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## Women's Quota Bill Fails Lok Sabha Test, Doesn't Get Two-Thirds Majority



**New Delhi:** The bill to amend the Women's Reservation Bill failed to clear a key hurdle after the Centre could not secure the votes needed for its passage in the Lok Sabha on Friday. The Centre needed a two-thirds majority to get the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, passed, but fell short of the mark. The proposed legislation saw 298 MPs voting in its favour and 230 voting against. Two other bills, including one for delimitation and increasing the number of seats in the Lok Sabha, were not put to vote after the first one lost, with the Centre saying they were "inextricably linked" to the legislation related to women's reservation. The

Lok Sabha debate, which went on past midnight on Thursday and continued on Friday, saw the Centre making a forceful pitch for the reservation of 33% of seats in the lower house of parliament and state assemblies for women.

Leading the charge for the government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to allay a key fear of the Opposition parties and said he was personally guaranteeing that no injustice would be done to the southern states with the increase in seats in the Lok Sabha. "Let all of us not miss this important opportunity to give reservation to women. I have come to appeal to you - do not see this from a political lens, this is

in national interest," PM Modi said. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also assured the House on both days that the current representation of southern states would be preserved, or increase slightly, once the seats in the Lok Sabha were increased from the current 543 to roughly 816.

Both PM Modi and Shah also accused the Congress and other opposition parties of manufacturing issues to oppose the bill and deprive women of reservation. These parties, the BJP leaders said, would have to pay a price at the hustings for blocking the bill.

**Opposition's Take**  
Opposing the linking of the bill with delimitation, Leader of the Opposition

Rahul Gandhi said the government was using the issue of women's reservation as a smokescreen and was actually attempting to redraw the country's electoral map in its favour. "This is not a women's bill as it has nothing to do with empowerment of women. This bill is an attempt to change the country's electoral map, using and hiding behind India's women," he alleged. Gandhi also claimed that the government was attempting to bypass the caste census. "They are trying to avoid giving power, representation to my OBC brothers and sisters, and instead take power away from them," he said.

**Reactions**  
After the legislation failed to clear the Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the two other bills were "inextricably interrelated" with it. "It is a matter of regret that the Opposition did not support such a historic and important bill meant to give respect and representation to the people of the country. You had an opportunity and you squandered it. The Modi government's efforts and struggle to give rights to women will continue," he said.

## The Fate Of 2 Other Bills After Women's Quota Move Fails Parliament Test

**New Delhi:** The Constitution Amendment Bill to tweak the women's quota law has been defeated in the Lok Sabha after division of votes. The government will not go ahead with the two others - the Delimitation Bill, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill. One of the other two bills would have been needed to implement the women's quota law - had it cleared the Lok Sabha - in the Union Territories of Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu and Kashmir. A Constitution amendment bill can be

passed only by a two-third majority of those present in the house at the time of voting. Going by current strength, the NDA did not have the required numbers for getting the Constitution amendment bill passed. The special three-day parliament session looked to amend the Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam, commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act, mandating 33 per cent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Had it sailed through, it would be brought for implementa-



tion in 2029. The amendments also sought to raise the number of Lok Sabha seats to 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 general

elections, following a delimitation exercise to be carried out based on the last published census. The Opposition had objected to all the amendments right from the beginning.

## "Am I A Terrorist?" Another Court Setback For Congress' Pawan Khera

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Friday refused to vacate its stay on the Telangana High Court's grant of transit bail for Congress leader Pawan Khera, who faces a case in Guwahati over remarks against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma. The ruling by a bench of Justice JK Maheshwari and Justice Atul S Chandurkar leaves Khera open to arrest by Assam Police. However, the court also gave Khera

the liberty to immediately file an anticipatory bail plea in the Guwahati High Court, while also asking that forum not to be influenced by this hearing. "The (Guwahati) court should decide on bail application strictly on merits of the case," it said, also reprimanding Khera for submitting incorrect documents, i.e., an incorrect Aadhaar. But the court declined a request for protection till Tuesday; appearing for Khera, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi



said the Guwahati High Court plea will be filed Monday. When the request was rejected Singhvi lamented, "Am I (Khera) a terrorist?" Singhvi had earlier argued

that Wednesday's order had been ex-parte; the Supreme Court had then stayed a Telangana High Court order granting one-week anticipatory transit bail to Khera.

## TDP MP Devarayalu backs Women's Reservation and Delimitation Bills in Lok Sabha debate

**New Delhi April, 17:** The Telugu Desam Party (TDP)'s floor leader in the Lok Sabha, MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, backed the Union government's proposal to proportionally increase all states' seats in the lower house by 50%, amid the ongoing debate on the delimitation bills.

His response came amid criticism that a uniform 50% increase in seats, as announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is not written into the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026. This would leave a population-based seat distribution, based on the latest Census, as the only process allowed by the Constitution as per Article 81. However, Krishna Devarayalu said NDA ally

TDP would support the three bills to pave the way for delimitation and women's reservation, based on Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "guarantee". Andhra Pradesh has 25 seats in the Lok Sabha, out of which the TDP has 16. His remark came minutes after the YSRCP Lok Sabha Floor Leader PV Midhun Reddy said that an "oral commitment" wasn't enough, reminding that at the time of bifurcation, Andhra Pradesh was promised Special Category Status orally in the Parliament, which never came to fruition. Noting that a population-based delimitation and redistribution of seats would be a disadvantage for Andhra Pradesh as well, he said, "The best thing for us is what Home Minister



(Amit Shah) proposed yesterday, wherein we are not losing (representation) but gaining 0.6 (percentage points)." When asked how they were supporting the bills without mention of the 50% increase in seats in the legislation itself, the MP replied, "Yesterday, I heard what the Home Minister has mentioned. The Prime Minister has mentioned. They gave a guarantee in the House. Based on that, we

are supporting these bills. TDP is supporting women's reservation and delimitation," he said. In 2018, TDP chief and Andhra Pradesh Minister Chandrababu Naidu had moved a no-confidence motion to the Lok Sabha after cutting ties with the NDA, all over the Special Category Status denied to the state after verbal assurances in the past. TDP later rejoined the BJP in 2024.

