

## PM NARENDRA MODI

## RUSSIA INVITES PM NARENDRA MODI TO 'VICTORY DAY' PARADE MARKING END OF WW2

**Diary Times Desk :** The Russian deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko announced on Tuesday that Moscow has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the May 9 celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of victory over Germany in World War II.

Rudenko told news agency Tass that an invitation to PM Modi has already been sent out and that he is expected to be in Russia next month for the event.

"It's being worked out, it should be this year. He has an invitation," Rudenko said to the news agency. Apart from PM Modi, Russia has also invited leaders of several other friendly nations to attend this year's Victory Day parade at the iconic Red Square in Moscow.

The invitation comes as Russian President Vladimir Putin is also expected to make a trip to India later this year. PM Modi had invited Putin to come to India during his trip to Russia in July 2024, which the Russian leader accepted. The exact dates of the visit are yet to be announced.

In 2024, PM Modi went for his first trip to Russia in five years after he previously visited the far eastern city of Vladivostok in 2019 to attend an economic conclave.

Putin and PM Modi maintain regular contact, holding telephone conversations once every couple of months. The two leaders also hold in-person meetings, particularly on the sidelines of international events.



## RBI'S REPO RATE CUT

## BANKS LIKELY TO REDUCE INTEREST RATES AFTER RBI'S REPO RATE CUT: REPORT

**Diary Times Desk :** With the RBI's 50 basis points cumulative reduction in policy rates since February this year, transmission of the rate cut by banks is expected in the coming quarters, according to an SBI report.

The report points out that following the RBI's 25 basis point cut in repo rate in February, public sector banks reduced deposit rates by 6 basis points, and foreign banks reduced 15 basis points, while private banks increased the rate by 2 basis points.

The analysis of the weighted average lending rate (WALR) on fresh loans versus the repo rate reveals that WALR for public sector banks and scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) closely follow the adjustments in the policy rate, implying an effective and timely transmission mechanism.

The report also points out that on the regulatory and development policy front, the RBI has decided to widen the option for managing stressed assets. It is proposed that a new market-based framework for securitisation of stressed assets will be created, in addition to the existing ARC route under the SARFAESI Act, 2002. This will give more flexibility in managing NPA.

Current guidelines on co-lending are applicable only to arrangements between banks and NBFCs for priority sector loans. Although co-lending is a win-win situation for all parties, the current model is still under examination. The expansion of co-lending to all regulated entities is a welcome move, but exact details are needed to gauge the impact and the scope of this new arrangement, the SBI report states. That report also points out that with the recent spurt in gold loan portfolio coupled with an increase in the gold prices and volatility, regulatory intervention on account of fear of loan-to-value limit breaches is natural.



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## TAHAWWUR RANA BEING BROUGHT TO INDIA IN SPECIAL FLIGHT: SOURCES



**Diary Times Desk :** Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana is likely to be brought to India in a special flight on Thursday after all hurdles for his extradition were removed by the US, people familiar with the matter said on Wednesday. Rana, 64, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, was lodged in the Metropolitan Detention Centre in Los Angeles. A multi-agency team has gone to the US and all paperwork and legal issues are being completed with US authorities to bring him to India, they said. Rana is being brought to India after his last-ditch attempt to evade extradition failed as the US Supreme Court justices rejected his application. "You are all aware that the US Supreme Court has rejected his plea. As far as extradition of Rana is concerned, at this point, I do not have an update," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "We will provide you an update at an appropriate time," he said while replying to a question during his weekly media briefing. Rana is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

## INDIA'S NAVAL AVIATION GETS A BOOST: RAFALE-MARINE JETS APPROVED FOR ACQUISITION

**Diary Times Desk :** The Indian Navy will acquire French-origin fighter jets, the Rafale-Marine, for its aircraft carriers, expanding the scope of offensive operations at sea and adding new capabilities like longer-range precision strike missiles to target ships and aerial threats. In the event of a crisis, these jets can also be deployed to the Indian Air Force (IAF) bases along the northern borders to augment the IAF's fleet of 36 Rafale jets. The Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the purchase of 26 Rafale-Marine fighter jets from aviation major Dassault at a cost of Rs 63,000 crore. Deliveries of the jets are expected to begin three years after signing the contract, with the entire fleet to be in place with the Navy by 2031. The deal includes weapons, simulators, spares, associated ancillary equipment, crew training, and logistics support for the Indian Navy.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DECLINES MARGINALLY TO 4.9% IN 2024: GOVT SURVEY



**Diary Times Desk :** There was a slight uptick in the urban jobs for women but no such cheer for men in 2024, the latest set of government job data released on Wednesday has shown. The Periodic Labour Force Survey - Key Employment Unemployment Indicators for 2024 released by the Ministry of Statistics -- reveals that in rural areas, there was a marginal decline in overall unemployment from 4.3% to 4.2% amid slight reductions for both men and women. This was not the case in cities though because urban male unemployment rose from 6% to 6.1% but female unemployment declined from 8.9% to 8.2%. Overall urban unemployment rate was stable at 6.7%. At an all India level, unemployment saw a minor drop -- 5% to 4.9%, suggesting slight improvements in employment opportunities. The data further show a decline in unpaid helpers in household enterprises and notes, "this seems to have contributed to the drop in worker population ratio as well as labour force participation ratio among rural females, as the percentage of helpers in household enterprises decreased from 19.9% to 18.1% from 2023 to 2024," the Survey says.

## INDIA ENDS TRANS-SHIPMENT FACILITY FOR BANGLADESH IN SHARP REBUKE TO YUNUS' 'LANDLOCKED' REMARK

**Diary Times Desk :** India announced on Wednesday the cancellation of the trans-shipment facility extended to Bangladesh in 2020, citing significant congestion at Indian airports and ports. The decision follows recent remarks by Bangladesh's interim government head, Muhammad Yunus, who controversially described India's Northeast as "landlocked" and called for Chinese autonomy over the region. Yunus also met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, where the two leaders discussed regional stability and minority issues. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) issued a circular confirming the termination of the trans-shipment facility, which had been established to allow the export of cargo from Bangladesh to third countries via Indian Land Customs Stations, en route to Indian ports and airports.



