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Omar Abdullah Refuses To Cut 'Tricolour' Ribbon, Earns Praise



Srinagar: He came. He saw. He declined. "Ye nahi kaat sakte hum (Can't cut this)." Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah declared, refusing to cut an inaugural ribbon sporting national colours. Abdullah, 56, was inaugurating the 'Know Your Artisans' event at the Kashmir Haat in Srinagar. The Chief Minister is seen walking towards the ribbon stretched across and then stopping short as he notices the national flag colours, shows a video. "Isko wahan se khol dijiye, dono side se khol dijiye (Open it from there, open it from both sides)," the Chief Minister instructed officials as he arrived at the scene, pointing to the ribbon in saffron,

white and green stripes. He was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, his advisor Nasir Aslam Wani and a host of others. The ribbon dealt with, Abdullah went on with the rest of the proceedings at the Kashmir Haat in the heart of the city. The gesture won him wide-spread praise on the internet. "Compliments to Chief Minister Shri Omar Abdullah for his keen situational awareness and corrective intervention," said a user on X. "I appreciate and respect your gesture Mr. Chief Minister. Thank you for being a role model. Bharat Mata Ki Jai!" said yet another. The Chief Minister's party, the National Conference, used

the incident to highlight what "real respect" looks like. "This is what real respect for the Tiranga looks like. In a time when patriotism is often reduced to cheap TV debates... actions like these speak louder than words," National Conference leader Gagan Bhagat said on X. The incident, which raised many eyebrows, also led to questions on the oversight by the private organisation handling the event. "Who thought using the tricolour as a ribbon was a good idea? Are people in our country really this pathetic and insensitive?" asked another user. "Omar Abdullah decides not to cut the Tricolour as a ribbon.

Why Delimitation Has Become Flashpoint Between Centre And Southern States



New Delhi: As the debate over the proposed delimitation exercise intensifies, the BJP finds itself facing growing resistance from southern states, raising concerns that the issue could deepen the political divide between them. The Vindhyaas are emerging as a political fault line for the BJP, raising fears that the party could be branded as a "northern party" in the South. Notably, the Vindhya or Vindhyaal range - stretching from Gujarat to Bihar - has long served as a major geographical, climatic and cultural divide, separating the North's Indo-Gangetic plains from the southern Deccan Plateau. Leaders of Southern states argue that a population-based delimita-

tion would unfairly benefit northern states, where population growth has been higher, while penalising states that have performed better in population control and development. Lok Sabha seats will be increased to up to 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise to be carried out based on the last published census. Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy launched the first major political attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this week, criticising the Centre's delimitation plan. In a post on X, Reddy warned a population-led increase in

Lok Sabha seats would "punish" states that effectively controlled population growth. He also wrote to chief ministers of southern states, calling for a united stand. Reddy proposed a hybrid model for delimitation, suggesting that half the seats be allocated based on population and the other half on economic performance. Directly targeting PM Modi, he cautioned that ignoring southern concerns would trigger "strong resistance." Leaders from southern states, mostly from parties outside the BJP-led NDA, argue that states such as Uttar Pradesh stand to gain a significantly higher number of seats through delimitation. In contrast, states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala

would see only marginal increases. They describe the proposal as "rewarding failure and punishing progress," pointing to the South's stronger record in population control and development. The controversy has brought together several southern leaders, including Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, all of whom have echoed Revanth Reddy's concerns. Stalin on Wednesday announced a state-wide black flag agitation tomorrow against the proposed delimitation exercise and warned the Centre of consequences and a "heavy price" if it did not

heed to Tamil Nadu's voice. Even the opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Telangana has taken a firm stand on the issue. Party leader KT Rama Rao (KTR) warned that the move could trigger a "strong people's movement across Southern India," adding that the region would not remain a "mute spectator" if its political voice was weakened. The lone exception has been the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), led by Chandrababu Naidu. While calling for fairness in the delimitation exercise, the TDP has adopted a cautious approach and avoided directly confronting the BJP-led Centre, of which it is a partner.

I will uphold the trust placed in me: Minister Lokesh



From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 15: Minister Nara Lokesh said that he feels lucky to have been selected as the working president of the Telugu Desam Party. He made it clear that he will work tirelessly to strengthen the party and uphold the trust placed in him. Lokesh participated in the Chandragiri constituency workers' meeting on Wednesday. As the young leader Lokesh, who was selected as the working president of the Telugu Desam Party, came to their area for the first time, the leaders and workers of Chandragiri constituency showered him with garlands. On this occasion, Lokesh said, 'Anji Reddy's grandfather, who stood in the election fray without fear despite being threatened by his opponents.. Thota Chandrayya, who did not mention the name of his opponent even though he was losing his life.. Manjula Reddy, who sat in the polling booth despite being bleeding, are my inspiration. It is because of all your sacrifices that we are all sitting here today with 94 percent of the seats. I said during the padayatra that ac-

tion will be taken against those who have fabricated false cases against people and activists and caused trouble.. That is what we are doing now. We are not implementing the Raja Reddy Constitution like them..'. "People like Amarnath Goud, Abdul Salam, Thota Chandraiah, who did not know the inauspiciousness, were mercilessly killed. We are taking legal action against the culprits. Three days ago, Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy's men attacked devotees for asking them to remove a car blocking the temple. The government will not stand idly by if devotees are attacked. There is no way to spare those who commit such misdeeds. Telugu Desam Party chief Chandrababu Naidu started his political career from Chandragiri," he said. Lokesh continued his speech.. "Chandragiri was a turning point for me in the Yuvagalam Padayatra. Today, I heard the good news about my political promotion here. That is why Chandragiri is a constituency that has come to me. In the Telugu Desam Party, the worker is the leader. Recently, on the party's forma-

tion day, ordinary workers sat next to CM Chandrababu. We have spent about Rs. 150 crore insurance money for the workers. We will lift all the false cases filed against the cadre in the previous government. We have cleared most of the bills that were pending in the past. We will also release the rest soon. We will take the responsibility of strengthening the workers financially. Telugu Desam is the biggest family with one crore members..'. "Small problems are natural in such a big family. The cadre should work hard together for the ideology they believe in. If we stay at home and get bored, we will lose. We are tracking the work of every worker with advanced technology. We will identify every worker who works for

the party through the 'My TDP App' and provide them with a suitable position. Jagan does not trust Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy, who is known as the flower in Chandragiri's ear. Jagan understood his handiwork. He embezzled 600 crores in liquor. He also sold God's laddus and clothes. The people of Chandragiri have been freed from such a corrupt person. MLA Pulivarthi Nani follows us for work in the constituency. In the last 22 months, he has started work in the constituency with Rs. 900 crores. It is my responsibility to bring industries to Chandragiri. Leaving aside small problems, the TDP, Jana Sena and BJP cadres should fight against their opponents together," he said.