## We will soon expose the entire corruption of Chevireddy's family Pulivarthi Nani warning

**From Our Staff Reporter Tirupati, April 17:** Chandragiri MLA Pulivarthi Nani stated that YSRCP leader Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy will once again go to jail in the TUDA corruption case. He said that all officials who supported Chevireddy's family would be suspended within a week. He warned that Chevireddy would not escape punishment in the case related to the inclusion of bogus votes. Pulivarthi Nani toured Tirupati on Friday and participated in several programs. Speaking to the media on this occasion, he criticized Chevireddy Mohith Reddy as a person without political values. He alleged that Mohith Reddy earned crores by using his father's influence. Pulivarthi Nani warned that he would soon expose the entire cor-



ruption of Chevireddy's family. He lashed out saying Mohith Reddy has no right to criticize Minister Nara Lokesh. He accused Chevireddy's family of being synonymous with betrayal, alleging that Chevireddy had backstabbed Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, Vijayasai Reddy, and even Y. S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy. He further claimed that Chevireddy was involved in a liquor scam worth ₹600 crores without the knowledge of Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and said they have evidence to prove it. He added that for the past 23 months, he has focused only on development and stayed silent without engaging in vindictive

politics. He also stated that Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has distanced himself from Chevireddy's family and mocked that Chevireddy was not even given a cabin in Tadepalli. Pulivarthi Nani challenged them to come for an open debate on the allegations against their government and to take an oath at the Kanipakam temple.

## Lokesh tells officials to assign infra works to school management panels

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 17:** Minister for Human Resource Development Nara Lokesh on Thursday instructed the officials to assign basic infrastructure works in government schools to School Management Committees (SMCs) and ensure their speedy completion. Addressing a review meeting with senior officials from the School Education and Intermediate Education departments, Mr. Lokesh said steps should be taken to ensure that all government schools in the State have at least 3-star level infrastructure. "There are 60 schools across the State with a strength of more than 1,000 students," he said, instructing the officials to focus on providing 5-star facilities in those schools.



## YSRCP leaders are spreading venom in AP: MLA Goutu Sirisha

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April, 17:** MLA Goutu Sirisha expressed anger, stating that YSRCP is creating drama during the time of the Women's Reservation Bill. Speaking to the media on Friday, she said that while the entire country is happy about the Women's Reservation Bill, YSRCP leaders in Andhra Pradesh are "spreading venom." She remarked that the "Jagan team," which was seen as villains until yesterday, is now proving themselves as "jokers" through their statements. She added that the 2023 NCRB report is clear evidence of the alleged

atrocities during Jagan's rule. According to her, Andhra Pradesh recorded higher crimes and atrocities than other southern states during Jagan Reddy's rule. She also stated that statistics show more attacks on women in AP compared to even larger states.

**"Such a disgraceful history belongs to YSRCP..."**  
The MLA advised former minister Vidadala Rajini to review the list of crimes that occurred during the previous YSRCP regime before criticizing TDP. She alleged that under Jagan's rule, repression was carried out against all sections of society, regard-



less of caste or religion. She said that Andhra Pradesh will never forget how women in the capital region were dragged on roads. She accused the previous government of harassing farmers—especially women—who voluntarily gave land for the capital,

subjecting them to suffering for five years.

She also criticized the alleged incident of stopping women on their way to visit Kanaka Durga temple and forcing them to eat food on the road without basic arrangements, calling it cruelty by YSRCP. She questioned whether it was not YSRCP's "shameful history" to allegedly use drones to monitor women during protest marches, violating their privacy. Goutu Sirisha alleged that through YSRCP's social media wing, obscene and derogatory posts were made against women leaders of TDP and Jana Sena.

## Anil Chandra Punetha appointed as AP State Election Commissioner

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April 17:** Approval has been granted for the appointment of retired IAS officer Anil Chandra Punetha as the State Election Commissioner. Governor Abdul Nazeer has approved the proposal sent by the state government. The government is expected to issue a GO (Government Order) shortly, officially appointing Anil Chandra Punetha as the SEC. Anil Chandra Punetha previously served as the Chief Secretary of the state and is currently serving as the Vigilance Commissioner. With the Governor's approval, the government will soon issue the official GO and assign full responsibilities to him. This appointment has gained importance as elections to panchayats, municipalities, and district parishads are approaching. Anil Chandra Punetha is a 1984-batch IAS officer and has experience working in several key departments in the state. It is also known that he has handled election-related responsibilities on earlier occasions.



