group is an active platform promoting contemporary art and uniting artists. The group’s first exhibition ‘Soha’ was held from April 12 to 14, 2025, at the same venue in Raipur.

ANTI-DRUG AND CYBER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN HELD IN SIUD VILLAGE, 50-WOMEN COMMANDO TEAM FORMED



Janjgir-Champa: Under community policing initiatives, a successful anti-drug and cyber awareness program was organized in Siud village under the Navagarh police station area. During the event, the police also formed a 50-member women commando team. The program was conducted under the leadership of Station In-Charge

Inspector Kamlesh Sende, where villagers were educated in detail about the harmful effects of drug abuse. A strong message was also delivered against illegal liquor, urging people to stay away from such activities. As part of the cyber awareness drive, police officials informed villagers about online fraud, cybercrime, and cases of digital arrest. They

advised people not to click on unknown links, not to share OTPs, and to use social media safely and responsibly. Police officials stated that continuous campaigns will be carried out against illegal liquor, drug trafficking, and other social crimes in the district, and similar awareness programs will be organized in the future as well.

After Public Outreach, Police Detain 5 Troublemakers and Send Them to Court in Bilaspur

Bilaspur: In a strong action against individuals disturbing public peace, police in the Chakarbhatha area took strict measures that created a stir in the region and sent a clear message that even minor law and order violations will not be tolerated. Acting on continuous complaints and apprehensions of potential disputes and violence, Chakarbhatha police conducted a mobile police station ‘Jan Chaupal’ on April 12, 2026, to assess the situation on the ground. As soon as indications of pos-



sible unrest were received, the police immediately swung into action and initiated preventive proceedings against five individuals. The accused were taken into custody and identified as Darbari Lal Narang (58), Sunil Narang (36), Karan

Narang (24), Gautam Kosle (38), and Kailash Joshi (49), all residents of Bodsara village. Police took action against them under Sections 170, 126, and 135(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

Youth Arrested with 35 Pouches of Country Liquor in Birra Police Action

Janjgir-Champa: As part of an ongoing campaign against illegal liquor, Birra police achieved a major success by arresting a youth with 35 pouches of country-made liquor. According to information, under the direction of Superintendent of Police Nivedita Pal, guidance of Additional SP Umesh Kumar Kashyap, and supervision of SDOP Birra Satrupa Taram, police acted on a tip-off received through the local informant network. During the operation, police arrested



Surendra Kashyap (23), a resident of Pendri village. From his possession, 35 pouches of country-made plain liquor worth approximately Rs 2,800 were seized. A case has been registered against the accused under Section 34(2) of the

Excise Act, and he has been sent to judicial remand following arrest. Police Inspector Jay Kumar Sahu, ASI Teej Ram Jangade, along with other personnel of the team, played an active role in the successful operation.

Man Arrested for Killing His Wife in Kabirdham, Swift Police Action



Kabirdham: The Kabirdham police are continuously taking strict action against serious crimes in the district. In a similar case, Singhanpuri Jungle police have arrested a man in connection with a murder case through swift action. Under the direction of Superintendent of Police Dharmendra Singh, guidance of Additional SP Pushpendra Baghel and Amit Patel, and leadership of SDOP Sanjay Dhruv, the police team quickly investigated the case and traced the accused. According to information, Mangalsingh Baiga (30), a resident of Bhemdranawanganv Baigapara village, allegedly assaulted his wife Dashmat Bai Baiga,

resulting in her death. After receiving the information, police reached the spot and initiated necessary legal procedures. During the investigation, the accused was tracked down and arrested. The weapon used in the crime, an axe handle, was also recovered from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused at Singhanpuri Jungle police station under Crime No. 11/2026, Section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and further investigation is underway. Kabirdham police stated that strict action against serious crimes will continue to maintain law and order in the district. The police team of Singhanpuri Jungle played a key role in the operation.

Strong Police Action in West Zone of Raipur Commissionerate, Crackdown Creates Panic Among Criminals



Raipur: In a major drive to dismantle the roots of crime and instill fear of law among offenders, Raipur Police carried out strict action in the western zone of the city, including parades of habitual criminals, intensive checks in BSUP colonies, and preventive detentions. Following strict instructions from senior officers, a large-scale coordinated campaign was launched across multiple police stations including Purani Basti, D.D. Nagar, Amanaka, Azad Chowk, Saraswati Nagar, Kabir Nagar, New Rajendra Nagar, Mujgahan, and Tikrapara. Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner of Police (West Zone) Sandeep Patel and Additional DCP Rahul Dev Sharma, more than 85 listed habitual offenders and knife-wielding criminals were summoned to police stations and paraded. They were

strictly warned that any return to criminal activities would result in imprisonment. During the operation, three active habitual offenders were immediately arrested and proceedings were initiated to send them to jail under preventive legal provisions. The police also used drone surveillance and combing operations to monitor sensitive areas such as BSUP colonies and Valmiki Nagar. Narrow lanes and suspected hideouts were closely scanned using drones, sending a clear message that criminals cannot escape police surveillance. Authorities stated that this is not a one-time action but part of an ongoing zero-tolerance policy against crime in Raipur. Such surprise operations and technological surveillance will continue in the future to ensure public safety and maintain law and order in the city.

Major Success Under “Ujiyara Campaign”: Rs 33 Lakh Worth of Ganja Seized in Kanker

Kanker: Under the “Ujiyara Campaign” launched against illegal narcotics, Kanker police have achieved a major success by seizing a large quantity of ganja worth approximately Rs 33 lakh. The operation was carried out under the direction of Superintendent of Police Nikhil Rakhecha (IPS), guidance of Additional SP Yogesh Sahu, and supervision of DSP Avinash Thakur. On April 11, 2026, police at Narharpur police station received a tip-off that illegal ganja was being transported in a Creta vehicle bearing registration number HR 10 C 3344 via Bharatmala Road towards Dibbipani. Acting immediately on the information, police teams set up a blockade. On seeing the police, the



driver attempted to escape by driving recklessly and subsequently met with an accident near Dibbipani. The driver abandoned the vehicle and fled from the spot. Upon searching the vehicle, police recovered 67.380 kg of illegal ganja packed in 13 packets across three sacks. A Creta vehicle, valued at approximately Rs 10,00,000, was also

seized. The total seized property is estimated at Rs 43,69,000, and formal seizure proceedings were conducted in the presence of witnesses. The accused driver is currently absconding and a search operation is underway. A case has been registered at Narharpur police station under Crime No. 83/2026, Sections 281 and 20(b)(ii)(C) of the

Highlights

Under the “Ujiyara Campaign” launched against illegal narcotics, Kanker police have achieved a major success by seizing a large quantity of ganja worth approximately Rs 33 lakh. NDPS Act, and further investigation has been initiated. The operation was led by Inspector Somesh Singh Baghel (Station In-Charge, Narharpur) along with Dudhawa Outpost In-Charge Yogendra Verma, Sub-Inspector Prem Shankar Thakur, ASI Budharu Ram Markam, Paltu Ram Mandavi, Gautam Bisen, and other police personnel.

