

**GOLD AND SILVER PRICES DIP AMID PROFIT BOOKING AS US DOLLAR GAINS**

Mumbai, Feb 24 : Gold and silver prices retreated on Tuesday, amid uptick in US dollar and profit-taking after huge gains in previous session. Investors weighed in tariff uncertainty and ongoing US-Iran peace talks which capped the decline in prices. MCX gold April futures dipped 0.58 per cent to Rs 1,60,664 per 10 grams around 10.50 am on an intraday basis. Meanwhile MCX silver March futures declined 0.33 per cent to Rs 2,64,450 per kg.



GOLD & SILVER

**SRI LANKAN NAVY SEIZES 685 KG OF SEA CUCUMBERS**



WORLD NEWS

**HARRY BROOK'S TON SEALS SEMIFINAL SPOT AS ENGLAND DEFEAT PAK BY 2 WICKETS**



T20 WORLD CUP

**IN BRIFS**

**ANDHRA MILK ADULTERATION: SEVEN PEOPLE STILL IN CRITICAL CONDITION**

**Amaravati (TSIT):** The condition of seven persons undergoing treatment at various hospitals in Andhra Pradesh's Rajahmundry after consuming adulterated milk is critical, a top official said on Tuesday. State Health and Family Welfare Department Commissioner Veerapandian said that 15 people are undergoing treatment in various hospitals, of whom three are on ventilators, two on dialysis and three more on ventilator-dialysis. Among those undergoing treatment, there are two children, including a five-month-old baby. He said four people have died so far. No new cases were registered on Tuesday. Veerapandian told the media that necessary steps are being taken to provide better treatment to all those hospitalised. On the suggestion of senior nephrologist Raviraj, medicines required to quickly improve kidney function but not available here are being brought from Chennai and Mumbai.

**Rahul reiterates demand to cancel trade deal with the US**

**Bhopal (TSIT):** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of "surrendering India's interests" to the United States under pressure for the trade deal.

In his address at the Maha Kisan Sammelan here, Gandhi, citing recent developments, noted that the US Supreme Court had rejected tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration and that several countries had walked away from trade deals with the US, yet the Prime Minister had remained silent.

At Congress-organised farmers' convention, which was also attended by party President Mallikarjun Kharge, Gandhi claimed the agreement compels India to buy goods worth Rs 9 lakh crore from America over the next five years, severely damaging domestic industries—especially textiles and agriculture. He alleged that the textile sector has already been crippled, claiming that the US has granted zero per cent tariffs to Bangladesh while pressuring



"The textile industry was destroyed, and after that, America says, look, we will help Bangladesh, so we have zero per cent tariff in textile. Here, the minister says that if India buys cotton from America, then we will also be wiped out from America," ..... **Rahul**

India to import cotton or risk being sidelined. Gandhi accused PM Modi of "yielding to US demands to safeguard his political image and future, compromising national sovereignty".

"Narendra Modi ji gave it all under pressure... to save his image, to save his political future, to avoid threats," he stated and directly challenged the Prime Minister to cancel the deal. Gandhi also cited sealed evidence, including emails, messages, and videos, that he claimed had not been made public. He urged Congress workers, Youth Congress members, and supporters to stand firm without compromise, invoking the party's historic role in the Green Revolution and nation-building. "You will not compromise with

anyone. You have the blood of the Congress party in you, the blood of patriotism. You brought about the Green Revolution. You gave food to your country, you gave grains to your country, you built your industry," he said.

The Bhopal rally marked the start of a nationwide series of Kisan Sammelans by the Congress to protest the interim India-US trade framework. The Congress leaders argued that the deal betrays farmers by flooding Indian markets with cheaper US imports, endangering key crops such as cotton, soybean, and maize, and undermining food security and rural livelihoods. Similar events are planned in states, including Maharashtra, to mobilise farmers across the country.

**4 Senior CPI (Maoist) Leaders Join Mainstream Before T'gana DGP**

**HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:**

In a major development in the State's anti-extremism efforts, four senior underground leaders of the banned CPI (Maoist) organisation joined the mainstream before Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) B. Shivadhar Reddy on Tuesday.

The leaders who surrendered include Politburo Member (PBM) and Central Committee Member (CCM) Tippiri Thirupathi @ Devuji @ Kumma Dada, Central Committee Member Malla Raji Reddy @ Sangram, Telangana State Committee (TSC) Secretary Bade Chokka Rao @ Damodar @ Jagan, and State Committee Member Nune Narsimha Reddy @ Ganganna @ Sannu Dada.

According to police officials, the four leaders had been underground for decades, holding key positions in various committees across Dandakaranya, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Telangana regions. Their



return to the mainstream is being viewed as a significant setback to the organisational structure of CPI (Maoist), particularly in Telangana.

Officials stated that sustained security operations, shrinking support networks, internal differences, and leadership fragmentation within the outfit contributed to their decision to renounce violence and rejoin society.

Speaking on the occasion, DGP Shivadhar Reddy said the State Government remains committed to providing full support and protection to those who surrender and choose a

peaceful path. He reiterated that under Telangana's Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Reintegration Policy, surrendered cadres are eligible for financial assistance, rehabilitation support, skill development opportunities, and other welfare measures to help them rebuild their lives.

The DGP also appealed to remaining underground cadres, especially those belonging to Telangana, to lay down arms, return to their families, and contribute constructively to the development of the State within the constitutional framework.