### YOUR HOROSCOPE

10-04-2025

<p><b>Aries</b> Today, you will meet old friends, which will refresh old memories. Employed people may be fired from the job due to heavy arguments with colleagues in the workplace. People doing business should thank God for getting financial benefits from the advice of their spouse. Due to irritation in the eyes, you should consult an ophthalmologist.</p>	<p><b>Taurus</b> Today you will get success as your long pending legal proceedings will come in your favor. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in the family as employed people will get progress in their workplace. People doing business should make a budget and spend the money in order to get financial benefits. Housewives should change their food according to health and season.</p>
<p><b>Gemini</b> Today you should include yoga and meditation in your daily routine. For employed people, your responsibilities may increase due to promotion in the workplace. People doing business may suffer financial loss from any unknown person today. There may be difficulty in walking due to nerve pain problems.</p>	<p><b>Cancer</b> Today you will get relief from all your problems due to sudden financial gain. Employed people may have to get scolded by their boss due to being hasty in the workplace. People doing business may face increased difficulties in business due to arguments with business partners. As the problem of foot pain increases, you must consult a specialist doctor.</p>
<p><b>Leo</b> Today, you should offer water to Lord Shiva to avoid difficulties. A heated argument with HR in the workplace will spoil your whole day. Businessmen have to exercise patience, there are chances of improvement in business. Today, you may face stomach and pancreas problems due to eating too much fried food.</p>	<p><b>Virgo</b> Today you should take special control over your speech and behavior. People in employment will get success in the workplace with the help of friends. People doing business will get financial gain due to some special offer, your financial condition will be strengthened. Old diseases of elders in the house may emerge.</p>
<p><b>Libra</b> Today is going to be a busy day for you. Employed people will get a chance to work with senior officers due to advancement in their professional field. People doing business should avoid exchanging money with any unknown person today. Pregnant women may have to face problems due to changing weather.</p>	<p><b>Scorpio</b> Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employed people may have to face mental problems due to extra workload in the workplace. People doing business may have to travel abroad in connection with business expansion. Diabetic patients should get themselves checked by a doctor in case of any problem today.</p>
<p><b>Sagittarius</b> Today you should take all important decisions of your career thoughtfully. Employed people may have to face some problems due to the start of a new job in the workplace. Due to financial gain for business people, you can invest in a new business. Problems like leg pain and headache may bother you.</p>	<p><b>Capricorn</b> Today you can invest especially in land and buildings. Employed people may have to travel long distances due to office work, due to which your health may deteriorate. People doing business may face difficulties in repaying business loans due to loss of money. High BP and cholesterol problems will increase the problems of your spouse.</p>
<p><b>Aquarius</b> Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employees will be suspended due to indiscipline in the workplace. People doing business should solve all the problems of their customers in time. Due to worsening weather, problems related to cold and cough may increase in the family.</p>	<p><b>Pisces</b> Today your interest in creative work will especially increase. Employed people may be given an important project by their boss to handle important projects in the workplace. People doing business should control their speech and behavior with their customers. You should walk carefully on the road, problems may arise due to injury.</p>



## HIMACHAL PRADESH: MP KANGANA RANAUT SAID- BJP IS SANATANI, CONGRESS IS THE FORGOTTEN CHILD OF THE BRITISH

**Diary Times Desk :** Actress and MP Kangana Ranaut said that BJP is connected to Sanatani culture. Congress is the forgotten child of the British. The ideology of Congress is like that of thieves being cousins. Wherever Congress leaders meet, thieves gather there and a gang of dacoits is formed. She was addressing a public meeting in Sundarnagar constituency. Accusing the Congress, she said that during the Congress tenure, terrorist attacks took place in many places including Parliament. The Congress party is in cahoots with Pakistan, but now the leadership of the country is in the hands of a strong person. Now Pakistan cannot even open its mouth. A handful of people of Congress have kept the people of the country scared. Earlier, Atal Bihari Vajpayee also ran the government with great difficulty. Kangana said that the plight of Himachal also has to be corrected. For this, do not get misled by the Congressmen. Do not make the same mistake as last time. Wave the saffron flag on all 68 seats. She said that before the assembly and Lok Sabha elections, Congress leader Alka Lamba made big promises to women. She has returned from here only after telling lies after lies. Kangana also took a dig at Congress on the Wakf Board.



## JAIRAM THAKUR: LEADER OF OPPOSITION JAIRAM THAKUR MET NITIN GADKARI, ASKED FOR WIDENING OF JANJHELI-CHAIL AND OTHER ROADS

**Diary Times Desk :** Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur on Wednesday paid a courtesy call on Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi and expressed gratitude for the various projects being run by the Central Government under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Himachal Pradesh, the tunnels being laid across the state and the network of National Highways. The Leader of Opposition urged Nitin Gadkari to get many roads of the state including Janjehli-Chailchowk-Nagwan widened and improved. On the request of the Leader of Opposition, Nitin Gadkari assured to get the work done as soon as possible under CIRF for the concerned roads. The Leader of Opposition said that at present, the Central Government is providing full support for the roads from National Highway to rural areas in Himachal Pradesh. Whatever work is going on in the state, all of it is being done with the support of the Central Government.

## ELECTRICITY BOARD SAID: 'KANGANA'S STATEMENT IS MISLEADING, THE BILL WAS FOR TWO MONTHS, SHE ALSO TAKES SUBSIDY, BUT PAYMENT IS NOT MADE ON TIME'

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited has clarified on Kangana's statement that under Manali Electricity Sub-Division, the electricity connection of domestic consumer number 100000838073 is registered in the name of Kangana Ranaut at her residence in Simsa village. At present, the electricity bill of her residence in Simsa for two months' outstanding electricity consumption is Rs 90,384, which is entirely for the consumption done by her during two months. It is completely wrong and misleading to say that this bill is for one month. The Electricity Board clarified that the electricity bill issued by Kangana Ranaut on March 22, 2025 also includes her payment of previous bills which is Rs 32,287, in this way her bill issued in March amounts to a total of Rs 90,384 including the previous dues. It is clarified here that the connected load of her residence is 94.82 kW which is 1500 percent more than the electricity load of a normal residence.