The leader in the Telugu Desam Party is the worker: Palla Srinivas Rao

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 15: The party's state president Palla Srinivas Rao said that the worker is the leader in the Telugu Desam Party. Speaking to the media on Wednesday, he said that only the Telugu Desam Party can stand by the lower classes and BCs politically. Palla Srinivas thanked the leader Chandrababu Naidu for once again giving him the post of TDP state president, who is a BC with confidence. He said that he will work to make the party an unstoppable force for future generations by respecting the welfare of

the workers, the experience of the seniors and encouraging the youth.



Palla Srinivas congratulated Nara Lokesh, the

of hope of the party's workers, who was appointed as the party's national working president. Srinivas Rao said that it is gratifying to provide a place to the ordinary mandal president and cluster in-charges in the highest committee of the party, the Polit Bureau. He expressed his heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed leaders in the national and state committees. 'I wish you success in these new responsibilities that you will undertake,' said TDP state president Palla Srinivas Rao.

AP Deputy Speaker Raghurama donates Rs. 1 crore to Aakiveedu Ram Temple

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 15: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Speaker Raghuramakrishna Raju said that one crore rupees have been collected to build a Ram temple in Aakiveedu in West Godavari district. He said that the entire amount of money was given by devotees. He said that the Ram temple will be built soon with all the permissions. He said that he first came to know about the existence of a Ram temple in Aakiveedu through Sakshi media. The Deputy Speaker alleged that he was attacked when he went for Ram. He said that lawyer Jada Shraavan and two others have filed a petition in the High Court alleging that the Ram temple is being built without permission.

Deputy Speaker Raghurama said that the High Court will hear the petition today. He said that the permission of the District Collector is necessary for the construction of a temple, mosque and church. They told the court through the petition that the Ram temple is being built without permission. Raghuramakrishna Raju said that he also says that action should be taken against churches without permission. However, he alleged that the churches run by the petitioners do not have any permission either. He said that he had requested the court that the construction of the Ram temple would not be done without permission. He said that he is requesting the authorities to remove the illegal structures. He said that Jada Shraavan had said in the court that permission



should be given for the reconstruction of the Ram temple, which has a lot of history. He questioned whether permission should be given to the Kalvari Satish prayer hall according to the same rule. Raghurama said that they were building a meeting hall in Tadepalligudem after getting permission and then converting it into a church and offering prayers. He said that the authorities had noticed this matter and issued notices three months ago. He said that so far, no

response has been received from them on this. He said that it was later found out that the Calvary Temple at Namburu also did not have permission. He said that if the authorities had given notices to take action against such structures, they would have gone to court. He alleged that in many places, prayer halls were being converted into business centers. Raghuramakrishna Raju appealed to the authorities to investigate this and take action.

Home Minister responds to Kadiri accident incident

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 15: It is known that gas cylinders exploded in a house in Kummuravandlapalli village of Kadiri mandal of Sri Sathya Sai district. Four people died in the accident and ten others were seriously injured. Firefighters and police reached the spot immediately after receiving the information. The fire brigade personnel completely brought the fire under control. Those injured in the incident were immediately taken to Kadiri Government

Hospital. The house was completely destroyed in



the accident. State Home

Minister Anita responded to the incident. Sri Sathya Sai spoke to the District Collector and SP on the phone and learned the details of the incident. Home Minister Anita expressed deep sorrow that the four people died in this incident. She instructed the officials to provide better medical treatment to those injured in this accident. She advised the officials to immediately expedite the relief efforts. Home Minister Anita assured that the government will stand by the families of the deceased.

EDITORIAL

Is Netanyahu the reason for the failure of US-Iran talks?

The derailment of the US-Iran talks has left the entire world disappointed. This is because the world had pinned a lot of hopes on these talks, especially due to the involvement of US Vice President JD Vance. It is noteworthy that after he took office, who is being promoted as the cowboy president of America, the most important responsibility entrusted to Vance was to bring Iran to the negotiating table. If these talks were successful, the entire world was waiting with hope that on the one hand, the flames of war would be extinguished, and on the other hand, a path to international economic stability would be paved. It is said that Vance was also very eager to demonstrate his diplomatic skills through these talks and gain recognition as a key international leader. Therefore, it is also known that he was ready to extend a friendly hand by trying to instill a sense of trust in the Iranian representatives. However, the 21-hour-long talks between the US and Iran in Islamabad, Pakistan, have failed to break the deadlock as both sides have failed to agree to each other's demands. Diplomatic sources say that Tehran has become "more friendly and more cooperative" with negotiators despite being aware of the "risk of mistrust and misunderstanding" between the US and Iran. Trump has acknowledged this, saying in an interview with Fox News that Vance's team has become "very friendly" with Iran in the end. However, it is now being said that Iran's refusal to give up its "nuclear ambitions" ultimately led to the failure of the talks. "We had very serious talks, and they ended up being very friendly. We achieved almost everything we needed to do, except for their refusal to give up their nuclear ambitions."