**APPROVED PROPOSAL**

**Union Cabinet clears move to rename Kerala as "Keralam"**

**New Delhi (TSIT):** The union Cabinet, Tuesday approved a proposal to alter the name of the State of "Kerala" to "Keralam," Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced. Addressing a press briefing after the Cabinet meeting, Vaishnaw said the decision marks an important constitutional step following a unanimous resolution passed by the State's Legislative Assembly



last year. "The union Cabinet has approved the proposal for alteration of the name of the

State of Kerala as 'Keralam.' The constitutional process under Article 3 will now be followed," he said.

Following the Cabinet's approval, the President of India will refer the proposed legislation — the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 — to the Kerala Legislative Assembly for expressing its views, in accordance with the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution.

Under Article 3, Parliament has

the authority to alter the name of any State by law. However, no such Bill can be introduced without the recommendation of the President and unless the proposal has first been referred to the concerned State Legislature for its views within a specified period. After receiving the Assembly's views, the union Government will proceed with the next steps, including obtaining the President's recommendation for introducing the Bill in Parliament.

**INDIA, ISRAEL BEGIN TALKS FOR FTA, AIM TO BOOST COMMERCIAL TIES**



**New Delhi (TSIT):** India and Israel have started the first round of negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) here with an aim to further boost commercial ties and promote investments, an official

statement said on Tuesday, February 24. In November last year, the two countries signed the terms of reference (ToR) to formally start the negotiations for the pact. "The first round of negotiations for the India-Israel Free Trade Agreement (FTA) commenced on February 23, 2026 in New Delhi, and is scheduled to take place until February 26, 2026," the commerce ministry said. In such pacts, two sides significantly reduce or eliminate import duties on maximum number of goods traded between them.

**KHARGE ACCUSES PM MODI OF SUCCUMMING TO PRESSURE FROM US**

**Bhopal (TSIT):** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday, February 24, alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi could not stand firm



when threatened with tariffs by the United States. Speaking at a farmers' 'Mahachaupal' rally here, he accused the Prime Minister of "selling out

the country" and "cowardice", and said a trade agreement which "mortgages the country" was not acceptable to the Congress. "A deal is done between two equals.

Modi was made to bend... threatened with tariffs," said Kharge, referring to the Indo-US trade deal. He also contrasted India's stand with that of Brazil, and claimed that its President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva advised Modi during his visit not to give in to US's pressure, and stand for Indian farmers as he (Lula) himself was doing.

**20 CR TIRUPATI LADDUS MADE WITH ADULTERATED GHEE: CM NAIDU**

**Amaravati (TSIT):** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday claimed that over 20 crore Tirupati laddus were made with adulterated ghee and sold during the YSRCP rule. He claimed that between 2019 and 2024, 59.71 lakh litres of adulterated ghee were supplied to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), and Rs. 234 crore were spent on this.



Replying to the debate in the State Assembly on the Tirupati laddu adulteration, he said 20.01 crore laddus were made with adulterated ghee and sold to devotees.

He alleged that a syndicate was formed to produce adulterated ghee and supply it to TTD, in violation of all norms and by bypassing the laboratories for testing quality. He clarified that after the coalition government came to power, he cited the NDDB report on ghee adulteration. The Chief Minister said that after the issue came to the government's notice, it was decided to constitute the Special Investigation Team (SIT). "They challenged this, too, and went to the Supreme Court. The court said that there should be no political involvement in this and that an SIT should be formed and an investigation should be conducted under the auspices of the CBI," he said. Chandrababu Naidu revealed that the CBI submitted a report to the state government for

action against the guilty officials. They suggested some rectification in the TTD. The Chief Minister said the government had formed a one-man committee to take action in accordance with the SIT report. He noted that the Supreme Court had dismissed a petition filed by Subramanian Swamy against the one-member committee.

He alleged that the tender rules were changed between January and February 2020 as part of the adulteration conspiracy.

He claimed that, even though the CFTRI issued its report on ghee adulteration in 2022, the then TTD chairman suppressed it. The rules were thrown to the wind to give ghee supply contracts to unqualified companies. CM Naidu said that then TTD Chairman Subbareddy's personal assistant Chinnappanna, took a bribe of Rs 4.5 crore. "It was found that various types of chemicals were used to make adulterated ghee. They even lured the technical experts of TTD with expensive phones and opened the gates for adulterated ghee," he said.

**'SEWAGE CRISIS'**

**Toilet war on US warship amid Iran tensions raises a stink**

**US (TSIT):** The USS Gerald R. Ford, the US Navy's flagship aircraft carrier and a symbol of American military might, remains beset by chronic sewage system failures, US media reported. Persistent plumbing problems continue to dog America's newest and biggest supercarrier, nearly a decade after its commissioning.



Recent media reports highlight this ongoing saga, noting that despite years of issues, the Navy insists the problems do not hinder the vessel's operational readiness, even as it prepares for potential strikes against Iran, NPR reported. The Navy Times reported

that the system's "narrow pipes" have proven inadequate for a crew of over 4,600 sailors, leading to frequent clogs and vacuum failures. Early reports in 2022, Forbes reported that the unclogging required a specialised acid flush costing \$400,000

each time. During its 2025 deployment, which included operations off Venezuela leading to the capture of President Nicolás Maduro in January, the USS Ford averaged one "sewage-related maintenance call per day", the Navy Times reported.

