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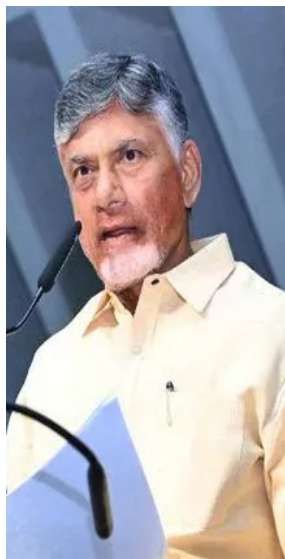
## Key twist in the rape case of a woman in Macherla

**Palnadu District:** Police have made progress in the rape case of a woman in Macherla. Based on CCTV footage, police have determined that the victim's boyfriend was responsible for the assault. They are further investigating who may have assisted the and have taken additional steps in the investigation.

Earlier, a brutal rape was committed on a government employee who was living alone in Macherla. The incident took place last Thursday. The accused entered the victim's house under the pretext of asking for drinking water. He then threatened her with a knife and attacked her. He tied her hands and legs, gagged her mouth with cloth, and sexually assaulted her before fleeing the scene.

Currently, the victim is receiving treatment at Guntur Government General Hospital. Doctors have stated that her condition is stable. Based on her complaint, police registered a case and began an investigation. Using CCTV footage, they have initially identified the accused, and special teams are conducting a search to apprehend him.

## India advancing rapidly in the nuclear sector under Modi's leadership: CM



**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 7 :** Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said that achieving a key milestone in India's nuclear energy journey is a matter of pride. He stated that the indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor set up at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, successfully achieved criticality on Monday. This is considered a major step forward in the second stage of India's nuclear program. Prime Minister Modi has already expressed happiness over this achievement, calling it a testament to India's scientific capability and congratulating the scientists and engineers.

## YSRCP leaders should question Jagan on that issue: PVN Madhav

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 7 : P. V. N. Madhav, BJP Andhra Pradesh president,** responded to the attempted attack by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on the ABN Andhra Jyothy office. He said that resorting to attacks is not right in a democracy.

Group, but leaders of the coalition parties are not even condemning them. He criticized Jagan for

**mane: MP CM Ramesh" MP C. M. Ramesh** demanded that YSRCP apologize to ABN Andhra Jyothy Managing Director Vemuri Radhakrishna. He said Radhakrishna would not be intimidated by the threats of YSRCP groups.



He commented that Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had "spread poison" regarding the Amaravati capital issue. He said that Jagan, who has changed his stance three times, should be questioned by his own party members. If there are objections to media reports, they should be countered or discussed, he suggested.

He also said that there are harsh reports against them in Sakshi Media

continuing his alleged hostility toward Amaravati and advised him to change his approach and cooperate for the state's development. "The attack is inhu-

He recalled that even during the tenure of Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, attacks on ABN Andhra Jyothy had occurred, and alleged that Jagan is continuing the same culture. He stated that if there are errors in news reports, they should be challenged—but attacking is inhumane.

He also questioned whether, if such behavior continues, YSRCP would be able to run media organizations like Sakshi.

## Those who commit wrong can never escape time: Kollu Ravindra

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 7 :** Minister Kollu Ravindra condemned the attack by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on the ABN Andhra Jyothy office. He questioned whether attacks are the response when Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's stance on the capital issue is questioned. He called it a heinous act that former ministers allegedly joined rowdy groups to attack a media organization.

are observing Jagan's "irrational and aggressive behavior." He added that those who do wrong can never escape the consequences of time.

**"Why so much panic when flaws are exposed?" - MLA Somireddy**

He said this attack reflects the "demonic culture" of YSRCP. He accused them of making allegations freely through their own media, but resorting to attacks when their failures are questioned.

He alleged that during their five-year rule, YSRCP harassed several media organizations, including Andhra Jyothy and ABN. He recalled that under Jagan's rule, through GO 2430, there were attempts to prevent questioning government failures. He criticized the current attacks as shameful and said people

MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy questioned why YSRCP reacts so strongly when its flaws are pointed out. He condemned the attack on ABN Andhra Jyothy offices. He said that ABN MD Vemuri Radhakrishna only commented that YSRCP leaders tend to agree with whatever Jagan says on the capital issue. He criticized YSRCP for changing positions—from supporting Amaravati initially, to backing the three-capital proposal, and now supporting "Ma Vigan." He questioned what was wrong in Radhakrishna's "Weekend Comment by RK" and said objections should be addressed through rebuttals, not attacks.

**"Jagan cannot stop media freedom" - Prathipati**

**Pulla Rao**

Former minister Prathipati Pulla Rao said that media freedom cannot be suppressed through physical attacks. He described ABN Andhra Jyothy's reports and Radhakrishna's writings as "sparks of fire."

He alleged that internal dissent within YSRCP over the "Ma Vigan" proposal led to frustration, and accused Jagan of encouraging attacks on ABN to cover up his inability to control his own party.

**"No need for attacks" - MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy**

MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy criticized YSRCP, saying it is resorting to attacks on media offices to divert attention from losses related to "Ma Vigan." He said there are many ways to express disagreement with media reports and that attacks are unnecessary.

**"Truth cannot be stopped by intimidation" - Venkata Subbarao**

Bodepudi Venkata Subbarao, a member of the Srisailem Temple trust



board, strongly condemned the attempted attack. He said attacking media for questioning the capital issue is wrong and warned that such actions threaten democracy. He added that people have already rejected intimidation politics and that truth cannot be silenced through fear.

**"Does that newspaper have values?" - Syed Rafi**

Syed Rafi, TDP spokesperson, condemned the attacks allegedly carried out under Jagan's direction. He accused them of diverting public attention from opposition to "Ma Vigan." He also questioned whether Sakshi Media Group follows ethical values.