Passengers clashed over a seat on the Intercity Express at Samastipur Junction



Samastipur: A fight broke out between two passengers over a seat on the Jaynagar Intercity Express train at Samastipur Junction on Saturday. The incident occurred when members of a family boarded a coach for Patna. A dispute over seating

quickly escalated into a physical altercation. It was reported that the two parties had already been arguing over something, which escalated after boarding the train. Railway police arrived at the scene immediately after receiving information and brought the situation under control.

Youth Arrested Within Minutes for Creating Panic by Brandishing Knife in Dhamtari

Dhamtari: Police from Kareljadi outpost in Dhamtari district swiftly arrested a youth who was creating panic in the area by openly brandishing a knife. Police were conducting routine patrolling in the outpost jurisdiction to maintain peace and law and order when they received a tip-off from an informant that a young man near the electricity office in Mazaratola of Kareljadi village was threatening passersby with a sharp knife and spreading fear in the area.



Taking the information seriously, the police team immediately reached the spot and, in the presence of witnesses, conducted a

raid. They found a youth holding a black-colored sharp knife and threatening people passing by. Upon questioning, the

accused identified himself as Sanjay Sahu (20), son of Narendra Sahu, resident of Kareljadi. A 12-inch-long sharp steel knife was recovered from his possession. The accused could not produce any valid documents for the weapon. Police immediately seized the knife and registered a case at Kareljadi police outpost under Magarlod police station, Crime No. 60/2026, Sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act. The accused was arrested and produced before the court, from where he was sent to judicial custody.

Pran Pratishtha Concludes at Newly Built Shri Balaji-Narasimha Temple in Bahiyara, Lakshmi-Balaji Wedding Ritual Performed

Ara: The four-day Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the newly constructed Shri Balaji-Narasimha Temple in Bahiyara village concluded on Sunday with the ceremonial wedding ritual of Shri Balaji and Goddess Lakshmi. The temple has been built at the ancestral residence of former Rajya Sabha MP Dr. R.K. Sinha, inspired by him and his wife Rita Kishore Sinha, and constructed by their son, BJP National Secretary Rituraj Sinha, and daughter-in-law Pallavi Sinha. The temple premises resonated with Vedic chants as a team of forty scholars and priests from Tamil Nadu conducted the rituals. The final day witnessed elaborate religious ceremonies including yajna, havan, and traditional rituals, creating an atmosphere of deep devotion and spiritual fervor. Devotees from Bahiyara and



nearby villages gathered in large numbers to witness the rituals and offer prayers. The temple houses idols of Shri Balaji, Goddess Mahalakshmi, Lakshmi Narasimha, and the Ram Darbar, including Lord Ram, Sita, Lakshman, and Hanuman. Idols of Lord Ganapati, Hanuman, and Garuda are also installed within the temple premises, while statues of the divine gatekeepers Jai and Vijay at

the entrance have become a major attraction for devotees. Rituraj Sinha stated that the temple has been constructed in accordance with South Indian architectural traditions based on Agama Shastra. The structure was designed by renowned Coimbatore-based architect R. Balakrishnan and crafted by skilled artisans. The idols have been sculpted from Krishna stone by Arun Yogiraj, the sculptor associat-

ed with the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The same team of priests from Tamil Nadu, who played a key role in the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya, conducted the rituals here as well. Situated on the scenic banks of the Son River, the temple has now been opened to the public. Rituraj Sinha stated that devotees from Bhojpur, Shahabad, and across Bihar will now have easy access to Shri Balaji's darshan. The

temple premises, with its eco-friendly surroundings, lotus-filled ponds at the entrance, and the flowing Son River nearby, offers a spiritually uplifting environment. The final day of the ceremony also saw the presence of several prominent political leaders from across the state. Among those present were Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha, BJP State President Sanjay Saraogi, Minister Dilip Jaiswal, BJP Organization General Secretary Bhikhu Bhai Dalsania, JD(U) leader and Minister Ashok Choudhary, Legislative Council Chairman Awadhesh Narayan Singh, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Deepak Kumar, along with several MLAs, former legislators, and NDA leaders. They offered prayers and participated in the rituals conducted by Vedic scholars.

ELDERLY FARMER SHOT DEAD WHILE SLEEPING ON FARM HUT, BODY FOUND 50 METRES FROM HOME

Bhagalpur: A sensational murder case has come to light from Paschimi Bhittha village under Ismailpur police station area in Naugachia police district of Bhagalpur, where a 65-year-old farmer was shot dead by unidentified assailants. The deceased has been identified as Buttan Mandal, a resident of Ward No. 4. According to reports, he was sleeping at his farm hut (basa) when the incident occurred between 2 am and 3 am. The attackers fired a shot that hit his abdomen and pierced through his chest, resulting in his death on the spot. The incident came to light on Sunday morning when the victim's elder son went to the



farm hut to feed cattle. He found his father lying in a pool of blood and unresponsive. Shocked by the scene, he immediately informed other family members, who then alerted the police. It is reported that the crime spot is located barely 50 metres from the victim's residence. The incident has created panic in the area, and fear has gripped local residents. Villagers stated

that the deceased was a sociable person and had no known disputes, raising questions about the motive behind the murder. Upon receiving information, the Ismailpur police reached the spot and began an investigation. A forensic team also collected evidence from the scene. Police have launched a manhunt to identify and arrest the culprits.

Major Police Crackdown in Bhagalpur, Five Arrested with Brown Sugar in Two Separate Raids



Bhagalpur: In a major crackdown against illegal narcotics, Bhagalpur police conducted raids in two different police station areas and arrested a total of five accused with brown sugar. The action was carried out under a special

campaign launched on the instructions of the Senior Superintendent of Police. In the first operation conducted in the Kahalgaon police station area, police raided a house located in Shiv Parvati Nagar based on a tip-off. During the raid, four accused were

caught while allegedly packaging illegal narcotics. Police recovered 58.028 grams of brown sugar, 270 intoxicant tablets, mobile phones, cash, silver foil, a weighing machine, and other materials from their possession. The arrested accused

have been identified as Munna Kumar, Govind Kumar, Sonu Kumar, and Raja Kumar. In the second operation carried out in the Babarganj police station area, police raided Aliganj Maheshpur Harijan Tola and arrested one accused. From his possession, 313.25 grams of brown sugar, three mobile phones, Rs 13,300 in cash, and a weighing machine were recovered. The accused has been identified as Abhishek Kumar. In both cases, police have registered FIRs under relevant sections and initiated further legal proceedings. Police officials stated that the crackdown on illegal drug trade in the district will continue.