"To be honest, in my opinion, that's the most important thing of all," the US president said. Although Vance refused to reveal the details of the secret talks that lasted 21 hours, it is said that the main disagreement was on the issue of nuclear weapons. It is noteworthy that Vance said that the main reason for the failure of the talks was that Iran was not ready to abandon its nuclear program, even though it said that its uranium enrichment facilities in Iran had already been destroyed. While Iran has made it clear that it is not trying to make a nuclear bomb, it is observed that it insists on a clear guarantee that Iran will not develop nuclear weapons, which seems to indicate that the US is trying to achieve through negotiations what Iran has said cannot be achieved through war. Meanwhile, Iran is increasingly blaming Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the lack of progress in the Iran-US talks. Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi accused Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu of calling US Vice President JD Vance in the middle of the talks, and the talks went off the rails after that. Xlo tweeted that Netanyahu called JD Vance in the middle of the talks, and the talks that were heading towards a key breakthrough went off the rails after that. It is noteworthy that key figures in the US intelligence community had previously alleged that Israeli pressure was the reason for the sudden US attack on Iran on February 28. Until the previous day, there were reports that an agreement had almost been reached in the talks between the two countries in the UAE. The UAE itself announced that Iran had come down to an unprecedented level and agreed to many conditions, especially on the issue of nuclear weapons. The attacks on Iran began just hours after that announcement. Not only UN experts, but also US experts have said that Iran has agreed to inspect nuclear facilities. If Iran has started a war like this, it is clear that none of the reasons given by the US for the war are true. If we consider that key figures in the US intelligence community themselves have said that Iran has no intention of attacking the US or Israel, and that they have no information about the need to go to war with that country now, it is revealed that Donald Trump has taken unilateral decisions to satisfy the country's Prime Minister by putting pressure on Israel. However, despite the fact that almost the entire top leadership of Iran was killed in the war, the army there has not lost any confidence and is putting up serious resistance, and moreover, the scope of the war has been expanded to the Gulf countries and the Strait of Hormuz, the US government has been in self-defense. Additional forces had to be deployed to counter Iranian aggression. It would have to bear an unexpected heavy cost. It is now widely believed that the US hastily entered the war without assessing Iran's capabilities. Therefore, while Trump is searching for ways to get out of this war with dignity, Pakistan has appeared as a bridge. Although it is clear that China is leading Pakistan, it is known that the country has started negotiations for reconciliation with Iran under the watchful eye of the US. It has been revealed that Iran is also searching for ways to get out of this war with dignity. Therefore, both sides have shown interest in the talks. Later developments reveal that only Israel is worried about where an agreement will be reached between them. On the other hand, there has been no statement from the US on the news that the Israeli Prime Minister called JD Vance during the talks. The Iranian Foreign Minister's accusation that the focus of the US-Iran talks has shifted towards Israeli interests after Netanyahu's phone call to JD Vance, and the US intelligence officials' previous statement that Trump went to war with Iran only due to Netanyahu's pressure, raise suspicions that Trump is in a hopeless position to take steps against Netanyahu's will. It is also believed that the support provided in the last US presidential election may not be the only reason for this. Despite holding the BRICS presidency and India's trade, economic and social interests in the Gulf being particularly intertwined, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inability to intervene in the West Asian conflict is also mentioned on this occasion. According to the words spoken on the first day of the war, it is clear that Israel fears that if the government in Iran changes, that is, if the war ends without the formation of their puppet government, it will pose a major threat to their country's security and operations. On the other hand, the United States has also realized that if Iran is not subdued now, it will not be possible in the near future. Donald Trump, who attacked Venezuela under the pretext of supplying drugs to the United States and kidnapped the country's President Nicolás Maduro Moro and his wife Cilia Flores and imprisoned them in their own prison, is no longer talking about drug trafficking. Hundreds of representatives of American companies are being sent to that country and are making unsuccessful attempts to invest in the country's state-owned oil companies.

38% vs 18%: How Bengal Exposes The Biggest Irony Of Women's Reservation

Long debated and stalled for decades, the legislative odyssey of the Women's Reservation Bill, now formally known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, began nearly 30 years ago when it was introduced in September 1996. In September 2023, the Parliament finally passed the 128th Constitutional Amendment Bill unanimously, reserving 33% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly. The law seeks to correct India's gender imbalance in politics, where women currently account for only about 15% of Parliamentary representation. The catch, however, is that the law was tied to the completion of a fresh census and a subsequent delimitation exercise, pushing implementation to 2034 at the earliest.

What The Delimitation Pivot Hides

The Union government is now attempting to accelerate this timeline by proposing amendments that would use 2011 census data instead of the pending census and expand Lok Sabha seats by 50% - from 543 to 816, with 273 seats reserved for women - asking the Parliament to pass this in three days while West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are still mid-election. In response, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has accused the government of "rushing the process to gain political advantage" as the Congress Working Committee warns of the profound consequences of the delimitation proposal. While the 50% seat expansion is presented as equitable, the absolute gaps between states widen dramatically: Northern states gain roughly 200 seats against the South's 66. In an 816-member House where the majority mark shifts to 409, the Hindi heartland, where the BJP's base is most concentrated, commands a larger share of power, making Southern states increasingly less decisive in government formation. By using 2011 Census data, which contains no full caste enumeration, the government has also sidestepped the long-standing demand for a quota-within-a-quota for OBC women. Constitutional scholar



Zoya Hasan has noted that basing electoral restructuring on data that is 15 years old, and predates the pandemic, mass migration, and rapid urbanisation, risks misrepresenting the very communities the bill claims to empower.

The BJP's Bengal Gambit

The timing has an obvious factor: West Bengal, which votes in two phases this month. The BJP's strategy is to use the bill as a direct weapon against Mamata Banerjee's most loyal constituency of women voters, who have consistently given the Trinamool Congress a double-digit lead in post-poll surveys. Modi has framed the legislation as a "historic opportunity", suggesting that Banerjee's record is no substitute for a Constitutional guarantee, while Smriti Irani, campaigning in Rajarhat, accused both the Congress and the Trinamool of failing to support the bill "despite being led by female leaders". The BJP's women-focused campaign also invokes the RG Kar case related to the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in August 2024, with Irani accompanying the victim's mother, now a BJP candidate from Panihati, as she filed her nomination. The message is pointed: the Trinamool's headline numbers on representation are hollow if the state's

institutions fail to protect women on the ground.