## EDITORIAL

### The artisans' strike must end!

The strike of artisan workers, which has been going on since the 8th of this month under the auspices of the Telangana Electricity Artisans Employee Joint Action Committee to resolve their just demands, is intensifying day by day. The management of the power companies has not resolved the problems and has taken tough decisions, complicating them, which has further intensified the artisans' movement. The Telangana Electricity Artisans Employee Joint Action Committee (TVAEJAC) has called for a strike. They appealed to the management of the power companies and said that they are tired of it, no matter how many restrictions they have imposed... even if 23,000 artisans are terminated.. they have warned that the strike will not be called off until our problem is resolved. They expressed their grief that 5,000 artisans in the state have already died or retired without any employee benefits. The workers are expressing deep anger over the Congress government's promise to regularize all artisans but ignoring it. The GENCO, which has expressed anger at the power artisans who are on strike to achieve their demands, is preparing to take tough decisions. The GENCO Director (HR) has issued a memo stating that medical credit cards and medical bills should not be reimbursed to the artisans who participated in the strike and their dependents. It has been advised that those services should continue to be provided to those who are not on strike. The power companies have also decided to permanently dismiss the artisans from their duties as they are on strike while the ESMA Act is in force. In this context, GENCO has issued notices to the artisans who participated in the strike. It also warns that if they do not join duty within 24 hours of receiving the notices, they will be dismissed from their jobs. If the strike of artisans, who are the main working class in the production and supply and distribution sectors, continues for a long time during the hot summer season, the people of the state will not only face severe hardships but also risk becoming a headache for the state government. In the early 2000s, due to the lack of job placements in the electricity production and supply and distribution sector across the then united Andhra Pradesh state, a system of contract workers was formed through outsourcing. Technically skilled workers were hired by contractors to serve electricity consumers at the field level outside generating stations and substations. This is a kind of exploitative system. A broker system that exploits the labor of workers without implementing minimum wages. There were no safety standards, accident and life insurance facilities on the mercy of contractors. There were many incidents where contractors were forced to deposit PF money and ESI facilities that were due according to law.

It is a historical fact that the current artisans who are contract workers fought heroically in the Telangana Malidasa movement. The Jung Siren that took place at the Mint Compound was also artisans. After the formation of Telangana state, the contract system would be completely abolished, and why should electricity workers have a contract system that MLAs and ministers do not have, the leaders of the then movement and the first Chief Minister of Telangana raised the slogan at the Mint Compound. After the formation of Telangana state, the artisan workers, who had shown patience for more than two years, went on strike in July 2017. After a nine-day strike, the then managements agreed to merge the 23,500 contract workers working in the electricity companies on December 4, 2016, into the electricity company as per the government's orders. Since the rule of reservation, local reservation and other things were being violated, it was announced that special service terms would be formulated for contract workers and they would be recognized as permanent workers. A new post called 'Artisan' was created for this. This is different from the posts of Junior Lineman and Lineman. Artisan is divided into Grade 1, 2, 3, and 4. Those without educational qualifications are identified as Grade 4 Artisans, those who have passed the 10th standard are identified as Grade 3 Artisans, those who have passed ITI are identified as Grade 2 Artisans, and those who have completed a diploma or degree are identified as Grade 1 Artisans. Basic pay, increments, etc. have been announced grade-wise. The trade unions have reached an agreement in some dissatisfaction. Getting out of the contractor brokerage system is a welcome development. Even though ten years have passed since the agreement was signed, the artisans have been appealing to the management through various platforms for a long time that the government is refusing to give them the rights they are entitled to. These are the main demands of the artisans who have gone on an indefinite strike since the 8th of this month. Promotions should be made based on educational qualifications. APSEB rules should be applied to artisans. Unmandated workers should be integrated. The contract workers who were left working by December 4, 2016 should be made permanent. The Wage Revision Commission 2026 should be taken up immediately. It is a fact that workers who have been working for at least ten to 25 years are still not getting wages commensurate with their work. This is against the basic principle of equal pay for equal work. In the last twelve years, about four thousand workers have either retired or died. Currently, 3,769 are working in Genco, 3,583 in Transco, 8,552 in South DISCOM, and 3,465 in North DISCOM, making up 19,369 artisan workers.

# Challenges For The First BJP Government In Bihar

The swearing-in of Samrat Choudhary as Bihar's first-ever BJP chief minister on Wednesday marks a decisive political transition-ending the long dominance of Nitish Kumar of Janata Dal (United) and ushering in a new phase of governance. Choudhary's promotion to the CM's post follows the exit of Nitish Kumar, who stepped down after being nominated to the Rajya Sabha. It also marks a major political transition in Bihar after more than two decades of Kumar's supremacy. Although Choudhary is the face of the government, Bihar remains a coalition system involving the BJP, JD(U) and other regional parties. This builds inherent tension for the top man. Choudhary inherits not just power, but a structurally constrained state battling poverty, migration, weak industrialisation, and entrenched social fault lines. His tenure will be judged not by continuity, but by transformation. The BJP's rise to the "big brother" role signals a shift in power balance, but also introduces friction over caste equations, leadership space, and policy priorities. Keeping symbolism aside, the real test for Choudhary and the BJP begins now.

**Continuing social coalition**  
Bihar politics is inseparable from caste. Choudhary's elevation as an OBC leader (belongs to Koeri/Kushwaha community) is a calculated move to consolidate backward caste support. Though Choudhary is the central leadership's pick,

some within the party's traditional organisational structure have been sceptical about his suitability since he comes from outside the 'original' BJP cadre (having previously been in RJD and JD(U)). The RSS may still have reservations about his leadership style or background. The state's social fabric remains fragmented amidst upper castes (traditional BJP base), OBCs and EBCs (politically decisive), Dalits and Mahadalits and Muslims (significant minority bloc). Choudhary must now find ways to get support of the EBCs and Dalits to counter the RJD's strong base. For maintaining a broad coalition without alienating key groups - especially in a post-Nitish political landscape - Choudhary will require careful calibration, not just rhetoric. Being the first BJP Chief Minister in Bihar is both an opportunity and a burden. Expectations from the party, the central leadership, and voters are unusually high.

The onus is on Choudhary to prove that the BJP can govern independently in Bihar. For this, he must deliver faster results than previous regimes and prepare the ground for future electoral dominance.

In fact, Choudhary's failure would not just be personal-it would raise questions about the BJP's long-term strategy in eastern India.

**Need for structural transformation**

For nearly two decades, Bihar focused on restoring governance-improving roads, law and order, and welfare de-

livery. These gains, while significant, have plateaued.