PM Modi to address 'Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan' on 13th April

New Delhi: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will attend a national level 'Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan' on 13th April 2026 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi at around 11 AM. He will also address the gathering on the occasion. The programme will witness participation of eminent personalities and women achievers from diverse fields. It will bring together representatives from different sectors such as government, academia, science, sports, entrepreneurship, media, social work and culture. In September 2023, Parliament passed the



'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam' marking a significant step towards enhancing women's representation in legislative bodies. The Act provided for reservation of one-third of seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

Now, with a focus on implementation of women's reservation across the country, a Parliament session is being convened on 16th April. The Sammelan is being organised to reinforce the commitment towards greater partici-

pation of women in shaping India's development trajectory. It will also highlight the increasing role of women in governance and leadership across all levels, from Panchayats to Parliament. The programme will underscore the importance of enhanced representation of women in decision-making processes. The Sammelan will highlight the role of women in the journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047. It will reflect the government's continued commitment towards women-led development as a central pillar of the vision for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Updates on Key Sectors in View of Developments in West Asia

New Delhi: In view of the evolving situation in West Asia, the Government of India is closely monitoring developments and undertaking coordinated measures to ensure preparedness across critical sectors. The following update outlines the measures being undertaken in the areas of energy supply, maritime operations, and assistance to Indian nationals in the region: Energy Supply and Fuel Availability The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas shared an update on the current fuel supply situation, outlining measures being undertaken to ensure uninterrupted availability of petroleum products and LPG amid the ongoing developments affecting the Strait of Hormuz. It was noted that Public Advisory and Citizen

Awareness Citizens are advised to avoid panic purchase of petrol, diesel and LPG and rely only on official sources for information. LPG consumers are requested to use digital booking platforms and avoid visiting distributors. Citizens are encouraged to use alternate fuels such as PNG and electric or induction cooktops. All citizens are urged to conserve energy in their daily use during the current situation. Government Preparedness and Supply Management Measures Despite the ongoing geopolitical situation, the Government has prioritised domestic LPG and PNG supply, along with high priority for hospitals and educational institutions. The Government has already implemented several rationalisation measures on both

the supply and demand side, including enhancing refinery production, increasing the booking interval from 21 to 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas and prioritising sectors for supply. Alternate fuels such as kerosene and coal have been made available to ease pressure on LPG demand. The Ministry of Coal has directed Coal India and Singareni Collieries to supply additional coal to States for distribution to small and medium consumers. States have been advised to facilitate new PNG connections for domestic and commercial consumers. Coordinated Efforts with States/UTs and Institutional Mechanisms State Governments are empowered under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and LPG Control Order.

Amit Shah expresses deep condolences to the family members and countless admirers of the renowned singer, Asha Bhosle Ji, on her passing

New Delhi: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah has expressed deep condolences to the family members and countless admirers of the renowned singer, Asha Bhosle Ji, on her passing. In a post on X platform, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah said that today is a sad day for every Indian — especially every music lover like me — as our beloved Asha Bhosle Ji is no longer amongst us. He said that Asha Ji not only carved a distinct identity for herself through her melodious voice and unparalleled talent but also further enriched Indian music with her musical



notes. He said that her unique ability to adapt to every genre of music won the hearts of all who listened. Shri Shah said that having touched millions of hearts with her voice, Asha Ji left an indelible mark across numerous lan-

guages—including Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, and Gujarati—as well as in the realm of folk music. He said that the simplicity and warmth that characterized Asha Ji's demeanor were as profound as the tenderness in her voice.

Indian army contingent departs for India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise dustlik



The Indian Army contingent departed today for the 7th edition of India-Uzbekistan joint military Exercise DUSTLIK. The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted at Gurumsaray Field Training Area, Namangam, Uzbekistan from 12 to 25 April 2026. Exercise DUSTLIK is a yearly event conducted alternatively in India and Uzbekistan. Last edition was conducted at Foreign Training Node, Aundh (Pune) in April 2025.

The Indian Armed Forces contingent comprising 60 personnel is being represented by 45 personnel from the Indian Army, majorly from a Battalion of the MAHAR Regiment and 15 personnel from the Indian Air Force. The Uzbekistan contingent also comprises of approximately 60 personnel, from Uzbekistan Army and Air Force. Aim of Exercise DUSTLIK is to foster military cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations in semi-mountainous ter-

rain. It would focus on high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and basics of special arms skills. The Exercise will also establish a unified operational algorithm between the command-and-control structures of both the contingents for planning and execution of joint operations. Key operational aspects to be practiced include land navigation, strike missions on enemy bases and seizure of enemy-held areas. The Indian contingent will take the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the operational procedures and drills of the Uzbekistan Armed Forces and share own operational experiences with the Uzbekistan contingent. The joint training will culminate in a 48-hour validation exercise aimed at validating the tactical drills for joint operations, emphasising on Preparation & Execution of Joint Special Operations, aimed at Neutralisation of Unlawful Armed Groups.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan releases the agricultural roadmap for four districts; observes Integrated Farming Model and interacts with farmers at Advanced Agriculture Festival

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan presented a major initiative for farmers on the second day of the Advanced Agriculture Festival being held in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, by releasing a comprehensive agricultural roadmap for four districts — Sehore, Raisen, Vidisha, and Dewas. On this occasion, he also inspected an Integrated Farming Model with the objective of promoting modern agriculture

practices. At the same time, during special sessions organised at the Festival on the Crop Insurance Scheme and Integrated Farming, the Union Minister directly interacted with farmers, listened to their problems in detail, and held extensive discussions with scientists and experts to find practical solutions. During his address, he emphasised that in order to make agriculture more profitable, it is extremely essential to adopt new technologies, diversify crops, and implement integrated farming

systems. He stated that farmers should not limit themselves to traditional farming practices alone but should also incorporate activities such as animal husbandry, horticulture, beekeeping, and organic farming into their agricultural systems. By doing so, farmers will be able to achieve higher returns at lower costs. He further stated that continuous efforts are being made at every level to ensure that the benefits of government schemes reach the last farmer in the most remote areas.

Agricultural roadmap for Vidisha, Raisen, Sehore and Dewas Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the Advanced Agriculture Festival is not merely a formal or ceremonial event, but rather a serious and structured effort aimed at bringing meaningful improvements in the country's agricultural system. He stated that a well-defined agricultural development roadmap has now been prepared for the districts of Vidisha, Raisen, Sehore, and Dewas. In the

coming time, similar plans will be developed for all districts of Madhya Pradesh. He clearly stated that these plans will not remain confined to paper or administrative files but will be implemented effectively on the ground. Through the convergence and coordination of various schemes of the central and state governments, the benefits of these plans will be delivered directly to farmers. The aim is to make agriculture not only more profitable but also more sustainable in the long run. He further said

that under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, continuous efforts are being made to transform the direction of agriculture and to make farming more profitable and resilient. At the Festival, farmers are being provided with practical, field-level, and scientific knowledge. Through different sessions, attempts are being made to explain various aspects of farming in a simple and accessible manner so that farmers can improve their crop systems and overall production practices.

Trump says US to 'blockade' Strait of Hormuz after talks failed over Iran's 'nuclear ambitions'

AGENCY
Washington: US President Donald Trump's threat to blockade the Strait of Hormuz will only affect a small handful of vessels that are still navigating the waterway, shipping expert Lars Jensen says. "If this is actually done by the Americans, it will halt a very tiny trickle of vessels. In the greater scheme of things, it doesn't really change anything," he says. Jensen, chief executive of Vespucci Maritime, says Trump's threat of preventing safe passage for any ships paying tolls to Iran would also have little impact, as any company doing so would already face sanctions for paying the regime. "First of all, there's very few ships that pass. There's even fewer of those that pay, and those that pay will already be subject to American sanctions," he says. Most shipping companies will continue to wait and see if there is a tentative peace agreement and whether that



might hold, Jensen says, and if that occurs, a slow ramping up of shipping may resume. As for what it would take shipping lines to decide whether it was safe to transit the strait again, he says the honest answer from those firms would be that they don't know. "Because at the end of it, it boils down to trust: trust that any agreement between the US and Iranians will hold for a significant portion of

time, and that's a subjective feeling, there is nothing hard and tangible you can point to," he says. As we watch to see whether the next few days bring more talks or a resumption of the war, the US president has made various threats in a lengthy Truth Social post. We knew Iran's nuclear point was a huge point of contention and one that Trump has confirmed negotiators couldn't get past.