## The time for such YSRCP politics is over: Minister Atchannaidu

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 7 :** Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu condemned the attempt by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) to attack the ABN Andhra Jyothy office. He said that attacking media freedom is a reflection of YSRCP's political culture. He alleged that the attacks on the media are happening because they questioned Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's stance on Amaravati. He strongly criticized YSRCP for attack-

ing media that raises questions, calling it a heinous act. He added that during YSRCP's rule, many media organizations faced harassment, and it is disgraceful that MLAs and former ministers allegedly led rowdy groups to media offices.

Minister Atchannaidu said that people have already taught a lesson to YSRCP's "rowdy politics." He stated that the days of intimidating the media through threats and attacks are over. He praised ABN

Andhra Jyothy Managing Director Vemuri Radhakrishna for continuing to run the media fearlessly despite pressure.

He further said that YSRCP is resorting to diversionary politics because it cannot respond to Andhra Jyothy's editorial. He added that people will not forget the attitude of YSRCP leaders toward women. Finally, he stated that the time for YSRCP's politics of suppressing the media has come to an end.



## Manipur Tense, Many Injured In Firing As Angry Mob Storms Paramilitary Camp

**Guwahati:** Angered by the death of two children in a grenade attack by suspected "Kuki militants" in Bishnupur district of Manipur, an angry mob stormed a CRPF camp nearby, accusing them of not protecting the civilians. The security forces had to fire to control the situation, sources said, adding that several persons sustained injuries and were rushed to hospitals in capital Imphal. Protests and roadblocks were also reported at Segar Road in Konjeng Hajari Leikai.

In view of the law-and-order situation, the governor has ordered the temporary suspension of internet



and mobile data services in Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Kakching, and Bishnupur districts. According to the official order, authorities apprehend that anti-social elements may misuse social media plat-

forms to circulate images, hate speech, and inflammatory video messages, which could provoke unrest and worsen the situation.

The government stated that the decision was taken to prevent the spread of disinformation and rumours through platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and to stop the circulation of bulk SMS messages that may facilitate mobilisation of mobs and agitators.

**Death Of 2 Children**

Public outrage intensified on Tuesday over the death

of two children injured in the recent bomb attack at Tronglaobi. The victims' family identified the two children as Oinam Tomthin and his sister, both five years old. Their father, Oinam Mangal, is serving in the Army, and their mother, Pheiroijam Binita, works as a nurse in a Guwahati hospital, said their maternal uncle. Binita had recently undergone surgery and had to go for another surgery after the recent blast left her in a critical condition, he added. Meanwhile, tension continues to prevail in the area, with locals demanding justice and stronger security measures.

## "Unfortunate": Rajnath Singh On Mamata Banerjee's "200 Cars Of CRPF Men" Remark

**Kolkata:** Union minister Rajnath Singh, on the campaign trail in West Bengal, said today that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's "200 trucks" comment was "unfortunate" and should not have been made. Asked about the matter in an exclusive interview, Singh said, "In every election, in any state, paramilitary forces go there so that voting can take place properly and no law-and-order situation arises. That is why they are sent. If our paramilitary personnel have come to West Bengal, it is not the first time". He also said the Election Commission is an "autonomous

organisation" and pointing fingers at it is "unfortunate".

Mamata Banerjee had sparked a row yesterday with her claim that the 200 cars carrying Central forces are on their way to Bengal - "from Uttar Pradesh via Ayodhya to attack you". The Chief Minister has been extremely vocal against the Election Commission - which is deploying nearly 2.4 lakh Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel in West Bengal - has maintained its calm, saying its objective is to "ensure fear-free, peaceful, and fair elections".



audience. "This is a 15-day trick, a 15-day game, a 25-day game, and then they'll understand," she added while speaking at an election campaign rally in Nadia district. The Election Commission - which is deploying nearly 2.4 lakh Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel in West Bengal - has maintained its calm, saying its objective is to "ensure fear-free, peaceful, and fair elections".

Asked about the ruling party's allegations about polarisation of voters, Singh said the BJP "never talks about Hindus and Muslims". "We do not want to divide the country on basis of religion. Rather, we are people who practice the politics of justice and humanity. Truth be said, if anyone plays politics on the basis of religion, it is the Trinamool, the Congress, and other political parties," he said. Speaking at the roadshow in Barrackpore attended by cheering crowds, Singh said the message from the crowd is "crystal clear" - the Trinamool government is leaving West Bengal, and the BJP government is coming in.

## Trump Says "Whole Civilisation Will Die Tonight", Iran Calls Him "Psychopath"

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump has issued a big warning to Iran and said that the "whole civilisation will die tonight". In a post on Truth Social, he said that, although he does not want it to happen, "it probably will". "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will," he wrote. He said that tonight will be "one of the most important moments"

in world history, as 47 years of extortion, corruption, and death will "finally end."

However, his statement kept the possibility of an off-ramp open, saying that "maybe something revolutionarily wonderful can happen". According to the Wall Street Journal, US and regional mediators have been pushing for a 45-day ceasefire that could lead to a permanent end to the Iran war, but officials said little progress has been

made. Meanwhile, US Vice President JD Vance has asserted that the US has achieved its war objectives in Iran, leaving the next move to Tehran.

**Iran's Response**

The Islamic Republic replied to Trump, saying, "You and your allies will suffer an unforgettable hit from the ancient civilisation of Iran". The Iranian Embassy in Turkey said on X that a "psychopath's threat" will not end what

time could not. The post read, "Alexander burned it. The Mongols ravaged it. History tested it. Iran is still here. A psychopath's threats won't end what time couldn't." Trump on Monday said that he is "not at all" concerned about committing possible war crimes as he again threatened to destroy Iranian infrastructure if Tehran does not meet his Tuesday 8pm EST deadline to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. UN Secretary-Gen-

eral Antonio Guterres warned the US that attacking civilian infrastructure is banned under international law, his spokesperson said Monday. Iran has rejected US pressure, with state media reporting that the authorities are insisting that instead of just a ceasefire it wants a full end to the war.

