

IN BRIEF

CM expresses grief over demise of Pope Francis

Hyderabad, April 21 (UNI) : Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday expressed profound grief over the demise of His Holiness Pope Francis, the revered head of the Roman Catholic Church and sovereign of Vatican City.

Taking to social media platform X (formerly Twitter), the Chief Minister described Pope Francis passing away as an irreparable loss to humanity.

He paid heartfelt tributes, applauding the Pope's lifelong dedication to social justice, compassion, and peace.

Reddy lauded the Pope's unwavering support for refugees, migrants, and the marginalised, noting that his inclusive approach and global outreach efforts had left an enduring legacy.

Calling him a towering spiritual figure, he acknowledged Pope Francis's remarkable advocacy for interfaith harmony, climate change action, and global unity.

The Chief Minister conveyed his deepest condolences to the global Catholic community and the Pope's family, remembering him as a visionary leader who devoted his life to humanity's well-being and moral upliftment.

**India announces three-day state mourning on passing away of Pope Francis**

New Delhi, April 21 (UNI) : India today announced three-day State Mourning as a mark of respect on the passing away of Pope Francis, with the National Flag to be flown at Half Mast throughout the country and there will be no official entertainment.

In a late night statement, the government said: "His Holiness Pope Francis, Supreme Pontiff of the Holy See passed away today, the 21st April, 2025.

"As a mark of respect, three-day State Mourning shall be observed throughout India, in the following manner:

- Two days' State Mourning on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 and Wednesday, April 23.
- One day's State Mourning on the day of the funeral.

Catholic Church head Pope Francis dies aged 88

Rome, April 21 (UNI) : Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church, has died aged 88 after serving as the head of the Vatican for 12 years. The Vatican announced his passing on Easter Monday, on its X (formerly Twitter) handle: "Pope Francis died on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, at the age of 88 at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta." Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Apostolic Chamber, said in a statement: "Dearest brothers and sisters, with deep sorrow I must announce the death of our Holy Father Francis. At 7:35 this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the house of the Father."

The pontiff had been afflicted by a series of health issues in recent years and was using a wheelchair for some of his recent public appearances. In February 2025, he was hospitalised with severe bronchitis and



pneumonia in both lungs. The pope, who had part of a lung removed as a young man, had become increasingly frail over the years. He underwent two major intestinal surgeries in recent years: in 2021, to remove the left part of his colon; and again to treat an intestinal blockage in June 2023. His death has now set in motion the centuries-old process of electing a new Pope to spearhead the Catholic Church. The first

Latin American to hold the position, Pope Francis was elected in 2013 after the retirement of his predecessor, Benedict XVI retired. His death came a day after he wished "Happy Easter" to worshippers at the Vatican's St Peter's Square.

His passing was mourned by several world leaders, who expressed their condolences at his death and paid heartfelt tributes.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote on his X: "Deeply pained by the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. In this hour of grief and remembrance, my heartfelt condolences to the global Catholic community. Pope Francis will always be remembered as a beacon of compassion, humility and spiritual courage by millions across the world.

"From a young age, he devoted himself towards realising the ideals of Lord Christ. He diligently served

the poor and downtrodden. For those who were suffering, he ignited a spirit of hope." Recalling his meeting with him in Italy, PM Modi added: "I fondly recall my meetings with him and was greatly inspired by his commitment to inclusive and all-round development. His affection for the people of India will always be cherished. May his soul find eternal peace in God's embrace." French President Emmanuel Macron expressed his grief and wrote: "From Buenos Aires to Rome, Pope Francis wanted the Church to bring joy and hope to the poorest. May it unite people with each other and with nature. May this hope continually resurrect beyond him." He added: "My wife and I extend our thoughts to all Catholics, to the grieving world." US Vice President JD Vance, who met the pope just yesterday, said his heart "goes out to

(Contd on page 3)

Telangana pavilion inaugurated with grandeur at Osaka Expo, Japan



Hyderabad, April 21 (UNI) : In a proud moment for the state, Telangana inaugurated its dedicated pavilion at the prestigious Osaka Expo in Japan, marking a significant milestone in international

representation. Led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the "Telangana Rising" delegation arrived in Osaka from Kitakyushu and made a vibrant entry into the India Pavilion on Monday

Sridhar Babu. Held once every five years, the Osaka Expo is a globally recognised event. Telangana has earned the distinction of being the first Indian state to participate in this prestigious global forum.

The pavilion is a celebration of Telangana's rich cultural heritage, rapidly developing industrial landscape, and thriving tourism sector. Exhibitions within the pavilion highlight the state's technological innovations, traditional arts, and diverse tourist attractions, offering visitors a holistic glimpse into the heart of South India.

Through its presence at the Expo, Telangana aims to foster international cultural cooperation and attract global investments, reaffirming its position as a rising economic and cultural hub on the world stage, an official statement said.

Chhattisgarh should become an ideal state by implementing new criminal laws soon: Shah

New Delhi, April 21 (UNI) : Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday held a review meeting here with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai to assess the implementation of the three new criminal laws in the state.

In his address, Shah said Chhattisgarh should take the complete implementation of the three new criminal laws as a challenge and become an ideal state by implementing them soon, a Home Ministry statement said.

He emphasised the importance of making the full implementation of the three new

criminal laws—enacted under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi—a top priority in Chhattisgarh.

He said the primary objective of these laws is to strengthen and modernise the Indian judicial system, and that a state like Chhattisgarh stands to benefit significantly from these reforms.

Shah said the Chhattisgarh government should ensure accountability by assigning the responsibility to Deputy Superintendent of Police level officers for filing chargesheets within 60 and within 90 days for serious crimes. He

highlighted that under the new criminal laws, the entire process—from recording evidence to conducting trials—can be carried out through video conferencing, significantly reducing the need for manpower and streamlining judicial.

The Home Minister stressed that all police stations and DSP-level officers in Chhattisgarh should regularly use the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) in serious crime investigations.

Shah also recommended a structured review mechanism for the implementation of the new criminal laws in the state.

He added that the Chief Secretary and

Director General of Police should conduct weekly reviews, the State Home Minister should review the progress every 15 days, and the Chief Minister should assess the implementation on a monthly basis.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Union Home Secretary, Chief Secretary of Chhattisgarh, Director General of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh, Director of the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), and other officials.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in US to attend IMF-World Bank meeting

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman arrived in the US on a five-day official visit during which she will attend the Spring Meetings of the IMF-World Bank. She will also participate in the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meetings besides bilateral meetings with many countries and organisations. She was welcomed on her arrival by Indian Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra, and Srikar Reddy Koppula, Consul General of India in San Francisco.

(See on page 4)

Iran's FM to visit China for talks on ties, US negotiations



Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi will travel to China on Tuesday, during which he will discuss Iran's ongoing indirect negotiations with Washington, as well as Iran-China ties, with Chinese officials, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced Monday.

( See on page 5)

Ostapenko stuns Sabalenka to win Stuttgart Open



Jelena Ostapenko beat world number one Aryna Sabalenka to win the Stuttgart Open in stunning fashion on Monday. Ostapenko, who had failed to win in three previous meetings against Sabalenka, took the match 6-4 6-1, the BBC reported.

(See on page 7)

SC declines urgent plea for Prez rule in West Bengal



The Supreme Court on Monday refused to pass any immediate direction on a plea seeking imposition of President's rule in view of communal and political violence allegedly triggered by the Waqf (Amendment) Act in Murshidabad.

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# EARTH DAY 2025

CELEBRATING  
THE GREEN  
JOURNEY OF  
INDIAN RAILWAYS

This Earth Day, Indian Railways proudly reaffirms its commitment to building a smarter, faster and cleaner transport ecosystem, one that not only drives progress but also sets an inspiring precedent for sustainable development. As one of the world’s largest rail networks, Indian Railways is transforming itself into an environmentally responsible force, focusing on sustainability at every turn of the wheel.

## Powering Clean Mobility

A key milestone in this green transformation is the near-complete electrification of the broad-gauge network. With over 98% of the route (68,701 RKM) now electrified, Indian Railways has significantly reduced its dependence on fossil fuels, paving the way for cleaner, more energy-efficient journeys. The shift to electric traction not only cuts carbon emissions but also improves operational efficiency and lowers fuel costs. Since June 2015, Indian Railways has also championed green fuels by blending 5% bio-diesel in High-Speed Diesel (HSD) for diesel locomotives.



## Solar-Powered Railways

In parallel, Indian Railways is harnessing solar power to energise its vast infrastructure. With 215.99 MW of rooftop solar capacity already commissioned, solar panels have been installed on station buildings, coach rooftops and various railway facilities. This clean energy revolution ensures that trains are running not just on time, but also on sunshine.



## Conserving Water, Preserving Tomorrow

Water conservation is another priority. Railways have adopted eco-friendly practices such as rainwater harvesting systems at several stations and the deployment of over 70 Automatic Coach Washing Plants to reduce water usage. The water from these facilities is also recycled and reused for activities like gardening and coach cleaning, reinforcing the Railways’ motto that “every drop counts”.



## Eco-Friendly Measures in Motion

Another key initiative includes transitioning to energy-efficient three-phase electric locomotives equipped with regenerative braking, the adoption of Head-On Generation (HOG) technology and the widespread use of LED lights in buildings and coaches. As of March 2025, all Railway stations, service buildings and residential quarters have been equipped with 100% LED lighting. Furthermore, lakhs of saplings are planted every year as part of afforestation efforts to enhance carbon sinks and offset emissions through reforestation and renewable energy projects.



## Revolutionising Rail Hygiene

Cleanliness and hygiene also take centre stage through the introduction of bio-vacuum toilets in coaches. These toilets consume less water and eliminate the discharge of waste onto tracks, ensuring cleaner surroundings, safer maintenance and a healthier environment for both staff and passengers.



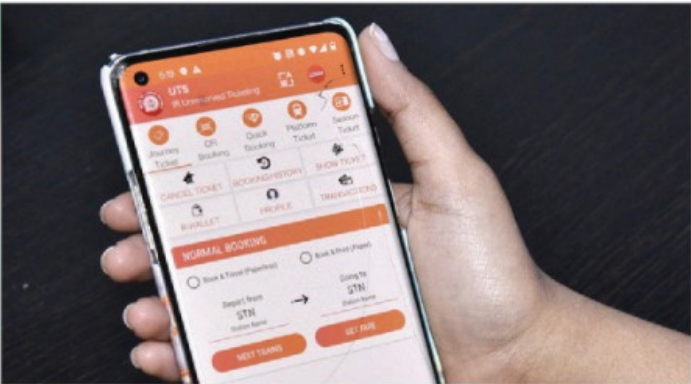
## Driving Sustainability with DFCs

Freight operations remain a cornerstone of sustainability, with Rail freight generating up to 80% less CO2 and consuming 75-90% less energy compared to road transport. The Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) project alone is projected to cut emissions by 457 million tons of CO2 over 30 years, bolstering the green credentials of freight transport.