TMC's Numbers: Ahead Of The Benchmark?

The irony here, however, is that the Trinamool Congress already operates beyond the 33% threshold in its own Lok Sabha delegation. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, 11 out of 29 Trinamool MPs were women, amounting to roughly 38%, the highest share among major national parties. By comparison, women account for around 13% of the BJP's elected MPs. At the state level, over 20% of Mamata Banerjee's Council of Ministers are women, including high-profile portfolios such as agriculture, welfare, and public health. In contrast, BJP-ruled states such as Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh still have far lower shares of women MLAs than Bengal, even after decades of national-level discussions on quotas. What distinguishes the Trinamool's record is not just the headcount but the diversity behind it. The party's women MPs span a wide social and professional range: actors with deep constituency ties, doctors and academics, career politicians, a former bureaucrat, and an Anganwadi worker who arrived at Parliament without the cushion of elite networks or family incum-

bency. They are drawn from Adivasi, Dalit, Muslim, and urban middle-class backgrounds, reflecting constituencies that cut across rural, peri-urban, and metropolitan Bengal. Mamata Banerjee remains one of only two women Chief Ministers in the country, a product not of reservation but of four decades of street-level political activism.

The 'Party Ticket'

As West Bengal moves towards the 2026 state elections, the BJP's "women-first" pitch - cash transfers, women-only police battalions, and job-quota promises - will be heavily advertised. On the other hand, Banerjee can leverage not only scheme-based welfare such as Kanyashree Prakalpa and Lakshmi Bhandar, but also a demonstrable record of women's representation in both the Lok Sabha and the state cabinet. And yet, West Bengal, held up as the Bill's best-case argument, is not exempt from the contradictions of the "party ticket". While the Trinamool's 38% women MPs in the Lok Sabha is an impressive achievement, the upcoming Assembly elections offer a more sobering reality: the party has fielded 52 women out of 291 candidates - just about 18%, which is half the 33% threshold it champions nationally and a steep drop from its Parliamen-

tary contingent. The BJP in Bengal lags further behind, fielding only around 11% women for the state polls. The Trinamool Congress appears to have chosen "winnability" over gender equity in drawing up its nominee list. It is a sad reflection of our electoral system that development, health, education and gender issues no longer ensure electoral victory, and are consigned to manifestoes. The party has dropped 74 sitting MLAs this year. In many cases, these seats are filled by new faces, but the pressure to hold onto a majority has led the party to favour established organisational leaders who are still predominantly male. Bengal with its duality - 38% women in Parliament versus 18% in the state contest - captures the core tension of the Bill better than any other example: it is the strongest case for why reservation is necessary, and simultaneously a reminder of how much political will it takes to make it real. If anything, the Bill's passage may amplify comparisons rather than consolidate credit, raising a broader question: can a party leverage a policy for electoral gain when its core objectives are already being realised more effectively, albeit imperfectly, by its opponent?

The Big Takeaways: Deciphering Tamil Nadu's High-Stakes Battle

Over the last 25 days, I have travelled across Tamil Nadu through its southern, central, western, and northern regions-meeting candidates, from high-profile veterans to low-profile newcomers, and speaking with voters in markets, on streets, and among campaign ranks. This is the sixth Assembly election I am reporting from the ground in Tamil Nadu - and it is shaping up to be THE most fascinating one. The arithmetic and grassroots equations in the state remain as complex as its ideological debates and its colorful, emotive, and loud political campaigns. The first 2026 reality is unmistakable: this is not the binary "DMK vs. AIADMK" contest that both alliances claim. It is, at the very least, a three-way fight-with Tamizhaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) at the centre of the conversation. Whether or not people ultimately vote for it, they are talking about it everywhere. Add Seeman's NTK, and this begins to resemble a four-way race; in some pockets, even five- or six-cornered contests are emerging. For pollsters, this election is a nightmare for one reason. Vijay's fan appeal is massive-but how much of it will translate into votes, and whose base it will erode, remains enormously unpredictable. Based on exten-

sive ground travel, here are five broad realities shaping the race-not from data, but from conversations and observation.

Anti-incumbency Is Real, But the DMK Is Not Complacent

MK Stalin's greatest strength may be his lack of complacency. There is little evidence of hubris. The leadership appears acutely aware that anti-incumbency exists and that the ground is not entirely secure. The DMK has focused on alliance management with precision-holding partners together, even expanding the coalition, and ensuring coordination down to the constituency level. For instance, in Virudhunagar the two-time DMK MLA ARR Sreenivasan had to give up the seat for party's new ally DMDK. Late actor Vijayakanth's son Vijay Prabhakar is the candidate and the Sreenivasan is on the campaign trail every day with the young Vijay Prabhakar. This is important as the DMDK is a new ally, one the DMK fought till 2024. When asked Sreenivasan said "Stalin has ordered DMDK victory here and I will ensure that happens" Overall, the DMK's campaign is built on arithmetic: tight alliance synchrony, a manifesto aimed at blunting voter fatigue,

and a formidable organizational and propaganda machinery operating at full throttle. In a close contest, this could prove decisive. Crucially, the anti-incumbency vote is split-primarily between the TVK and the AIADMK. A united front here would have posed a far more serious challenge.

A Generational Battle: Under-40 vs. Over-40

A little over 40% of Tamil Nadu's electorate is under 40-and this is Vijay's natural constituency. Across Chennai, Trichy, Madurai, and Tirunelveli, the energy among younger voters is unmistakable. From hotel staff to drivers to market vendors, the response is strikingly consistent: Vijay. Many of these voters come from families historically aligned with the DMK or AIADMK. At a DMK rally, when I asked young, dancing band members who they would vote for, the instinctive answer was immediate-"Vijay"-before caution set in! This is where the disruption lies. The DMK's traditional dominance among urban and youth voters is now under serious pressure. That shift alone could reshape the electoral map.