## KANGANA RANAUT PRAISED PM MODI: BJP MP SAID- THERE MAY BE A STAIN ON THE MOON, BUT NOT A SINGLE ONE ON PM MODI

**Diary Times Desk :** BJP MP Kangana Ranaut targeted the Himachal government while addressing a gathering in Sundernagar, Himachal Pradesh. During her address, Ranaut said that before 2014, many scams took place including 2G scam, coal scam and fodder scam. Actress-turned-politician Kangana praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that there may be a stain on the moon, but there is not a single stain on Prime Minister Modi. She said that the RSS follows the ideology of 'Sanatan, Nationalism, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Kangana Ranaut said during her address, 'The ideology of BJP and RSS follows Sanatan, Nationalism, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which we have been following for a long time. Kangana Ranaut on Tuesday attacked the Congress government of Himachal Pradesh, alleging that the condition of the state is bad and it needs to be freed from the grip of 'wolves'. The BJP MP made this remark while addressing a gathering in her parliamentary constituency Mandi. She praised the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP leader also took a dig at the Congress government over the controversy over the 'samosa' check in the state, which officials later clarified was against the 'misconduct' of officials and not about the snacks served to the chief minister.

## HIMACHAL CM: CM SUKHU SAID IN AHMEDABAD- BJP CAN COMPETE WITH STRENGTH AT BOOTH LEVEL AND AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE

**Diary Times Desk :** In the Congress National Convention held on Wednesday in Gujarat's capital Ahmedabad, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu enumerated the merits of Himachal's development model. The Chief Minister apprised the Congress leaders from across the country about the state government's policy of system transformation. The Chief Minister informed about the various welfare policies launched in the state during his tenure of two and a quarter years. The Chief Minister also suggested adopting an aggressive stance to fight the BJP and strengthening the party at the booth level. Sukhu said that the BJP government at the Center is discriminating against Himachal. The biggest natural disaster of the century occurred in the state during the monsoon season. An economic package was sought from the Central Government for relief work but no financial help was received. The National President of BJP is from Himachal. There are seven BJP MPs from the state but no leader fought for the rights of Himachal. The state government helped the affected families with its limited resources.

## CHIEF MINISTER SUKHU SAID- I DO NOT TAKE KANGANA RANAUT'S STATEMENTS SERIOUSLY, SPOKE ON ELECTRICITY BILL...

**Diary Times Desk :** On the statement of BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that I do not take her statements seriously. She keeps giving such statements. On the matter of huge electricity bill, the Chief Minister said that the MP has built a very big house in Manali, Himachal Pradesh. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge was absolutely right in saying that those who want to work for the party should come forward. Those who do not feel like working and take posts only for politics, it does not look good. The youth should come forward. The Chief Minister said that the speakers of the country have put forth their views in the national convention. A discussion was held on how to face the challenges of the future.

## HIMACHAL NEWS: CHIEF MINISTER SUKHU SAID - APPROVAL GIVEN TO SET UP EV CHARGING STATIONS AT 402 PLACES

**Diary Times Desk :** CM Sukhwinder Sukhu said that the state government has approved setting up EV charging stations at 402 places. Out of these, 252 will be set up in the rest houses of the Public Works Department, 19 in the rest houses of the Jal Shakti Department, 18 in the premises of Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Corporation, 100 in the premises of the Forest Department, 12 in the premises of the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police office and one charging station in the BBNDA office. 6 green corridors have been developed in Himachal. To ensure smooth movement of electric vehicles. He said that so far 4997 electric vehicles have been registered in the state. 500 electric taxis are being included in various government departments under the e-taxi scheme. Apart from this, e-buses and taxis coming from other states are also promoting environmental protection in the state. In view of the increasing demand for green transport across the country, the government has notified six highways of the state as green corridors.

## 2020 DELHI RIOTS: COURT STAYS ORDER FOR FURTHER PROBE AGAINST KAPIL MISHRA

**Diary Times Desk :** A Delhi court on Wednesday stayed till April 21, an order for further probe against Law Minister Kapil Mishra for his alleged role in the February 2020 riots. Special judge Kaveri Baweja stayed the order after Mr Mishra moved court with a plea against the magisterial court verdict. The court also issued notice to complainant Mohammad Ilyas, on whose plea the magistrate ordered the FIR, and asked him to respond by April 21. Additional chief judicial magistrate Vaibhav Chaurasia on April 1 "prima facie" found a cognisable offence against Mr Mishra requiring further investigation. "It is clear that Mishra was in the area at the time of alleged offence... further probe required," the judge had said. Delhi Police had opposed Ilyas' plea saying Mr Mishra had no role in the riots. Violence broke out in northeast Delhi on February 24, 2020, following protests over the citizenship law, leaving 53 dead and several injured. The police had informed the magistrate that "a plan" was being "hatched to shift the blame on Mishra". Mr Mishra's role was already investigated in the larger conspiracy behind the riots, it added.

## FLIGHT CARRYING TAHAWWUR RANA HAS LEFT US, TO LAND IN DELHI TOMORROW: SOURCES

**Diary Times Desk :** Tahawwur Hussain Rana, India's most wanted who is accused of plotting the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai, is on way back to face the law. A special flight carrying him departed from the US this evening after he exhausted all legal avenues to stop his extradition. Rana, 64, will land in Delhi tomorrow afternoon, sources said, and he will be arrested by the National Investigation Agency immediately. A joint team of the National Investigation Agency and the Research and Analysis Wing is reportedly bringing him back. He is likely to be presented in a Delhi court, sources said. The Mumbai police have not been officially informed when he would be transferred to the city. He has been charged with criminal conspiracy, waging war against the government of India, murder and forgery and under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. A Canadian citizen of Pakistani origin who was based in Chicago, Tahawwur Rana is accused of playing a key role in the attacks that cost 166 lives. Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, prime accused in the 2008 attack, had said Rana had extended logistical and financial support.