Axios reported, citing a US source, that Trump might be the most hawkish person in the top levels of the administration. "The president is the most bloodthirsty, like a mad dog," another US official told the publication. The source also claimed that Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth or Secretary of State Marco Rubio "sound like doves" compared to Trump. Explosions have been reported on Kharg Island, an important oil export hub near the Strait of Hormuz, on Tuesday, according to semi-official Iranian news agency Mehr.

## EDITORIAL

# Hunger is fueled by war

The ongoing war in West Asia is depriving millions of people around the world of essential food and medicine. The United Nations' aid agency, the World Food Program (WFP), has expressed concern that if the war continues until June, 320 million people worldwide could go hungry. The war has not only severely disrupted shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz, but also exacerbated the global energy crisis. Shipping routes from strategic hubs like Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi have been completely closed. As fuel and insurance rates have increased dramatically, transportation costs are also increasing accordingly. With these costs, it is being forced to supply very little. Thousands of tons of food are being transported very late. The International Risk Committee has revealed that \$130,000 worth of medicines meant to be sent to war-torn Sudan have been frozen in Dubai, while 670 boxes of nutritional food meant for malnourished children in Somalia are stuck in India. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has warned that 16 countries are facing severe delays in getting essential supplies. The United States has already weakened many aid groups, and the war has exacerbated the problem, raising concerns. The UN says this is the worst disruption to supplies since the Covid pandemic. Not only has shipping costs increased, but supplies have also had to be supplied through alternative routes. The war has created new emergencies in Iran and Lebanon, where hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced. Humanitarian aid is being cut off. Even if the war stops, the effects of the war will continue to affect supplies around the world. Alternative transport routes are being sought to replace the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal.

Aid is being sent by ship around Africa. It takes weeks to reach its destination. The burden of transportation costs is increasing as different transport routes are used to get vaccines to Iran and Nigeria on time. Before the war, UNICEF used to send vaccines directly to Iran by plane. Now, instead, it is being sent by plane to Turkey and then to Iran. This not only costs an additional 20 percent of the transportation costs, but also delays their arrival. Save the Children International, a charity organization, used to ship supplies from Dubai to the Sudanese port. Now, it is sending emergency supplies from Dubai via Saudi Arabia and from there via the Red Sea. This not only increases the transportation costs by 25 percent, but it also takes more than ten days to arrive. Meanwhile, 19 million Sudanese people are facing a severe food crisis.

This delay is affecting 90 primary health centers in Sudan. They are struggling with a lack of essential medicines. Ultimately, they are unable to prioritize supplies. The number of children in need must be reduced. Or the number of items that can be provided must be reduced. With fuel prices rising, food prices and transportation costs rising, and supplies not being delivered, 6.5 million people in Somalia are suffering from acute food shortages. Their security is like a candle in the wind. In Nigeria, fuel prices have halved, causing electricity shortages in hospitals and forcing them to rely on generators. Mobile health teams are reducing their services. Overall, the war is having a serious impact on hunger around the world.

It is common for 30 percent of the world's fertilizer supplies to be transported through the Strait of Hormuz. These fertilizers are the basis of agricultural work in East Africa and South Asia. But poor farmers in poor countries are now waiting for fertilizers. Sudan imports almost half of its fertilizer needs from Gulf countries and Kenya. Noticing this, the United Nations Secretary-General has set up a task force to monitor fertilizer supplies. Preparations are being made to transport fertilizers and other essential goods through the Black Sea through an agreement called the 'Black Sea Grain Initiative' that was adopted earlier. No matter how terrible the war is this time, there are allegations that the international community has not responded enough to supply essential goods, medicines, and provide humanitarian aid to poor countries.

# Pak's 'Global Power' Act Is Fooling No One - Least Of All UAE And Saudi

Pakistan's repeated attempts to project itself as a rising global power continue to collapse under scrutiny, revealing a stark gap between narrative and reality. Structural constraints - economic dependence, geopolitical limitations, and strategic inconsistencies - puncture Islamabad's grand narrative that it is emerging as a significant player on the global stage. This narrative has been amplified through sections of international media, projecting Pakistan as a hub of global diplomacy, capable even of mediating complex conflicts such as the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war. While Islamabad did attempt to position itself in such a role by proposing a ceasefire framework and engaging in diplomatic outreach, these efforts have quickly unravelled. Crucially, the initiative lacked meaningful participation from key stakeholders: Iran showed little willingness to engage on Pakistan's terms, and no direct negotiations between Washington and Tehran materialised. As a result, the much-publicised diplomatic push failed to gain traction, producing neither a concrete agreement nor a credible roadmap for conflict resolution. The meeting in Islamabad with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey aimed at de-escalating the crisis, thus amounting to little more than a symbolic exercise, underscoring Pakistan's limited capacity to influence outcomes in high-stakes geopolitical crises.

**An Old Pattern**  
This is not a new phenomenon. Previously, a similar narrative was aggressively promoted - that Pakistan's JF-17 fighter jets were experiencing a surge in global demand; in fact, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif went so far as to assert that the country would

no longer require IMF loans or external borrowing, confidently stating that "we may not need IMF loans in the next six months" based on anticipated revenues from defence exports, particularly the Chinese-origin JF-17 aircraft. This assertion, like others before it, proved hollow. Before that, there was yet another claim: that Pakistan had discovered massive oil reserves in the Arabian Sea. That, too, proved to be misleading. Even Donald Trump, while recently backing this narrative, remarked that Pakistan has "massive oil reserves" and that it could one day even "sell oil to India".