AIADMK: Strong Where It Is, But Uneven Overall

The "Two Leaves" symbol remains resilient despite five

years out of power and the absence of towering figures like MGR and Jayalalithaa. Edappadi Palaniswami has kept the organization intact and disciplined. In western Tamil Nadu-especially around Salem-his influence is unmistakable. The alliance with TTV Dhinakaran's AMMK adds a layer of caste arithmetic in the south. Yet the party's strength is uneven. Where it is strong, it remains formidable; But its strength may not be even across seats, especially in northern urban centres. Its biggest challenge is structural: the TVK is eating into the anti-DMK vote while also making inroads among women voters-a traditional AIADMK base. For the AIADMK, this election is existential. For the DMK, defeat would be a setback; for the AIADMK, losing space to the TVK could redefine its future.

The Minority Calculus

The Muslim (about 6%) vote appears largely consolidated behind the DMK alliance. The Christian vote (roughly 6%), however, seems more fluid than before. Vijay's identity and appeal seem to be creating a generational divide within the community-particularly among church leadership. Younger voices appear more receptive; older ones remain aligned with

the DMK. With minorities accounting for roughly 12% of the electorate, even marginal shifts matter. In constituencies like Perambur and Trichy East-where Vijay is contesting and where Christian population is higher than the average 6 percent-the contest is being framed on the ground as "Vijay vs. DMK," with the AIADMK squeezed out in the conversation. These are the fault lines that could produce surprises.

No Wave, Just Micro-Battles

This is not a wave election. It is a constituency-by-constituency fight, each with its own arithmetic. Smaller parties like the NTK are already feeling the pressure. Seeman's consistent 6-8% vote share now risks being squeezed as Vijay consolidates the "third force" space. If the TVK makes significant inroads into the roughly 20% vote share historically occupied by smaller parties, it disrupts the entire electoral equation. The old arithmetic simply won't hold. It's an existential battle for many small parties that have carefully aligned with the major two Dravidian parties to be electorally relevant in the state.

And, Finally

Tamil Nadu assembly elections, like that in most big Indian states, are difficult to predict.

Public Participation Key for Self-Enumeration in Census 2027: Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha

Vijayawada, April 15: District Collector and Principal Census Officer Dr. G. Lakshmisha urged citizens to actively participate in the self-enumeration process of Census 2027, scheduled from April 16 to 30. Speaking at a media briefing, he said the digital self-enumeration facility allows people to submit their details online, ensuring accurate and error-free data while saving time. The initiative aims to increase public participation and streamline the census process.

He informed that citizens can provide details such as family members, housing status, water source, internet access, and other key information through the online portal. A 15-day outreach campaign will also be conducted to create awareness among different sections of society.



departments and support from media are crucial for the success of the program.

Fire Safety Awareness Drive Conducted in Rampachodavaram

Rampachodavaram, April 15: As part of Fire Service Week observed from April 14 to 20, a fire safety awareness program was conducted at the RTC bus stand in Rampachodavaram, said District Fire Officer Lakshmana Swamy. He emphasized that public awareness is key to preventing fire accidents and urged people to follow basic safety measures at home. Demonstrations were given on how to respond during fire emergencies, especially for women.

He advised checking gas leaks, avoiding electrical overloading, keeping flammable materials away from kitchens, and ensuring proper ventilation. He also warned against careless handling of cigarettes and matches.



across the district under the supervision of District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar.

The Fire Service Week programs are being organized

Station Fire Officer K. Krishna Dora and staff participated in the program.

SP Reviews Women Safety with GMSKs; Awareness Rally Conducted



Paderu, April 15: Alluri district SP Amit Bardar conducted a special review meeting with Gram Mahila Samrakshana Karyakartas (GMSKs) in Paderu to

strengthen law and order and enhance women's safety awareness. He directed officials to prioritize prevention of crimes against women at the village level and ensure immediate response to cases of harassment and domestic violence. Strict action is being taken to prevent child marriages, and awareness programs are being conducted on domestic violence, dowry harassment, and good touch-bad touch for children.

The SP also stressed creating awareness on the dangers of illicit liquor, road safety measures like helmet use, and prevention of cyber frauds, including OTP sharing and suspicious links. He urged women to approach police without fear and assured strict action against offenders.

Later, under the supervision of Hukumpeta CI Sanyasi Naidu, an awareness rally on women and child safety was conducted with participation from GMSKs across the district. Citizens were advised to stay alert and report suspicious activities to police or dial 112.

Collector Reviews Government Institutions in Pithapuram

Kakinada, April 15: District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad conducted a field inspection in Pithapuram, reviewing various government institutions including a Community Health Centre, Anganwadi centre, primary school, Secretariat, and Pithikapuram Nagaravanam.

He directed officials to improve staff performance and ensure better public services. At the health centre, he reviewed OP services, medicine supply, lab, X-ray, dental, wards, and maternal & child care, and instructed officials to reduce patient rush and enhance services.

During his visit to an Anganwadi centre, he checked nutrition quality and advised following the prescribed menu. He also stressed improving basic English and math skills among children. Expressing concern over a teacher's absence at a nearby primary school, he ordered issuance of a show-cause notice. The Collector inspected Secretariat-9, reviewed sanitation, drinking water, streetlights, and waste management, and later visited Nagaravanam, directing officials to speed up ongoing works. Officials



from various departments accompanied him.

SP Tuhin Sinha Issues Key Directions on Road Safety and Law & Order

Anakapalli, April 15: District SP Tuhin Sinha directed officials to take stringent measures to prevent road accidents and maintain law and order during the monthly crime review meeting held at the district police office. He stressed speedy disposal of pending cases using technology and called for strict action against traffic violations such as helmetless riding, drunk driving, minor driving, wrong-route driving, and non-use of seat belts. Vehicles with pending challans should be seized and licenses cancelled if necessary. The SP instructed coordination with departments to improve safety measures at accident-prone spots, including installation of speed breakers, rumble strips, and proper lighting. He also ordered regular counselling for rowdy sheeters, strict action under relevant laws for repeat offenders, and awareness programs on cyber crimes and crimes against women. Use of advanced tools like fa-



cial recognition and CCTNS was emphasized to speed up investigations. Officials were also told to ensure safety compliance in industrial areas and promptly respond to emergencies.