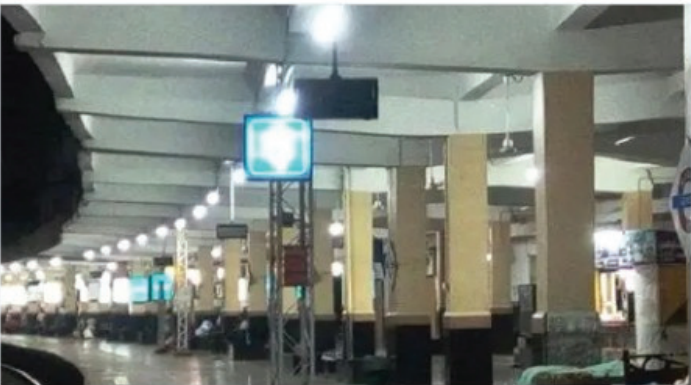
## Tech Savvy & Greener Solutions

Digitalisation is also making a substantial impact. Through paperless ticketing via the IRCTC and UTS mobile apps, Indian Railways has saved millions of paper slips over the years, helping reduce deforestation while offering passengers a faster, smarter and more convenient way to travel.



## Transforming Railways into a Global Green Leader

Indian Railways is reimagining infrastructure with sustainability at its core. From solar-powered station lighting to eco-friendly construction materials, green practices are being seamlessly woven into every layer of development. This transformation goes beyond environmental upgrades, it reflects a holistic vision to make Indian Railways a global leader in sustainable transportation. With every electrified route, solar installation and paperless ticket, the Railways is driving India toward a future that’s cleaner, greener and more responsible.





## Thunderstorm with lightning, gusty winds likely in Telangana in next 48 hours: Met

Hyderabad, April 21 (UNI) : Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds with speed ranging from 30-40 kmph is likely to occur at isolated places in Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Hanamkonda, Jangaon, Siddipet, Yadadi Bhuvangiri, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Medchal Malkajigiri districts of Telangana during the next 24 hours, Meteorological Centre said on Monday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that the same situation is likely to prevail in Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Nagarkurnool, Narayanpet, Jogulamba Gadwal districts of the state on Tuesday.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at isolated places in Telangana during the next 48 hours and from April 25 to 27.

Dry weather is likely to prevail in the state on April 23 and 24.

Maximum temperatures are likely to rise gradually by 2-3 degrees celsius in Telangana during the next three days.

As per media reports, hailstorm occurred at isolated places in Rangareddy district of the state during the last 24 hours.

Rain occurred at one or two places in Telangana during the same period.

The highest maximum temperature of 43.5 degrees celsius was recorded at Adilabad on Sunday, the report added.

## Catholic Church head Pope Francis ...

**(Contd from page 1)** the millions of Christians all over the world who loved him". "I was happy to see him yesterday, though he was obviously very ill. But I'll always remember him for the below homily he gave in the very early days of COVID. It was really quite beautiful. May God rest his soul."

European Union President Ursula von der Leyne wrote: "Today, the world mourns the passing of Pope Francis. He inspired millions, far beyond the Catholic Church, with his humility and love so pure for the less fortunate. My thoughts are with all who feel this profound loss. May they find solace in the idea that Pope Francis' legacy will continue to guide us all toward a more just, peaceful and compassionate world."

Cardinal Kevin Ferrell, the Vatican camerlengo who had confirmed the news earlier this morning said in his statement: "His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of his Church. He taught us to live the values of the

## Rythu Mahotsavam begins in Nizamabad, focus on modern farming and farmer welfare

Nizamabad, April 21 (UNI) : The three-day Rythu Mahotsavam, featuring modern agricultural equipment, high-yield crop varieties and livestock breeds among other things, commenced with great enthusiasm on Monday at the Giriraj Government Degree College grounds in N i z a m a b a d . S t a t e Agriculture, Marketing, and Handloom Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao formally inaugurated the event, organised by the Telangana State Agriculture Department. The Agriculture Minister was accompanied by Ministers Uttam Kumar Reddy, Jupally Krishna Rao, and Government Advisor Mohammed Shabbir Ali, who arrived by helicopter from Hyderabad. Senior government officials, MLAs, MLCs, and agricultural department heads also participated.

The event showcases over 150 stalls featuring modern agricultural equipment, high-yield crop varieties, livestock breeds, organic farming techniques, and innovative products from agriculture and allied sectors. Special sessions by scientists, experts, and progressive farmers are being held to educate attendees on

sustainable and profitable farming practices. A large number of farmers from five districts gathered to explore the latest advancements. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tummala emphasised that the Mahotsavam aims to help farmers combine organic methods with modern technology to maximise yields and income with minimal investment.

He expressed gratitude to the Central Government for setting up the Turmeric Board in Nizamabad and urged swift implementation for the benefit of turmeric farmers. The Minister reaffirmed the state's commitment to farmer welfare, noting that Rs 33,000 crore has already been disbursed under the crop loan waiver scheme, and Rythu Bharosa funds will soon follow.

Tummala assured that compensation for crop losses due to natural calamities would be arranged and reaffirmed Telangana's leadership in timely paddy procurement and farmer payments. He called on farmers to explore cultivation of palm oil, a highly profitable and pest-resistant crop, and promised support for setting up an oil palm processing unit in the district.

## Bandi Sanjay slams Cong, hails Ambedkar as national icon and inspiration for all

Karimnagar, April 21 (UNI) : Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, on Monday, paid rich tributes to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar during a seminar organised

by the BJP district unit in Karimnagar, marking Ambedkar's birth anniversary.

Speaking at the event, Bandi Sanjay said no one in Indian history had faced the level of humiliation that Ambedkar endured. Yet, he turned every insult into motivation and devoted his life and education to the upliftment of society and the marginalised.

He described Ambedkar not just as a Dalit leader but as a towering national figure—"a god for the Indian nation"—whose legacy goes beyond caste lines. Bandi Sanjay accused the Congress party of attempting to confine Ambedkar's contributions to just the Dalit community, calling it a deliberate effort to diminish his broader national impact.

He recounted how Ambedkar was insulted both under British rule and

## Jagga Reddy hails Govt's decision to launch cancer screening centres in Telangana

Hyderabad, April 21 (UNI) : Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Working President Jagga Reddy lauded the state government's landmark decision to establish Cancer Screening Centres in Hyderabad's slums, poor localities, and rural villages, calling it a much-needed step toward saving lives and supporting financially vulnerable families.

In a heartfelt statement on Monday, Jagga Reddy congratulated Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and extended his special thanks to Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha for spearheading the initiative.

He termed the move as a "wonderful decision" that will help detect cancer early and enable timely treatment, especially among poor and middle-class families who are most affected by the disease. "Over the past two decades, I have witnessed many families crumble under the weight of cancer—both emotionally and financially. Early detection can save lives, especially in the case of breast and cervical cancers, which claim the lives of many women due to lack of awareness and screening facilities," Jagga Reddy said.

## Kishan Reddy slams Cong and BRS for backing AIMIM in local body MLC elections



(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, April 21 : Union Minister and BJP Telangana State President G Kishan Reddy launched a scathing attack on the Congress and BRS parties during a media conference held at the BJP state headquarters on Monday.

On the final day of campaigning for the Hyderabad local authorities constituency MLC elections, Reddy accused both parties of betraying democratic principles by aligning with the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) and attempting to undermine the electoral process.

Reddy alleged that both

the ruling Congress party and the BRS (Bharat Rashtra Samithi), the main opposition in the state assembly, have opted out of the Legislative Council elections (MLC) with the sole aim of aiding AIMIM. "They are trying to hand over Hyderabad to the Majlis party, and eventually, they will not hesitate to hand over Telangana too," he warned.

The BJP leader also leveled serious accusations against the BRS, claiming that the party is threatening its own corporators and preventing them from casting their votes. "This is an insult to the democratic rights of the people who elected them," he said,

adding that both Congress and BRS have consistently collaborated with AIMIM to divide anti-Majlis votes.

Reddy went on to question the secular credentials of Congress and BRS, asserting that AIMIM carries the legacy of the Razakars and religious fanaticism. He cited historical instances and alleged atrocities to argue that the Majlis party is unfit to represent the secular fabric of the state. "Isn't it true that 400 Dalits were massacred in Teegalukunda under Majlis influence? And yet Congress and BRS are bowing to this party for political gain," he said.

"Even though Rahul

## CM, Revanth Reddy invites Osaka business leaders to invest in Telangana at World Expo 2025

Hyderabad, April 21 (UNI) : In a major push to attract global investments, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy invited leading members of the Osaka Chambers of Commerce to explore the rich, untapped investment opportunities in Telangana.

Speaking at the World Expo 2025, the CM emphasised the state's dynamic growth strategy and its commitment to fostering global partnerships.

Addressing a gathering of prominent Osaka business leaders, CM Revanth Reddy said, "Konnichiwa. Namaskaram. I am delighted to be in Osaka, where tradition meets the future. Telangana is the first Indian state to participate in the World Expo, proudly representing India on this global platform." He highlighted Telangana's readiness to partner with Japanese firms across diverse sectors such as the circular economy, urban infrastructure, riverfront development, software, AI, pharma, bulk drugs, tourism, textiles,

agriculture, green power, and more.

"We offer policy stability, high ease of doing business, and world-class infrastructure. Many Japanese companies have already achieved success in Telangana. We welcome many more to design, manufacture, and export from Hyderabad — your launchpad to India and beyond," he said. Industries and IT Minister D Sridhar Babu also emphasised Telangana's robust business ecosystem, pointing to Hyderabad as a global hub for IT, life sciences, aerospace, electronics, and defence.

"We are building India's first Net Zero industrial city — the Future City — on 30,000 acres, focused on green energy, smart mobility, and the circular economy. In partnership with Japan's Marubeni Corporation, a marquee industrial park is being developed," he added. He also detailed major infrastructure projects like the 370-km Regional Ring Road (RRR),

Gandhi leads the Congress and KCR leads BRS, it is Asaduddin Owaisi who is the real super boss of both parties in Telangana," Reddy stated. He questioned the rationale behind BRS's decision not to contest the MLC elections in Hyderabad despite having significant electoral presence.

He also criticised AIMIM for having opposed the formation of Telangana and expressed dismay at BRS's alliance with such a party. "It's shameful that the BRS is supporting the very party that stood against the Telangana movement," Reddy said.

Reddy called on the people of Hyderabad and Telangana to be vigilant against what he described as a "Congress-BRS-MIM nexus" and urged voters to recognise the BJP as the only party committed to democratic values and state development.

He concluded with confidence in BJP's victory, noting that BJP candidate Gautam Rao has already reached out to voters across party lines and received widespread support.

Radial Roads, and the strategic industrial zones between the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and RRR, which are ideal for sectors like EVs, semiconductors, and energy storage. Plans for a dry port with road and rail links to nearby seaports were also presented to facilitate exports.

Drawing inspiration from Japan, he spoke of Telangana's plans to transform the Musi River into a 55-km urban greenway, learning from the rejuvenation of rivers in Tokyo and Osaka. Special Chief Secretary (Industries) Jayesh Ranjan presented Telangana's vision for Young India Skills University, designed with values of quality, discipline, and lifelong learning — expected to drive future talent and business opportunities. The Chief Minister said, "Telangana and Japan share a deep connection. Like the sun rising over Osaka Bay, a new chapter is rising in Telangana. Together, let us build something timeless — for Osaka, for Telangana, for the world."