**Debt Comes Calling**  
Time and again, such narratives are floated to project Pakistan as an emerging power, but within days, they collapse under scrutiny. The pattern reflects a deeper issue. There has been a consistent habit of manufacturing exaggerated claims about Pakistan's global standing, when the fact remains that the country is structurally, economically, and geopolitically constrained. Its decision-making is not entirely autonomous and is shaped and influenced by external actors, such as Washington, Beijing, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and institutions like the IMF, on which it remains heavily dependent. A country that survives on loans and IMF bailout packages cannot claim complete strategic independence. There were also claims that Pakistan is performing a "master balancing act" in West Asia - that it is maintaining close ties with all sides amid ongoing regional conflicts. Surprisingly, some voices in India even suggested that India should learn from Pakistan's approach. But recent developments expose the ground reality. Reports indicate



that the UAE has demanded repayment of around \$3.5 billion, a clear sign of deep frustration with Pakistan's stance during the ongoing regional tensions. The UAE reportedly believes that at a time when it has faced severe challenges in the Middle East crisis - including being among the hardest hit by Iranian missile and drone strikes - its ally Pakistan has failed to extend even basic support and has instead chosen to remain diplomatically evasive toward Iran. Pakistan has now reportedly decided to repay its entire \$3.5 billion debt to the UAE by the end of April. Similarly, Saudi Arabia is also reportedly seeking repayment of its financial support and has asked Islamabad to immediately repay a \$6.3 billion loan, signalling deep frustration in a relationship long portrayed as ironclad. This is particularly significant in light of a mutual defence understanding between the two countries, under which an attack on one is effectively treated as an attack on both. Contrary to that commitment, Pakistan, instead of standing firmly with Riyadh dur-

ing the Iran crisis, has chosen to project itself as a 'mediator'.

**China's Concerns**  
China, often described as Pakistan's "all-weather friend", has also begun to display some unease. During a recent visit to China, Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, sought Beijing's backing for Islamabad's self-styled mediation efforts. To this, according to some Pakistani analysts, Pakistan was advised by Chinese officials to first resolve contradictions in its own regional policies - particularly its actions in Afghanistan. Beijing is reportedly concerned that Pakistan's contradictory approach jeopardises China's strategic interests in Afghanistan, including security concerns in Xinjiang, access to Afghanistan's mineral resources, and broader economic and connectivity ambitions under the Belt and Road Initiative. China is also displeased that Pakistan is attempting to weaken the Taliban - such actions threaten stability in a country where Beijing has made substantial strategic and diplomatic investments and re-

cently undertaken massive projects. Further, Beijing worries that Pakistan may be advancing Washington's agenda in Afghanistan to secure access to Bagram military bases, potentially undermining China's long-term interests. These concerns prompted China to arrange a meeting between Taliban and Pakistani representatives in Ürümqi to resolve differences - a process that remains ongoing. At the same time, there are clear signs that Chinese financial enthusiasm for major initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has waned. All of this points to a simple reality: a country cannot simultaneously try to align with everyone without facing consequences. Foreign policy is not about short-term optics or daily narratives; it must be assessed over the long term. Pakistan's repeated attempts to project itself as a decisive global player must be seen in this context. Until structural constraints - economic dependence, geopolitical limitations, and strategic inconsistencies - are addressed, such claims will continue to surface, and, just as quickly, disappear.

# 155 Aircraft For One Man - And Other Mysteries About US' Iran Rescue Op

US President Donald Trump's press interaction on April 6, Easter Monday, was awaited with great anticipation, with possibilities of announcements ranging from a possible ceasefire or a declaration of victory or even a reiteration of his threat to bomb Iran to the 'Stone Age' by knocking out its power plants and bridges. Flanked by the CIA Chief, the Secretary of War and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he, however, chose to focus primarily on the massive operation launched to rescue the American officer from the downed F-15 Eagle aircraft, giving minute details of how the operation unfolded and how the US military lived up to its motto of never to leave any personnel behind enemy lines. Yes, he did reiterate his threat of bombing Iran, saying that "the entire country can be taken out in one night", with some analysts saying that this was perhaps a veiled threat at a possible nuclear strike into Iran. The developments in the war zone in Iran, especially related to the downing of the F-15 aircraft and the subsequent rescue, however, raise serious questions. One, how did Iran successfully target the F-15 when its air defences had been completely destroyed? Two, why did a rescue mission require a package of more than 100 aircraft to support it? Why was the extraction site so near to the Isfahan nuclear site? Also, while examining the whole event, it is important to understand the configuration and role of the F-15 Eagle fighter aircraft.

**The Shooting Down Of The Eagle**  
The entire episode owes its origin to the shooting down of

an American F-15 Eagle on April 2; the aircraft was on a deep strike mission in North-western Iran (perhaps in Isfahan province) when it was shot by an Iranian missile. Initially, Iran claimed to have scored a hit on the stealth fighter F-35, but the debris later confirmed that it was an F-15E Strike Eagle from the Fighter Squadron deployed from RAF Lakenheath in the UK. This was the first time in 20 years that an American-manned fighter aircraft was shot down in enemy territory. When the fighter came down, both occupants, the pilot and the Weapon Systems Officer (WSO), ejected safely. As they ejected from the fast-moving aircraft at an interval of a few seconds, they landed in separate locations, kilometres apart, in hostile and mountainous terrain. The pilot was rescued in the next few hours in broad daylight by the US special operations forces, who located him first and launched a rescue mission with a full package, including two HH-60W Jolly Green II combat rescue helicopters. The extraction was, however, not easy. Facing direct fire from Iranian ground forces, one Blackhawk helicopter, which was carrying the recovered pilot, was shot, and a few crew members on the helicopter, too, were wounded by the missile strike. But the helicopter managed to fly out of Iran into friendly territory, with all members, including the rescued pilot, safe. During this mission, another US aircraft, an A-10 Warthog, which specialises in providing close ground support, was hit by Iranian fire. Once again, the pilot managed to fly the aircraft back into Kuwaiti airspace before ejecting safely. The A-10, how-



ever, crashed.