The future of the Strait of Hormuz is clearly an immediate concern, and the US is now threatening a blockade. Not only that, Trump is threatening any country who pays Iran "an illegal toll" to get through the vital shipping lane. There have been reports that some ships have passed through after paying a very expensive fee to Iran. Before these talks, he claimed there has been regime change in

Iran, with new and more "reasonable" leaders, but they are now "volatile, difficult, unpredictable people". But, he did acknowledge there had been points of agreement during these talks, and that's a sense we had here in Islamabad, as we heard technical experts became involved and talks continued into the early hours of the morning. Trump has also said the US delegation became "very friendly" and "respectful" of Iran's delegation, which would suggest some sort of working relationship difficult to imagine before this weekend. We had wondered how he might react to the failure to agree to come to an agreement in Islamabad... we can now see his first response. Across two lengthy social media posts, he says he will block the few ships that are currently making it through the Strait of Hormuz. "I have instructed our Navy to seek and interdict every vessel in International Waters that has

paid a toll to Iran. No one who pays an illegal toll will have safe passage on the high seas." The posts do not make it clear how "safe passage" will be denied, but it is worth remembering that the US has, in just the last few months, boarded vessels en route to or from Venezuela. Crucially, he also says "Other Countries will be involved with this Blockade", without specifying who. Iran's selective - but effective - blockade of one of the world's most important waterways has generally only been bypassed by ships either aligned to Iran, to nations Tehran considers friendly, or by vessels that are thought to have paid a toll, believed to be around \$2m (£1.5m). He also suggests that Iran has promised to open the Straits. Going by their public statements, they have repeatedly said the reverse, seeking formal recognition of what has become maybe their key strategic point of leverage.

Justin Bieber headlines Coachella with nostalgia-fuelled set



AGENCY
Washington: Justin Bieber made a nostalgia-fuelled return to the major stage as Coachella's much-anticipated headline act. The 32-year-old spent much of Saturday night's gig sitting in front of a laptop and singing to YouTube music videos of his older hits, such as Baby and Never say Never - delighting the crowd in an apparent tribute to the platform on which he was discovered. He also played some of the home videos that had brought him to the industry's attention aged 12, pulling them up on the big

screen, and appeared to interact with the live comments on the YouTube stream of his set. It marked the star's biggest live show in four years, having cancelled his Justice world tour following health issues. He opened the gig alone on an otherwise empty stage, performing tracks from his 2025 albums Swag and Swag II - before telling the crowd he wanted to take them "on a journey" and reaching back into his archive. He repeatedly asked the audience: "How far back do you go?" Bieber also played the clip for which he most recently went viral - and which prompted speculation about his mental state - in which he confronted a photographer and said: "It's not clocking to you, I'm standing on business." Dressed in a hoodie and shorts on a stripped-back stage, Bieber was joined by musical guests including The Kid Laroi, Wizkid, Tems and Dijon. The star's wife Hailey Bieber was spotted in the crowd, alongside celebrity couple Timothée Chalamet and Kylie Jenner.

Voters in Hungary set to decide whether Viktor Orbán remains in power after 16 years



AGENCY
Kyiv: Tensions between Budapest and Kyiv were heightened earlier this year when oil stopped passing through a major pipeline to Hungary and Slovakia. Deliveries via the Druzhba pipeline came to a halt after the major oil hub at Brody in western Ukraine was damaged in a Russian attack on 27 January. The channel supplies oil from Russia to Hungary and Slovakia and runs across Ukraine. Kyiv says the damage is severe and that it does not have the resources to repair it quickly, but Orbán's government has accused it of stalling. The situation highlights Hungary and Slovakia's continued dependence on Russian

oil. Ukraine has accepted "technical support" and funding from the EU to speed up the mends. The stand-off resulted in Orbán vetoing a 90bn (£78bn) EU loan to Ukraine, holding up a crucial support package for the country. Even before the first reports suggesting possible Russian efforts to bolster Orbán's position, Ukraine had already become a central issue in Hungary's parliamentary election campaign, dominating government messaging. It argues the EU and Kyiv risk dragging Hungary into the war, and that only Orbán's Fidesz party can prevent it. The party has amplified the message using AI-generated campaign videos.

GERMANY'S FAR-RIGHT AFD ADOPTS 'RADIC'

AGENCY
Washington: The far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party is riding high in the opinion polls in the eastern German state of Saxony-Anhalt and could win an outright majority in regional elections there in September. It would be the first time a far-right party has held power in a German state since World War Two. This weekend the AfD officially adopted what has been described as a "radical" and pro-ethnic German government programme for Saxony-Anhalt at a party conference in the central city of Magdeburg. The AfD's leading candidate in the state, Ulrich Siegmund, a TikTok star who was given a standing ovation by the delegates, said it was an historic moment, not just for Saxony-Anhalt. "The whole of Germany is watching this



historic election," he told the conference. "Parts of Europe are watching this historic election. Parts of the world are watching this historic election, because from here, finally, the political turnaround can also happen here in Germany." He said his party had the courage to speak out about what was going wrong in Germany, "that we don't feel safe anymore, that we scarcely feel at home anymore, that we don't recognise our homeland anymore".

After Iran talks falter, the big question is 'what happens next?'

AGENCY
Washington: Twenty-one hours was not enough to end 47 years of hostility between Iran and the US. The historic high-level talks in Islamabad, during a pause in weeks of grievous war, were always unlikely to end any other way. Calling this marathon negotiating session a failure belies the scale of the challenge in narrowing wide gaps on complex issues ranging from age-old suspicion about Iran's nuclear programme to new challenges this war has thrown up - most of all Iran's control of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, whose closure is causing economic shocks worldwide. To do a deal, they also needed to overcome a deep chasm of distrust. A day ago, it wasn't even certain the two sides would meet, and even more, sit down



in the same room. A long-standing political taboo was broken. The urgent question now is: what happens next? What happens to the contested two-week ceasefire which pulled the world back from US President Donald Trump's alarming threat to destroy a "whole civilisation" in Iran?

their "final and best offer". Will the US now escalate or negotiate? We still don't know enough about what happened behind tightly closed doors in a five-star hotel in leafy lockdown Islamabad during talks that went on long into the night. There are still few details on the disputes and discussion between the two sides, assisted by Pakistani mediators, the calls to and from experts, advisers, and, according to Vance, "dozens" of calls to Trump himself. The vice-president spoke of the "core goal" of the US during his brief dawn news conference. "We need to see an affirmative commitment that [Iran] will not seek a nuclear weapon and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon," he said.