## After a decade, Govt greenlights 100 pc general transfers in SERP, bringing new momentum

Hyderabad, April 21 (UNI) : In a significant move, the Telangana government has approved 100 per cent general transfers for employees of Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), marking the first such transfer exercise in over a decade. The decision, made under the direction of Panchayat Raj and Women & Child Welfare Minister Dr. D Anasuya Seethakka, comes as a relief to 3,974 employees who have been awaiting transfers, many of whom have served in the same locations for ten years without replacement. The transfers are being carried out in response to long-standing requests

from the staff and are aimed at boosting efficiency and accelerating the implementation of welfare schemes. The government emphasised that this move will help revitalise operations within SERP and support faster execution of programs under the Indira Mahila Shakti Policy, which focuses on transforming women's groups from self-employment units to engines of employment and wealth creation. With renewed focus and reallocation of human resources, the government expects the transfers to inject fresh energy into the rural development mission, an official statement said on Monday.



STANDARD POST

Pope Francis leaves behind unique legacy in Catholic world

Pope Francis, who passed away aged 88 today, was one of the Vatican’s most unique figures, with his papacy being marked by several unusual aspects.

He was the first Jesuit-Latin American, and non-European to hold the title in centuries, as well as being the first one to hold the title after the resignation, instead of his successor’s death in over 600 years - an unusual practice in the highly tradition-driven Vatican.

Though he did not radically alter Catholic practices, Francis surprised the global community with his comments on topics such as homosexuality, abortion, and the death penalty, being far less hardline than his predecessor Benedict XVI.

For the Catholic world, his papacy was one of the most interesting and unique ones, as many of his actions and remarks were removed from the strict traditions of the Vatican.

This includes him choosing Basilica of St Mary Major in Rome as his place of burial, making him the first one to not be interred underneath the St. Peter’s Basilica, opting for a simplistic burial.

Francis, who was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Argentina, also took a more proactive stance on world affairs.

This includes his participating in a TED talk in 2017, his Focus on Mercy and Inclusion initiative which emphasised on forgiveness, reflecting his belief that the Church should be more welcoming and compassionate to all.

Because of him being very much at the centre of both a “progressive” and “conservative” approach, his papacy was looked on with a lot interest, earning criticism and praise from both sides. Due to his unorthodox approach, Francis was deemed too progressive and simultaneously far too conservative.

A defining feature of his papacy was marked by the issue of sex scandals by clerics that stretched to the very highest levels of the Catholic Church.

Deciding to change the narrative, in his 2019 meeting with clerics, new Vatican laws regarding sex abuse were introduced, and a mandate that every diocese set up a clear reporting process. Francis also abolished the top-level confidentiality of the "pontifical secret", which had shrouded the sex abuse scandal for a very long time.

Francis took a more lenient position on LGBTQ+ issues. He will be remembered for taking a gentler view of homosexuality. He maintained that being gay is “not a crime” and approved blessings for same-sex couples, but he also reiterated that homosexuality is a sin in the eyes of the Church.

Francis did not endorse marriage for priests, despite bishops’ requests for this. He also did not allow the possibility of women being ordained as deacons to address a shortage of ordained ministers. His discerning spirit saw there was too much division and no clear consensus for change.

He said women who had undergone an abortion should be “forgiven”. However, he described a Belgian abortion law as “homicidal” and initiated beatification for Belgian King Baudouin, who had abdicated his throne for a day rather than sign a law that decriminalised abortion in 1990.Francis was also openly critical of Germany’s controversial “Synodal Way” – a series of conferences with bishops and lay people – that advocated for positions contrary to Church teachings. Francis expressed concern on multiple occasions that this project was a threat to the unity of the Church.

At the same time, Francis was no stranger to controversy from the conservative side of the Church, receiving a lot of theological doubts from his fellow clerics.

He also adhered the lines of his predecessors, and acknowledged the role of climate change, and its destructive effects on the planet. He also emphasised on using a more scientific-empirical-evidence-based approach to address the situation, mixing theology with science, advocating for ‘ecological conversion’ so that humans could see nature as God-given gift.In conclusion, Francis’ papacy left behind a highly polarised Vatican, starkly divided on various issues, leaving behind both admirers and critics, and generated a lot of new questions for the Catholic world.

Epilepsy Surgery: An Overview

(Standard Post Bureau)  
Epilepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by recurrent, unprovoked seizures. For many people, seizures can be controlled with medication, but for some, these medications are not effective. When epilepsy cannot be managed with drug therapy alone, epilepsy surgery may be considered as a treatment option. Epilepsy surgery aims to reduce or eliminate seizures by removing or altering the area of the brain where seizures originate.

Types of Epilepsy Surgery

There are several types of epilepsy surgery, and the approach depends on the nature and location of the seizure focus, as well as the patient’s overall health and seizure history.

- Resective Surgery: The most common type of surgery for epilepsy is resective surgery, where the brain tissue responsible for initiating seizures is surgically removed. The most well-known procedure is the lobectomy, which involves the removal of part of the brain. For example, in patients with temporal lobe epilepsy, the temporal lobe may be resected to stop seizures.
- Laser Ablation: Laser interstitial thermal therapy (LITT) is a less invasive technique than traditional resective surgery. It involves inserting a thin laser fiber into the brain through a small incision. The laser delivers focused heat to the seizure focus, causing it to shrink and stop seizures.
- Corpus



Dr Rohit Bansil, Associate Director- Neurosurgery & Neuro-spine, BLK-Max Super Specialty Hospital, New Delhi

**Callosotomy:** This procedure is generally used for patients who suffer from generalized seizures that affect both sides of the brain. A corpus callosotomy involves cutting the corpus callosum, which is the bundle of nerves connecting the two hemispheres of the brain. This limits the spread of seizure activity from one side to the other.

**Hemispherectomy:** In severe cases, where the seizures are uncontrollable and the affected hemisphere of the brain is not essential for motor or cognitive function, a hemispherectomy may be performed. This involves the removal or disconnection of one half of the brain to prevent seizures.

**Responsive Neurostimulation (RNS):** This is a more recent option for patients who are not candidates for resective

surgery. RNS involves implanting a device in the brain that detects seizure activity and sends electrical impulses to stop the seizure before it starts.

**Candidates for Epilepsy Surgery**

Not everyone with epilepsy is a candidate for surgery. Ideal candidates are those who have tried multiple medications without success and have well-defined, localized areas of the brain responsible for the seizures. Doctors typically use a variety of diagnostic techniques to assess whether surgery is a viable option. These include brain imaging (MRI, PET scans), electroencephalography (EEG), and functional brain mapping, which helps identify the areas of the brain that control critical functions such as movement, speech, and memory.

**Benefits of Epilepsy Surgery**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in US to attend IMF-World Bank meeting

Washington/New Delhi, April 21 (UNI) : Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman arrived in the US on a five-day official visit during which she will attend the Spring Meetings of the IMF-World Bank.

She will also participate in the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meetings besides bilateral meetings with many countries and organisations.

She was welcomed on her arrival by Indian Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra, and Srikar Reddy Koppula, Consul General of India in San Francisco.

“Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman is welcomed upon her arrival during her official visit to the USA by Shri Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Ambassador of India to the United States of America, along with Dr. Srikar Reddy Koppula, Consul General of India in San Francisco in presence of Shri Ajay Seth, Finance Secretary, at San Francisco International Airport, today,” the Ministry of Finance posted on X.In the course of her two-day visit to San Francisco beginning April 20, the Union Finance Minister is to deliver a keynote address at the Hoover Institution at the

Stanford University, San Francisco, on ‘Laying the foundations of Viksit Bharat 2047’ followed by a fireside chat session.

Sitharaman will also interact with top CEOs from prominent fund management firms during a Roundtable meeting with investors, besides holding bilateral meetings with CEOs from top information technology (IT) firms based in San Francisco. Sitharaman will also participate in an event featuring Indian diaspora in San Francisco and interact with the Indian community settled there, a statement said.During her visit to Washington, from April 22-25, the Finance Minister will participate in the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the 2nd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governor (FMCBG) Meetings, Development Committee Plenary, IMFC Plenary, and Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable (GSDR) meeting.On the sidelines of the Spring Meetings in Washington, she will hold bilateral meetings with her counterparts from several countries, including Argentina, Bahrain, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, and USA; besides meeting EU Commissioner for Financial Services; President, Asian

Development Bank (ADB); President, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Advocate for Financial Health (UNSGSA); and First Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

During her maiden visit to Peru from April 26-30, the Union Finance Minister will lead an Indian delegation of officials from the Ministry of Finance and business leaders, highlighting the strengthening bilateral economic and trade relations between the two nations.Beginning her visit in Lima, Finance Minister Sitharaman is expected to call on the President of Peru, Dina Boluarte, and Prime Minister Gustavo Adrianzen, besides holding bilateral meetings with the Peruvian Ministers of Finance and Economy; Defence; Energy and Mines; and also holding interaction with local public representatives.

In the course of her visit to Peru, the Union Finance Minister will chair the India-Peru Business Forum meeting with prominent business representatives in attendance from both India and Peru. She will also hold an interaction with the Indian investors and businesses currently operating in Peru, as well as the Indian Business delegation visiting Peru.

For many patients, epilepsy surgery can significantly improve their quality of life. The primary benefit is the potential for seizure freedom or at least a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of seizures. In some cases, seizures may be completely eliminated. Even if seizures are not completely eradicated, surgery may lead to a substantial reduction, making it easier for patients to live more independently and engage in activities they previously could not.

Risks and Considerations

As with any surgery, there are risks associated with epilepsy surgery. These include infection, bleeding, and neurological complications such as cognitive changes or weakness. The specific risks depend on the area of the brain being operated on. However, the overall risk of significant complications is relatively low, and advancements in surgical techniques have improved safety and outcomes.

In conclusion, epilepsy surgery offers hope to many individuals who have not responded to medications. By carefully selecting candidates and employing advanced surgical techniques, epilepsy surgery can provide lasting relief and significantly improve the lives of those affected by this challenging condition. However, it is important for patients to thoroughly discuss the risks and benefits with their healthcare team before proceeding with surgery.

People on responsible posts should avoid misleading comments: DGP Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow, April 21 (UNI) : Director General of Police (DGP) of Uttar Pradesh Prashant Kumar on Monday termed Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav’s claims of caste-based postings in the police as completely false and a rumour.

The DGP has advised that people in responsible positions to avoid such misleading comments. He said that such information being spread on social media is baseless and to refute it, the police of the concerned districts have already released data.

He clarified that if any such false information is spread in the future, we will bring out the truth. "People in responsible positions should avoid making such comments," he said.Kumar said that the deployment of policemen has been done in all the districts of the state as per the standards set.In response to Akhilesh’s claims, the Agra Police Commissionerate released data and said that 39 percent of the policemen deployed here are from Other Backward Class (OBC) and 18 percent from Scheduled Caste (SC) category, while the standard for OBC is only 27 percent.

Mainpuri police also revealed that 31 percent of the policemen in their

district are from OBC and 19 percent from SC category. On the other hand, Chitrakoot police said that out of their 12 police stations, three are headed by OBC, two by SC/ST and seven by other categories.

Similarly, Prayagraj police also responded to Akhilesh’s post and called it false. Prayagraj police said that for the appointment of police station in-charge, qualified employees are selected on the basis of dedication, integrity, social harmony and sensitivity towards public grievances.