Students Shine in Intermediate Exams: Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha

Vijayawada, April 15: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha congratulated students who performed well in the Intermediate examinations. In NTR district, 84% of first-year students (29,103 out of 34,510) and 87% of second-year students (31,453 out of 36,151) passed, with an overall pass percentage of 85%. The district secured 4th rank in first year and 3rd rank in second year at the state level. The Collector appreciated students, teachers, and officials for the achieve-

ment. He encouraged students who did not get desired results to utilize supplementary exams as an opportunity and advised them to work with proper guidance and determination.



Anna Canteen Launched in Rampachodavaram

Rampachodavaram, April 15: An Anna Canteen providing food at just ₹5 was inaugurated at the constituency headquarters in Rampachodavaram of Polavaram district. MLA and Legislative Chairperson Miriyala Sirisha Devi, along with Joint Collector Bachu Smaran Raj, attended the inauguration held at the Union Bank premises. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said the canteen aims to provide affordable and hygienic food to the poor and daily visitors from remote villages. Breakfast and meals will be available for ₹5 each every day. She thanked Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for establishing 62 Anna Canteens in the second phase across the state. The Joint Collector stated that the initiative ensures no



one goes hungry and that quality food is served as per the government menu under the supervision of District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar.

Protocol Violation: ST Commission Chairman Expresses Anger



Rampachodavaram, April 15 (Pen Power): Andhra Pradesh State ST Commission Chairman Solla Bojji Reddy expressed serious displeasure over the failure to follow protocol in official programs held in Rampachodavaram

constituency of Polavaram district. He criticized officials for not extending due respect and maintaining proper timing during the Anna Canteen inauguration held on Wednesday, stating that inviting him but not following protocol reflects negligence. He also alleged that similar protocol violations occurred during the distribution of 5G smartphones to Village Organization Assistants (VOAs) under SERP, where he was called late to the ??, causing embarrassment. The Chairman accused ITDA officials of repeatedly neglecting protocol and disrespecting his constitutional position, even obstructing his interaction with the public. He warned that strict action would be taken against concerned officials if such lapses continue.

Man Sentenced in Ganja Smuggling Case

Anakapalli, April 15: A court has sentenced an accused in a ganja smuggling case registered under Narsipatnam Rural Police Station limits. The 1st Additional District and Sessions Court, Visakhapatnam, awarded 4 years and 9 months of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of ₹5,000. The case dates back to July 21, 2021, when police intercepted three suspects during vehicle checks near Nagaram village outskirts and seized around 10 kg of ganja. The accused had procured the contraband from agency areas and were transporting it to Tamil Nadu. One of the accused, Akash Pandurangan (19) from Vellore

district, was convicted based on strong evidence presented by the prosecution. The court also stated that failure to pay the fine would result in an additional one month of simple imprisonment.

District SP Tuhin Sinha appreciated the police and prosecution teams for their effective investigation and successful conviction.



Collector Conducts Surprise Inspection of Mid-Day Meal Scheme



Vijayawada, April 15: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha conducted a surprise inspection at Puchalapalli Sundarayya Municipal High School in LBS Nagar to review the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. He personally examined the food quality, kitchen hygiene, water usage, and storage practices. The Collector also dined with students and expressed satisfaction over the quality and taste of the meal, while interacting with them to gather feedback. He instructed officials to ensure that meals meet nutritional standards and follow the prescribed menu. Emphasizing the scheme's importance for students' health, attendance, and academic progress, he warned that any lapses would not be tolerated and assured regular inspections.

Census 2027 a Historic Milestone: Collector R. Mahesh Kumar

Amalapuram, April 15: District Collector R. Mahesh Kumar said the 17th Census-2027 will be a historic milestone, as it will be conducted in a fully digital mode for the first time in India. During a teleconference with tahsildars, MPDOs, and technical staff, he issued guidelines for the smooth and transparent conduct of the census. He highlighted that citizens can use the self-enumeration

facility through an online portal, ensuring convenience, time-saving, and data privacy.

The census will be conducted in two phases—House Listing (April–September 2026) and Population Enumeration (February 2027). Officials were directed to ensure 100% data collection, proper training of enumerators, and effective use of mobile apps and digital devices.

He also noted that caste-based data collection will be a key feature this time, aiding welfare schemes and policy decisions.

Collector Urges Farmers to Take Up Sericulture



Markapuram, April 15: District Collector M. Vijaya Sunitha encouraged farmers to show interest in sericulture (silk farming) as a profitable alternative to traditional crops. Speaking at an awareness program held at the Sericulture Department office, she said both Central and State governments are offering subsidies—up to 90% for SC/ST farmers and 50% for others. She noted that around 480 farmers in the district are currently cultivating mulberry on 1,200 acres and stressed the need to expand awareness in rural areas. Farmers were advised to learn modern practices and utilize government support to increase income. Later, the Collector distributed subsidized equipment to farmers. Officials and experts attended the program.

Tight Arrangements for Chandanotsavam; Administration Ready for 2 Lakh Devotees



Visakhapatnam, April 15: District Collector M. Abhishikt Kishore directed officials to ensure smooth conduct of the annual Chandanotsavam at Simhachalam Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple. With an expected turnout of around 2 lakh devotees, elaborate arrangements have been made by dividing the temple area into 12 sectors, each monitored by senior officials. Special focus is on queue management, parking, sanitation, drinking water, and RTC bus movement. QR code-based ticket verification will be strictly enforced, and action will be taken against fake tickets. Police Commissioner Shankabrata Bagchi stated that only one vehicle per pass will be allowed, with strict limits on VIP entries. Private vehicles will not be permitted, and special transport arrangements are in place to handle the crowd.