Why this disillusioned Trump voter spends hours searching Epstein files

AGENCY
Georgia: After Cayden McBride finishes class in Rome, Georgia, the 19-year-old goes home, opens his laptop, and starts searching. For the past few months, he has been spending hours at a time combing through the Jeffrey Epstein files on the US Department of Justice (DOJ) website and following others online who are doing the same. Flight logs. Transcripts. Images. Videos. The material released by the DOJ has given new insight into the crimes of the late convicted sex offender and into his high-profile connections. McBride believes the Epstein files still matter, even if the headlines have



moved on to the Iran war recently. "As a Christian, I don't believe anybody should endure what these women have been through," he says. "There is so much bad stuff in these files." McBride was a self-described "Trump guy" and "very anti-establishment".

has left him and many others disheartened with the movement, the president and especially with Pam Bondi, Trump's former attorney general. Bondi was removed from her post just last week, to be replaced, in the interim, by her deputy Todd Blanche. Trump has lauded Bondi for doing a "tremendous job" and Blanche denied reports that his predecessor's handling of the Epstein files had been a factor in her departure. But McBride hailed the changing of the guard, expressing hope that there could now be renewed focus on the Epstein issue. His wish was granted this week, from an unlikely quarter.

AT LEAST 30 FEARED DEAD IN CRUSH AT HAITIAN TOURIST SITE



AGENCY
Haiti: At least 30 people are feared to have been killed in a stampede at a popular tourist site in Haiti on Saturday. The incident took place on Saturday during an annual Easter gathering at the Laferrière Citadelle, a Unesco World Heritage site. Jean Henri Petit, head of civil protection for Haiti's Nord department, said, warning the death toll could yet rise. Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé said the incident occurred "during a tourist event attended by many young people" at the site, in the northern town of Milot. He said an investigation had been launched and "all relevant authorities" mobilised to support those affected. "The government sends its sincere condolences to the affected families," Fils-Aimé said in a statement. The site had been packed with students and visitors after the event - commemorating the 19th Century

fortress's founding - was advertised on social media, local media report, citing officials. The stampede was said to have started near the entrance to the site and was exacerbated by the onset of heavy rain. Haiti's Le Nouvelliste newspaper first reported the death toll, citing Petit. The government statement did not say how many had died. Citadelle Laferrière, also known as Citadelle Henry, was built by revolutionary Henri Christophe shortly after Haiti gained independence from France. The stronghold took more than a decade to construct and was a crucial part of a network of fortifications to protect the new Caribbean island nation against attacks. The site has since become a symbol of Haitian independence. The deadly stampede comes as Haiti grapples with widespread gang violence that has led to thousands being killed.



Ukraine and Russia accuse each other of hundreds of ceasefire violations

Manhattan prosecutor investigates abuse claims against congressman Eric Swalwell

AGENCY
Manhattan: The Manhattan District Attorney's Office says it has launched an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against US Congressman Eric Swalwell. Four women have accused him of misconduct ranging from sexual harassment to rape, including an alleged incident in New York. Swalwell, a leading contender in California's governor race, denies the claims, vowing to defend himself with "facts". "We urge survivors and anyone with knowledge of these allegations to contact our Special Victims Division," said the New York City prosecutor's

office. Representatives for Swalwell - who was elected in 2012 to a district near San Francisco - did not immediately respond to the BBC's request for comment. In urging accusers to come forward, the district attorney's office said on Saturday: "Our specially trained prosecutors, investigators and counsellors are well-equipped to help you in a trauma-informed, survivor-centered manner." The investigation comes a day after Swalwell said the allegations were "false". "For nearly 20 years, I have served the public - as a prosecutor and a congressman, and have always protected women," the married father-of-three added.

DONALD TRUMP ORDERS US NAVY BLOCKADE OF STRAIT OF HORMUZ

THREATENS TO 'FINISH' IRAN OVER NUCLEAR DISPUTE

AGENCY

White House: US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that the Navy would "shortly" begin a blockade of ships entering and leaving the Strait of Hormuz.

"So, there you have it, the meeting went well, most points were agreed to, but the only point that really mattered, NUCLEAR, was not. Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz," he posted on Truth Social.

"At some point, we will reach an 'ALL BEING ALLOWED TO GO IN, ALL BEING ALLOWED TO GO OUT' basis, but Iran has not allowed that to happen by merely saying, 'There may be a mine out there somewhere,' that nobody knows about but them. THIS IS WORLD EXTORTION, and Leaders of Countries, especially the United States of America, will never be extorted. I have also instructed our Navy to seek and interdict every vessel in International Waters that has paid a toll to Iran. No one who pays an illegal toll will



have safe passage on the high seas," Trump said. The development follows collapsed talks with Iran in Pakistan. The US president has vowed to destroy Iranian mines, warning US forces are "locked and loaded". "We will also begin destroying the mines the Iranians laid in the Straits. Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL! Iran knows, better than anyone, how to END this situation which has already devastated their Country. Their Navy is gone, their Air Force is gone, their Anti

Aircraft and Radar are useless, Khomeini, and most of their "Leaders," are dead, all because of their Nuclear ambition," he added. Trump said other countries would also be involved with this blockade and Iran would not be allowed to profit off this "Illegal Act of EXTORTION". "The Blockade will begin shortly. They want money and, more importantly, they want Nuclear. Additionally and, at an appropriate moment, we are fully "LOCKED AND LOADED," and our Military will finish up the little that is left of Iran! President DON-

ALD J. TRUMP," he added. The Middle East teeters on the brink of an expanded conflict today, with Al Jazeera reporting that the Israeli army chief has explicitly ordered his forces to prepare for a possible resumption of war on Iran. This stark military escalation, broadcast by the Qatar-based news network, arrives at a critical and volatile moment for the region, directly following the abrupt collapse of international diplomatic efforts to halt the ongoing hostilities.

Ceasefire Talks Hit Dead End

The alarming directive from Israel coincides with a complete standstill in US-Iran ceasefire negotiations. High-stakes diplomatic talks aimed at ending the six-week war have officially failed. Following 21 hours of gruelling, face-to-face marathon negotiations in Pakistan, the US delegation—led by Vice President J.D. Vance and featuring key figures like Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff—could not reach a consensus with an Iranian delegation headed by Parliament Speaker

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. The talks ultimately collapsed over profound strategic disagreements. A major roadblock was the inability to agree on the control and safe passage of vessels through the heavily contested Strait of Hormuz. Furthermore, Iranian officials maintained a hardline stance, asserting that any successful truce hinged entirely on the United States acknowledging Iran's "legitimate rights and interests." With neither side willing to concede, Vice President Vance confirmed the US delegation's return without a resolution.

Global Economic Shockwaves

The dual blow of Israel's potential military mobilisation and the failure of international diplomacy is sending immediate shockwaves through global markets. Crude Oil and Gold Physical crude markets are bracing for severe shortages, driving up record premiums amid widespread geopolitical panic. Simultaneously, gold prices have surged as the breakdown of talks weakens the US dollar, triggering a massive wave of safe-haven investments.

PFRDA's NPS Swasthya: Here's How You Can Dip Into Pension Funds For Health

AGENCY

Mumbai: The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) recently launched the second proof of concept for the groundbreaking initiative 'NPS Swasthya,' which has been designed to reshape the way Indians view their retirement savings. The initiative is intended to provide healthcare funding along with retirement planning.