**The Rescue of the WSO**

It is the rescue of the second officer that is shrouded in mystery and the details of which have posed questions. As per the official version, the WSO, a Colonel-ranked officer, landed 20-30 kilometres away from the pilot and, despite being seriously injured, evaded Iranian forces and tracked for over 30 kilometres overnight, climbing mountainous features of altitude up to 1,700 metres, before being rescued in a daring mission. Detailing the mission himself during the press briefing on April 6, President Trump said that 21 aircraft were deployed to help with the search-and-rescue in the first wave, flying for hours under "very, very heavy enemy fire". The WSO was "bleeding profusely" but was able to climb mountainous terrain and contact US forces to communicate his location. Rescuers mobilised a massive response that included subterfuge to confuse the Iranians about where they were looking. The president added that the entire operation involved 155 aircraft, including four bombers, 64 fighters, 48 refuelling tankers, and 13 rescue aircraft, among others. Under intense air cover, the special operations teams

were inserted into Iran to link up with the WSO. To ensure minimum interference from Iranian forces, areas around it were bombed and roads around the extraction site were destroyed, so as to prevent Iranian reinforcements from reaching there by road. However, near the extraction site, as per official reports, two C-130 transport planes that had been landed at a forward position carrying the special forces on the rescue mission got bogged down and were stuck in the mud and gravel, unable to take off. To ensure that the mission's success was not subverted, the US military flew in three replacement C-130s, kept ready as a contingency. The WSO and all others were thereafter safely extracted under heavy fire from Iran after destroying the two C-130s in situ to ensure that precious American hardware did not fall into Iranian hands. The final result - all US troops made it out safely, including the WSO. The cost of the mission was massive, in excess of USD 400 million. The price paid: at least five to seven aircraft destroyed or shot, namely, one F-15 Eagle, one A-10 Warthog, one Blackhawk helicopter, two C-130 planes (destroyed in situ) and possibly two HH-60W Jolly Green II

combat rescue helicopters. There were also reports that an MQ-9B drone was downed by the Iranian forces during this operation.

**The Mystery**

While the US successfully extricated its WSO and all others involved in the mission, questions are being raised about the mission itself. When has it ever been the case that you need to deploy 155 aircraft on a Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) Mission? Why were the two C-130s deployed when each has the capacity to carry up to 90 troops? Does it imply that the mission required almost 200 troops for the rescue - or were the troops already there, inserted for another mission? Was the case of the extraction site being very close to the Isfahan nuclear site just a coincidence, or was it that there was a special operation being planned to extricate 450 kilograms of enriched Uranium from the nuclear plant, deeply buried inside the site? Were the C-130 landed at or near an abandoned airstrip close to Isfahan city for the rescue mission, or was the real operation aimed at extricating enriched Uranium? If the rescue mission did not have the element of Uranium extraction included, why were fixed-wing aircraft deployed when such missions are better executed by small and swift helicopters? Remember, the site of extraction was not more than 200 kilometres from the Iranian border in the West, from where such a mission could have been executed without all the noise and destruction. And finally, if there was indeed another daring mission to retrieve enriched Uranium from Isfahan, does this rescue help cover up a botched operation?

## AI Cameras, Poll Cancellation For Booth Capturing Among Poll Body's Plans For Bengal

**Kolkata:** Elections in West Bengal have for long been shadowed by violence but this time, the Election Commission is drawing a hard line. Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has assured voters of a fear-free process, promising polls that are violence-free, intimidation-free, and devoid of bogus voting, booth capturing, or any form of manipulation. Behind the scenes, the poll body is preparing for strict enforcement. Polling and presiding officers have been put on high alert, with clear instructions: Zero tolerance for violations. In a major step, AI-enabled CCTV cameras will monitor polling stations in real time. If cameras are switched off or any suspicious activity is detected, repolling can be ordered immediately. The Commission is also ready to invoke Section 58A of the Representation of the People Act, which allows it to cancel polls in case of booth capturing. If reports from the Returning Officer confirm malpractice, voting can be declared void and



fresh elections ordered. Sources say if disruptions continue even during repolling, entire constituencies could face countermanded elections -- meaning the voting process will take place at a later date. Insiders warn that Bengal could see a higher number of repolls this time compared to previous elections. Tentative dates suggest repolling for the first phase may happen on April 25 and 27, and for the second phase on May 1

and 3, because after the polling, officers make report and based on that report repolling take place next day. To tighten security, the Commission has already reshuffled top officials, including the Chief Secretary, DGP, Home Secretary, Kolkata Police Commissioner, and several senior police officers. Security deployment is also at an all-time high, with around 2,400 CAPF companies being stationed across the state making it one of

the largest election security operations in recent years. Under Section 57 of the Representation of the People Act, the EC can also adjourn polls in case of riots, natural disasters, or official complaints. While states like Bihar recently saw peaceful elections without repolls, the Commission is leaving nothing to chance this time -- especially in West Bengal, along with Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry.

## Nashik Family Was Returning From Outing. How A Shortcut Led Them To Death

**Mumbai:** A decision to take a shortcut proved fatal for nine members of a family, six of them children, when their car plunged into a well in Maharashtra's Nashik district. On Friday, three adults and six children from the Dargude family travelled to an event organised by a coaching centre in Dindori. They included Sunil Dargude (32), his wife Reshma (27), daughter Gunwanti (11), Sunil's sister-in-law Asha (32), her children Sreyash (11), Shravani (11), Sraddha (13) and Srishti (14), and a relative's child Samridhhi (7). After attending the programme, the nine left for their village, about 10 km away. It was evening time, and Sunil, who was driving the Maruti Suzuki XL6 car, decided to take a shortcut. This proved to be a deadly error. The car hit the wall of a roadside well and plunged into it. The deep well had water till the 40-foot mark. When local residents heard the sound, they rushed to the well and called the fire brigade. The residents attempted to begin rescue work, but darkness and the well's depth were major challenges. Firefighters used lights to locate the vehicle. Divers jumped in, and ropes were used to pull the car out of the well. But it was too late. All the occupants were dead. The body of one of the children was found outside the vehicle. Police have registered a case under sections relating to causing death by negligence and rash driving. Sunil Dargude, one of the victims, has been charged with driving rashly, and the well's



owner, Rajendra Raje, faces a negligence case. According to reports, the road next to the well was constructed a few years back, but no steps were taken to close the well.