The next phase demands structural economic change: industrialisation, job creation, and urbanisation. The key challenge is shifting Bihar from stability to actual transformation. Despite recent claims of growth above 10% and millions lifted out of poverty, Bihar still ranks among India's poorest states in per capita income. The state's economy remains heavily dependent on agriculture and remittances from migrant labour. Inheriting a legacy which contains neither a manufacturing base nor major private investment, Choudhary faces the classic 'low-income trap'. Perhaps, the most politically explosive challenge is unemployment. Bihar sends millions of workers to states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Delhi every year. Government job creation - such as the announcement of over 30,000 posts - offers limited relief in a state of over 120 million people. The BJP's 'double engine' promise - alignment with the central government - raises expectations of large-scale investment. Last year, in May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced massive infrastructure investments and projects worth over Rs 48,000 crore, which signal intent. But Bihar's challenge is not just building roads or metros; it is converting infrastructure into economic productivity. Past experiences have shown that infrastructure announcements alone do not translate into sustainable employment. Deliver-



ing jobs, not just schemes, will define Choudhary's credibility among youth. Without industrial corridors, skilled labour, and policy stability, these remain isolated gains. The gap between infrastructure creation and economic transformation remains wide.

**Administrative and governance issues**

As the deputy chief minister, Choudhary has built his political persona partly around a tough law-and-order approach, crackdowns on mafias, fast-track courts, and policing reforms. However, Bihar's crime narrative is complex. While stricter policing may produce short-term optics, deeper issues - political-criminal nexus, and policing capacity - require systemic reform. The risk is that governance becomes overly focused on visible enforcement rather than institutional strengthening. Similarly, Bihar's governance capacity remains uneven. While welfare delivery has improved, issues persist.

There are leakages in government schemes; local government institutions are weak and bureaucracy faces capacity constraints. Choudhary's experience as finance and home minister gives him administrative grounding, but scaling governance reforms across districts is a different challenge altogether. Choudhary steps into office at a moment of political symbolism and structural urgency. Bihar is no longer a state that needs mere governance repair - it needs economic reinvention. His success will depend on whether he can move beyond incrementalism and address the core challenges: jobs, industrialisation, social cohesion, and institutional reform. The transition from Nitish Kumar's era to a BJP-led government is complete; the transition from stagnation to transformation is not. That is the real test-one that will define not just his tenure, but Bihar's trajectory in the coming decade.

## Amir Hamza Attack Was A Symptom. A Deadlier Storm Is Brewing Within Lashkar

In the midst of the Iran war and its threatened re-emergence in an even fiercer avatar, some welcome news. Hamza, a founding member of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was shot by unknown gunmen in Lahore and is said to be currently in critical condition. The elimination of any terrorist anywhere is to be greeted with a sigh of relief. But the Lashkar is in a category of its own. As American negotiators label Iran as the worst terrorist state in the world, nothing Tehran has in its armoury can match what Pakistan has in its quiver of terrorist groups.

**Amir Hamza As A 'Day 1' Node**

Available reports say unidentified attackers opened fire on Hamza outside a news channel office in Lahore while he was walking on the streets. Hamza is no ordinary terrorist. A fiery speaker and writer, he was picked up by Zaki Ur Rehman Lakhvi in 1985, when he was a student at a madrassa in Punjab. This was long before the LeT was even formed. He was taken to meet Hafeez Saeed at his residence, and as a result of these and other meetings, the first 'institution' of the Lashkar, the Markaz Da'wa-al-Irshad (MDI), was established. Its publications division was headed by the enthusiastic Hamza, then in his early 20s. He also edited the monthly magazine Mujallah Ad-Dawah and the Al Jarar, the inflammatory rhetoric of both of which directly led to an increase in the membership of the organisation to more than 10,000 in less than three years. The tenor of these and other publications reveals some interesting aspects other than 'jihad' - primarily against In-

dia and then the US - and the whole 'heaven' rewards belief. It specifically endorses the Pakistan Army as the 'Army of Islam', contrasting it with corrupt politicians and civilians, and thereby justifying its every action. Hamza's position was that every Pakistani should be a 'symbolic Minister of Defence'. Another recent one was this: "When their combined fist of self-defence lands on the terrorists, we could see Modi falling flat on his face". All this was bolstered by references from the Quran and Sunna, providing a solid base for the Army, particularly the Chiefs whom Hamza eulogised to the hilt.

But Hamza is not just talk. He went to the then Soviet Union to tie up with Salafist groups, and later to Iran to bolster Sunni resistance to the Shia majority. He was also at the core of the Afghan jihad, and, therefore, is well-linked with members of the original Taliban and the mujahideen. He was also a fundraiser of note, and, all in all, is a central figure of the Lashkar, embodying their absolute hatred for India and the US.

**What His Loss Means**

He's the historical memory of the group, and losing him would hit LeT leaders hard. The organisation, however, will survive, and perhaps even thrive as younger and even more radical leaders come up. That's the core of the issue. Lashkar has never been without its internal feuds. For instance, a major fissure was reported following the second marriage of Hafiz Saeed to a much younger woman, which, together with operational reasons, led to the estrangement between him and the operational chief Zaki-ur-Rehman. Following

the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, Pakistan faced immense pressure to clean up its act, and several Lashkar leaders were 'arrested' and given showpiece sentences. Hamza, however, seems to have got away, and, in fact, seems to have been given yet another group to head: the Jaish-e-Manqafa. This helped the LeT raise financial resources, even as known fronts like the Falah-e-Insaniyat were shut down. That this was done with the full knowledge of the Pakistan 'establishment' is without doubt.