**NASSCOM SEES 6.1% GROWTH IN FY26 TECH REVENUES**

**Mumbai (TSIT):** India's technology sector is expected to grow 6.1 per cent in FY26, with total revenues projected to reach USD 315 billion, according to NASSCOM. Despite global geopolitical uncertainties and rapid changes driven by artificial intelligence, the industry is set to maintain steady growth. The sector is also expected to add 1.35 lakh new jobs in FY26, taking the total direct workforce to 59.5 lakh, up from 58.15 lakh in FY25. In FY25, the industry had recorded a net addition of 1.33 lakh jobs. However, the increase of 2,000 additional jobs over the previous year marks one of the slowest growth rates in employment in recent years.

**'Superstar-turned-interviewer': Mohanlal 'grills' CM Vijayan**

**Thiruvananthapuram (TSIT):** In a political season dominated by optics and messaging, it is not often that Kerala's biggest screen icon starts asking the questions instead of facing them. That is precisely what happened when Dadasaheb Phalke award winner and Malayalam cinema's enduring superstar Mohanlal sat down to interview Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at Cliff House, the official residence of the Chief Minister.



The teaser of the interview is set to be released on Tuesday evening across social media and television platforms, with the full version to follow on leading channels. For decades, it has been Mohanlal who has been at the receiving end of probing questions about cinema, craft, fame and public life. This

time, the roles were reversed. The actor reportedly spent two days in Thiruvananthapuram for the project. The first day was devoted to discussions on the themes to be covered, and the interview took place the next day. The conversation is said to span the Chief Minister's personal journey, political evolution, and the government's record in office. The optics are com-

elling. A Dadasaheb Phalke laureate interviewing a sitting Chief Minister on the eve of an election inevitably invites political readings. The Opposition has already accused the government of ramping up public relations efforts as the state heads to the polls.

The presence of one of Kerala's most popular cultural figures is bound to amplify that debate. This is not entirely unprecedented. Mohanlal had earlier conducted a similar interview with former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy. Photographs of Mohanlal and Pinarayi Vijayan together at Cliff House have already gone viral, fuelling anticipation. Whether the interview reshapes political narratives or remains a high-profile media moment, one thing is certain: when the superstar asks the questions, Kerala watches.

## Centre approves construction of 5,000 houses for displaced in Manipur

**NEW DELHI:** Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has approved the construction of 5,000 houses for the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Manipur, officials said. The approval was given by the minister following a meeting with Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh in the national capital on Monday evening. The state's two deputy chief ministers, Nemcha Kipgen and Losii Dikho, accompanied Khemchand in the meeting. According to the officials, the houses will be constructed under PMAY-G in the Financial Year 2025-26 to rehabilitate the internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the law and order crisis (ethnic violence). Chouhan assured all help to bring peace and normalcy to

the state. The proposal for the houses was submitted by the Manipur government earlier this month. Meanwhile, the Union Rural Development Ministry approved a special window of Awas+ 2024 household survey for capturing the details of the eligible affected households. The state government has also been allowed to continue the registration of the eligible people under the special project of PMAY-G. These houses shall be constructed as per the provisions of the FFI of the PMAY-G. The state government is also allowed to sanction houses for eligible beneficiaries under the special project, to whom assistance (one or more instalments) was released earlier under the PMAY-G, but their houses were destroyed during the ethnic violence.

## Namaz row: ABVP chants Hanuman Chalisa at Lucknow University, demands 'shuddhikaran'

**LUCKNOW:** Protests erupted at the Lucknow University campus on Tuesday after members of the RSS-backed ABVP gathered near the Lal Baradari complex, reciting Hanuman Chalisa and demanding "shuddhikaran" of the site where namaz was offered a few days ago. According to officials, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) activists raised slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" while marching towards the mosque within the Lal Baradari complex. Visuals showed police repeatedly stopping the protesters from advancing further. The protesters later sat on a road in front of the mosque and began reciting the Hanuman Chalisa, demanding "shuddhikaran" (purification) of the place where namaz was allegedly offered

a few days ago. Police intervened and detained around seven to eight protesters as a precautionary measure. They were initially seated in a bus parked on the campus and later taken to Hasanganj police station, where further legal formalities were carried out, a police officer told PTI. He said the detentions were made to prevent escalation and maintain peace on the campus. Nearly a dozen youths affiliated with various student organisations were also bound down during protests on Monday to ensure the situation did not turn serious. Videos from the spot showed some protesters being forcibly removed by police personnel. A senior police officer pres-



ent at the university said, "As of now, we are handling the situation. We will update you about the future course sometime later." Lucknow University Proctor Rakesh Dwivedi said, "We are talking to students and will sort this out." On being asked about the namaz controversy, he said, "We have provided everything about the (namaz) controversy to the police."

When asked whether this meant that police were seeking registration of an FIR against those who offered namaz, he said, "It is for the police to do their part. We have cleared our position in writing to the police on the subject." Security arrangements around Lal Baradari had already been tightened, with police personnel routinely deployed in the area, offi-

cial said. The atmosphere on the campus returned to normal by Tuesday afternoon, they added. The protest comes a day after members of the Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha, National Students' Union of India (NSUI), and All India Students' Association opposed the university administration's move to seal the entry gates of Lal Baradari, which houses a mosque. The situation briefly escalated when activists of some right-wing groups reached the spot and raised religious slogans, prompting sloganeering from the other side. NSUI's Uttar Pradesh unit vice president Aryan Mishra alleged that the mosque inside Lal Baradari was locked on Saturday and claimed that Muslim students had

been offering namaz there for years. He said namaz was offered on Sunday evening under the watch of NSUI volunteers. An ABVP office-bearer earlier warned that if namaz was permitted on campus, they too would recite the Hanuman Chalisa. University officials have said Lal Baradari, a historic structure on the campus, was declared a restricted zone after a portion of its wall collapsed recently. The building, which earlier housed the teachers' association office, a bank, a cafeteria and a staff club, had been vacated years ago due to its fragile condition. Police and Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) deployment continued on the campus to prevent any untoward incident, an official said.