Traditionally, the National Pension System (NPS) has served as a major vehicle for long-term financial security. It ensures that subscribers build a corpus to sustain themselves during their post-retirement years. Amid rising healthcare costs and medical emergencies often draining household finances, PFRDA has now come up with a mechanism that allows pension funds to serve a dual purpose — retirement planning and healthcare support. NPS Swasthya: Here's what you must know PFRDA, which serves as the regulatory authority, has described NPS Swasthya as a multi-partner initiative that has been structured to provide comprehensive financial support along with health security. As per the official statement, the new



initiative will see the Medi Assist Healthcare Services acting as the core technology partner to provide digital infrastructure, while CAMS KRA supports subscriber onboarding and KYC enablement. Meanwhile, Tata Pension Fund and Axis Pension Fund will serve as the designated pension fund managers. Further, it stated that the Aditya Birla Health Insurance provides the integrated top-up insurance cover, with Medi Assist TPA managing claims administration. "The initiative addresses a growing gap in India's retirement landscape, where healthcare costs are projected to rise by

11.5 per cent to 14 per cent in 2026, significantly outpacing inflation and putting long-term financial security under pressure for millions," PFRDA said. The scheme has been introduced at a time when the pension ecosystem rapidly scales with NPS and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), having a cumulative subscriber base of 9.64 crore. Its combined assets under management are pegged at Rs 16.55 lakh crore, as of March 29, 2026. While the NPS funds have usually remained locked until the subscriber reaches retirement age, the NPS Swasthya initiative provided them access to a "Net

IPOs This Week: One Mainboard Issue To Launch, Om Power Transmission Shares To List On Indian Stock Market

AGENCY

Mumbai: The third week of April will be a truncated week in the Indian stock market, expecting limited action in the primary market with limited openings of initial public offerings.

The coming week will witness the launch of two IPOs for subscription including one mainboard and one SME IPO and few listings.

Here's a look at all IPO actions in the primary market between April 13-17, 2026: Citius Transnet InvIT IPO Citius Transnet Investment Trust Invit IPO will open for subscription on Friday, April 17, 2026 and end on Tuesday, April 21, 2026. The IPO is a book built issue of Rs 1,350 crore.

As per the draft documents, the proposed public issue, included a strategic investor portion capped at 25% of the total size. The shares are proposed to be listed on both BSE and NSE. Mehul



Telecom IPO Mehul Telecom IPO is scheduled to open for subscription on Friday, April 17, 2026 till Tuesday, April 21, 2026. The company will in BSE SME and expects to raise Rs 27.73 crore through the public issue.

The offer will be entirely fresh issue of around 28 lakh shares. New Listings Om Power Transmission IPO Shares of Om Power Transmission are scheduled to list on the BSE and NSE on April 17,

Transmission IPO is a book-built issue of Rs 150.06 crore. It comprises a fresh issue of 76 lakh shares worth Rs 132.56 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 10 lakh shares

amounting to Rs 17.50 crore. The price band for the IPO is set at Rs 166 to Rs 175 per share. Emiac Technologies IPO Emiac Technologies IPO will list on the BSE SME on Monday, April 13, 2026. The offer is entirely a fresh issue totalling up to Rs 31.75 crore. The IPO bidding started from Friday, March 27, 2026 and ended on

Wednesday, April 8, 2026. Safety Controls & Devices IPO Safety Controls & Devices SME IPO are scheduled to be listed on Monday, April 13. The shares will list on BSE SME. The Safety Controls & Devices IPO consists of 60 lakh shares. Safety

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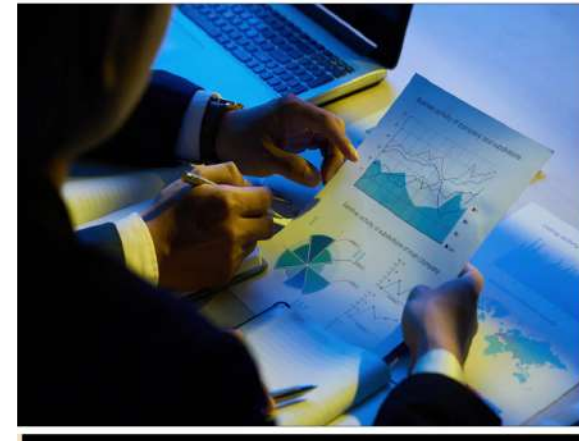


CORPORATE ACTIONS THIS WEEK:

Aurobindo Pharma, Muthoot Finance, Others To Trade Ex-Dividend

AGENCY

Mumbai: Aurobindo Pharma Ltd., Muthoot Finance Ltd., Energy Infrastructure Trust Ltd., Blue Blends Ltd., Pashupati Cotspin Ltd., and Prime Plastics Ltd. are among the many companies that have corporate actions lined up this week. Prima Plastics will also engage in a spin-off. Blue Blends (India) Ltd. had had its resolution plan suspension on April 17, while Prima Plastics' will have its spin-off on the same date. The listed companies have announced dividend payouts, income distribution, buy backs and stock splits that investors can benefit from. Dividends Muthoot Finance will trade ex-dividend and mark the record date has approved an interim dividend of Rs 30 per share on Friday, April 17. Stock Split On Friday, April 17, R&B Denims Ltd. will trade ex-stock split in the ratio of 10:1. That means 10



Highlights

■ Aurobindo Pharma Ltd., Muthoot Finance Ltd., Energy Infrastructure Trust Ltd., Blue Blends Ltd., Pashupati Cotspin Ltd., and Prime Plastics Ltd. are among the many companies that have corporate actions lined up this week.

equity share with a face value of Rs 10 will be subdivided into two shares of Rs 1. Stock splits typically enhances liquidity and encourages broader

investor participation. Investors should be watching these dates closely, as such actions often influence near-term stock sentiment and trading activity.

Income Distribution (InvIT) Energy Infrastructure Trust Ltd. will launch its InvIT (income distribution) with the record date of April 16. The ex-date is also April 16. Buy Back Of Shares Aurobindo Pharma Ltd. approved a share buy-back plan worth up to Rs 800 crore. The company will repurchase 54,23,728 fully paid-up equity shares, representing up to 0.93% stake, at a price of Rs 1,475 per share. The offer price is a premium of 11.6% over April 2's close of Rs 1,333.7. The board has set April 17 as the record date for the purpose of determining the entitlement and the names of equity shareholders who would be eligible to participate in the buy-back. The buyback is proposed to be made from all of the equity shareholders, including the promoters and members of the promoter group, on a proportionate basis through the "tender offer" route.

TCS Suspends Employees, Launches Enquiry Following Sexual Harassment Allegations In Nashik

AGENCY

Mumbai: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has suspended several employees pending an internal enquiry following serious allegations of sexual harassment at its Nashik office. The IT firm initiated immediate disciplinary action upon learning of the matter, reaffirming its strict stance against workplace misconduct. The corporate response follows formal complaints made by tech employees in Nashik. In connection with the allegations, local law enforcement has arrested six individuals, including a team lead, from the multinational company's office. Emphasising its commitment to a secure working environment, TCS highlighted the priority it places on staff welfare and safety. "TCS has a long-standing zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form,"



a company spokesperson stated. "We have always ensured the highest standards of safety and wellbeing of our employees at the workplace." Addressing the prompt intervention, the spokesperson detailed the immediate steps taken by the firm's management regarding the accused personnel. "As soon as we were made aware of the matter in Nashik, we took swift action. The employees being investigated

have been suspended pending enquiry." The technology giant confirmed it is fully supporting the ongoing police probe into the arrested individuals. Moving forward, the company's final disciplinary decisions will be guided by the official findings. "We are cooperating with the local law enforcement authorities, and any further action will be based on the conclusion of this investigation," the spokesperson concluded.