**Lashkar-e-Taiba 'Re-grouping'**

Hamza seemed to have seven lives. Even as Operation Sindoor devastated the Lashkar headquarters at Muridke and eight other camps, killing several hundred cadres of both Lashkar and Jaish, Hamza disappeared, even as most leaders remained dormant for a while. Rumours arose of them being shifted out to Afghanistan and the border areas to prop up the Pakistan army's ongoing fight with the Tehreek-e-Taliban. The first to resurface again and threaten India with 'maritime terrorism' was Lashkar leader Saifullah Kasuri, who was seen in several videos addressing crowds, with armed men in the background. While this alarmed Indian agencies, speculation was also rife that Saifullah may have been making a bid for leadership in the aftermath of the death of several leaders. This gained currency when another leader, Bilal Arif Sarafi, was killed a month later at Muridke, amid rumours of infighting between groups. It would seem then that the Hamza attack is another instance of infighting at a time when



the group is under stress and leadership hierarchies have been disrupted. All this would be great news for the Indian intelligence community, except that in recent weeks, in particular, a series of modules have been interdicted across the country, which indicates that the threat is extremely high. It's only worse that it is backed by rabid politicians.

**The 'High Threat' In India**

In April alone, India shut down at least three major terror modules. One was in Amritsar, and another in Kashmir, which had specific Lashkar Pakistani connections, with investigations ongoing across more than 10 states. A few days back, a key operative, Shabir Ahmed Lone, was nabbed on the Bangladesh border, with his arrest unveiling networks across the country, including in Tamil Nadu, and plans to attack major temples, including Kalkaji and the Lotus temple in the national capital. A number of drones were intercepted in Tarn Taran in the same month. Around the same time, Pakistan's Defence Minister, Khawaja Asif, was threatening to attack Kolkata, clearly indicating a foot in the door in Bangladesh. Days later, a major Lashkar operative was claiming that it was

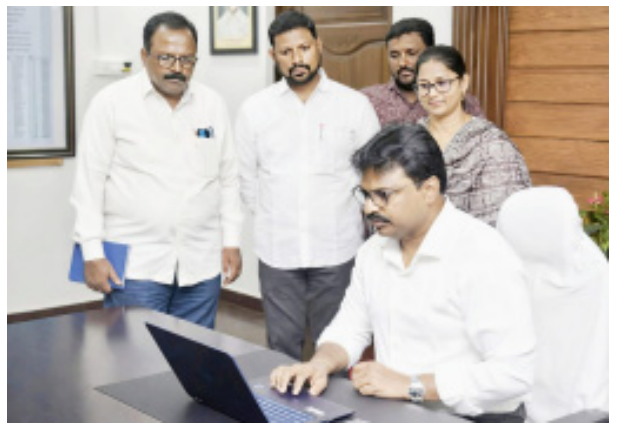
the Pahalgam attack that led to Pakistan's enhanced status in the US-Iran talks and its growing proximity with the US. Clearly, terror networks are as much under stress as the Pakistani establishment is 'running with the hare and hunting with the hounds' in its mediation exercise. It is trying to keep the Saudis happy by deploying its aircraft and a large troop presence, even while the country's Field Marshal, Asim Munir, disembarks in Iran to mollify Tehran. In all this, Pakistan has the explicit support of US President Donald Trump. Surely, there could be no better time for Pakistan and its terrorist networks to set their terrorist plans against India in motion, and then appeal to the US for help when India inevitably retaliates. The churn within terrorist circles for the top spot, in what is, after all, an extremely wealthy organisation, may well lead to new terrorist leaders wanting to prove themselves, the most obvious means being an audacious attack on India. Hamza may be incapacitated, injured, or dead, but there are far worse and more vicious leaders vying to take his place. Brace yourself. Munir's next logical move would be to get the country's top post: the President. And he doesn't like to stop till he reaches the top.

## Govt Focus on Quality Education : Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha



**Vijayawada, April 17:** District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha said the government is prioritizing high standards in education in government schools. During a surprise inspection at the DVR Colony MPP School in Nandigama, he interacted with students and assessed their learning skills. He reviewed the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme, inspected food quality, kitchen hygiene, water usage, and storage practices, and even dined with students, expressing satisfaction over the quality. He noted that the scheme is positively impacting students' health, attendance, and academic progress. The Collector emphasized that facilities like classrooms, drinking water, sanitation, and electricity are being improved and urged students to utilize them effectively and strive for academic excellence. He also warned that negligence in mid-day meal quality will not be tolerated.

## Collector, SP Register Family Details for Census 2027



**Ongole, April 17:** As part of the Census 2027 Self-Enumeration drive, District Collector P. Rajababu and SP V. Harshvardhan Raju registered their family details through the online portal on Friday. The Collector urged citizens to utilize the self-enumeration facility available from April 16 to 30 and register their family details online. He said the initiative enables people to submit their information conveniently. The SP stated that from May 1 to 30, village secretariat staff will conduct door-to-door enumeration and requested the public to cooperate by providing accurate information. He clarified that officials will not ask for OTPs, bank details, or sensitive personal data, and cautioned people to stay alert against fraud attempts in the name of the census.

## Alluri District Shines in Inter Results; Govt College Students Excel



**Paderu, April 17:** Students from government junior colleges and KGBVs in Alluri district delivered outstanding performance in Intermediate results, proving that poverty is no barrier to talent. District Collector Nishanthi T felicitated toppers with certificates, mementos, and dictionaries. The district made significant progress, jumping to 5th rank in second-year results from 20th last year. The Collector credited students' hard work, teachers' efforts, and the 50-day "Sankalp" programme for the success. Several students from government and tribal welfare colleges secured top marks across streams, while KGBV students also performed impressively. Officials and parents attended the felicitation programme.

## Mass Rally in Palamaneru Demands Bullet Train Stop



**Chittoor, April 17:** A massive all-party rally was held in Palamaneru under the leadership of the Palamaneru Protection Committee, demanding a stop to the Chennai-Bengaluru Bullet Train. The rally witnessed huge public participation, passing through major streets and concluding with a human chain at Nehru Circle. Leaders stated that ignoring Palamaneru in the bullet train project is unjust and urged the Central and State governments to sanction a station immediately. They warned of intensified protests if their demand is not met. Participants highlighted that a train stop would boost regional development, benefiting students, software employees, and local businesses. Large numbers of youth, women, traders, and community leaders took part, showcasing strong unity.