## All 7 on board air ambulance killed in crash, bodies brought to hospital for post-mortem

**RANCHI:** All seven persons on board an air ambulance were killed after the aircraft crashed near Simaria in Jharkhand's Chatra district, and their bodies have been brought to a hospital for post-mortem examination, officials said on Tuesday. The Beechcraft C90 air ambulance, operated by Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd, was en route to Delhi from Ranchi when it crashed on Monday evening in the Bariatu Panchayat area of Simaria, located deep inside a forest, killing all seven on-board, including two pilots. "We have brought all the seven bodies for post-mortem at Sadar Hospital, Chatra. The crash is being investigated," an official told PTI. The aircraft took off from Ranchi airport at 7.11 pm and went

missing around 7.30 pm. It lost contact with the air traffic control about 20 minutes after departure, he said. Ranchi airport director Vinod Kumar said inclement weather could be a possible reason behind the crash, though the exact cause would be ascertained after a detailed probe. Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari said the state government will conduct a probe into how permission was given to the aircraft to fly during "inclement weather". He also said proper compensation would be given to the kin of the deceased. Terming the crash extremely unfortunate, Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth said unpleasant weather could be one of the reasons, which will be determined by the probe.



In a post on X, former chief minister and BJP leader Champai Soren said he was deeply saddened. The deceased have been identified as Captain Vivek Vikas Bhagat, Captain Savrajdeep Singh, Sanjay Kumar, Dr Vikas Kumar Gupta, Sachin Ku-

mar Mishra, Archana Devi and Dhuru Kumar. Meanwhile, a lingering sense of grief prevailed in Chatra district, as the near and dear ones of those killed in the crash expressed shock and disbelief. Bajrangi Prasad, the father of deceased Dr Vikas Kumar

Gupta, said he had sold all his land to make his son a doctor, who was posted at Sadar Hospital in Ranchi. "He has a seven-year-old son... He was meritorious and had completed his MBBS from Odisha's Cuttack," Prasad, who hails from Bihar's Aurangabad district, said. Family members of Sanjay Kumar (41), however, blamed the "poor" health infrastructure behind the tragedy. "Had we given proper treatment to my brother-in-law Sanjay in Ranchi, precious lives could have been saved. I lost both Sanjay and sister Archana Devi in the incident," Kumar said. Chatra Deputy Commissioner Keerthishree G had earlier told PTI that the bodies of all seven deceased were retrieved from

the crash site and shifted to Chatra hospital for post-mortem examination. In a statement, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the Beechcraft C90 aircraft (VT-AJV) was operating a medical evacuation flight on the Ranchi-Delhi sector when it crashed in Kasaria Panchayat of Chatra district. "The aircraft was airborne from Ranchi at 19:11 IST. After establishing contact with Kolkata at 19:34 IST, the aircraft lost communication and radar contact with Kolkata at approximately 100 nautical miles south-east of Varanasi," it said, adding that there were seven people on board, including two crew members. An Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) team has been dispatched to the

crash site. According to the DGCA website, Delhi-based non-scheduled operator Redbird has six aircraft in its fleet, including the one that crashed. Anant Sinha, CEO of Devkama Hospital in Ranchi, told PTI that the air ambulance was arranged by one of their patients. "The patient, Sanjay Kumar, a resident of Chandwa in Latehar district, was brought to the hospital with 65 per cent burn injuries on February 16. He was being treated in the hospital," he said. The family members decided to take him to Delhi for better treatment, Sinha said. "They arranged for an air ambulance on Monday. The patient left the hospital for Delhi around 4.30 pm," he said.

## Metroman Sreedharan announces revised details of proposed high-speed rail project

**MALAPPURAM:** Technocrat E Sreedharan on Tuesday unveiled revised details of a proposed high-speed railway line project connecting the southern and northern parts of the state, weeks after opening an office here for the same. The revised alignment of the 465-km corridor from Thiruvananthapuram to Kannur includes Pathanamthitta district, which was not part of the earlier route plan, he told a press conference at Ponnani. Stating that it is a Government of India project, E Sreedharan, fondly called the Metroman, said that prior government sanction is not required before starting work on such projects. He also claimed that if the BJP comes to power in Kerala, work on the proposed project would begin within three months and be completed within four and a half years. "If the BJP wins power in