## INDIA GETS RAFALE BOOST, RS 63,000-CRORE DEAL CLEARED FOR 26 NAVY FIGHTERS



**Diary Times Desk :** India will buy 26 Rafale M fighter jets - i.e., the marine variants - for the Navy in a record government-to-government deal worth over Rs 63,000 crore, sources told NDTV Tuesday. These will be the first major fighter jet upgrade for the country's naval forces. The purchase had been first considered in July 2023, when the Defence Ministry contacted its French counterpart. The deal will also include a comprehensive package for fleet maintenance, logistical support, personnel training, and indigenous manufacturing of components under offset obligations. The agreements will likely be signed later this month, when French Defence Minister Sébastien Lecornu visits India. Deliveries are expected five years after the deal is confirmed, sources said. The fleet is, therefore, not likely to be fully inducted before 2031. The Rafale M is widely considered one of the world's most advanced naval fighter jets. It is equipped with Safran Groups' reinforced landing gears - regarded as one of the best for carrier-compatible aircraft - and also features folding wings.

## MAMATA BANERJEE SAYS WAQF AMENDMENT ACT WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED IN BENGAL

**Diary Times Desk :** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said the Waqf (Amendment) Act will not be implemented in the state, asserting her continued support for minority communities. Speaking at a programme organised by the Jain community in Kolkata, Banerjee said, "I know you are aggrieved because of the enactment of the Waqf Act. Have faith, nothing will happen in Bengal that allows anyone to divide and rule." Speaking about the protests against the newly enacted Waqf Act which triggered large-scale violence in Murshidabad district bordering Bangladesh, the chief minister said, "Look at the situation in areas bordering Bangladesh. One shouldn't do things hurriedly because at times that leads to difficulties. We face difficulties here since 33 per cent of people in our state are from minority communities. Should we throw them out?" The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was passed in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

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## 22 ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH VIOLENCE OVER WAQF ACT IN MURSHIDABAD, SECURITY TIGHTENED

**Diary Times Desk :** Twenty-two people were arrested in connection with the violence in the Muslim-dominated Murshidabad district of West Bengal during a demonstration against the Waqf Act, police said on Wednesday. The situation has been peaceful with a huge contingent of police maintaining a strict vigil on the sensitive areas, especially in and around Jangipur, which was rocked by the violence on Tuesday, they said. "The situation is calm, peaceful and under control. Not a single untoward incident was reported from anywhere in the district. Prohibitory orders would continue to remain in force till 6 pm on April 10. Internet would also remain suspended till 6 pm on April 11," a senior police officer said. Prohibitory orders were clamped in and around Raghunathganj and Suti police station areas following the violence. Stones were hurled targeting the police, and vehicles of the force were set on fire by a mob that blocked the NH-12.

## "I KNOW YOU WANT MY BLOOD BUT...": PINARAYI VIJAYAN AS DAUGHTER FACES FRAUD CASE

**Diary Times Desk :** Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday said neither he nor his party is taking seriously the Serious Fraud Investigation Office's (SFIO) action against his daughter in the "illegal payment" scandal and that it does not affect him in any way. Vijayan also said that he was aware the intention behind the move was to target him.. Responding to a series of questions on the matter, he remarked -- "I know you want my blood, but you will not get it easily". "You can keep hoping for my resignation," he said while answering queries on the issue by reporters during a press conference in the evening. He said the SFIO case was in the court and it will be dealt with legally. His remarks come amidst reports that the ED is preparing to register a case against Vijayan's daughter, who is already facing a probe by the SFIO in the alleged "illegal payment" scandal. There were also media reports that the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs has granted approval for prosecution proceedings.

## "KISSING MY A\*\*, TRYING TO MAKE DEALS": TRUMP ON COUNTRIES HIT BY TARIFFS

**Diary Times Desk :** US President Donald Trump mocked tariff-hit nations on Tuesday (local time), stating that they were ready to do anything while trying to negotiate with him. While speaking at the National Republican Congressional Committee, Trump said he was a better negotiator than Congress. He said, "I'm telling you- these countries are calling us up, kissing my a\*\*. They are dying to make a deal- please sir make a deal, I'll do anything, I'll do anything sir". He added that although some 'rebel' Republicans argue that he must allow Congress to make a deal, he believed that if that were the case, China wouldn't have been slapped with 104 per cent tariffs, and vice versa. "I'll see some rebel Republicans that want to grandstand say, 'I think that Congress should take over negotiations.' Let me tell you, you don't negotiate like I negotiate," he said. He added that Congress's negotiations would sell America. "Congress takes over negotiating to sell America fast because you're going to go busted. I just saw it today. A couple of your congressmen said, 'I think we should get involved in the negotiation of the tariffs,'" he mocked.

## US REACTS TO CHINA'S 84% TARIFF TIT-FOR-TAT MOVE: 'BEIJING SHOULD COME TO TABLE'

**Diary Times Desk :** Shortly after China announced 84 per cent retaliatory tariffs on American goods, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Fox Business Network that Beijing's levy is "unfortunate". Bessent suggested that China "should not try to devalue their way out of" the tariff war, urging Beijing to come to the table for talks. Instead, he said, China needs to punish those exporting fentanyl precursors to the US, an issue which has been long raised by American President Donald Trump. Fentanyl became a flashpoint in the US-China relations as Trump accused Beijing of having done very little to stop its export to the US. In turn, China had blamed the Trump administration for using the issue as a pretext to raise tariffs, with the Chinese foreign minister describing it as "blackmail". In his statement further, Treasury secretary Bessent also reportedly noted that allies coming to the US should think about "how to rebalance China".

## CHINA HITS BACK AT DONALD TRUMP WITH 84% RETALIATORY TARIFF ON US GOODS



**Diary Times Desk :** Amid the ongoing trade war between the United States and China, Beijing on Wednesday hit back at Donald Trump's 104 per cent tariffs with its own additional tariffs of 84 per cent, up from the previous 34 per cent, on all American goods. The Chinese finance ministry said that these additional tariffs will be imposed on goods from the US from April 10, news agency Reuters reported. Beijing had previously announced a retaliatory tariff of 34 per cent on American goods. China's commerce ministry also announced that it has added 12 US entities to its export control list, while including 6 American entities to its "unreliable entity" list. Soon after the announcement, the US stock index futures also reportedly took a sharp dive. Later, the US reacted to China's retaliatory tariffs, describing them as "unfortunate". Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent urged Beijing to not avoid the issue and asked it to "come to the table".