Civic authorities and the well's owner were locked in a dispute over this. The tragedy has now prompted the local administration into action. Work to fill the well has

begun to ensure such an incident doesn't take place again. An investigation has also been launched to find out why the authorities let a well remain so close to a road.

## 2 Pakistan Terrorists Among 5 Arrested In J&K, One Evaded Cops For 16 Years

**New Delhi:** The first pictures have emerged of two Pakistani terrorists who were part of a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) module busted by police in Srinagar. Five people were arrested, officials said on Tuesday, including Pakistani terrorist Abdullah alias Abu Hureira who had evaded the police for 16 years and had also helped set up bases outside Jammu and Kashmir. The other Pakistani terrorist has been identified as Usman alias Khubaib. The two Pakistani terrorists in custody are categorised 'A+' and were involved in creating the LeT network in Jammu and Kashmir and other states. Officials said Hureira infiltrated India about 16 years ago and commanded about 40 foreign terrorists over the years, most of whom have been killed by security forces, news

agency reported. Investigators searched 19 locations, including in Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Haryana, and recovered a large quantity of weapons, including four AK rifles, and incriminating material. Officials said the three Srinagar residents who have been arrested are Mohammad Naqeeb Bhat, Adil Rashid Bhat and Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Mama, and they allegedly provided logistical support, food and shelter to the terrorists. Forged documents with addresses located in other states have also been recovered from Abdullah and Usman, indicating the use of false identities to facilitate the module's expansion in other states. Naqeeb Bhat was the first to be arrested on March 31 and he led the police to Mir and Rashid Bhat.

## "Bechara UAE Needs Money" : Pak Senator On Repaying \$3.5 Billion Debt



**New Delhi:** As Pakistan prepares to repay \$3.5 billion of the debt it owes to the UAE, its senator Mushahid Hussain framed its financial obligation as a "brotherly rescue" for a nation that is currently "stuck and helpless". Hussain, in an interview with Dunya News, said it has a moral responsibility to support the UAE during what he described as its time of crisis. "Bechara (helpless) UAE needs money, they made commitment to Trump. If they are facing issues, as big brothers, Pakistan will help the UAE," he said. "Pakistan took the right decision. Our UAE brothers are in need and helpless. We took loans from them and are repaying them in times of crisis. We have always helped them. Pakistan played an important role in building the UAE. We trained their armed forces. We have good relations since the time of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (the founding father and first president of the United Arab Emirates)," said Hussain. He also stressed Pakistan's role in "building the UAE," spe-

cifically noting that Pakistani expertise was instrumental in training the UAE's armed forces. He pointed to the massive instability in the Middle East amid the war that began on February 28, adding that the UAE have \$150 billion to US President Donald Trump, implying a significant drain on their reserves. "They are stuck and helpless now. They are also stuck in wars in Yemen and Sudan. It's our responsibility to help them," said Hussain. Hussain went on to give

UAE "brotherly advice" regarding its demographics and ties with India. "Your population is 10 million; out of that, 4.3 million are from India. Pay attention that the friendly ties with them do not land you up as part of Akhand Bharat," he added. Pakistan prepares to repay US \$3.5 billion by this month's end to the UAE, according to a senior Pakistani official cited by Dawn. "The amount will be returned as soon as possible," the official added, highlighting that "national

dignity could not be compromised for financial considerations." The funds in question were part of external financial assistance provided in 2019 through the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, aimed at stabilising Pakistan's balance of payments. Pakistan is currently participating in an International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme that requires it to secure approximately \$12.5 billion in rollovers from key international partners, including China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These funds are crucial to maintaining adequate reserve levels and meeting ongoing external financing obligations. Pakistan's current central bank reserves stand at \$16.3 billion, but the UAE repayment will reduce them by 18 per cent, a step that will weaken the country's external buffer and import cover. As the Iran war continues, Pakistan is among the countries that have been hit by rising oil and commodity prices.

## "Akhilesh's Lyari Raaj" Or "Dhurandhar Chief Minister": A UP Poster Drive

**Patna:** A 'Dhurandhar' poster campaign has started in Uttar Pradesh, with a youth organisation projecting next year's Assembly election as a choice between "Akhilesh's (Yadav) Lyari Raj" and "Dhurandhar" Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The references are from Aditya Dhar's blockbuster movies Dhurandhar and Dhurandhar The Revenge. For those who skipped the movies, Lyari is a densely populated Karachi neighbourhood that once lived under the shadow of gang wars. Lyari forms a key setting in the Dhurandhar universe. And the first part shows Rehman Dakait, played by Akshay Khanna, as an influential gangster virtually ruling Lyari. The posters, which have appeared in over 10 cities of Uttar Pradesh, show Samajwadi Party president and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav in the avatar of Rehman Dakait and pit him against Adityanath, whose government is set to complete a decade in power. On one side of the poster is a collage of news reports on communal riots during the



Akhilesh Yadav regime. The other side showcases news reports about gangsters being killed after the Yogi Adityanath government came to power. These killings include the murders of Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf, who were shot dead on live television while police were taking them for a medical check-up. These posters in Lucknow, Malihabad, Sitapur, Hardoi, Jaunpur, Barabanki, Azamgarh, Noida, Pratapgarh, Amethi and Gonda have been put up by an organisation named Youth Against Mafia. The 'about' section on this organisation's website says, "Uttar Pradesh cannot build a prosperous future if

public memory fades. Periods of organised crime, fear, violence, and weakened rule of law do not just harm victims in the moment. They shrink investment confidence, discourage entrepreneurship, weaken local economies, reduce job creation, and damage the hopes of an entire generation. "Youth Against Mafia exists to turn memory into civic action. The foundation will document the past, educate the present, and help shape a future where young people defend a safer and more opportunity-led Uttar Pradesh," it adds. Abhinav Tiwari, general secretary of Youth Against Mafia, said the organisation has no links to any political party.