Kerala, I can assure you on behalf of Rajeev Chandrasekhar (BJP state chief) that the work will start within three months. It will be completed within four and a half years. It will then be handed over directly to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)," the veteran added. He said the proposed rail line will originate from Thiruvananthapuram Central and pass through an underground tunnel to the airport before proceeding to Varkala, Kollam, Kottarakkara, Pathanamthitta, Thiruvalla, Kottayam, Vaikom, Ernakulam, Nedumbassery, Thrissur, Pattambi, Malappuram, Kariapur, Kozhikode, Koyilandy, Vadakara, Thalassery, and Kannur. The travel time from Thiruvananthapuram to Kannur is estimated at three hours and 20 minutes, he said. Of the total 465 km length, 440 km will be elevated, which is the most economical method of construction,

he added. The service will connect three major airports in the state—Thiruvananthapuram, Nedumbassery, and Kannur. The estimated construction cost for the first phase of the project is Rs 56,500 crore, Sreedharan said, adding that the revised estimate has reduced costs compared to earlier projections. Proposed ticket fares have also been finalised, and they will be lower than those of the existing Vande Bharat services, he added. Sreedharan said he would send a report in this regard to the Centre by the end of April or the beginning of May. The commencement of work would depend on which government comes to power in the state. He also said that neither Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan nor anyone else in the state government had contacted him after he opened the office for the project.

Neither the BJP-led union government nor the Left government in the state has made any statement about the high-speed project proposed by Sreedharan so far. Last month, Sreedharan said that the state can hope to see a high-speed rail network that will cut travel time from Thiruvananthapuram to Kannur to 3 hours and 15 minutes, as the Centre is expected to formally announce the project soon. A former managing director of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, the veteran technocrat said that an office for the high-speed rail project has already been established, and work on preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR) commenced there on February 2. He also said that the Kerala government's proposed Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod is "not workable" and termed it a "foolish venture" and an "election stunt."

## Infant twins, children among 6 of family killed in Meerut house fire; short circuit suspected

**MEERUT:** A devastating accident shook Meerut after a suspected short circuit triggered a massive blaze inside a house in the Lisadi Gate area, killing six members of an extended family, including two four-month-old twin sisters, and three children aged 4 and 12. According to officials, the blaze at Iqbal Ahmad's residence on Monday night spread rapidly when most male members of the family were out to offer Ramzan namaz, leaving little time for the others to escape. Police said the family was into tailoring and online garment business, for which a large quantity of cloth was stored on the ground floor of the three-storey house, causing the fire to spread rapidly. Mohammad Farooq, a family member, said he had gone to offer namaz when he received a call about the fire. "By the time I came back, a huge crowd had gathered outside the house. The blaze



killed my daughter, my son, my younger brother's twin daughters and his son. My elderly mother survived the fire, though her blood pressure shot up due to the shock," Farooq said. The deceased have been identified as Rukhsar (25), Mahbish (12), Hammad (4), Akdas (4), Nabia (4 months) and Inayat (4 months), all residents of Gali No. 3 near the Surahi Wali Masjid in Kidwai Nagar, police said. One injured woman, Ameer Bano (55), is undergoing treatment at a hospital, they

said. The victims were laid to rest at the Bale Miyan cemetery at Nauchandi on Tuesday afternoon. Heart-wrenching scenes were witnessed when the coffins were carried out of the house, where a large number of people gathered to mourn the family's loss. Officials said the family members had given in writing that they didn't want a post-mortem of the bodies. The incident occurred at Kidwai Nagar around 8 pm on Monday. Seven people were

admitted to the hospital with burn injuries, of which six died, Meerut SSP Avinash Pandey told reporters. Police confirmed the deaths after midnight. A Dial 112 response vehicle was rushed to the spot within three minutes of receiving information about the blaze, followed by fire tenders, Pandey said. The narrow lanes in the locality posed a major challenge for the firefighters, prompting them to deploy motorcycles and later access the house from the adjoining rooftops, officials said. The firemen had to break a wall to gain entry into the building. A local also assisted in the rescue efforts by placing a ladder to help evacuate those trapped on the first floor of the house, the SSP said. While five people were rescued from the first floor, those trapped on the second floor were engulfed by dense smoke and flames.

## Govt set to launch HPV vaccination against cancer for girls aged 14; to use single-shot Gardasil

**NEW DELHI:** In a major step towards eliminating preventable cancers among women, the Union government will soon launch a nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 years, official sources said on Tuesday. According to sources, the programme will use a single-shot Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11. The drive would be a special vaccination campaign and not under the government's Universal Immunisation Programme. It is in line with the World Health Organisation recommendations, which identify HPV vaccination as a central pillar of the Global Strategy to Eliminate Cervical Cancer. "Strong global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a single dose provides robust and durable protec-



tion when administered to girls in the recommended age group," an official source said. The nationwide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus. In the open market, quadrivalent Gardasil-4 is a two-dose vaccine -- each costing Rs 3,927 -- for girls below 15 years. For those above 15 years, three doses of the vaccine are required. Gardasil-4 vaccine is manufactured by

MSD India. "Vaccination under the national programme will be voluntary and free of cost, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups. By prioritising prevention at the right age, the programme is expected to provide lifelong protection and significantly reduce the future burden of cervical cancer in the country," the source said. The vaccine has an excellent safety record, supported by more than 500 million doses administered globally since its introduction in 2006.

Widespread vaccination has led to substantial reductions in HPV infection, precancerous lesions, and cervical cancer incidence in several countries. Once the vaccination programme is launched, India will join 160 countries that have introduced HPV vaccination in their national immunisation schedules. According to the source, over 90 countries are implementing single-dose HPV vaccination schedules, the source said. HPV vaccines are among the most extensively studied vaccines worldwide, with evidence demonstrating 93 to 100 per cent effectiveness in preventing cervical cancer caused by vaccine-covered HPV types. "The upcoming nationwide rollout (of the vaccination programme) is a significant milestone towards achieving the vision of 'Swastha Nari', ensuring that prevention, protection, and equity form the foundation of women's

healthcare in the country," an official source said. According to data, cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India, with nearly 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths reported annually. Scientific evidence establishes that almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), particularly HPV types 16 and 18, which together account for more than 80 per cent of cervical cancer cases in India. Despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening, cervical cancer continues to impose a heavy burden on women and families. According to sources, the forthcoming vaccination programme directly addresses this challenge by preventing HPV infection before it can progress to cancer.