## CHINA APPROACHES WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION OVER LATEST US TARIFFS

**Diary Times Desk :** China has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization over bruising tariffs imposed by Washington, Beijing's commerce ministry announced Wednesday, accusing US President Donald Trump of engaging in "bullying" tactics. Trump's latest salvo of tariffs came into force Wednesday, hitting China the hardest and bringing levies against the world's second-largest economy to 104%. In retaliation, Beijing hiked its own tariffs on American goods to 84%, up from an initial 34%, propelling the tit-for-tat standoff to new levels. Beijing has called for the world to unite against Trump's aggressive trade policy, and warned that it intends to "fight it to the end". Calling the snowballing rounds of tariffs unleashed on China since February "a grave mistake", a spokesperson for the commerce ministry said the cumulative measures highlight "the unilateral bullying nature of the US actions".

## "WE WILL TAKE BACK PANAMA CANAL...": PENTAGON CHIEF MEETS PANAMA PRESIDENT

**Diary Times Desk :** The US will take back the Panama Canal, ending China's influence in one of the world's most important waterways, US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth said today after a rare visit to the Central American nation. Marking the first visit by a US defence secretary to Panama in decades, Mr Hegseth held a closed-door meeting with Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino. He also got a close-up look of the canal as Washington reiterated its deep concern over China's investments and involvement in and around the crucial waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Following talks with Panama's government, the Pentagon chief vowed to deepen the US military's security cooperation with Panamanian forces. China, he said, would "not be allowed to weaponize" the canal by using Chinese firms' commercial relationships as a guise for espionage. "Together, we (Panama and the US) will take back the Panama Canal from China's influence," Secretary Hegseth said in Panama City. Given Donald Trump's tough rhetoric, the stakes were high for Secretary Hegseth's visit.



## HAJJ: SAUDI ARABIA SETS APRIL 29 AS DEADLINE FOR FOREIGN UMRAH PILGRIMS TO DEPART

**Diary Times Desk :** As the Umrah pilgrimage season is set to begin, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah on Tuesday announced the final deadline for foreign Umrah pilgrims to depart the Kingdom. All Umrah pilgrims must leave the country by April 29, marking the end of the Umrah pilgrimage season as Saudi Arabia shifts focus to the massive logistical operation required for Hajj, the ministry announced. The Saudi Arabian administration further announced that pilgrims who fail to adhere to the said deadline could face severe consequences, including penalties of up to SRI00,000 for overstaying their visas or violating pilgrimage regulations. Authorities also urged all the service providers and sponsoring agencies in the Kingdom to ensure strict compliance with the departure timeline, warning that failure to report any violations could result in the maximum fines. The move comes in response to logistical issues and overcrowding experienced during the last Hajj season when a significant number of pilgrims reportedly entered the country using non-Hajj-specific visas. Authorities say the restriction aims to improve coordination and ensure a safer and more organised pilgrimage this year.

## DONALD TRUMP ADMIN SAYS INDIA AMONG 50 NATIONS WILLING TO LOWER TRADE TARIFFS

**Diary Times Desk :** US trade representative Jamieson Greer said India is among several countries now planning to lower tariffs, claiming that early signs indicate the Donald Trump administration's trade measures are beginning to pay off. Defending the national emergency on trade, Jamieson Greer told the Senate Finance Committee that while the United States maintains an average 5 per cent tariff on agricultural goods, India's average tariff stands at 39 per cent. "Our average tariff on agricultural goods is 5 per cent, but India's average tariff is 39 per cent. You understand the trend here. Our trade deficit, driven by these non-reciprocal conditions, is a manifestation of the loss of the nation's ability to manufacture, to grow, and to build. The President recognises the urgency of the moment," said Greer. He named India, along with Argentina, Vietnam and Israel, as among the countries that have shown willingness to reduce both tariff and non-tariff barriers under President Trump's push for "reciprocity" in trade.

## RELIEF FOR ZIRAKPUR, PANCHKULA COMMUTERS: UNION CABINET OKAYS RS 1,878-CRORE BYPASS PROJECT

**Diary Times Desk :** The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a 19.2-km Zirakpur Bypass road project in Punjab and Haryana to be built at a cost of Rs 1,878.31 crore. The six-lane Zirakpur Bypass will start from Junction with NH-7 (Zirakpur-Patiala) and end at Junction with NH-5 (Zirakpur-Parwanoo) with a total length 19.2 km in Punjab and Haryana. The total capital cost of the project is Rs 1,878.31 crore, an official release said. "The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved construction of 6 lane access-controlled Zirakpur Bypass with length of 19.2 km worth Rs 1,878.31 crore in Punjab and Haryana on Hybrid Annuity Mode," it said. The primary purpose of the project is to ease congestion in Zirakpur, Panchkula and surrounding areas by diverting traffic from Patiala, Delhi, Mohali Aerocity and providing direct connectivity to Himachal Pradesh. The current proposal aims at reducing the travel time and ensuring hassle-free traffic movement in the congested urban section of NH-7, NH-5 and NH-152.



## PUNJAB POLICE TAKE CUSTODY OF AMRITPAL'S AIDE IN ASSAM AFTER NSA DETENTION ENDS

**Diary Times Desk :** Punjab Police arrested Pappalpreet Singh, a close aide of jailed Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh, from Dibrugarh Central Jail in Assam after his detention under the National Security Act (NSA) expired on Wednesday. He is being transported back to Amritsar under tight security. With this, only Amritpal Singh remains in Assam's jail, where his detention period is set to end on April 23. Following his release from Dibrugarh jail, Pappalpreet Singh was arrested in connection with the Ajnala police station attack case. Amritsar Rural SSP Maninder Singh confirmed the arrest, adding that Pappalpreet is expected to arrive in Amritsar by late evening and will be produced before the Ajnala sub-divisional court on Thursday. Amritpal Singh, the 'Waris Punjab De' chief, along with nine associates, has been detained in Dibrugarh jail under the NSA since 2023. Earlier, several of his associates, including Varinder Singh alias Fauji, Basant Singh, Bhagwant Singh alias Pradhan Mantri Bajoke, Gurmeet Singh Gill alias Gurmeet Bukkanwala, Kulwant Singh Dhaliwal alias Kulwant Singh, Gurinderpal Singh Aujla alias Guri Aujla, Harjeet Singh alias Chacha, and Sarabjeet Singh Kalsi alias Daljeet Singh Kalsi were brought back to Punjab.