"We have started this awareness drive to inform people from Gen Z about what Uttar Pradesh went through. Riots used to take place, and the youth of today must not forget that," he said. Fakhru Hasan Chand, Samajwadi Party spokesperson, said people are unsafe under the BJP government, irrespective of whether they are at home, in jail or on the road. "That BJP government throws allegations against the Samajwadi Party. If you search on the Internet, 'Atiq with BJP leaders', you will see the real face of the BJP," he said. "Uttar Pradesh's law and order situation is in tatters, and the BJP government has completely failed to fix it."

## IT Rules Overhaul To Bring Entire Digital News Ecosystem Under One Framework: Sources

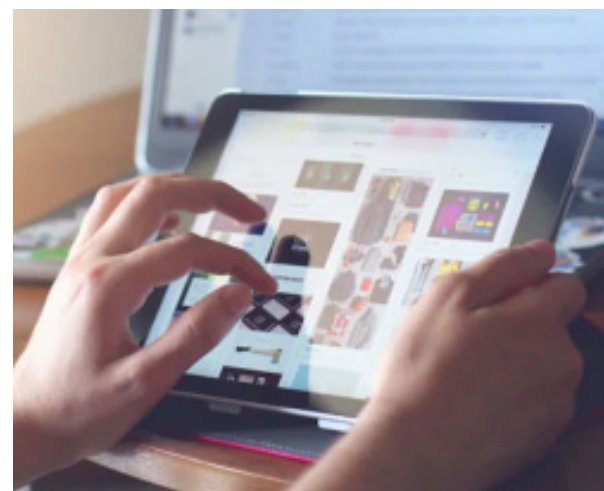
**New Delhi:** The Centre is working on a significant overhaul of the Information Technology Rules that could widen their scope to cover the entire digital news ecosystem, government sources told. The proposed draft amendments are still under consultation, with the deadline for stakeholder feedback now extended. According to sources, the changes are centred around four key areas including data reten-

tion, compliance requirements, definitional clarity and structural reforms within the rules. The effort is aimed at streamlining the existing framework and addressing gaps that have emerged with the rapid growth of digital content platforms. One of the key proposals under discussion relates to the rules, which currently apply largely to registered news broadcasters. Sources said the government is examin-

ing ways to expand its ambit to include non-registered entities that are increasingly producing and disseminating news and current affairs content online. At the same time, officials stressed that news and current affairs content will continue to remain under the domain of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Sources dismissed concerns that the amendments could lead to censorship,

asserting that claims suggesting content critical of the government would be taken down as unfounded. The government has held multiple rounds of consultations with industry stakeholders, during which several suggestions have been put forward. These include a demand for consolidation of existing guidelines, clearer differentiation between registered publishers and other content creators,

and greater transparency in compliance processes. Some stakeholders have also raised concerns about the potential impact of the proposed rules on the advertising ecosystem. Sources indicated that these issues are being examined as part of the ongoing consultation process. There is also a push for clearer definitions, particularly around what constitutes news and current affairs content.



# Peddi Clears the Way for 4 May Releases



Ram Charan's Peddi was supposed to hit the screens on March 27, but the team later postponed it to April 30, hinting at a summer release. However, it is now clear that the movie will not arrive on that date either and has been pushed to June. As a result, three Telugu films now have the opportunity to test their luck at the ticket windows this May. Gaayapadda Simham, directed by newcomer Kashyap and

starring Tharun Bhascker, JD Chakravarthy, and others, is hitting the screens on May 1. The makers had locked this date even before Peddi's postponement was confirmed, which generated good buzz. Now, with Peddi pushed further, the decision is likely to help the film as it is sticking to its release plan without any delay. Surprisingly, Anand and Vaishnavi's Epic is also heading for a May 1 release. The

team is just awaiting the official announcement of Peddi's postponement to confirm the date. Though the initial buzz was good, the recently released content from the film hasn't generated much traction, so the makers should begin promotions immediately after confirming the release date. On the 8th of May, Satya's Jetlee will be released, and the comedy entertainer has strong potential to rake in revenue.

Prathyangira Cinemas will release the film in the USA. They are also behind Samantha's Maa Inti Bangaram, scheduled for a release on May 15th. All four films are carrying a decent buzz among the film circles now. Initially, there were reports that Maa Inti Bangaram would hit screens on May 1st, but now it is clear that it will release in mid-May. Since no biggies are releasing in this window, strong WOM can drive good numbers for these films.

# Shocking: SRK Says No To Big Cameo In Jailer 2?



Superstar Rajinikanth scored his career's biggest hit in 2023 with the action thriller Jailer. Directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, this movie also features pivotal guest appearances by Kannada star Shiva Rajkumar and Malayalam star Mohanlal. Following the success of these cameos, Nelson tried introducing more stars for Jailer's sequel, Jailer 2. Recently, it was widely reported that Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan would be playing a cameo, along with Mohanlal and Shiva Rajkumar, in Jailer 2. It was added that SRK, Shivanna, Mohanlal, and Rajini would together shoot an important sequence in the movie very soon. However, the latest reports from B-Town re-

veal that there is no truth to SRK playing a cameo in this movie. According to Bollywood media, SRK rejected the offer to maintain his current look exclusively for his upcoming film, King. It was reported that the makers of Jailer 2 approached SRK for a five-day shooting schedule. Reportedly, SRK was also interested in doing it, but on one condition: he wanted to do the cameo only if Jailer 2 releases after King, because he did not want to reveal his look before the release of King. As Jailer 2 is slated for an August release and King will hit the screens in December, SRK and the Jailer 2 team have amicably decided to drop the collaboration. Earlier, it was also re-

ported that Nandamuri Balakrishna would play an important cameo in Jailer 2. However, after doing the rounds in the media for a long time, those reports did not materialise. Now, the film finds itself in a similar situation with Shah Rukh Khan. It remains to be seen if the makers go back to Balakrishna or approach another star hero for this cameo. Despite turning down the offer, Shah Rukh Khan has reportedly shown interest in collaborating with Rajinikanth in the future for another film, if given a chance. In the past, Rajinikanth did a cameo in Shah Rukh Khan's Ra.One. He also paid tribute to Rajini with the song Lungi Dance in the film Chennai Express.