## No Compromise on Patient Care: Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha



**Vijayawada, April 17:** District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha stressed that there should be no compromise in providing quality healthcare services to the public. During inspections at the DVR Colony UPHC and the local CHC in Nandigama, he reviewed medical services, staff attendance, and availability of medicines. He examined cleanliness, OP registers, drug stocks, lab services, and immunization programs. The Collector directed special attention toward services for pregnant women and children. In view of the summer season, he instructed officials to take preventive measures against fevers and water-borne diseases and to conduct awareness programs. He also emphasized improving services based on public feedback received through QR code systems.

## Citizens Urged to Participate in Digital Census



**Rampachodavaram, April 17:** Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar urged all citizens to actively participate in the ongoing Census self-enumeration drive. Along with Joint Collector B. Smaran Raj and DFO Shivakumar Gantal, he demonstrated the process by registering family details through mobile phones. Awareness programs are being conducted across the district, encouraging people to submit their household data via online portals or mobile apps. The drive, running from April 16 to 30, aims to ensure every family completes digital self-enumeration.

## New method in Census... Option for self-enumeration

**From Our Staff Reporter**  
**Amaravati, April 17 :** As part of the ongoing census process in Andhra Pradesh, an opportunity has been provided for self-enumeration from April 16 to April 30, said AP Chief Secretary G. Sai Prasad. A circular has been issued in this regard. People can enter their details themselves through the portal <https://se.census.gov.in>. A 15-day special outreach campaign is being conducted to increase public participation. The AP Chief Secretary stated that a thematic drive is being carried out to reach all sections of society. The program is being launched with ministers, MLAs, and public representatives. Special drives are being conducted in government offices and among staff. Awareness programs will also be held with celebrities, film actors, and sportspersons.

Special drives will be organized for SHG women and MGNREGA workers. Awareness will be created in schools, colleges, and universities. Promotion will be carried out through Anganwadi and health workers. The campaign is being extended to tribal areas and weekly markets (shandies). In urban areas, awareness will be spread through Resident Welfare Association meetings. A "Census 5K Run" will be conducted on April 26. Awareness programs will also be held in shops, factories, and banks, along with special drives for police personnel. The target is 10 to 20 self-enumerations per day in each secretariat. The AP Chief Secretary has directed the Information and Public Relations department to widely publicize the initiative through media. Self-enumeration is completely voluntary, and no one should be forced to participate.

## My Bharat Budget Quest 2026 Concludes with PM's Virtual Interaction

**Vijayawada, April 17:** The two-day national conference "My Bharat Budget Quest 2026", held on April 12-13, concluded successfully with a virtual interaction by the Prime Minister with youth across the country. Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Andhra Pradesh Ministers Satya Kumar Yadav and M. Ram Prasad Reddy participated virtually. The event at Acharya Nagarjuna University saw the presence of senior officials and academicians. The program featured presentations, panel discussions on budget topics, and advanced video conferencing for the PM's address. Participants were given kits, and the initiative aimed to engage youth in nation-building and policy awareness.



## Commercial LPG Supply at 70-80%, No Shortage: Official



**Vijayawada, April 17:** LPG GM & OMC State Level Coordinator N. Bhaskar Reddy said domestic LPG supply in the state continues at 100%, while commercial supply is maintained at 70-80% due to increased bookings following West Asia tensions. Priority is being given to households, while hospitals, educational institutions, canteens, and temples are receiving uninterrupted commercial LPG supply. On average, 17,652 commercial cylinders are distributed daily. He assured that there is no shortage of LPG, with at least three days of buffer stock available. Delivery delays in some areas are due to panic bookings. Measures are also in place to ensure continuous supply of 5 kg cylinders for migrant workers. Officials also stated that the state has sufficient petrol and diesel reserves for 15 days, and efforts are underway to promote piped natural gas (PNG) as an alternative fuel.

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## 4,100 Kg Ganja Worth Rs.20 Crore Destroyed; Crackdown Intensified in Tirupati



**Tirupati, April 17:** District Collector S. Venkateshwar and SP L. Subbarayudu said efforts are underway to make Tirupati a ganja-free district. About 4,100 kg of ganja worth over Rs.20 crore, seized in around 208 cases, was destroyed through incineration at the solid waste management centre in Renigunta with court permission. The Collector stated that strict action is being taken against cultivation, transport, and usage of ganja as per government directives. Special teams are monitoring transit routes, as Tirupati has been identified as a key transit point to cities like Chennai, Bengaluru, and Kerala. Awareness programs are also being conducted for students on the harmful effects of drugs, alongside strict enforcement including PD Act cases. The SP emphasized that there will be zero tolerance towards drug-related activities and urged public cooperation to eliminate narcotics completely.

## Collector Rajababu Participates in 'Palle Nidra'



**Ongole, April 17:** Prakasam District Collector Rajababu participated in the 'Palle Nidra' program at Gundla Samudram village in Marripudi mandal. He visited the village on Friday evening and inspected local conditions, including recently constructed internal cement roads. The Collector also reviewed ongoing development works as part of the program. Officials from various departments accompanied him during the visit.

## Tight Security for EVMs: District Collector



**Ongole, April 17:** District Collector and District Election Officer P. Rajababu directed officials to ensure round-the-clock tight security at EVM storage warehouses in the district. During a routine inspection, he visited the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) godown at Mamidipalem in Ongole, verified the seals, and reviewed security arrangements in accordance with Election Commission guidelines. Officials from the election and revenue departments were present during the inspection.