About 40 percent of the police station in-charges posted in Prayagraj are from OBC and SC/ST category. Appointment to these posts is done through a fair process.The DGP said that it is the duty of UP Police to refute false information and bring the truth in front of the public. He appealed to everyone to avoid spreading misleading information and not to raise unnecessary questions on the police system.

The controversy started when Akhilesh Yadav alleged caste discrimination in police postings, to which the UP police responded by exposing his misrepresentation with facts.

CCTV makers in MSMEs seek govt support to enforce STQC

New Delhi, April 21 (UNI) : The MSMEs manufacturing CCTVs have asked the government to give time and financial support to implement Stadardisation Test and Quality Certification (STQC) failing which over 1000 units will face immediate closure and loss of upto 4 lakh jobs across the country.

"With over 1,000 MSME factories at risk of closure, the livelihoods of more than 400,000 individuals are hanging in the balance. The current challenges — including rising production costs, supply chain disruptions and stringent compliance requirements — are exacerbated by the difficulties in meeting STQC standards without adequate technological support," the Federation of All India Information Technology Associations (FAIITA) said while seeking an urgent meeting with Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for IT and I&B.To ensure the sustainability of MSME manufacturers in the CCTV sector, it is imperative that the government provides the necessary technological assistance, stated FAIITA. "Until these measures are put in place, we urge the government to keep the implementation of STQC protocols in abeyance for MSME manufacturers so they can continue operations without the undue burden

of compliance," it added.

Highlighting the "serious" challenges being faced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and stakeholders in the CCTV manufacturing sector due to the recent enforcement of STQC requirements, the FAIITA supported the Government's vision of enhancing national security and promoting quality standards through initiatives such as Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

However, the sudden implementation of STQC compliance, without a structured transition framework, is proving to be disproportionately burdensome for MSMEs and may potentially undermine the very objectives it seeks to achieve, it said.

In letter written to Vaishnav, the FAIITA said the implementation of STQC, without government support, will pose a serious threat to the existence of te MSME-led manufacturing and employment in the CCTV manufacturing facilities. MSMEs have invested heavily in establishing local manufacturing capabilities. The abrupt enforcement of STQC norms without sufficient lead time or support jeopardizes these investments and risks the loss of lakhs of jobs across the country.

Immediate compliance requirements may force

smaller players out of the market, allowing only a few large companies to remain, leading to monopolization and

reduced innovation thereby defeatng the purpose.

The MSME-driven CCTV ecosystem supports a range of associated sectors, such as cabling, molding, packaging, and logistics. Disruption in MSME manufacturing will have a cascading effect on these industries, the association said adding there is a noticeable absence of centralized guidance, helplines, or support

frameworks to help MSMEs navigate the complex STQC processes, leading to costly delays and confusion.The association has sought "extension of compliance deadline" to allow sufficient time for MSMEs to meet the requirements in a sustainable manner.

"A stakeholder consultation meeting with MeitY officials to engage directly with MSMEs and collectively identify viable solutions to ensure a phased or tiered compliance approach to accommodate MSMEs of varying capacities and allow scalable implementation is the need of the hour," it said seeking reimbursement or financial support mechanisms to alleviate the significant costs involved in testing and certification.



## Afghanistan launches polio vaccination campaign targeting over 11 mln children

Kabul, April 21 (UNI) : The Afghan interim government's Ministry of Public Health launched a nationwide campaign on Monday to give polio vaccination doses to 11.6 million children under five, the ministry said in a statement.

Running site-to-site from Monday to Thursday, the campaign will provide anti-polio drops to children across the country, said Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, spokesperson for the ministry, adding that a supplementary dose of vitamin A will also be provided to children under five. In his message, Amarkhil urged tribal elders, religious scholars, and local residents to actively participate and fully cooperate with polio workers to implement the campaign properly.

## SK's ousted president Yoon attends 2nd criminal trial hearing

Seoul, April 21 (UNI) : South Korea's ousted President Yoon Suk-yeol on Monday attended the second hearing of his criminal trial over insurrection charges. Yoon entered a courtroom of the Seoul Central District Court around 9:57 a.m. local time (0057 GMT) after arriving at the court through its underground parking lot. He was photographed and filmed in the defendant's seat by photographers and cameramen, who left the courtroom before the hearing was formally launched.

On April 4, the constitutional court upheld a motion by the parliament to impeach Yoon over his short-lived martial law imposition. With the court's decision, the conservative leader officially lost all presidential power.

Yoon declared an emergency martial law on the night of Dec. 3 last year, but it was revoked by the opposition-led National Assembly hours later.

The impeachment motion against Yoon was passed in the parliament on Dec. 14 last year.

Yoon was apprehended in the presidential office on Jan. 15 and was indicted under detention on Jan. 26 as a suspected ringleader of insurrection. If convicted of being the insurrection ringleader, Yoon could face the death penalty or life imprisonment. He was released on March 8 as the prosecution decided not to appeal against the court's release approval.

## Putin orders gov't to consider creating national supercomputer center : Kremlin

Moscow, April 21 (UNI) : Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered the government to explore the possibility of creating a national supercomputer center that would be available for use by Russian researchers, the Kremlin said on Monday.

"The Russian government is hereby ordered ... to consider the issue of creating a national supercomputer center, taking into account previous orders and considering the possibility of giving Russian researchers access to its computing power, as well as the need to train personnel for this center," the Kremlin said in a statement.

A report on the matter should be prepared by July 15. Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has been assigned to oversee the order's execution. The president's order comes following his participation in a plenary meeting of the Future Technologies Forum and a meeting with scientists on February 21.

## Azerbaijan's president to visit China

Beijing, April 21 (UNI) : At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev will pay a state visit to China from April 22 to 24, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Monday.

Noting that China and Azerbaijan are strategic partners, spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a regular press briefing that in recent years, under the personal attention and promotion of the two heads of state, China-Azerbaijan relations have maintained a good momentum of development. The political mutual trust between the two countries has been continuously consolidated, Belt and Road cooperation has achieved fruitful results, and international collaboration has been effective, Guo said.

During Aliyev's visit, President Xi Jinping will hold talks with him to draw up a new blueprint for the development of bilateral relations, Guo said. Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee Zhao Leji will meet with Aliyev, respectively, to have in-depth exchanges of views on cooperation in various fields. "It is believed that this visit will further deepen the China-Azerbaijan strategic partnership and bring more benefits to the two peoples," Guo said.

## Wild fire engulfs Poland's Biebrza National Park

Warsaw, April 21 (UNI) : A major wildfire has engulfed approximately 400 hectares of Biebrza National Park in northeastern Poland, local authorities confirmed Monday morning.

The fire, which began Sunday afternoon at the border of Augustow and Monki counties in Podlaskie province, has spread rapidly despite ongoing firefighting efforts. Justyna Klusewicz, spokesperson for the Podlaskie Provincial Command of the State Fire Service, told the Polish Press Agency on Monday that roughly 180 firefighters, supported by forest services, park rangers and soldiers, are currently battling the blaze.



US Vice President J.D. Vance with Second Lady Usha Vance and their children visits Akshardham temple, in New Delh on Monday

# Israel conducts over 200 strikes in Gaza within days, kills Islamic Jihad member

Jerusalem, April 21 (UNI) : Israel's military said on Monday that it carried out more than 200 airstrikes across the Gaza Strip over the past three days, killing a member of the Islamic Jihad movement.

The military said the strikes targeted militant infrastructure, militant cells, rocket launch and sniper positions, weapons depots and command centers.

It identified the killed fighter as Ahmad Mansour, who it said participated in the Hamas-led surprise

attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and later directed rocket fire during the ongoing war. In Rafah's Shabura and Tel al-Sultan neighborhoods, Israeli troops dismantled "terrorist infrastructure" and uncovered a cache of grenades, ammunition and other military gear.

Along the recently constructed Morag Corridor, which bisects Rafah from Khan Younis and the rest of Gaza, troops located weapons, destroyed Hamas

infrastructure and killed several militants, the military said.

In northern Gaza, soldiers launched an airstrike on a building containing what was described as underground infrastructure and detected multiple militants. The army also reported dismantling Hamas sniper posts that had threatened its ground forces. At least eight people were killed in Israeli strikes on Monday and dozens wounded, the Palestinian news agency WAFA reported.

# Bangladesh 'locks' National ID card of former PM Sheikh Hasina, nine family members

Dhaka, April 21 (UNI) : Escalating its attacks against Sheikh Hasina and her family, the Bangladesh Election Commission's National Identity Registration Wing has blocked the National Identity cards of the former Prime Minister and nine of her family members.

The NIDs of the 10 listed individuals were locked through an official letter on April 16, signed by ASM Humayun Kabir, director general of the National Identity Registration Wing at the EC, The Daily Star reported.

The other individuals whose NID's have been locked include - Sajeeb

Ahmed Wazed (Sheikh Hasina's son and Awami League leader), Saima Wazed (her daughter), Rehana Siddiq (Sheikh Rehana, Hasina's younger sister), Tulip Rizwana Siddiq (Hasina's niece and UK MP; daughter of Rehana), Azmina Siddiq (Tulip's sister and Hasina's niece), Shaheen Siddiq (aunt of Tulip), Bushra Siddiq (Shaheen's UK-based daughter), Radwan Mujib Siddiq (Tulip's brother), and Tarique Ahmed Siddiq (was Hasina's security affairs advisor and is husband of Shaheen Siddiq).

Bangladesh Election Commission officials said

that locking an NID means its information can no longer be verified, corrected, or changed.

A locked NID is effectively unusable. However, it is still not clear whether there was a direct order from the Election Commission Secretariat.

In Bangladesh, the NID is a crucial document used for various essential services such as banking, voting, legal processes, utilities, telecommunication services etc.

Therefore, "locking" an NID has significant implications, essentially c o m p l e t e l y disenfranchising a citizen from all government services.

## 22 Sri Lankan soldiers injured in bus-lorry collision

Colombo, April 21 (UNI) : Twenty-two Sri Lankan soldiers were injured on Monday morning when the bus they were traveling in collided with a lorry in Gampaha District, located in the country's Western Province, police spokesman K.B. Manathunga said.

The official said that 20 of the injured soldiers were discharged from the hospital by Monday afternoon, while the bus driver and one soldier remained under medical treatment.

Manathunga added that the lorry driver has been taken into custody, and local police are continuing their investigation into the incident.

Rome, April 21 (UNI) : With the passing of Pope Francis, the Vatican is set to begin its elaborate rituals steeped in centuries of tradition, to mark the end of one papacy and begin the next. Pope Francis, who died today age 88, had led the Catholic Church for 12 years, beginning his tenure as the Pope in 2013 after the retirement of his predecessor Benedict XVI. Before the next Pope is anointed, a nine-day mourning period (called the Novendiales) follows the demise of the previous one. The Pope's body must also be displayed at St. Peter's Basilica for a public mourning, and a mass will take place on each day.

In accordance with ancient tradition, upon the pontiff's death his signet

ring - which acts as the seal for official papal documents is defaced or destroyed, signifying the end of his reign. Afterwards, the papal passages are sealed off until a successor is appointed. Until then, the College of Cardinals will take charge as the temporary charge. Cardinals from around the world must gather for the conclave in which Francis' successor is selected.