# Is This Why Yash Said Yes to Play Ravana?

Ramayana is one of the most anticipated releases of this year. This Nitesh Tiwari directorial features Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita, and Yash as Ravana. The recently released teaser, introducing Ranbir as Rama, generated huge buzz among the audience despite some mixed reactions. Now, they are eagerly awaiting the first-look teaser of Yash as Ravana. When it was announced that Yash would be playing the role of Ravana, everyone wondered why he chose to do a negative role, especially after scoring two pan-India blockbusters, KGF and KGF 2. But Nitesh Tiwari's recent statements about Ravana's character design in the film make one think this might be the reason Yash signed the role.



In a recent interview with The Times of India, Nitesh Tiwari said that instead of showing Ravana just as a menacing villain, Ramayana showcases both his strengths and weaknesses. He stated that Ravana will be presented in a complex manner rather than in a one-dimensional way. He said that the film shows not only the powerful nature of Ravana but also his supreme knowledge and

talent. He added that there are many layers to Ravana, as he was a great warrior, musician, able king, and a true devotee of Lord Shiva. Nitesh opined that there are many shades to him, rather than him being just a negative character. Nitesh opined that it was important for him to showcase all these aspects, as they hide a great

lesson: if a man is overdriven by his ego and vengeance, none of his great qualities matters, and he ends up like Ravana.

Even Ranbir Kapoor said that Ravana's interpretation in this film will be very different from what we have seen in other Ramayana films over the years. He added that only an actor

with the huge stardom and aura of Yash could pull off this role. Apart from acting, Yash also serves as a co producer of this film. He is producing Ramayana along with Namit Malhotra. Ramayana is being made in two parts, with the first part scheduled for release during Diwali 2026 and the second part on Diwali 2027.

# Biker Leads Weekday Race but Needs More Speed!

Actor Sharwanand, who scored a success earlier this year with Naari Naari Naduma Murari, has come up with his new film Biker, which was touted to be India's first motocross film. This Abhilash Kankara directorial was released last Friday and opened to a decent response from the audience. Biker enjoyed a moderate opening weekend with decent reviews, holding its own despite stiff competition from the heavily promoted Raakaasa. Surprisingly, the film showed some growth on Monday, surpassing expectations and outpacing its competitor, delighting fans and sports films lovers. According to trade reports, Biker collected more than Raakaasa on Monday by registering good numbers in urban single screens and multiplexes. After a slow start during the weekend, it is a positive sign for the team to see the film doing well on weekdays. It remains to be seen if Biker carries the same momentum in the coming days as well. The makers of Biker have intensified promotions after the release.



Tweets from stars like Ram Charan and Nani also helped the film gain buzz among audiences. However, the film has a bigger target to cross the breakeven mark, and it needs to maintain consistent collections throughout this week to

place the producers in a safe position. Also, there are new releases in the form of Dacoit and LIK this week, and thus, Biker needs to perform very well in the next three days to end up as a clean hit at the box office.

# Varanasi: 1 Year to Witness History in the Making!



The most celebrated director of this generation in Indian cinema Rajamouli is collaborating with superstar, Mahesh Babu for Varanasi, which happens to be one of the most anticipated films in production currently. Today happens to be an important chunk in the armour of Varanasi, as the film will be heading for release in exactly one year from today. With the release date and loaded for April 7, 2027, let us have a look at the prospect that's on offer.

As per reports, the film has completed nearly 70% of the shooting already, and the planning is to complete the entire shooting by the end of June. This is just unverified report for now, and we have to see if this would be the actual timeline for the completion of the shooting. But either way, considering the release plan that is in effect for the film, Rajamouli could be looking to complete the entire production process by the end of this year. This would leave him with a good three months for the promotional campaign that would follow. Considering the international legacy that Rajamouli could gather with RRR, there will be a lot more anticipation on Varanasi, even at the global level. Even the western audience who loved RRR could be greatly anticipating this Mahesh Babu film now, and Rajamouli will have to bear this responsibility. If everything goes to plan and the film would actually be releasing in theatres next April, then we could be expecting a cinematic masterpiece unfold on the big screens worldwide exactly one year from now.

# Dragon Shoot Paused For NTR's Look

NTR and Prashant Neel's Dragon is currently on a short break. The movie was to shoot for a major schedule this month but then, it got halted. Apparently, there are multiple looks of the actor in the film and this new schedule was to have a new look. But then, both NTR and Neel were not satisfied with the Look they achieved and so, they decided to pause the schedule. Both of them are on the same page as far as the movie is concerned. They want nothing but the best even if that means the movie is delayed. The team completed a major schedule in Jordan and after that, they also shot for about a week at Temple near Shamshabad last month. Meanwhile, a massive set is being built for the film in the outskirts



in which the shoot will begin next month. The movie was previously announced for June 25, 2026. Obviously, that will be missed and Ram Charan's Peddi may arrive on that date now. Mythri Movie Makers and NTR Arts are jointly producing the film. The movie's success is very important for NTR after he met with a major setback with his Bollywood debut film, War 2.