## Aditya University Assistant Professor Awarded PhD



**Gandepalli, April 17:** Kaladi Govindaraju, Assistant Professor in the CSE department at Aditya University, Surampalem, has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Pondicherry University. He completed his research under the guidance of Prof. Dr. N. Srinath of the CSE department, focusing on security and privacy techniques in fog-enabled vehicular ad hoc networks. University Chancellor Dr. N. Seshareddy and other officials congratulated him and wished him success in his future endeavors.

## Strict Action Against Drugs in Visakhapatnam Range

**Visakhapatnam, April 17:** Police in the Visakhapatnam Range have intensified their crackdown on narcotics, launching a 100-day action plan titled "Sankalpam 2.0, Chaitanyam 2.0, Abhyudayam 2.0." The initiative was announced by Range IG Gopinath Jatti during a review meeting with district SPs. So far, assets worth Rs.11.63 crore linked to drug cases have been frozen, and 32 offenders jailed under the PIT NDPS Act. Between June 2024 and April 2026, 129 accused in 72 cases were convicted. Police have conducted over 27,000 awareness programs, reaching more than 18 lakh people, including 7 lakh students. Advanced technology, including drones and surveillance apps, is being used to curb drug cultivation and trafficking. The plan focuses on strict enforcement, public participation, youth engagement, and monitoring. Authorities aim to create over 1,000 drug-free villages in the region by the end of the 100-day campaign.



## Tribal Students Shine in Intermediate Results



**Rampachodavaram, April 17:** Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar felicitated meritorious tribal students who excelled in Intermediate exams, proving on par with corporate colleges. Duripalli Sravani Sri Sunanda secured State 1st rank with 986/1000 marks, while Bandham Venkata Sai Manjula achieved District 1st rank with 985 marks. Both students, coming from humble agricultural families, were honored with shawls and mementos. The Collector appreciated the students, parents, and teachers, stating that tribal educational institutions are delivering quality education. He encouraged students to pursue higher studies and aim for prestigious careers like civil services.

# Papam Prathap Review: Neat idea with a handful of laughs



Set in the 1990s in a village in the Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh, the story follows Prathap (Thiruveer), a simple rural man who falls in love with Bujji (Payal Radhakrishna). After having feelings for her for a long time, he finally proposes and marries her. His father (Ajay Ghosh) initially opposes the match but agrees for the sake of his son. Just three nights into the marriage, things take a shocking turn. While Prathap believes everything is going well, Bujji calls for a village panchayat and publicly declares that her husband has a problem and she cannot continue living with him. The twist

is that Prathap himself has no idea what this problem is.

Determined to find the truth, he tries different ways. He asks his friend to sleep beside him, which does not help. He then brings in a local videographer to record his behavior at night. Only then does he discover the issue he is dealing with.

The rest of the story is about whether Prathap can overcome this problem and win his wife back.

#### Analysis

Directed by debutant S.P. Durga Nares, "Papam Prathap" is built on an uncommon premise. A male protagonist dealing with a psychologi-

cal issue that occurs only during sleep is not something often explored in Telugu cinema. This is not about common problems like sleepwalking or snoring, but something more unusual, which gives the film a fresh starting point. A recent Korean film "Sleep" (2023) has explored a similar issue, but both these movies are completely different. The director handles the first half reasonably well by not revealing the actual issue early on. This creates curiosity and allows space for situational humor. The portions where Bujji leaves Prathap and the villagers speculate about his problem bring a mix of humor and awkwardness. Some scenes work, while others feel stretched. However, the film loses focus in the second half. Once the core issue is revealed, the narration becomes slow and repetitive. The story begins to drift, and the lack of tight writing becomes evident.

The idea is fresh, but the execution does not fully match its potential. A more focused and crisper screenplay would have made a big difference here.

Thiruveer delivers a sincere performance and carries the film well. He brings out the innocence and vulnerability of

his character in a natural manner. Payal Radhakrishna suits her role and performs convincingly. Avasarala Srinivas, as a psychologist, and Prasad Behara provide decent support. Ajay Ghosh and Raashi fit well as Prathap's parents, though Ajay Ghosh tends to overact in some scenes. Goparaju Ramana adds a few humorous moments with his character.

K.M. Radhakrishnan's music is average and does not leave a lasting impression. The cinematography is decent and captures the village setting effectively. The production design is neat and appropriate.

Editing is one of the major drawbacks. The film feels longer than necessary, and several scenes could have been trimmed. The film goes all over the place.

#### Bottom Line

"Papam Prathap" has an interesting idea about sleeping issues, and it tries to present it with a mix of humor, but the execution falls short. While the premise and a few comedic moments work, the uneven narration and lengthy runtime reduce its impact. It could have been much better with tighter writing and sharper editing.

# Rajasthan Royals Official Found Guilty Of Breaching IPL Protocol. BCCI Reveals Punishment



Rajasthan Royals team manager Romi Bhinder was fined Rs 1 lakh and handed an official warning for using a mobile phone inside the dugout during the IPL 2026 match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Guwahati on April 10. The Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) of the BCCI issued a show-cause notice to Bhinder over the incident and asked him to respond within 48 hours. While the RR official did submit his response in time, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia revealed that the ACSU was not satisfied. As a result, the BCCI decided to hand him the fine and issue a formal warning. "This violation happened in the match between Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, where our anti-corruption unit in Guwahati took note of the violation and issued him an expla-

nation notice on April 12. He was given 48 hours to respond as Romi Bhinder was found or seen carrying his mobile to the dugout area." "He can have a mobile in his hand but he cannot take it to the dugout area, so an explanation was sought and Romi Bhinder responded within the stipulated 48 hours. The anti-corruption unit examined his reply and found it to be not satisfactory." "Therefore considering the fact that this is his first time he has done this violation of the IPL PMOA protocols, the anti-corruption unit decided to impose him a penalty of Rs 1 lakh and also issued a warning to him not to repeat this kind of breach or violation of the IPL PMOA protocols in future," said Saikia to IANS. According to the PMOA (Players and Match Officials Area) guidelines found on IPL's website, "The Team Man-

ager may use a phone in the dressing room but NOT in the dugout." Bhinder has been associated with RR since the league's inception in 2008 and also serves as a local guardian for Sooryavanshi, 15. He was even with the now-defunct Rising Pune Supergiants when RR was banned from participating in the competition in 2016 and 2017 seasons. "On behalf of BCCI, I can just say and we hope that this should be a deterrent for all other stakeholders who are part of the IPL to strictly adhere to the spirit of rules and follow the IPL PMOA protocols," added Saikia. RR, the IPL 2008 winners, are currently at the third position in the points table, and will take on three-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday.