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### POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas the Undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the DCB Bank Ltd., under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, 2002, calling upon the borrowers / co-borrowers as mentioned in column no. 3 to repay the amount mentioned in the said Demand Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers and co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount as mentioned in column no. 6, notice is hereby given to them and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property as described herein below in column no. 4 in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with the Rule 8 of the said Rules.

Bangalore					
Sr. No	Loan Account	Borrowers/Co-Borrowers	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount Demanded	NPA Date	Date of Possession
1	DRHLRJN00564849	DIVAKAR METYA (Borrower) & PRANATI METYA (Co-Borrower)	28-Nov-25 Rs:52,07,092/-	04-May-25	23-Feb-26

**Description of Secured Assets:** "SCHEDULE 'A': All that the piece and parcel of Residential property bearing House List katha no.46/1, property Site No.6, situated at PUTTENAHALLI VILLAGE, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, now comes under the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahangara Palike Ward No.187, ARO Arekere, Bangalore, measuring East to West : 165-0 feet and North to South : 35-0 Feet, in all measuring 5775 Square Feet, and bounded on the - East by: Private property, West by: Road, North by: Private property, South by: Road and Property No.5, Together with Car parking in the Silt, Ground, First, Second, Third and fourth Floor of Residential Apartment known and called as "KUSHI APARTMENT".

**SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY:** 300 Square Feet of undivided share, rights, title and interest in land comprised in the schedule 'A' Property.

**SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY:** Flat bearing No.SF-1 on the SECOND FLOOR, of the building named "KUSHI APARTMENT", having measurement of 1450 square feet of super Built Up Area, Consisting of Three Bedrooms, One Common Bath, Hall, Modular Kitchen, Vitrified Flooring, Passage Balcony all electrical fittings and with all civic amenities thereon and ONE COVERED CAR PARK SPACE IN STILL FLOOR and bounded on:- East by: Road, West by: Flat No.SF-2, North by: Passage, South by: Road"

Date: 25-02-2026  
Place: Bangalore

Sd/-Authorised Officer,  
DCB Bank Limited

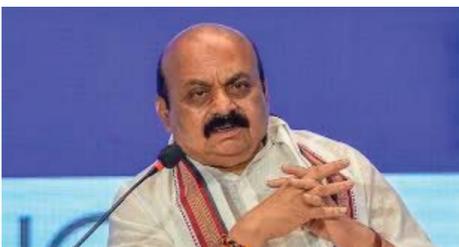
### Udupi district Congress stages protest against BJP over MGNREGA

Udupi, Feb 24: The Udupi District Congress staged a protest condemning the alleged anti-people stance of the BJP-led Central Government over the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) at Udupi DC office on Tuesday, February 24. The protest, organized by the Udupi District Congress, accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of diluting and effectively withdrawing key provisions of the rural employment guarantee scheme, which was originally implemented by the Congress-led UPA government to support the livelihoods of the rural poor. Party workers and leaders began a foot march from Coin Circle in Manipal to the Deputy Commissioner's office in Udupi. During the march, protesters raised slogans against the central government. Later, a memorandum addressed to the Centre was submitted through ADC Abid Gadyal.



Addressing the gathering, KPCC Campaign Committee President Vinay Kumar Sorake alleged that the Central Government was depriving the poor of their rights by altering welfare schemes meant for their benefit. He said that a movement on the lines of the farmers' protest would be necessary to safeguard the MGNREGA scheme. District Congress president Ashok Kumar Kodavoor, former minister Jayaprakash Hegde, Coastal Development Authority president M A Gaffoor, Urban Development Authority president Dinakar Heroor, Udupi Taluk Implementation Committee president Ramesh Kanchan, party leaders Uday Kumar Shetty, Prasad Raj Kanchan, Dinesh Hegde Molahalli and working president Kishan Hegde Kolkebil and others were present on the occasion.

### Basavaraj Bommai Says Damaging Nature Is Stealing from the Future



Haveri (Savanur): Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai stressed the need to protect nature, stating that harming it out of greed is like stealing from future generations. He said protecting the environment is essential for ensuring a healthy life for children and grandchildren. He was speaking at the 49th memorial of Sri Guru Rachateshwar Mahaswamiji at Sri Dodda Hunase Kalmatha in Savanur. Referring to a 2,000-year-old tamarind tree in the Matha premises, Bommai said its restoration after falling showed the strength and resilience of nature. Quoting the philosophy of Basavanna, he highlighted the principle of "Kayakave Kailasa" (work is worship), emphasizing honest hard work and ethical living. Bommai urged people to balance material progress with spirituality and follow the path of truth and compassion.