The process usually takes between two and three weeks, though it can stretch slightly beyond that if cardinals struggle to agree on a candidate.

Past popes were entombed in three coffins: one made out of cypress, one of zinc and one of elm, nested inside each other,

## Yemen's Houthis claim fresh attacks at Israel, US aircraft carriers

Sanaa, April 21 (UNI) : Yemen's Houthi group said on Monday that it had launched fresh attacks at two Israeli targets and two US aircraft carriers, using drones and cruise missiles. "We launched a drone attack at a vital target in the city of Ashkelon and another drone attack at a military target in the city of Eilat," Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said in the statement aired by Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

He didn't identify the names of the targets in both cities in southern Israel.

"As part of confronting the American aggression ... we targeted the aircraft carrier Truman and its escorting warships in the northern Red Sea, using two cruise missiles and two drones," Sarea said, referring to the USS S Harry Truman.

"We also targeted the aircraft carrier Vinson (the USS Carl Vinson) and its escorting warships in the Arabian Sea, using three cruise missiles and four drones," he said.

Sarea reaffirmed that the group's attacks "will continue" against Israel and the U.S. naval forces in the region. According to the Houthi television, the attacks against Israel and the U.S. warships were carried out in the past 24 hours. The Israeli defence forces have yet to comment on the Houthi claim, nor the US military.

Meanwhile, the US airstrikes in Yemen have been continuing. Early in the day, the Houthi television said the death toll from US airstrikes on Sunday night against a popular market in the Shu'ub neighborhood in central Yemen's capital Sanaa rose to 12, with 30 other "civilians" wounded.

Also on Sunday night, the Houthi television reported other US airstrikes on several Houthi locations in the northern provinces of Al-Mahwit, Saada, and Marib. Tensions between the Houthi group and the US military have escalated since Washington resumed airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen on March 15 to deter the group from targeting Israel and U.S. warships.

# Iran's FM to visit China for talks on ties, US negotiations

Tehran, April 21 (UNI) : Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi will travel to China on Tuesday, during which he will discuss Iran's ongoing indirect negotiations with Washington, as well as Iran-China ties, with Chinese officials, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced Monday.

"During the trip, which was planned in advance, we will hold consultations with Chinese officials on the process of our indirect talks with the United States and will inform them of the latest developments in this regard," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told reporters at a weekly press conference in Tehran.

He noted that the two sides would also discuss Iran's nuclear program, the removal of the US sanctions, as well as bilateral ties. Baghaei said China can play "a constructive and influential role" as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), describing China as Iran's "important friend and partner."

Iran and the United States held the second round of their indirect talks

on Tehran's nuclear program and removal of Washington's sanctions in the Italian capital Rome on Saturday with Oman's mediation. The first round took place in Muscat, Oman on April 12, and a third round is scheduled for the Omani capital again this coming Saturday.

The discussions, described as "constructive" by both sides, came in the wake of a letter sent by US President Donald Trump to Iran's leadership in early March, proposing talks on Tehran's nuclear program. Trump later warned of military action should Iran reject his offer for talks.

Iran signed a nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, with six major countries -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States -- in July 2015, accepting restrictions on its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. However, the United States withdrew from the deal in May 2018 and reinstated sanctions, prompting Iran to scale back some of its nuclear commitments. Efforts to revive the nuclear deal have not achieved substantial progress.

# 'Philippines' military drills with U.S. opposed by regional countries'

Beijing, April 21 (UNI) : The Philippines' decision to conduct the large-scale military drills with the United States has been detested and opposed by regional countries, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said here on Monday.

Spokesperson Guo Jiakun made the remarks in response to the annual military drills between the United States and the Philippines, which started on Monday. The exercise has come as Beijing and Manila are in a dispute over the South China Sea.

"With the world being hit by unilateralism, protectionism and bullying, countries in this region have been calling for greater solidarity, coordination, and joint efforts to keep the region stable and respond to challenges," noted Guo at a daily news briefing.

Against this backdrop, the Philippines chose to conduct the large-scale military drills with this country outside the region and brought in strategic and tactical weapons to the detriment of regional strategic stability and regional economic prospects, which puts them on the opposite side of regional countries, said Guo.

"This act has been detested and opposed by regional countries," he added.

Guo said that the Taiwan question is purely China's internal affair and is at the core of China's core interest.

# With Pope Francis' passing, Catholic Church to begin rituals to anoint next Pontiff

but Francis dictated that he be buried in a single coffin, made of wood and zinc.

When Benedict XVI was buried, his coffin also contained coins minted during his reign, as well as a metal tube enclosing a rolled-up paper scroll, called a rogito — a 1,000-word document retelling his life and reign. Francis will likely be buried with his own rogito detailing his unique papacy. At the end of the Novendiales, a large funeral procession takes place around St. Peter's Basilica, and then he will be laid to rest. While past Popes have all been buried underneath the St. Peters Basilica, Pope Francis had opted for a more simplistic burial, picking the Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica in Rome, one of his favourite

and most-frequented churches, as his final resting place, making him the first pope in a century to be interred outside the Vatican. Two to three weeks after the pope's funeral, the College of Cardinals will convene in the Sistine Chapel to hold a conclave for electing a new Pope.

There are currently 252 Catholic cardinals, 138 of whom are eligible to vote for the new Pope. The others are over the age of 80, which means they cannot take part in the election, although they can join in the debate over who should be selected. Unlike in regular politics, candidates do not openly campaign for the position. Vatican watchers have deemed cardinals who have a good shot at becoming pope

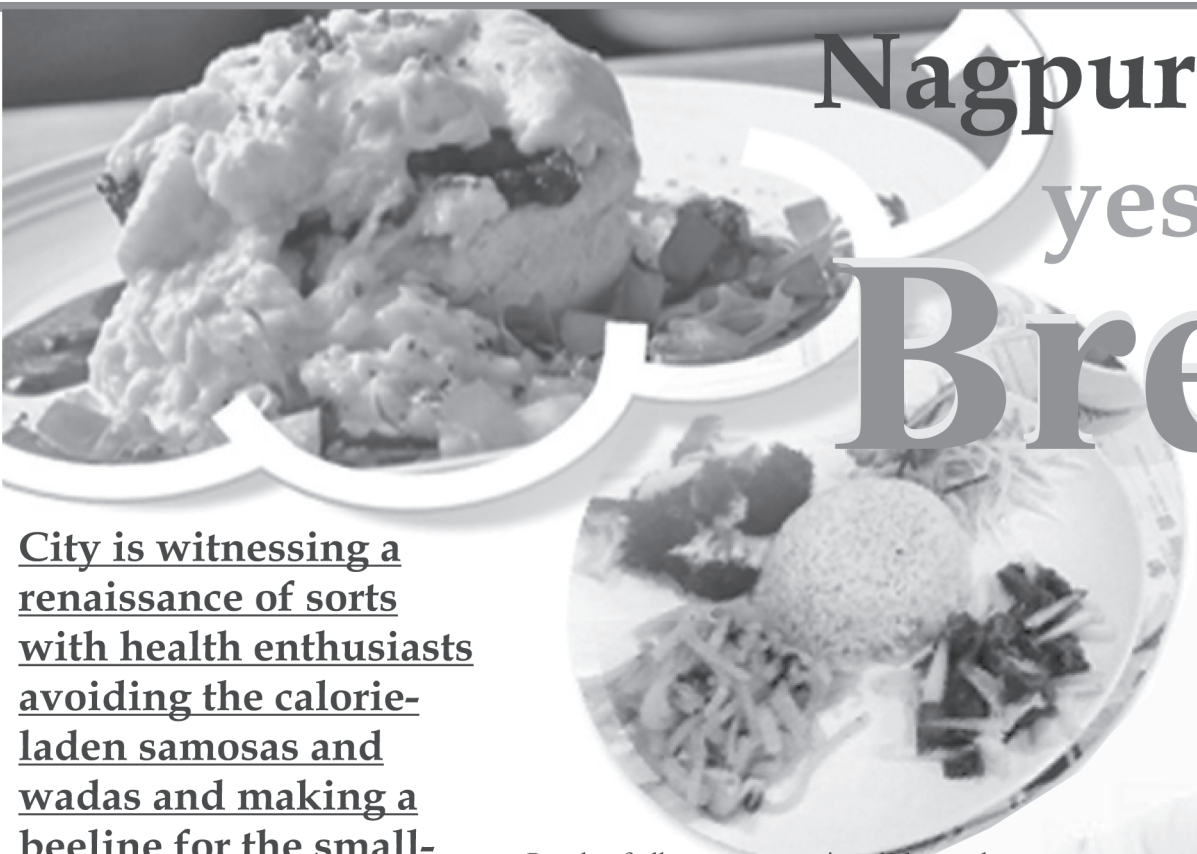
'papabile', meaning "popeable". On the day of voting, the Sistine Chapel is physically sealed off and the cardinals, who have taken an oath of secrecy, are locked inside. Inside the Sistine Chapel, the conclave begins the elections with paper ballots passed out to each cardinal, who writes the name of their chosen candidate below the words "Eligo in Summum Pontificem" (Latin for "I elect as supreme pontiff"). When completed - each cardinal - in order of seniority - walks to the altar to ceremoniously place his folded ballot into a chalice. The votes are then counted, and the result is read to the cardinals. If a cardinal has received two-thirds of the vote, he becomes the new Pope.





# Food&Kids

## Nagpur early risers say yes to healthy Breakfast



**City is witnessing a renaissance of sorts with health enthusiasts avoiding the calorie-laden samosas and wadas and making a beeline for the small-time breakfast joints and juice centres, serving healthy breakfast near the gardens, joggers' streets and lake-side trails of Nagpur.**

Fruity flavours There are many morning walkers, who prefer to stay away from the snacks early in the morning, so they go in for refreshing fruit shakes and juices. Dr Veena Talavia, who goes for a walk to the VNIT campus, is happy that there are quite a few options available there when it comes to fruit juices. "It has become a routine of sorts for my friends and I, post our morning walk. The number of juice centres has increased manifold in the past one year due to rise in the number of fitness enthusiasts these days.

People of all age groups enjoy shakes and juices of their choice. There are many cane juice centres too, which are crowded early in the morning," she said.

Vote for Veggies One can also relish a variety of vegetable juices near different jogging lanes. A kiosk at Dattatray Nagar, which serves aloe vera, bitter gourd and spinach juice, is crowded since six in the morning. Also, the wheat grass juice centres attract many fitness freaks, taking a walk around the Japanese Garden. Entrepreneur Bharat Goenka confessed that the vegetables juices are the biggest motivation for him to get up early. He said, "The juicewala outside the garden knows my vegetable juice combination, so the moment he sees me coming back from my rounds, he keeps the juice ready. Now I look forward to wake up early and come here for a walk."

Medicinal Neera Neera is a popular beverage, which has become an integral part of many fitness freaks' lives. Makeshift neera centres opposite G S College, at Zero Mile and the Gandhi Sagar Lake are favoured by many. This healthy drink has to be consumed before the sun rises lest it

becomes alcoholic. A marketing professional, Anil Dhurve, confessed, "I feel fitter and healthier as I take neera every day; so it has become a habit now. After this traditional drink, I relish the idlis and upma at the roadside South Indian eateries at Sadar and Dharampeth."