Music giant Universal gets \$64bn takeover offer

AGENCY

Mumbai: Universal Music Group, the entertainment giant behind acts such as Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter and Kendrick Lamar, has received a takeover offer estimated to be worth \$64.3bn (£48bn). US investment company Pershing Square is offering to buy Universal in a merger that would see the new company listed in America, its billionaire chief executive Bill Ackman said. As well as representing a huge list of artists, the world's largest music company also runs Abbey Road studios and owns labels such as EMI and Island Records. Pershing Square, which already owns a stake in Universal, also has holdings in Google, Meta and Amazon, as well as Restaurant Brands International, which includes Burger King. Universal said it had received Pershing's proposal and would assess its implications for shareholders, employees, artists, songwriters and other stakeholders. The company's board also expressed full confidence in chief executive Sir Lucian Grainge, his management



team and strategy. Ackman said its management had "done an excellent job nurturing and continuing to build a world-class artist roster and generating strong business performance". He said Universal had reshaped the industry to put artists at its centre, and had shown it could seize growth opportunities from artificial intelligence while protecting intellectual property. But he said the company's stock price had "languished" due to issues unrelated to the performance of its music business, which could all be "addressed with this transaction". Dan Coatsworth, head of markets at AJ Bell, said: "On paper, you might

think is a money-making machine. In reality, it's not that simple." Universal "is home to nine of the top 10 global recording artists of 2025", said Coatsworth but growth in the music streaming market had been slower than expected which matters "because Universal relies heavily on the likes of Spotify and Apple Music for royalty payments". Global music revenues have been growing year-on-year as streaming subscriptions rescued the industry from a period of piracy and financial decline. But a heated debate has been ongoing about how much these platforms pay out in royalties. The industry is also battling a rise in deep-

fakes - songs by fraudsters impersonating its artists - which are created by AI and are flooding platforms. He blamed a variety of factors, including uncertainty around an 18% stake in Universal owned by Bolloré Group, the family conglomerate of billionaire Vincent Bolloré, as well as a recent decision to delay listing the company's shares on the New York Stock Exchange. Universal is currently listed in Amsterdam but Ackman has long-campaigned for the company to float in the US. Ackman became a high-profile supporter of Donald Trump in July 2024 during his bid for a second term in the Oval Office. His intervention was seen as an important electoral endorsement of the now president from the business world. Adrian Cheesley, a former senior vice president at Universal, said the company would be the only music major to be listed on the S&P 500 stock market index in the US if the move went ahead. Commenting on Ackman's motives, Cheesley told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme he believed the billionaire

investor was happy with the current management. "I think this is about financial engineering, I don't think it's gonna affect the day-to-day running of the business," he said. Universal's share price initially soared by nearly 30% after the offer emerged on Tuesday. By the afternoon, it was 10% ahead. How music businesses earn revenue has changed as listeners switched to the likes of TikTok and Instagram. In 2024 Universal threatened to pull its songs from TikTok, claiming the platform wasn't paying fair value for music, and it was also concerned about "protecting human artists from the harmful effects of AI, and online safety for TikTok's users". Coatsworth said this dispute, while now settled, points to broader concerns around getting paid by social media networks. Added to that, he said: "Cut-throat competition in the music business also doesn't help. Record labels must plough significant amounts into marketing to make their artists stand above the crowd, and that means Universal must constantly spend money to make money."

MUMBAI INDIANS VS RCB RCB WON BY 18 RUNS



Sanju Samson Breaks MS Dhoni's Record With 1st Ton For CSK, Joins KL Rahul In Super Elite IPL Club

AGENCY

Mumbai: Sanju Samson announced his arrival at Chennai Super Kings in style in his fourth match for the franchise in IPL 2026. Samson stayed unbeaten on 115* (56b, 15x4s, 4x6s) as the star became the first wicket-keeper to hit a century for Chennai Super Kings (CSK). He reached the triple-figure mark in 52 balls. He also broke MS Dhoni's record for the most runs in an innings by a designated CSK wicket-keeper in the IPL - 84 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in 2019. Samson is also the second batter to score a century for three IPL franchises. He has scored centuries for Delhi Daredevils (now Delhi Capitals), Rajasthan Royals (RR) and CSK. KL Rahul (Punjab Kings, Lucknow Super Giants, DC) was the first to achieve the feat. Sanju Samson shed his indifferent start to IPL 2026 season with a blazing hundred and Ayush Mhatre



offered another glimpse into the future with a fluent half-century as Chennai Super Kings posted a competitive 212 for two against Delhi Capitals in Chennai on Saturday. His unbeaten 115 off 56 balls (15x4, 4x6) was the cornerstone of Chennai's one of better outings with the bat in this IPL. After being asked to bat first, the CSK man brought up his first substantial knock in a Yellow jersey, and was involved in an excellent stand with Mhatre for the second wicket - 113 runs in a

little over 11 overs. It was Samson's fourth IPL hundred, the first for CSK and the first in IPL 2026. A big score from Samson was essential for himself and CSK to restore the belief of 'Anbu-den' faithfuls in their team, and he did that on the night with a brilliant innings in front of home fans. It was the typical Samson innings. The Kerala batter had looked unsure of his feet and field placings in earlier matches this season, but on this instance a familiar Samson returned.

Ayush Mhatre Becomes First 'Retired Out' Batter Of IPL 2026 After Scoring 59 Off 36 Balls

AGENCY

Mumbai: Chennai Super Kings finally came into their own in IPL 2026 on Saturday, with Sanju Samson leading the charge. Samson made history by becoming the first batter in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL) to score centuries for three different franchises after he brought up his maiden hundred in Chennai Super Kings (CSK) colours against Delhi Capitals (DC) at the Chepauk Stadium. During the clash at Chepauk, a wounded Samson, following three poor outings, roared back into form with an unbeaten 115* off 56 balls, which included 11 fours and four sixes, at a strike rate of 205.36. Out of his four IPL



hundreds, Sanju has scored two for Rajasthan Royals (in the 2019 and 2021 seasons) and one for Delhi Capitals (in the 2017 season). He later added a 113-run stand with Ayush Mhatre (59 off 36 balls, with three fours and four sixes), while a fiery

cameo from Shivam Dube (20* off 10 balls, with two fours and a six) powered CSK to 212/2 in 20 overs. DC skipper Axar Patel (1/39) was among the wickets. Interestingly, Mhatre was retired out after the third ball of the 18th over, becoming

the first batter to be retired out in this IPL. The internet reacted strongly to the decision. Ayush Mhatre is a better hitter than Shivam Dube and retiring Ayush out was a bad move. Samson also completed 400 sixes in T20 cricket, becoming the fourth Indian to reach the milestone after Rohit Sharma (554), Virat Kohli (441), and Suryakumar Yadav (442). He now has 401 sixes in the shortest format of the game. The 113-run partnership between Samson and half-centurion Ayush Mhatre is the second-highest for CSK against DC for any wicket in IPL history, behind the 141 runs added by Devon Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad for the first wicket in Delhi in 2023.