## CM MANN LAUNCHES RS 4,000-CRORE LINK ROAD PROJECT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Diary Times Desk :** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has approved a major initiative to construct 20,000 km of link roads across the state, with a budget of Rs 4,000 crore. This project aims to enhance connectivity, facilitate the transportation of goods and services, and boost economic growth in rural areas. The Chief Minister emphasised the urgent need for constructing these roads, as most of them have been neglected for over six years, exceeding their intended lifespan. The construction of link roads will be prioritised based on their importance, classified as top priority, priority, and needy roads. The CM said an on-ground survey will be conducted to identify areas requiring immediate attention and ensure need-based construction. He asked the PWD and Mandi Board authorities to ensure that every penny is spent judiciously, with contractors responsible for maintaining the roads for five years. The CM said high-quality work will be ensured, with every allocated penny invested in a justified manner, adding that the project will incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology for need-based construction, ensuring optimal resource utilisation and top-quality work. The project aims to provide better connectivity.

## NIA ARRESTS 6TH ACCUSED IN CHANDIGARH GRENADE ATTACK CASE LINKED WITH RINDA, PASSIA

**Diary Times Desk :** In a major breakthrough in the Chandigarh grenade attack case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a Punjab resident, who played a vital role in the entire conspiracy that was masterminded by foreign-based Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorists. Pakistan-based designated individual terrorist Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, and US-based Harpreet Singh alias Happy Passia were among the four accused chargesheeted in the case by the NIA last month. The two terrorists were chargesheeted as absconders, while the other two accused were among the five persons previously arrested in the case. In the latest arrest, Abhijot Singh of Gurdaspur was taken into custody by the NIA, which identified him as the unidentified person whose role had surfaced during investigation. Abhijot, already in prison for another grenade attack at a police station, was found to have been in direct contact with Happy and an important part of the conspiracy.



## DERA SACHA SAUDA CHIEF RAM RAHIM GETS 21-DAY FURLOUGH

**Diary Times Desk :** Gurmeet Ram Rahim, the head of Dera Sacha Sauda, who is serving a 20-year sentence for rape and murder in Sunaria jail, Rohtak, has once again come out of jail. He has been granted a 21-day furlough. Singh walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak on Wednesday morning, sources said. In January, the 57-year-old Sirsa-headquartered sect chief was granted a 30-day parole. Singh is serving a 20-year sentence given in 2017 for raping two of his disciples. According to the Sirsa police sources he left the jail with tight security around 6 am on Wednesday and reached the dera in Sirsa by 9 am. During this furlough, he will stay only at the Sirsa dera and meet his followers. This time, his release is said to be linked to the Dera's foundation day celebrations. Dera Sacha Sauda was founded on April 29, 1948, by Baba Shah Mastana. This year marks its 77th anniversary and Ram Rahim is expected to participate in the event. After his arrival, security in Sirsa has been increased, especially around the Dera campus. Police checkpoints have been set up and vehicles are being strictly checked.

## SURJEWALA ACCEPTS CM SAINI'S CHALLENGE FOR DEBATE ON POWER TARIFF

**Diary Times Desk :** Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Singh Surjewala has accepted the challenge of Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini for a public debate on electricity tariffs and governance issues. Surjewala took to social media platforms 'X' and Facebook page on Wednesday to respond to the CM's remarks, demanding answers on key issues impacting the people of Haryana. CM Shri Nayab Singh Saini ji, I accept your challenge. Tell me when and where you will give an account of the Rs 5,000 crore burden imposed on the people of Haryana in the form of inflated electricity bills, the betrayal of youth employed under HERN, and the repeated paper leaks in recruitment exams! Jai Haryana!", said Surjewala on his social media platforms. Surjewala's reaction came a day after the CM, while reviewing preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Hisar, accused Surjewala and former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda of misleading the public on the issues of electricity tariffs and quality of power supply. The CM also dared both Congress leaders to come forward for a public debate based on facts and figures. The chief minister, in his statement, criticised the previous Congress regime.

## CRIME ON THE RISE IN STATE, DEBT HAS CROSSED RS 1 LAKH CRORE: BINDAL

**Diary Times Desk :** BJP state president Rajeev Bindal today said that the Congress government, which was in its third financial year, had burdened the people of the state with additional Rs 900 crore debt. The total debt on the state stood at over Rs 1.04 lakh crore. Bindal, while addressing mediapersons here, said that there was complete disorder in the state, heinous crimes were on the rise, development had halted and the mafias were reigning supreme. He added that a Dalit youth was brutally murdered in Chamba. While the BJP, led by Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, staged a protest, demanding action against the accused, the state government remained a mute spectator. He said that the Mandi SDM was manhandled and Vimal Negi, Chief Engineer of the HPPCL, was found dead but the government remained silent. Bindal asked the government why it was not ordering a CBI inquiry into Vimal Negi's death when his family members had levelled serious allegations against senior HPPCL officers.

## TRAINED COMMANDOS TO CURB CYBERCRIME IN STATE

**Diary Times Desk :** With the aim to curb rising cybercrime in the state, the police are set to deploy newly trained cyber commandos across the state. These cyber commandos have been trained in various premier institutes of the country under the prestigious cyber commando training programme organised by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C). At present, four cyber commandos, including two women personnel, have returned after completing a six-month cyber commando training programme in Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The cyber commandos include two women personnel named Manu and Madhu Sharma and two men named Akash Thakur and Ram Sharma. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) State CID Cybercrime Mohit Chawla said that these cyber commandos will use their expertise to curb and prevent cybercrimes and will also be engaged in ethical hacking and protecting the data.