Egg it on For those who swear by the health benefits of eggs, have become the regular patrons of the road-side kiosks specialising in eggy delights. Owner of one such food truck joint at Bajaj Nagar, Nahush Badge, said, "We have set up this joint specially for

the people who come for early morning walk in this area. Exotic dishes like egg tham jham and egg flip corn are favoured by the health conscious people." City businessman Atul Bangre, who religiously eats eggs post his running stint every day, said, "I get so tired after my exercise that I want to have something instant as well as healthy. So, I eat egg salad along with cheese chilla almost every alternate day. There's another joint at Abhyankar Nagar bus stand, which serves egg sandwiches in the morning hours, which are to die for; so I go there too on a regular basis."

# Summer coolers with a Twist

We all love our lemonades and ice creams on a hot summer day. As the mercury soars, Amdavadis are giving cool twists to your summer staples.

Fancy a chilled soup or an ice cream sandwich? In this heat, as your appetite goes for a toss, why not try some summer special meals that will not only ensure you stay cool but also fill you up and have you feeling light and happy.

### Say cool:

Be it some breezy rose sherbet, rejuvenating fresh juices, tall glasses of iced falooda or the humble nimbu pani — walk into one of our local cafes and enjoy a volley of unique cool mixes. So you find flavoured drinks like kiwi, strawberry and even plum lemonades and fruity buttermilk concoctions to chilled and wholesome pumpkin, cucumber and bell pepper soups and watermelon gazpachos. Says Reena Kakkar, owner of a cafe, "Lot of chilled fruit and vegetable soups are nutritious meals and perfect for summers." Play with your imagination and see the cool twist.

### 'Hot' ice:

The long lines at the street side gola walas laari are no joke! You really have to wait for your turn if you want to savour some tart kala khatta and kachi keri or that deliciously seasonal falsa and dadam golo. And this time, you can enjoy your golas with an amazing twist too! Some city youngsters have come up with unique gola flavours like gajar ka halwa, rosogulla and mango barfi too! Says Payal Vora, owner of a stall selling golas, "Amdavadis are not just foodies but adventurous with their tastes." For a city obsessed with chocolate, these gola walas have some choco-licious varieties too! Says Ekta Soni, another stall owner,



popular ice cream sandwich! A luscious chunk of ice cream sandwiched between two slices of white bread that is slathered with some delectable fruit jam! And when talking of snacky fare, we even have dosa ice cream! Dosa rolled into a cone and served with a scoop of your favourite ice cream! Says Smith Raval, a regular icecream snacker, "You just need to have an open mind to try combos! I love the idea of a crisp dosa with black currant ice cream! Even the ice cream bhajiyas you get during winters are delicious! I also love eating my French fries dipped in a vanilla softy! It tastes awesome!"

"Youngsters love stuff like chocolate cake gola, chocolate mousse and even chocolate pudding golas."

### I scream ice cream:

It's the kind of weather when you feel like making a meal out of ice cream and that's probably what pioneered some Amdavadis to fuse your favourite ice cream flavours with your favourite snacks. The regulars at the Manek Chowk khau galli, would know of the

## Healthy weekend drink: Cucumber Caiprioska

Unwind with a glass of chilled cucumber caiprioska. Generally, cocktails like Bloody Mary, Mojitos, Sex on the Beach or Tequila Sunrise can be fattening.



Even the most popular alcoholic beverage, beer is fattening. Chef Ashis Rout, Executive Chef at the Courtyard by Marriott, Gurgaon shares a recipe with us, which is not only tasty, but also low in calories.

### Ingredients:

2 large cucumbers cut into chunks  
60 ml vodka  
15 ml of lemon juice  
6 pieces of lemon chunks

**Method:** - A glassfull of crushed ice, topped with lemonade.

- Add the cucumber, lemon chunks and mash them together. Then, add the vodka, lemon juice and fill it up with crushed ice, top it with lemonade.

## What your coffee says about you

Merlo Coffee baristas has revealed that are able to figure out a customer's personality type just by the cup of coffee they order.



The company said that people who drink Cafe Latte tend to be a bit softer and can be more romantic than others and are probably still friends with their first crush, News.com.au reported.

People, who drink Flat White, are straight-up types and could lack imagination.

The Cappuccino lover doesn't really indulge in their coffee as much as they should; they are still a child at heart who love chocolate sprinkle on top.

People drinking Macchiato are coffee-savvy young professional. They work and play fast.

People whose choice of drink is Vienna are the one who like the finer things in life; they have high expectations, are demanding and a touch clingy.

Hot Mocha ordering people are often drifters and find it hard to settle down.

Hot Chocolate drinking people can be complete faux coffee-drinkers, posing as latte sippers.

Tea drinkers are real, wholesome and deep-thinkers. They are usually early morning people and read books.

## Go bananas with so many options

Banana prices have hit a 10 year-low and it's time to satiate your cravings for this fruit, which not only tastes yummy, but is packed with the goodness of vitamin B6, vitamin C, potassium, dietary fibre, potassium, biotin and copper.

The best thing about this fruit is it can be eaten straight off the rack, or be used in scrumptious smoothies, desserts, halwa, fudge, fritters, cutlets, bonda, am, payasa, curry and what not. So what are you waiting for? Go grab a few dozens while the prices are in control. Bangalore Times lists some popular varieties available in the city and what you can do with them...

Variety name: YELAKKI

Can be used for: HALWA

FUDGE

1 Kg Rs 35

Recipe for

halwa: Take

three fully

ripe bananas

and mash

them till they

are smooth.

Fry some dry

fruits in ghee and keep aside. In a pan, add bananas and

water and keep stirring on a low flame. Add sugar and

cook till the paste is thick. Now add ghee, cardamom

powder and fried dried fruits. Once the mixture is lumpy,

transfer it into a bowl and let it cool.

Variety name: ROBUSTA

Can be used for: BURFI

FRITTERS SHAKE

BONDA

CUTLET

1 Kg Rs 24

Recipe for bonda: Mash three bananas with a fork. Mix

the mash, one cup flour, approximately half cup sugar

and two pinches of soda powder. Now, heat oil in a wok

on medium flame. Drop in the banana mixture spoon by

spoon, without overcrowding the vessel. Fry it till

brown. Serve when hot.

Variety name: RED

Can be used for: SMOOTHIES, DESSERT, CHIPS,

CHICKEN

1Kg Rs 75

Recipe for smoothie: Mix one cup of almond milk, one

red banana and half cup of cooked oats in a blender. Your

smoothie is ready! Garnish with almond pieces.





## Botafogo stumbles in Brazil's Serie A



Rio De Janeiro, April 21 (UNI) : Facundo Torres and Jose Lopez scored on either side of halftime as leader Palmeiras moved two points clear at the top of Brazil's Serie A championship with a 2-1 win at Fortaleza.

Torres opened the scoring on the stroke of halftime by firing home from inside the six-yard box

after Fortaleza failed to deal with a Richard Rios free-kick from the left wing on Sunday.

Lopez doubled the advantage just after the interval when he ran onto Estevao's pass on the counterattack and slotted a low finish into the far corner.

The hosts rallied late, and Deyverson gave them

a glimmer of hope when he nodded in at the far post after Allanzinho's cross. But Palmeiras withstood a tense final 20 minutes to extend its league winning streak to four games.

Earlier, Argentine winger Tomas Cuello scored his first goal of the Serie A season as Atletico Mineiro secured a 1-0 home victory over reigning

champion Botafogo.

Cuello put his side ahead just after halftime by meeting a Gabriel Menino corner with a header at the far post. Botafogo suffered another blow just after the hour when David Ricardo was shown a straight red card for a bad tackle on veteran forward Hulk.

Atletico took control thereafter as the Rio outfit managed just two shots on goal en route to its second loss of the campaign. The result leaves Atletico Mineiro 16th with five points from as many matches, behind Botafogo on goal difference.

Elsewhere in Brazil's top flight on Sunday, Bragantino won 1-0 at home to Cruzeiro, Fluminense was held to a 1-1 home draw by Vitoria, Sao Paulo won 2-1 at home to Santos and Mirassol drew 2-2 at Juventude.

## No rest in La Liga ahead of 33rd round of matches

Madrid, April 21 (UNI) : Teams in Spain have no time to draw breath as La Liga moves directly the 33rd round of matches this week to allow for next weekend's Copa del Rey final between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid to be a stand-alone fixture. League leader, FC Barcelona plays on Tuesday night at home to seventh place Mallorca, with the chance to again pile the pressure on a Real Madrid side that plays away to Getafe on Wednesday night.

The timing of the two matches has again caused controversy, with Barcelona getting 24 hours more to prepare for the Cup final, although it's probably a toss-up to decide whether Flick would rather his

players had 24 hours extra rest ahead of Tuesday or Saturday. Despite a miracle fightback from 3-1 down at home to Celta Vigo on Saturday, Barca looked flat for 65 minutes of the game after its Champions League tie away to Borussia Dortmund last Tuesday.

Flick also lost top scorer Robert Lewandowski to a muscle injury with the Polish striker missing Tuesday's game and almost certain to be unavailable for the Cup final.

Left back Alejandro Balde is also sidelined with a muscle problem and Flick will be crossing his fingers that nobody else is injured.

Ferran Torres will probably start against Mallorca, with Lamine Yamal back in the side and

Ronald Araujo and Eric Garcia probably starting in central defense to rest Inigo Martinez and Pau Cubarsi (although Garcia could also push into midfield).

Tuesday's second match sees Valencia host Espanyol in a meeting between two sides that have hit form at the right time to escape the relegation dogfight and a win for either would all-but assure their top-flight survival for another year.

Real Madrid visits Getafe on Wednesday night, while Athletic Club Bilbao is at home to Las Palmas, Celta hosts Villarreal and Alaves is at home to Real Sociedad in a Basque derby, with the remaining fixtures on Thursday.

## Guardiola regards Villa game as final for Man City

London, April 21 (UNI) : Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola has issued a rallying cry to supporters ahead of his side's vital Premier League match at home to Aston Villa on Tuesday night.

City goes into the game fourth in the table with 58 points following Saturday's nervy 2-0 win away to Everton, but Villa sits just a point behind on 57, the same as Chelsea and Nottingham Forest (who plays Tottenham on Monday).

The Premier League is assured five Champions League places next season, but even so, someone is going to miss out on playing the competition and the important payday that it provides.

Speaking to the press on Monday, Guardiola was in no doubt over how important Tuesday's match is.

"Every point, every game counts," said Guardiola, who asked for the supporters to get behind his players.

"Sometimes we are sloppy, sometimes we are not playing well but it's now we need them - we need them desperately, to support us, to make noise and be there all

the time, because it's a final, absolutely it's a final for us," he said.

Guardiola also praised Aston Villa, who was unlucky to go out of the Champions League against Paris Saint Germain last week. "They are a contender to qualify for the Champions League. You see the game they played against my friend (PSG coach) Luis Enrique - wow, I was really, really impressed."

"They can play low block and play away, but when they decide to go, with the weapons they have, the speed they have, the set-pieces, they are incredibly well organized," he added.