### Beruru, The Purple Turtles & Oorjaa Announce Exclusive Warehouse Clearance Sale



Bengaluru: Design fluffers and home decor enthusiasts have a reason to celebrate as Beruru, The Purple Turtles, and Oorjaa come together for a special Warehouse Clearance Sale, offering exceptional deals on premium furniture, lighting, outdoor pieces, and home accents. Taking place from 26th February to 1st March, between 10 AM and 6 PM, at their Purple Turtles New Warehouse in Whitefield, this limited-time clearance event presents a rare opportunity to shop curated, design-led collections at exclusive warehouse prices. From sculptural outdoor furniture and planters by Beruru, to refined furniture and décor by The Purple Turtles, and statement lighting by Oorjaa, the sale will feature a wide range of pieces across categories. Shoppers can expect significant markdowns on display pieces, end-of-line collections, and select ready stock. This is a strictly limited-period warehouse event, open only for five days, making it the perfect opportunity for homeowners, interior designers, architects and décor enthusiasts to invest in timeless pieces at exceptional value.

### iQOO 15R Launched with Snapdragon 8 Gen 5, Starts at Rs. 44,999

Bengaluru: iQOO has launched its new flagship smartphone, the iQOO 15R, powered by the latest Snapdragon 8 Gen 5 processor. Designed for young professionals, the phone offers high performance for work, gaming and entertainment in a compact 6.59-inch display suitable for one-hand use. The device features a massive 7600mAh battery packed in a slim 7.90mm design. It also includes a 144Hz AMOLED display, Sony LYT-700V OIS camera, advanced cooling system, and IP68 & IP69 water and dust resistance. The phone runs on Android 16 with long-term software and security updates. The iQOO 15R is priced at Rs.44,999 for 8GB+256GB, Rs.47,999 for 12GB+256GB, and Rs.52,999 for 12GB+512GB variants.

### D. K. Shivakumar Says Mahadevappa May Have Info on CM Change

Bengaluru: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said that Minister H. C. Mahadevappa may have raised the Dalit Chief Minister issue as he could have some information about a possible change in the CM post. Speaking to reporters, Shivakumar said he had no information about any leadership change. He added that he is scheduled to visit Delhi regarding urban development funds



and will discuss proposals for tier-2 and tier-3 cities. On ministers making statements, he said it is the Chief Minister's responsibility

to control MLAs and ministers, while he communicates party matters. He described Satish Jarkiholi as a like-minded senior leader and said they discuss party affairs regularly. Shivakumar also supported giving opportunities to new faces in the party, stating that "the party needs new blood." On vacant government jobs, he assured they would be filled soon, adding that delays were due to internal reservation issues.

### S. Manohar Demands Arrest of Basanagouda Patil Yatnal Over Remarks on National Leaders



Bengaluru: MEI President and KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar has demanded the immediate arrest of expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for

his alleged derogatory remarks against Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Speaking at a protest in Bengaluru, Manohar strongly condemned Yatnal's comments and accused him of disturbing communal harmony and law and order in Karnataka. He alleged that the MLA's statements insulted national leaders and freedom fighters. Manohar urged the state government to take strict legal action against Yatnal, including registering appropriate cases. Several Congress leaders and party workers participated in the protest and extended their support to the demand for action.

### B. Y. Vijayendra Slams CM, Dy CM Over Vacant Posts, Youth Issues



Bengaluru: BJP State President and MLA B. Y. Vijayendra has alleged that the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister are playing with the lives of the youth today. Speaking to the media, he said that the youth have been in tears for the past two and a half years and have been staging protests and agitations. Even during the Belagavi session, when student associations protested, a lathi charge was carried out. Even then, the government did not wake up, he criticized. He also stated that the High Court had to intervene to fix an appointment for a meeting with the Chief Minister.

in Bengaluru, Kalaburagi, and Dharwad, and are protesting again today. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister continue to display arrogance. On one hand, there is no development; on the other, even salaries for employees are not being paid. By not initiating recruitment, they are committing injustice, he alleged. The Chief Minister now says the recruitment process will begin. The government has been in power for three years. If they have not done it so far, will they do it now? he questioned. How long will you test the patience of the youth? Can't you see their tears? he asked. Recruitment must begin immediately... He demanded that the recruitment process for vacant posts must start immediately and that the KPSC system should be reformed. Instead of engaging in blame games about what was done earlier, the government should deliver justice to the youth, he urged. The age limit of many candidates is expiring. The government must understand their emotions and act responsibly, he said.

Bengaluru : Calling for stronger global collaboration in emerging technologies, Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology, N.S. Boseraju, urged BRICS nations to work together to accelerate the development and application of quantum technologies. Speaking at a high-level bilateral meeting held at Vidhana Soudha with a Brazilian delegation led by Esther Dweck, Minister of Management and Innovation in Public Services, Brazil, Boseraju proposed the idea of convening a BRICS Quantum Summit to institutionalise cooperation among member countries. "Other international groupings such as ASEAN are already organising dedicated quantum summits. As BRICS nations, we must collaborate to harness quantum technology in areas such as agriculture, pharmaceutical research, water resource management, climate fore-



casting and flood mitigation. A BRICS Quantum Summit could serve as a strategic platform to jointly address shared developmental challenges," he said. Highlighting Karnataka's achievements, the Minister noted that the state is home to India's first indigenously built commercial quantum computer. He outlined the government's ambitious roadmap, including the announcement of a \$100 million Quantum Innovation Fund and the development of a dedicated Quantum City in Bengaluru. "Our goal is to build a \$20 billion quantum economy by 2035 and generate two lakh jobs in the sector," Boseraju said, adding that quantum technologies are being explored for applications in agriculture, flood management and healthcare. Beyond quantum computing, discussions also covered Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and space technologies.