## RS 25 CRORE SPENT IN 18 YEARS, SHIMLA STADIUM PROJECT HITS DEAD END

**Diary Times Desk :** In 2007, the then Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh had laid the foundation stone of a multipurpose stadium at Katasani village near Shimla. However, 18 years later, the ambitious project is still incomplete even after an expenditure of around Rs 25 crore. An incomplete eight-storey building and a flattened hillock at the site are telltale signs of bad planning, mismanagement and neglect. Initially, the plan was to construct an athletics track and an indoor stadium at the site. The plan to build an athletics track was shelved after the authorities concerned realised that the land was not adequate for the construction of a proper track. "The land was not adequate because the indoor stadium building was constructed in the middle of the proposed track," says a source. He adds, "Also, a dome was proposed on the top of the building to let skylight enter. This would have hidden half of the track from one side." Once the plan to build an athletics track fell flat, a proposal to build an international shooting range at the site was mooted. This proposal, too, didn't see the light of the day. Besides, the contractor stopped work on the indoor stadium as well.



## HIMACHAL ELECTRICITY BOARD SLAMS KANGANA RANAUT'S 'MISLEADING' BILL CLAIM

**Diary Times Desk :** A day after Kangana Ranaut claimed that Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited (HPSEBL) had handed her a monthly bill of Rs one lakh for her Manali residence, the board clarified that Ranaut's claim was not factual. According to the electricity board, the bill was for two months and the amount was Rs 90,384. The board further claimed that Ranaut did not pay her bills regularly and the connected load at her residence is 94.82 kW, which is 1,500 per cent more than the normal household. While addressing a public gathering in Mandi on Tuesday, Ranaut claimed that she had received Rs one lakh electricity bill for her Manali residence where she doesn't even stay. "They have increased bus fare, agencies conduct a probe on 'samosa', and we hear and read all this and feel embarrassed. I would say they are like wolves and we need to rescue the state from their claws," the Mandi MP said, taking a potshot at the Congress government. In the clarification, the board said that it was wrong and misleading on the part of Ranaut to claim that the bill was for one month. "In the bill issued to Ranaut on March 22, the previous unpaid bill of Rs 32,287 has also been included. The total bill for two months amounts to Rs 90,384," said the board's spokesperson.

## DARCHA-SHINKULA-PADUM ROAD LINKING LAHAUL WITH LADAKH OPENED

**Diary Times Desk :** In a significant achievement, the BRO officially restored the strategically important Darcha-Shinkula-Padum road today, which serves as a vital link between Lahaul Valley in Himachal Pradesh and Zaskar Valley in Ladakh. The road had been cut off for the last one-and-a-half month due to heavy snowfall at the Shinkula Pass, a critical point along the route. After months of relentless efforts in challenging weather conditions, the BRO team successfully cleared snow and debris to ensure that the road was thrown open for traffic. The completion of this crucial task will significantly enhance connectivity and provide residents with a much-needed link between the two regions. Rajesh Rai, Chief Engineer of the BRO project, led the formal reopening ceremony. He performed a symbolic puja, marking the occasion with the traditional "green flag" ceremony, signalling the resumption of vehicle movement. "The Shinkula Pass is now open to light vehicles and we are grateful to the dedicated efforts of all personnel involved in this mission," said Rai, expressing his pride in the BRO workforce. The road's reopening is vital for the transportation of essential goods, tourism and emergency services between Lahaul and Zaskar, both of which are geographically isolated for significant parts of the year due to severe weather conditions. While the BRO has made the road passable for light vehicles, it will be up to the district administrations to regulate traffic flow.



## LANDSLIDES CAN SPREAD FROM 11% TO 21% OF HIMACHAL'S AREA BY 2050: IIT-ROPAR STUDY

**Diary Times Desk :** A study conducted by scientists of the IIT-Ropar using mathematical and Artificial Intelligence (AI) models has indicated that landslide incidents in Himachal are likely to grow in the coming decades. It has predicted that landslides that are at present occurring in 11 per cent area of the state can spread to about 21 per cent area by 2050. The study has highlighted startling facts regarding the ecology of the state. It indicates that the way urbanisation is increasing in the state combined with global warming, 27 per cent of the present snow and ice areas are likely to change into barren land by 2050. It also states that 5 per cent water bodies in the state will change to sparse forestland while 2 per cent water bodies will change to built-up area and crop land. The study has also forecast that the built-up area in the state, which was about 5 per cent of the total area, has increased to about 8 per cent. Around 19 per cent of dense forest in the state will convert into sparse forest and natural vegetation areas. Reet Kamal Tiwari, one of the scientists of the IIT-Ropar who was party of the study on landslides, says that anthropogenic land use and land cover have made Himachal Pradesh hills more likely to fail.

## SAI SUDHARSAN SHINES AS GT ROUT RR FOR 4TH CONSECUTIVE WIN

**Diary Times Desk** : Gujarat Titans continued their winning streak in IPL 2025 with a 58-run win over Rajasthan Royals in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. Getting an invitation to bat first, GT posted 217 for 6 in 20 overs, thanks to Sai Sudharsan's 82 off 53 balls. Jos Buttler and Shahrukh Khan too scored crucial 36 each. Maheesh Theekshana and Tushar Deshpande picked two wickets apiece but both of them leaked over 50 runs in their respective spells. Jofra Archer, on the other hand, was really impressive with figures of 1 for 30 in four overs. In the chase, RR got off to a poor start but Sanju Samson's 41 off 28 kept them going. Shimron Hetmyer scored 52 off 32 towards the end but failed to get any support from the other end. This happened to be GT's fourth win on the trot while RR's two-match winning run ended with the defeat.



## RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN SURPASSES BHUVNESHWAR KUMAR IN ELITE IPL BOWLERS' LIST

**Diary Times Desk** : Chennai Super Kings (CSK) veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin surpassed Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) right-arm swinging seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar to become the third-highest wicket-taker in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL). During Tuesday night's clash against Punjab Kings (PBKS), the 38-year-old off-spinner scythed two wickets in four overs, giving away 48 runs at an economy of 12. With these two wickets, Ashwin breezed past Bhuvneshwar to emerge as the third-highest wicket-taker in the history of the cash-rich league. So far in IPL, the Chennai-born cricketer has 185 wickets in 217 matches at an average of 29.92, where the crafty ball tweaker has conceded runs at an economy of 7.18. The best bowling figures for the veteran spinner in this league is 4/34. On the other hand, the 'Prince of Swing,' Bhuvneshwar, boasts 184 scalps in 179 matches of the competition so far. These wickets have come at an average of 27.28, where the bowler has conceded runs at an economy of 7.57. The best figure for the 35-year-old player is 5/19. Above Ashwin are Punjab Kings (PBKS) leg-break spinner Yuzvendra Chahal (206 wickets in 164 matches at an average of 22.83 and best figures of 5/40) and former spin maestro Piyush Chawla (192 wickets in 192 matches at an average of 26.60, with best figures of 4/17).

## MAXWELL HANDED DEMERIT POINT AND FINE FOR CODE-OF-CONDUCT BREACH

**Diary Times Desk** : Glenn Maxwell, the Punjab Kings (PBKS) allrounder, has been fined 25% of his match fee and has also had one demerit point put in his record for a breach of the IPL's code of conduct during PBKS' home game against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Tuesday night. While the exact nature of his offence has not been made public by the IPL, a statement said that Maxwell "admitted to the Level 1 offence under article 2.2 (abuse of fixtures and fittings during the match) and accepted the match referee's sanction". Maxwell, batting at No. 6 after PBKS had opted to bat upon winning the toss, was dismissed by R Ashwin, caught and bowled, off the second ball he faced. Thanks to Priyansh Arya's 42-ball 103 and contributions lower down from Shashank Singh (52\* off 35 balls) and Marco Jansen (34\* off 19), PBKS put up a strong 219 for 6 on the board, which was enough to carve out an 18-run win. Maxwell picked up the first wicket during CSK's chase, that of Rachin Ravindra.

## EX-INDIA STAR SLEDGED VIRAT KOHLI IN IPL. RCB STAR'S REPLY: "SIDE MEIN AA, TEREKO..."

**Diary Times Desk** : Virat Kohli showed great signs of entering a purple patch in the IPL 2025 as he scored a 42-ball 67 for Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Mumbai Indians recently. In the first match of the IPL 2025, Kohli scored 59\* followed by 31 against Chennai Super kings and 7 against Gujarat Titans. Kohli, whose jersey number is 18, is playing his 18th IPL. In fact, he is the only player to have played in all editions of the IPL for just one team. In a Virat Kohli special on Jio Hotstar, '18 Calling 18, the star mentioned a sledging incident involving his long-time India and Delhi teammate Ishant Sharma. Recalling a match against Kolkata Knight Riders in Kolkata chasing 223, Kohli said he was intimidated with the way Ishant was bowling. "The interesting thing, which I've never spoken about, is that Ishant and I played all our cricket together, so I have faced him a lot. But in that game, I felt he was bowling at a different level, and that was the pressure. That is what environment means. Had I faced him in the nets, I wouldn't have been intimidated, but that day, I felt like I couldn't hit any of his deliveries, and that was because of the atmosphere and the pressure," he said.

## MOHAMMAD KAIF SLAMS PRACTICE OF RETIRING OUT PLAYERS IN ONGOING IPL

**Diary Times Desk** : Former India cricketer turned commentator Mohammad Kaif has lashed out at the teams in the ongoing Indian Premier League 2025 (IPL 2025) for retiring out players. There have been two instances of the teams retiring out their batters in the ongoing season, as Mumbai Indians recalled Tilak Varma back into the pavilion against Lucknow Super Giants during Match 16. Varma was batting on 25\* (23) and left the field with MI requiring 24 to win off last seven balls. Recently, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) also called back a well-set Devon Conway against Punjab Kings (PBKS), who was batting on 69 (49) as their team required 49 to win off 13 balls. The move didn't yield a positive result as teams ended up losing on both occasions. Mohammad Kaif has also shared his thoughts.

## RCB RETURN TO CHINNASWAMY TO TAKE ON UNBEATEN DC WITH RENEWED OPTIMISM

**Diary Times Desk** : In three of the last five seasons, since IPL 2020, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have won at least three of their first four games. Only once, in 2022, they came close to challenging for a top-two berth, but lost out to Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on net run-rate despite winning nine out of their 14 games. None of those wins were at home, though - they didn't play there because of Covid restrictions. RCB have long grappled with the home-advantage question long before it became a raging debate among teams in IPL 2025. The pitch, the altitude, the short boundaries - of which enough and more has been said over the years - make the M Chinnaswamy Stadium a bowlers' nightmare. And RCB hadn't really got their bowling right in all those years. They have this season. Which is why their return to the Chinnaswamy for their second home game of the season, against Delhi Capitals (DC) - they lost the first against Gujarat Titans (GT) - coupled with an excellent start is being met with optimism by fans, who haven't forgotten the remarkable run of late results that took them into the playoffs.

## VIRAT KOHLI SAYS "IT WAS NEVER ABOUT EGO", OPENS UP ON 'PERSONAL AMBITIONS' CHATTER

**Diary Times Desk** : Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) stalwart Virat Kohli has hit his peak form once again, emerging as the franchise's lynchpin in an excellent start to the 2025 season. Kohli hasn't just scored runs himself but also complemented other batters in the team effectively, with the team's success being the only objective in mind. Quite often, Virat has also been labelled as a batter who makes his 'ego' become a driving factor. But, in an interview with the Indian Premier League broadcasters, Kohli said that 'ego' has never been a driver throughout his cricketing career. In the IPL 2025 matches so far, Kohli has often made way for skipper Rajat Patidar to lead the charge with the bat, while playing a supporting role at times. During a chat with JioHotstar, Kohli highlighted the ICC Champions Trophy as an example, where he didn't mind giving Shreyas Iyer the driver's seat. "If you look at how things panned out even recently, in one of the Champions Trophy games, Shreyas (Iyer) took charge. It was never about ego. At that time, if I was in rhythm, in the flow of the game, I naturally took the initiative. If someone else was better placed to take the lead, they would do it. It was never about trying to overshadow anyone or suddenly feeling like I don't have the ability. It's always been about understanding the game situation, and that's something I've always taken pride in. I want to play according to what the situation demands."