There is another important match in the Premier League on Wednesday when Arsenal hosts Crystal Palace in a match that could see this season's title mathematically decided. Arsenal's 4-0 win away to Ipswich Town on Sunday meant Liverpool's title celebrations were put on ice, but if Arsenal loses on Wednesday, Liverpool will be Champions without needing to kick a ball in Sunday afternoon's visit to play Chelsea.

past fortnight. But with five matches left of Liverpool's season, Alexander-Arnold's future remains unresolved, the BBC reported. "Since I joined the club, he has been a fantastic player and there's a lot of good things that he will always be remembered for if he decides to leave," said Van Dijk. "Whatever may happen in the future for him, that's something he has to resolve with himself and the family." But he's a Liverpool player at this

point and he's important for our team." Second-half substitute Alexander-Arnold scored the only goal as Liverpool moved closer to a 20th league title with a 1-0 win against Leicester City on Sunday. The defender celebrated wildly, removing his shirt in front of the away fans. The meaning of Alexander-Arnold's celebration has been debated but Van Dijk says the Liverpool squad have had no inclination about the England player's

future. "At this point, we don't know as a group what's going to happen," added Van Dijk.

"He is already under a lot of pressure so there is no point for me to put him on the spot whatsoever."

Liverpool will be crowned champions if Arsenal fail to beat Crystal Palace on Wednesday. If Mikel Arteta's side win, the Reds will have the chance to clinch the title against Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield on Sunday.

## Embrace sports & education, shun growing menace of drug abuse: Farooq urges youth

Jammu, April 21 (UNI) : Former chief minister and Jammu and Kashmir National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah on Monday encouraged the young participants to stay focused on sports and education and avoid the menace of drug addiction that is increasingly affecting the younger generation.

Speaking after inaugurating the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Tournament here at Maulana Azad Stadium, Dr Abdullah also appreciated the efforts of Provincial President of J&K Youth National Conference Tejinder Pal Singh Aman for his dedication and commitment to the anti-drug campaign.

The tournament is being held under the theme 'Say No to Drugs' and aims to channel the energy of the youth towards constructive and healthy activities.

The tournament is part of a broader campaign to combat drug abuse among the youth of the region.

In the opening match, Majid 313 faced off against Trikuta Cricket Club in a thrilling 20-over encounter that marked the commencement of the week-long tournament that will conclude on April 26.

Dr. Abdullah interacted with the players and appreciated their enthusiasm and spirit for the game.

Provincial President JKNC, Rattan Lal Gupta said there is a dire need to divert the energy of our youth towards sports, culture, and education.

MLA from Poonch Haveli, Ajaz Jan also said that such initiatives are essential in shaping a brighter future for the youth.

He emphasized that sports not only promote physical fitness but also instil discipline, teamwork, and a sense of purpose, which are vital in steering young minds away from drug addiction.

## Pune juggler eyes Procam Slam at TCS World 10K in Bengaluru

Bengaluru, April 21 (UNI) : With over 30,000 participants expected to take part in the TCS World 10K here on April 27, one runner is set to turn heads — not for his speed, but for his extraordinary athletic act. Ketan Abhonkar, a mechanical engineer turned software professional from Pune and an accomplished endurance runner, will attempt to complete the 10K while juggling three balls — a rare and demanding pursuit known as juggling. Abhonkar's participation in the Bengaluru race carries added weight, as it marks the final leg of his bid to clinch the coveted Procam Slam — a title awarded to runners who successfully complete all four of India's premier distance races, organised by Procam International, within a

## Gurbaz, Moeen return as KKR bowl at Eden Gardens

Kolkata, April 21 (UNI) : Kolkata Knight Riders handed returns to Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Moeen Ali as they won the toss and opted to bowl first against Gujarat Titans in their crucial IPL encounter at the Eden Gardens here on Monday. KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane said the changes were aimed at boosting the team's balance as they look to climb up from seventh on the points table. "This is generally a chasing ground. Slightly on the drier side, when we bowl, we'll get an idea how it's playing," Rahane said. "All the players are working really hard. We've made some errors but it's all about being positive."

Rahane expressed confidence in his middle-order despite recent inconsistencies. "I feel 5, 6, 7 sometimes is a tricky

position to bat, but when it works well, it really looks well," he noted.

GT skipper Shubman Gill, who was happy to bat first, said conditions were not likely to change much over the evening. "I don't think there'll be any dew. If we post a nice total, it should be a good match," he said. Gill praised the collective efforts of his bowling unit and singled out Rashid Khan's impact.

"Everyone has been contributing with wickets. The way our bowlers have been controlling the totals has been tremendous," Gill said. "The skill-set that Rashid brings along with his bowling and the energy he brings on the field — any captain would love to have him." With both teams hungry for momentum, the evening promises a high-stakes battle.

## Valverde scores 93rd-minute stunner as Real beat Athletic Bilbao

Madrid, April 21 (UNI) : Federico Valverde's stunning stoppage-time strike kept Real Madrid in the La Liga title hunt as Carlo Ancelotti's side eventually overcame stubborn Athletic Bilbao at the Bernabeu.

Valverde crashed an emphatic half-volley into the top corner with the outside of his left foot three minutes into time added on to finally reward incessant second-half pressure from the hosts on Sunday.

It was his sixth league goal this season, but first since December against Sevilla.

Victory kept Real, who were without France striker Kylian Mbappe as he served a one-match ban following a red card in the 1-0 win at Alaves, four points behind leaders Barcelona with six games to go.

Barca had produced their own added-time drama on Saturday, coming from 3-1 down to beat Celta Vigo 4-3 thanks to Raphinha's 98th-minute penalty, the BBC reported. However, after a humbling week that saw the Champions League holders dumped out of this year's competition with a 5-1 aggregate defeat by Arsenal, Real kept alive their hopes of retaining their league title.

It appeared they would be frustrated by Bilbao and goalkeeper Unai Simon, who thwarted Eduardo Camavinga's rising drive and a Jude Bellingham header in a one-sided second half.

Real thought they had made the breakthrough with 11 minutes remaining but Vinicius Jr's classy curler was ruled out for a marginal offside against Endrick in the build-up.

It took a lengthy video assistant referee (VAR) delay to disallow the strike and, when the officials later deemed a clip on Bellingham in the area was not worth a review, it seemed another frustrating night was on the cards for the defending champions. But full-back Valverde, who had twice earlier gone within inches of breaking the deadlock, popped up late with his sublime strike to ease the pressure on Ancelotti, whose side next face Barcelona in the Copa del Rey final on Saturday.

single season. "Juggling combines the physical stamina of distance running with the mental focus of juggling — it's incredibly challenging, but immensely fulfilling," said Abhonkar, who is believed to be India's first and only athlete to have completed full marathons while juggling continuously. Although juggling is practised in over 32 countries and boasts a global community of enthusiasts, it remains largely unfamiliar in India. Abhonkar's efforts have not only broken new ground in Indian endurance sports but have also attracted attention from the international juggling fraternity. A seasoned distance runner since 2015, Abhonkar discovered juggling during the pandemic. "It started by chance during a cricket game with my family. I

found I had a knack for it and began training on my own," he recalled. His first juggling race, a modest 5K, was met with curiosity and support. "I was nervous at first, unsure of how people would react. But the audience and fellow runners were incredibly encouraging," he said. Since then, Abhonkar has joggled his way through several major Indian road races, including the

Teams: Gujarat Titans (Playing XI): Sai Sudharsan, Shubman Gill(c), Jos Buttler(w), Sherfane Rutherford, Rahul Tewatia, Washington Sundar, Shahrukh Khan, Rashid Khan, Ravishrinivasan Sai Kishore, Prasad Krishna, Mohammed Siraj; Impact Subs: Ishant Sharma, Mahipal Lomror, Anuj Rawat, Karim Janat, Arshad Khan

Kolkata Knight Riders (Playing XI): Rahmanullah Gurbaz(w), Sunil Narine, Ajinkya Rahane(c), Venkatesh Iyer, Rinku Singh, Moeen Ali, Andre Russell, Ramandeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Vaibhav Arora, Varun Chakaravarthy; Impact Subs: Manish Pandey, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Rovman Powell, Luvnith Sisodia, Anukul Roy.

## Ostapenko stuns Sabalenka to win Stuttgart Open

Stuttgart (Germany), April 21 (UNI) : Jelena Ostapenko beat world number one Aryna Sabalenka to win the Stuttgart Open in stunning fashion on Monday.

Ostapenko, who had failed to win in three previous meetings against Sabalenka, took the match 6-4 6-1, the BBC reported.

The Latvian set the tone with a break of serve in the opening game and kept the pressure on throughout.

Sabalenka was broken again in the first game of the second set before dropping serve on a further two occasions in an uncharacteristically error-strewn performance.

Ostapenko raced to victory in emphatic style by reeling off five games in a row. "I'm really happy today," Ostapenko said.

She said to her opponent: "It is great to share the court with you, you are such a great champion."

Ostapenko, 27, also beat world number two Iga Swiatek in the quarter-finals. It is her ninth WTA title and a first on clay since winning the French Open in 2017.

## Alexander-Arnold will be remembered for good things: Van Dijk

London, April 21 (UNI) : Captain Virgil van Dijk says Trent Alexander-Arnold will "always be remembered for good things" at Liverpool even if he decides to leave as a free agent this summer.

The right-back is out of contract at the end of the season and has held talks with Real Madrid.

Van Dijk and forward Mohamed Salah ended speculation over their futures by signing fresh two-year deals during the

**Printed, Published and Owned by Mohammed Shafi**

**Printed at KR Graphics,  
# 2-3-703/8, Tirumala Nagar Colony, Amberpet,  
Hyderabad - 500 013 and  
Published from # 2-3-645/8/1,  
Back Side of CPL Church, Prem Nagar,  
Amberpet, Hyderabad-500 013**

**Editor: Mohammed Shafi  
R.N.I.No. : TELENG/2011/39668**

**Cell : 9849881368, Tel : 040 - 23232705  
Email : standardposthyd@gmail.com**



## Central Railway Women's Welfare Organization Celebrates Women's Day Award Function 2025



(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 21 : Smt. Asha Meena, President, Central Railway Women's Welfare Organization (CRWWO), felicitated 14 Women Railway employees of Central Railway.

The Central Railway Women's Welfare Organization (CRWWO) celebrated the Women's

Day Award Function 2025 at the New Officers' Club, Nirmal Park, Byculla on 21.04.2025. The event aimed to recognize and felicitate the remarkable achievements and dedication of women employees across various divisions of Central Railway.

A total of 14 women employees were honoured

for their exemplary contributions. The awardees included 2 from Nagpur Division, 1 each from Pune, Solapur and Mumbai Divisions, 1 from Dr. B. A. M. Railway Hospital, Byculla, and 8 from Headquarters. The function witnessed the presence of Smt. Babita Pandey, Secretary CRWWO, Smt.

Teena Uppal Treasurer CRWWO along with other members of the organization.

This initiative by CRWWO is a testament to its ongoing efforts toward empowering women employees and acknowledging their pivotal role in the growth and success of Central Railways.

## Trains Cancelled and Partially Cancelled : SWR

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 21 : Due to Overhead Equipment (OHE) modification work between Gokak Road–Ghatprabha and Kudachi–Ugar Khurd railway lines, some train services will be cancelled and partially cancelled as detailed below.