# Jacqueline Fernandez to turn approver in Suresh case



Actor Jacqueline Fernandez, who has been in the news for her alleged links with conman Suresh Chandrashekar, has taken a significant legal step in the ongoing money laundering

case. According to reports, Jacqueline has approached a Delhi court expressing her willingness to turn an approver in the case. This means she is ready to provide information that could assist the investigation.

The court has asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to respond to her request and has scheduled the next hearing for April 20. At the same time, the court directed the actress to follow the due legal process for her plea to be considered.

The case revolves around an alleged Rs 200 crore extortion racket operated by Suresh Chandrashekar, who is accused of cheating several wealthy individuals.

Suresh had earlier claimed that Jacqueline was in a relationship with him and alleged that he had given her expensive gifts worth crores of rupees.

# Hardik Pandya Urged To 'Quit And Hand IPL Captaincy to Rohit Sharma': 'Injustice Was Done'



Mumbai Indians (MI) captain Hardik Pandya has come under scrutiny following the team's dismal start to the IPL 2026 season. With just one win in five matches, MI languishes second from the bottom of the points table. On Thursday, the five-time champions were brushed aside at home by Shreyas Iyer's Punjab Kings (PBKS), marking their fourth defeat of the campaign. MI's lone victory this season came against the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at the Wankhede Stadium on March 29. Speaking on Cricbuzz, former India batter Manoj Tiwary criticised Hardik's captaincy against PBKS, arguing that the all-rounder's leadership has been below par since he took charge of the franchise. "From where will ownership come? One has to look at oneself as well. You need to see how you have been playing. According to me, just because you are not having success this year doesn't mean the mistakes happened only this year. You need to look at the root cause as well. From 2015-2023, Rohit Sharma helped the Mumbai Indians win several trophies," said Tiwary. Tiwary also urged Hardik to relinquish the captaincy and return it to Rohit Sharma, noting that the veteran batter led the franchise to five titles between 2013 and 2023. "In 2023, there was no trophy. In 2024,

there was no trophy, and the chances of the same happening are high this year too. I think the captaincy is weak. I don't want to be harsh. But Hardik is not leading the team the way it should be. It's very important to be proactive as a captain. I think that if a solution is needed, Hardik should step back from the captaincy and hand the responsibility back to Rohit. When you removed Rohit, you did an injustice," he added. Beyond the leadership change, Tiwary slammed Hardik's tactical choices during the defeat to PBKS, specifically his decision to promote himself up the order ahead of Sherfane Rutherford. Furthermore, he questioned the move to open the bowling with Deepak Chahar despite the pacer's recent struggles. "Hardik shouldn't have promoted himself against the Punjab Kings. He scored 14 runs off 12 balls. Sherfane Rutherford just got five balls. If Rutherford had played as many balls, he would have hit 3-4 sixes. Hardik Pandya thought he could do it. Yes, he could have done it. You should have pushed Rutherford up. And secondly, there is no point in giving Jasprit Bumrah the second over when you are not giving him the first. Deepak Chahar just isn't able to swing the ball," he said.

# "He Did Exactly That": How Ricky Ponting's Advice Helped Arshdeep Singh Rattle Mumbai Indians In IPL 2026

Punjab Kings pacer Arshdeep Singh was on top of his game against Mumbai Indians during an Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday. The left-arm fast bowler returned with impressive figures of 3 for 22 in his quota of four overs. His performance helped him earn the Player of the Match award as Punjab eventually won the game by seven wickets to go to the top of the points table. The Shreyas Iyer-led team remains the only unbeaten side in the ongoing edition of the tournament. Arshdeep struck twice in consecutive deliveries to reduce Mumbai Indians to 12 for 2 in 2.2 overs. He removed Ryan Rickelton and then claimed the wicket of Suryakumar Yadav on the very next ball. Later in the innings, he cleaned up Sherfane Rutherford with a terrific yorker. "He's almost an over-trainer. He probably trains too much, and sometimes ends up building bad habits into his game. But yesterday, he came down on his own and did 30-40 minutes of spot bowling to refine a few things and improve his release," said PBKS head coach Ricky Ponting on JioHotstar. "

# Thassadiya song from Maa Inti Bangaaram: Festive energy

The first single "Thassadiya" from Maa Inti Bangaaram is out, setting the stage for this upcoming family action comedy drama headlined by Samantha Ruth Prabhu. Composed by Santhosh Narayanan, the song is a lively wedding celebration number packed with vibrant energy. With lyrics penned by Rehman and vocals by Chinmayi Sripada and Punya Selva, "Thassadiya" blends festive beats with a groovy rhythm that celebrates love, life, and family. Samantha dominates the song with her screen presence and sharp dance moves. Created by Raj Nidimoru and directed by Nandini Reddy, the film marks Samantha's reunion with the director after the success of "Oh! Baby." The movie also features Digant and Gulshan Devaiah in key roles. Produced by Tralala Moving Pictures, the film is gearing up for a theatrical release on May 15, 2026.