Anna Canteens to Feed the Needy: Minister Atchannaidu



Srikakulam, April 15: State Agriculture Minister said Anna Canteens have been set up to provide full

meals at just ₹5 for the poor, daily wage workers, and the needy. He inaugurated a new Anna Canteen building at Tekkali along with District Collector. The minister stated that 207 Anna Canteens are already functioning in municipalities and corporations across the state, and 67 new canteens are being launched in rural areas. He expressed satisfaction that two canteens are operating in Tekkali constituency.

He emphasized that the initiative, envisioned by Chief Minister, is a major support for workers and the elderly. Strict measures are in place to ensure hygienic and quality food. The minister and collector also served food to beneficiaries and reviewed its quality.

Cooperate for Purification of Electoral Rolls: Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad

Kakinada, April 15: District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad urged political parties to extend full cooperation for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)-2026 of electoral rolls.

At a meeting held at the Collectorate, he explained that the revision aims to ensure clean and accurate voter lists as per Election Commission guidelines. Voter details will be verified through unique enumeration forms and matched with existing data to identify eligible and ineligible voters.

He also informed that the number of polling stations in the district is proposed to increase from 1,640 to 1,825 after rationalization, with changes in locations and names of several centers. Political parties were advised to appoint Booth Level Agents for each polling station.



District officials and representatives of various political parties attended the meeting.

Anna Canteens in Rural Areas a Boon for Poor: Collector Vijaya Sunitha

Markapuram, April 15: District Collector M. Vijaya Sunitha said that setting up Anna Canteens in rural areas is a major relief for poor people.

She inaugurated a new Anna Canteen at Yerragondapalem along with local leaders and MLA Ugra Narasimha Reddy. She noted that 62 Anna Canteens have been launched across rural areas in the state and advised authorities to maintain hygiene and quality.

The Collector stated that around 8.89 crore people have benefited from Anna Canteens so far and encouraged the public to share feedback. Officials and local leaders participated in the event.



Collector Harendhira Prasad Congratulates Intermediate Pass Students



Kakinada, April 15: District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad congratulated students who passed the Intermediate 2026 examinations in the district.

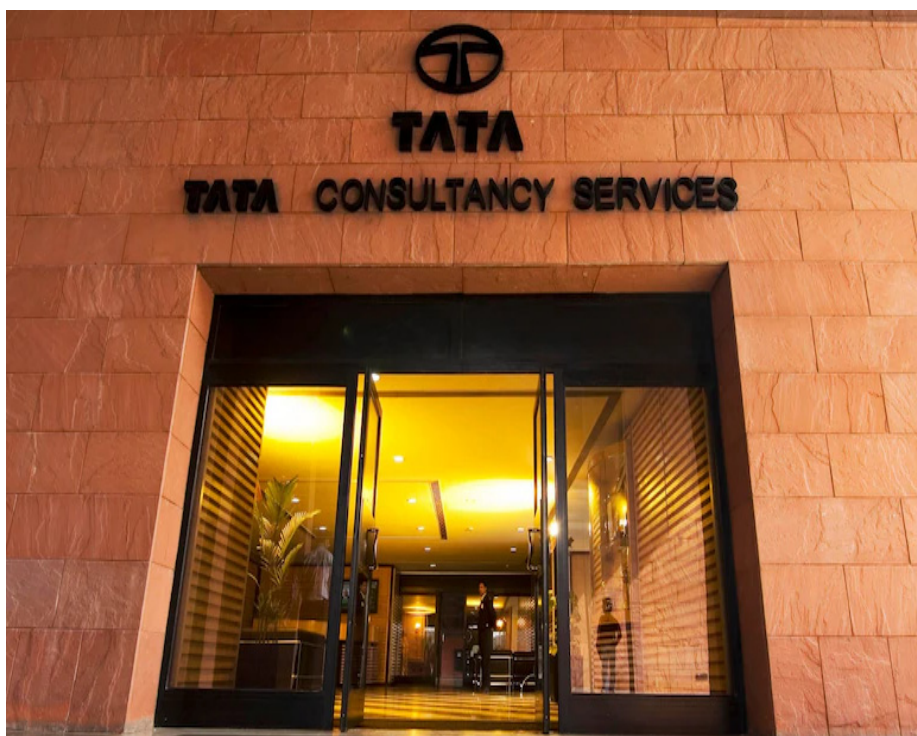
He advised students who did not clear the exams not to feel discouraged and to prepare well for the upcoming supplementary exams.

In the first-year exams, 14,143 out of 22,010 students (64.25%) passed, while in the second-year exams, 14,500 out of 20,028 students (72.39%) were successful.

The Collector encouraged students to aim for higher goals in their future.

'Targeted Recruits In Need Of Money': New Details In TCS 'Conversion' Case

Financial profiling, derogatory remarks about religion, an HR manager feigning compassion and gradual radicalisation -- a chilling modus operandi has come to light amid the storm surrounding allegations of religious conversion attempts and sexual assault in the Nashik branch of IT giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). According to police sources, the complainants have spoken of a well-oiled network involving senior staff members and an HR manager. The probe has revealed that the accused were part of a training team and had detailed information about new joiners. They would choose 'targets' who were financially weak, had family issues, and needed money, the investigation has found. During the training, derogatory remarks would be made about Hindu gods and goddesses. When the 'target' would be upset, HR manager Nida Khan, also among the accused, would reach out to them and gradually win their trust. Over time, the investigators say, the 'target' would be pushed to change his/her lifestyle and dressing habits. One of the 'targets', they added, was in-



fluenced so much that she quarrelled with her family and removed all photos of Hindu gods from her home. Seven people have been taken into custody in this case. These include Asif Ansari, Shafi Shaikh, Shahrukh Qureshi, Raza Memon and Tausif Attar.

How Cops Cracked Case
According to police sources, an undercover operation was executed to unravel the conspiracy. Women constables dis-

guised as housekeeping staff entered the office premises. Housekeeping services are outsourced, and an external agency hires staff. So sending in women cops in disguise was a safe move that did not alert the accused, the sources said. Some male cops were also on the premises in disguise. The undercover operation was carried out to confirm the shocking allegations, police sources said.