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Mumbai: There was no shortage of support for Lucknow Super Giants in their IPL 2026 match against Gujarat Titans at the Ekana Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Though LSG lost the match, the team can vouch for the fact that they will never be short of backing at the venue. Sachin Tendulkar's daughter Sara, an entrepreneur, was present at the stadium. Sachin's son Arjun is part of the LSG squad. A sensational four-wicket haul by Prasidh Krishna and fifties from skipper Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler helped Gujarat Titans (GT) to a seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their Indian Premier League (IPL) clash on Sunday. GT are placed fifth



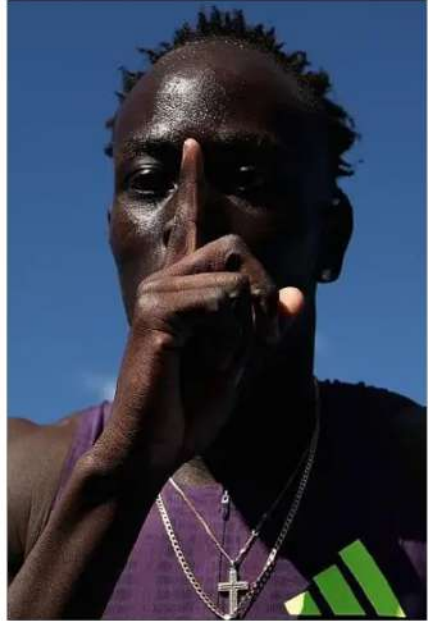
with two wins and two losses, collecting four points. LSG have slipped to sixth spot with an identical win-loss record. Put in to bat first, LSG scored 164/8, with only Aiden Markram (30 off 21 balls, with five fours and a six) crossing the 20-run mark, while Krishna picked up 4/28 in his spell. During the chase, fifties

from Gill (56 off 40 balls, with six fours and a six) and Buttler (60 off 37 balls, with 11 fours) helped GT reach the target comfortably, with seven wickets in hand and eight balls to spare. Sai Sudharsan got GT off to a solid start, hitting two fours off Mohammed Shami in the first over. He and skipper

AUSTRALIAN TEENAGER GOUT FASTER THAN BOLT AT 18

AGENCY

Cranberra: Eighteen-year-old Australian Gout Gout ran 200m faster than sprinting great Usain Bolt managed by the same age as he raced to a national title on Sunday. The teenager clocked a superb time of 19.67 seconds to set a world under-20 record. It was the first time that Gout had gone under the 20-second mark legally, after a wind-assisted 19.84 last season, and is the leading time in the world this year. Gout previously had the quickest-ever time by a 16-year-old, setting a national record of 20.06 when he burst on to the scene in 2024. Sunday's mark in Sydney put him ahead of Jamaican eight-time Olympic champion Bolt's time of 19.93 back in 2004. Bolt was aged 17 when setting what was then a world junior record and never bettered that time as a teenager, before setting a string of senior world records later in his career. United States sprinter Erriyon Knighton's 19.49 run in 2022 remains the fastest time by an U20 athlete, though it was not ratified as a world U20 record. Knighton was nevertheless the holder of the U20 record with an official time of 19.69, set in June 2022, until Gout went quicker. Aidan Murphy, who was second to



Gout on Sunday, also beat the 20-second mark with a time of 19.88. "This is what I've been waiting for," said Gout, who was born in Queensland to parents from South Sudan.

It's Carlos Alcaraz vs Jannik Sinner Again In Monte Carlo Masters Final

AGENCY

Kyiv: Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner will renew their "Sincaraz" rivalry when they meet in the Monte Carlo Masters final on Sunday with the No. 1 ranking at stake. Four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner will reclaim the top spot if he beats seven-time major winner Alcaraz, the Monte Carlo defending champion. Sinner reached his first Monte Carlo final by beating Alexander Zverev 6-1, 6-4 an eighth straight time on Saturday. In his semi-final, Alcaraz eliminated home hope Valentin Vacherot 6-4, 6-4, concluding with a sublime drop shot. Alcaraz leads their head-to-head 10-6 going into their ninth final. Both



players are bidding for a 27th career title. Sinner swept Indian Wells and Miami and became only the fourth man to reach the final at the first three Masters tournaments of the season, matching Roger Federer (2006),

Rafael Nadal (2011) and Novak Djokovic (2015). Alcaraz's two titles this year include the Australian Open, where he downed Djokovic and became the youngest man ever to win all four tennis majors.

PROGRAIS ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FOLLOWING BENN LOSS



AGENCY

Rome: Former world champion Prograis has announced his retirement at the age of 37. The two-time super-lightweight world champion was beaten convincingly by Conor Benn at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Saturday night and then revealed the fight would be his last. "Going in, I knew I was going to retire," the American told Ring Magazine. "This is my last fight. I knew this months ago - I just didn't tell anybody but I was terrified going into this. It's a great fight to be my last against someone like Conor Benn, someone that was strong - an arena like this with 70,000 in a stadium.

I couldn't ask for a better going away party, perfect end to my story." There were reports circulating prior to the fight that Prograis was hurt, which he confirmed following the defeat, saying he thought about pulling out as little as 24 hours prior to the bout. He added: "The rumours about me being hurt were true. I wanted to pull out of this fight so bad a month ago but kept pushing. I was terrified and thinking about pulling out even yesterday." Prograis retires with a 30-4 record, with 24 victories by knockout. He held the WBA super-lightweight title in 2019, and WBC super-lightweight crown from 2022 to 2023.

Landmark Moment In Bundesliga: Union Berlin Appoint Female Head Coach Marie-Louise Eta For Men's Team

A tectonic shift has taken place in European football, as Bundesliga club Union Berlin has decided to appoint Marie-Louise Eta as manager for the remainder of the season. Eta's appointment was confirmed by the German club following the departure of Steffen Baumgart. Though there is no confirmation of Eta being given a long-term role yet, the management's decision to bank on a female coach to help them stay in the German top division speaks volumes about the belief they have in her. While it is the first time that

a female coach will take over a men's team in Europe's top five leagues, Eta is not an unknown figure in European football. The 34-year-old is a Champions League winner as a player with Turbine Potsdam in 2010, and she also won three consecutive Bundesliga titles from 2009 to 2011. A veteran of German football, Eta has spent years refining her tactical philosophy away from the limelight. She did not arrive at this position by chance, but has earned it through meticulous work within the German youth national

setups and as a trusted assistant at Union. It was in 2019 that she first took up a coaching role with the Germany U19 women's team, and she also worked with the U17 and U15 teams before landing the top job at Union Berlin.

Challenges Ahead

Placed 11th in the Bundesliga standings, Union Berlin find themselves in a tricky position. The identity that defined their rise to the Champions League has been tested to the core this season. Eta's task is not just to help the club maintain its position in

the table, but also to strengthen its push for a top-half finish. With no transfer window to rely on, Eta must find a way to galvanise a squad that has lost its clinical edge and restore the defensive solidity that once made them the league's most feared underdogs. Whether Eta remains in the post beyond June is almost secondary to what has already been achieved. By stepping into the technical area as the person in charge, she has provided hope to aspiring coaches everywhere, regardless of gender.