### Cancellation of Trains:

1. Train No. 07303 Belagavi–Miraj Special, journey commencing on April 21, 2025, will be cancelled.

### Partial Cancellation of Trains:

1. Train No. 07303 Belagavi–Miraj Special, journey commencing on April 22, 2025, will be partially cancelled between Kudachi–Miraj and will be short terminated at Kudachi.

2. Train No. 07304 Miraj–Belagavi Special, journey commencing on April 22, 2025, will be partially cancelled between Miraj–Kudachi and it will be originated from Kudachi instead of Miraj at its scheduled time.

3. Train No. 07301 Belagavi–Miraj Special, journey commencing on April 23 & 24, 2025, will be partially cancelled between Kudachi–Miraj and it will be short terminated at Kudachi.

4. Train No. 07302 Miraj–Belagavi Special, journey commencing on April 23 & 24, 2025, will be partially cancelled between Miraj–Kudachi and it will be originated from Kudachi instead of Miraj at its scheduled time."

## Poster Unveiled for summer camp 2025 by ECoR, DRM



(Standard Post Bureau)

Visakhapatnam, April 21 : East Coast Railway Sports Association - Waltair is set to organize the Summer Camp 2025 for a duration of 40 days, from April 22 to May 31, 2023. In this connection, the Divisional Railway Manager Shri Lalit Bohra, unveiled the poster today. The summer camp will offer coaching across various sports for children aged 5 to 15 years, with two sessions each day: morning and evening. The poster unveiling ceremony was witnessed by ADRM (Operations) Shri Manoj Kumar Sahoo, ADRM (Infra) Shri E. Santharam, Sports Officer Shri M. Haranath, Sports Advisor Shri AK Moharana, Joint Sports Officer Shri A Avinash, Treasurer Shri Jusuf Kabir Ansari, Assistant Sports Officers

Shri Sh Patil & Shri Sahu and General Secretary Smt. N. Usha. The camp will feature coaching in a wide range of sports, including Athletics, Boxing, Basketball, Cricket, Ball Badminton, Football, Shuttle Badminton, Skating, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, and Volleyball.

In his address, DRM Shri Lalit Bohra highlighted that the summer coaching camp is open to all children of Railway employees as well as those residing in Visakhapatnam. The camp offers free coaching, and children will have access to world-class sports facilities at the Waltair Railway Stadium, Visakhapatnam. This initiative, launched by the East Coast Railway Sports Association of Waltair Division, aims to nurture young talent, promote a spirit of

sportsmanship, and provide opportunities for local youth to excel in national and international sports in future. The camp will cater to both boys and girls. Coaching for boys will include Athletics, Boxing, Basketball, Cricket, Ball Badminton, Football, Shuttle Badminton, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Yoga, and Volleyball. For girls, the coaching sessions will include Athletics, Boxing, Basketball, Shuttle Badminton, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Yoga, and Volleyball. The camp is open for registration, with specific entry norms for Cricket, Swimming, and Tennis. Interested individuals can directly contact the General Secretary, at the Waltair Railway Indoor Stadium – Visakhapatnam for further details and admission information.

## World Heritage Day 2025 celebrations at Mysuru Rail Museum: Prize winners of Poster-making, Drawing and Painting Competition

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mysuru, April 21 : The Mysuru Rail Museum, under the auspices of the South Western Railway (SWR), Mysuru Division, commemorated World Heritage Day 2025 today with a vibrant poster-making and drawing/painting competition. Aligned with this year's theme, "Disaster and Conflict-Resilient Heritage – Actions in Relation to Safeguarding Heritage, the event brought together young artists to showcase their creativity while

emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural legacy amidst global challenges.

Shri Mudit Mittal, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), South Western Railway, Mysuru Division, graced the occasion as the chief guest and distributed prizes to the competition winners. In his address, Shri Mittal lauded the participants for their exceptional artistic talent and urged them to nurture their passion for art

as they pursue higher aspirations. Your creativity is not just a skill but a powerful tool to inspire change. Keep this passion alive; it will guide you toward greater achievements in life," he remarked.

The event also featured speeches by senior railway officials, including Sr. Divisional Personnel Officer Shri Vishnu Gowda and Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Shri Kumar Digvijay.

The competition was held across three age

groups. The winners are as under:

Group A (6-9 years)  
Mohammed Ghouse Mohiuddin, Kounain Amber, Ridhaan Sanil and Ipsita Vigeet (1st, 2nd, 2nd & 3rd respectively).

Group B (10-13 years)  
Vedashree Wakinbe, Kanak Vinayak & Dhruvan MP (1st, 2nd & 3rd respectively).

Group C (14-17 years)  
Pragathi K.H, Ksithi S & Romit Arya (1st, 2nd & 3rd respectively).

Kindly arrange to publish this press note as a news item.

## BLW's Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar and Assistant Director Information and Public Relations Department Surendranath Pal were honored

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 21 : Varanasi Public Relations Society of India, Varanasi Chapter organized an honor ceremony and seminar on the occasion of National Public Relations Day at Dharendra Mahila PG College in Sundarpur. "For their excellent work in the field of public relations, BLW's Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar and Assistant Director, Department of Information and Public Relations, Uttar Pradesh, Shri Surendranath Pal were honoured with shawls and mementoes.

The programme began with lighting of lamps.

On this occasion, a seminar on the topic "Role of Public Relations in the Age of Artificial Intelligence" was also organised. Chief Guest, National Vice President, Shri Narendra Mehta shared his insightful



comments on the use of AI in organisations and ethical challenges. Also, expert lectures were delivered on the topic of inclusive and effective use of Artificial Intelligence by former Head of Department of Public Relations, Banaras Hindu University, Professor Anil Dave, Assistant Public Relations Officer, Banaras Hindu University, Dr Chandrashekhar and COO, Sunbeam Group of

Educational Institutions, Shri Sandeep Mukherjee. "Welcome and greetings were done by the Secretary of Public Relations Society of India, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Upadhyay.

The program was coordinated by Dr. Mamta Pandey, Head of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dharendra Mahila PG College and Mr. Harsh

Agarwal, Joint Secretary, PRSI.

On this occasion, mainly Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication Department, Dr. Bala Lakhendra Ji, Mr. Manohar Lal, Mr. Gyanendra Upadhyay and Dr. Anshuman Rana, along with all others, presented their views. On this occasion, Secretary Shri Pradeep Kumar Upadhyay said, "PRSI is continuously making the National Public Relations Day lively and meaningful in collaboration with local partners across the country. Our aim is to increase transparency in the society and strengthen dialogue.

Mr. Mahesh Seth, Mr. Shashank Kumar and Mr. Devvrat Pathak of Public Relations Society of India, Varanasi Chapter played an important role in making the program successful.

## SC declines urgent plea for Prez rule in West Bengal

New Delhi, April 21 (UNI) : The Supreme Court on Monday refused to pass any immediate direction on a plea seeking imposition of President's rule and urgent deployment of paramilitary forces in West Bengal in view of communal and political violence allegedly triggered by the Waqf (Amendment) Act in Murshidabad. The matter was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench comprising justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih. Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for the petitioner, sought the court's nod to file additional documents highlighting continued violence in the state and urged immediate implementation of Article 355 of the Constitution.

"There is a need for immediate deployment of paramilitary forces. The matter is listed for tomorrow. I have filed an additional application seeking the invocation of Article 355," Jain submitted. Reacting sharply, Justice Gavai asked, "You want us to issue a writ of mandamus to the President to impose President's rule? As it is, we are accused of intruding into legislative and executive domains."

The judge was referring to criticism faced by the top court in recent cases, including one where it directed the Governor and President to act within set timelines on state bills, sparking a larger debate on judicial overreach.

## Appeal to electricity consumers to pay additional security deposit

(Standard Post Bureau)

Kalyan/Vasai/Palghar, April 21 : Electricity consumers in the Kalyan circle of Mahavitaran are being given a separate bill for paying additional security deposit along with their electricity bills for the month of April or May. The facility of paying the security deposit amount in maximum six equal monthly installments is available to the consumers. The message in this regard is mentioned on the security deposit bill. Mahavitaran has appealed to the electricity consumers to pay the additional amount of this security deposit.

As per Regulation 13.1 of the Electricity Supply Code 2021 of the Maharashtra State

Electricity Regulatory Commission, a security deposit is charged to electricity consumers. The security deposit is recalculated every year and accordingly, after the end of the financial year, the new security deposit amount is determined based on the average electricity consumption of the consumers in the previous one year. The Commission has made a provision to collect double the average monthly bill of electricity consumers if the security deposit is monthly and one and a half times the average quarterly bill if the security deposit is quarterly. Similarly, as per Regulation 13.11, the interest amount on the security deposit amount paid by the

consumer is adjusted through the electricity bill at the equivalent rate of the Reserve Bank of India rate and paid to the electricity consumers.

All the necessary information for the consumers has been provided in the separate bills of additional security deposit. Also, the facility is available on the website of Mahavitaran [www.mahadiscom.in](http://www.mahadiscom.in) and through the mobile app of Mahavitaran for the payment of additional security deposit amount from home for low voltage electricity consumers. Mahavitaran has appealed to the electricity consumers to cooperate by paying the bill amount of additional security deposit.

## Job Mela for Teachers at MANUU, 20 Selected

(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, April 21 : The Job Mela for Teacher's was held at Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) on 20th April 2025. The event was hosted by the Training and Placement Cell (TPC) of MANUU.

According to Dr. Mohd Yousuf Khan, Director, TCP, more than hundred candidates attended the job mela and 20 candidates got offer letters whereas 45 more were shortlisted. The event served as a crucial platform for aspiring educators, both undergraduate and postgraduate students, to secure employment with leading educational institutions.

The placement drive brought together a broad spectrum of teaching and administrative opportunities across primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Institutions offered vacancies in roles such as Assistant Professors, Lecturers, Primary and Secondary Teachers, Trained Graduate Teachers (TGTs) apart from administrative positions and specialized roles such as PYP Occupational Therapist, Special Educator, Speech Therapist, Arts Teacher, Academic Coordinator, and School Counselors, showcasing a holistic approach to education.

Reputed educational institutions participated in the event, including Hyderabad Institute of Excellence, Princess Durru Shehvar College of Education, Shaheen Group of Institutions, Focus High School, Meluha International School, Neo School Aizza and Zaamin High School.

## New Office Bearers of MEWA elected

(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, April 21 : Mr. Shaik Naveed has been elected as President of Maulana Azad National Urdu University's Employees Welfare Association's (MEWA). This is his fifth term and third in a row as President. The elections were held on April 16, 2025 and results were declared on last Thursday. According to Prof. Mohammed Abdul Azeem, Returning Officer, MEWA Elections 2025 other elected office bearers include Mr. Dharamjeet Kumar (Vice-President); Mr. Mohd Shannavaz Ali Qureshi (General Secretary); Mr. M.A. Nawaz (Joint Secretary); Mr. Syed Ghouse (Secretary); Mr. Syed Yousuf Razvi (Organizing Secretary); and Mr. Razzak Shareef (Treasurer). Mr. Mohd. Javed, Mr. Md. Asif and Mr. M A Khayyum Baba are elected as the members.