A WhatsApp Planning

Group
The investigators have also found a WhatsApp group that the accused used to discuss the 'targets', the sources said. The accused discussed radical religious subjects and the company's internal politics. The Special Investigation Team probing the matter is also looking at the chilling allegations of sexual harassment and assault that have come to the fore.

Southern States To Benefit Despite Smaller Population: Sources On Quota Bill



New Delhi: The implementation of women's reservation will result in benefits, rather than disadvantages, for the South Indian states, high-ranking government sources have asserted. They contend that the apprehensions harbored by South Indian states - which have successfully controlled their populations - regarding potential losses relative to north Indian states due to delimitation are entirely unfounded. The Constitutional Amendment Bills regarding women's reservation, which were circulated to Members of Parliament today, include a provision stipulating a 50 per cent increase in the total number of seats in both Lok Sabha

and the state legislative assemblies. The south Indian states are vehemently opposing this move. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has been the most vocal critic. He maintains that while he is a staunch proponent of providing reservation for women, the manner in which the Central government is linking this initiative to delimitation constitutes a political conspiracy - one designed to diminish the representation of south Indian states while conferring advantages upon their north Indian counterparts. He has also issued a warning regarding the possibility of a large-scale protest movement. Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has simi-

larly denounced the move as an act of injustice. Today, high-ranking government sources clarified that conducting the delimitation exercise based on the 2011 census data will, in fact, benefit the south Indian states. This, they said, is because when viewed against the baseline of the 1971 census, the population growth in south Indian states has not kept pace with the proportional growth observed in north Indian states. But despite this demographic reality, the proposed provisions ensure a 50 per cent increase in the number of Lok Sabha seats allocated to these states. This implies that, on a proportional basis, these states will stand

to gain, as they will secure increased parliamentary representation despite having smaller populations. Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju also dismissed the apprehensions voiced by the southern states. He said certain individuals are attempting to propagate a misconception that the south Indian states would suffer adverse consequences as a result of their successful family planning policies. According to Rijiju, the south Indian states are, in fact, fortunate, as they are poised to receive a proportionally higher number of seats despite their lower population figures. Rijiju further said the delimitation process would be conducted in a manner that ensures fairness and justice for all states. Government sources have clarified that to implement women's reservation, the number of seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies will be increased by 50 per cent. On basis of this calculation, the maximum number of seats in the Lok Sabha could reach 850. Under this provision, a maximum of 815 seats are being allocated for the states, and 35 for the Union Territories.

Karnataka Woman Elopes With Lover, Her In-Laws Poison Her, Burn Body: Cops



An investigation to find a woman in Karnataka has revealed a chilling case of dishonour killing, in which three men allegedly murdered a married woman after she refused to end an extramarital relationship. The three men have been arrested, and the probe is on. Satyavva Helavar, a resident of Hukeri in Karnataka's Belgavi district,

was reported missing in February. In the course of the inquiry, it emerged that Satyavva eloped with Krishna Patil, with whom she was in an extramarital relationship. Police said Satyavva married Santosh Helavi four years back, but continued her relationship with Krishna Patil. After eloping, the couple briefly stayed together at a rented

home. Her in-laws, meanwhile, filed a police complaint against Krishna. Satyavva's in-laws were upset over the relationship and saw it as an act of dishonour, said police. The investigation revealed that Satyavva's family members tracked down her and Krishna's whereabouts and then brought her back. She was then taken to

Maharashtra, where her in-laws allegedly tried to convince her to end the relationship. She refused and insisted on returning to Krishna. This enraged her relatives. On March 21, the accused allegedly forced her to consume poison, leading to her death. To erase evidence, they reportedly burnt her body at a cremation ground in Maharashtra's Sangli district, located near the state's border with Karnataka. When Krishna could not contact Satyavva, he approached the police and filed a complaint against her in-laws, and a detailed probe brought the dishonour killing to light. The accused, identified as Prakash Bhemappa Helavar (46), Shanoor Sadashiv Helavar (35), and Kallappa Mayappa Helavi (40) were arrested and then remanded in judicial custody.

Air India's Boeing 787-8 Lands At Delhi Airport After Refurbishment

Mumbai: The first refurbished wide-body Boeing 787-8 aircraft of Air India landed at Delhi Airport on Monday, more than three years after the Tata Group-owned airline announced a USD 400-million investment plan to carry out a comprehensive refit of its legacy twin-aisle fleet.

The aircraft, VT-ANT, operated a non-stop ferry flight from San Bernardino in the United States, flying over the Pacific, and landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi at 10 pm, the airline said.

San Bernardino International Airport in California acts as a major hub for maintenance, painting and storage of Boeing aircraft.

Air India on Monday welcomed its first retrofitted, twin-aisle B787-8 (registered VT-ANT), marking the successful completion

of a nose-tail cabin refresh of the first of 26 B787 aircraft, the airline said.

Loss-making private carrier Air India's legacy widebody fleet comprises Boeing 787-8s and B-777s. These aircraft operate on several long-haul destinations across the UK, Europe, the USA and the Far East. The aircraft, which received comprehensive interior upgrades at Boeing's modification centre in Victorville, California, was subsequently painted in Air India's striking new livery at AeroPro, an FAA Part-145 certified aircraft paint facility in California, the airline said. Following the requisite regulatory certifications and clearances, the aircraft operated a non-stop ferry flight from San Bernardino to Delhi, it stated. Air India, which became private in January 2022 after the Tata



Group took back ownership of the airline from the Union Government, announced in December that year plans to refurbish its entire legacy wide-body fleet, comprising 27 Boeing B787-8 (Dreamliner) and 13 B777 aircraft, at an investment of over USD 400 million. This refurbishment included a complete overhaul of the existing cabin interiors, with the addition of the latest-generation seats and in-

flight entertainment across all classes. In addition, the refurbishment also included the introduction of a premium economy cabin on both fleets. The first such refurbished aircraft was to enter service. However, supply chain issues and geopolitical situations delayed the project commencement only in July last year, when the first of the 26 Boeing 787-8s flew to Victorville facility for retrofit.