### Belawal Foundation's One-Crore Tree Plantation Drive Receives Overwhelming Response



Bengaluru : With the support of NGOs and corporate organizations, the Belawal Foundation has undertaken an ambitious mission to plant one crore (10 million) saplings across Karnataka and India. Numerous NGOs, corporate institutions, and volunteers have joined hands in this noble initiative. The large-scale environmental conservation effort has received an encouraging response. Addressing a press conference, Sanjay Benawal, Founder and CEO of the Belawal Foundation, along with Kalyanamma, Founder of Pragati Foundation, urged everyone to plant at least one tree. They emphasized that this initiative holds immense significance in protecting Mother Earth and the environment, ensuring a healthy life and the right to breathe clean air. According to reports, by

March 2024, a total of 86,308.44 hectares of forest land in Karnataka had been encroached upon. Therefore, afforestation has become an urgent necessity in the present time, they stated.

The Earth is now pleading for help, and trees stand as its silent guardians. Once covered in lush green forests, our planet today is suffocating due to excessive deforestation and pollution. With every tree that is cut down, we move one step closer to an insecure and lifeless future. Rising temperatures, polluted air, drying rivers, and unpredictable climate patterns are clear signs of nature's distress, they added. Trees are not merely plants; they are life-givers. Without trees, life on Earth is impossible. Tree plantation is no longer a choice—it is an urgent need of the hour. When we plant a tree, we plant life, nurture dreams, and shape a better future for our children. Planting a tree as a gift in the name of family members, friends, or great personalities—on occasions such as birthdays, wedding anniversaries, marriages, and other celebrations—is highly encouraged. Each sapling will be geo-tagged, and as policies evolve, carbon credits will be accumulated, they informed. Braja Chaturvedi, Founder of Sansthan Tatva; Balaganadhar, Founder of Suraksha Enviro Solutions; Narayan Kudva, Founder of World Spiritual Organisation; Girish, CEO of Namma Halli Radio; Aarti, Director of Haritotsav Forum; Dr. Simha Shastri, President of Lions Club; and others were present at press conference.

**DCB BANK Ltd.**  
65012, BEE EMI Avenue, Dr. Raj Kumar Road, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560 010

**DCB BANK**

### POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas the Undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the DCB Bank Ltd., under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, 2002, calling upon the borrowers / co-borrowers as mentioned in column no. 3 to repay the amount mentioned in the said Demand Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers and co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount as mentioned in column no. 6, notice is hereby given to them and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property as described herein below in column no. 4 in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with the Rule 8 of the said Rules.

MYSORE, TUMKUR & Hassan					
Sr. No.	Loan Account	Borrowers/Co-Borrowers	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount Demanded	NPA Date	Date of Possession
1	DRBMY000445154	C KRISHNA (Borrower) & SAVITHAM (Co-Borrower)	25-Nov-25 Rs.10,25,837/-	02-Nov-25	20-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All that piece and parcel of the Property 1559 N 4/1, 2nd Ramamandira Road Kytthamara halli, Narzarbad Mohalla Mysore measuring East to West 1512 feet and North to South 22 1/2 feet and Bounded by: East by: Common Passage, West by: Galli, North by: Property fell to the ownership of Byrava and Ramachandra, South by: Road."					
2	DRBMY000443888	K V KUMARA (Borrower) & Y T PUTTAMMA (Co-Borrower)	25-Nov-25 Rs.11,32,466/-	02-Nov-25	20-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All the piece and parcel of the Property bearing No.1301/942A, and Grampanchayath Asset No.152100602300191650 situated at Pandavapura Taluk, Kytthamara halli, Grama, Mandya District, Property measuring East to West 10.866mtrs and North to South 8.5344 mtrs Bounded by: East by: Road, West by: Galli and Property of Sheenastheer, North by: Galli and property of Bhagyamma, South by: Galli and property of Naryana"					
3	DRBLMY000468258	M T MANJUNATH (Borrower) & VENKATESHAGOWDAM T & GAYATHRI M (Co-Borrower)	12-Nov-25 Rs.4,83,256/-	02-Oct-25	19-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All the piece and parcel of the property situated at Mysore City, Chamaraj Mohalla, Rahamaniya Street, 6th Cross Mysore District and property bearing No.844/2, New No C.H.7/2, measuring 12.00mts by 40.00mts bounded by: East by:Property of Boriah, West by: Property of D Bheemaling and Others, North by: 6th Cross, South by: Walk Way after Property of K.P Jadaiah."					
4	DRHLMY000514527	MANJULAN (Borrower) & RAVINDRAKUMAR K R (Co-Borrower)	25-Nov-25 Rs.9,98,046/-	02-Nov-25	20-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All the piece and parcel of the Property Situated at Property bearing No.81/1, Grampanchayath Indox No.152100602300191650 situated at Kirangurji, SRIKANGURJI, Bounded by: East by: Property of Eshwar, West by: Property of Umesh, North by: Property of Rukminamma, South by: Property of Lalithamma."					
5	DRHLMY00055329	RAVIM (Borrower) & RATHNAMMA M (Co-Borrower)	11-Dec-25 Rs.21,38,891/-	03-Dec-25	19-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All that piece and parcel of property bearing No.6773593307, Assessment No.1810/117/1730, situated Word No.11, Indira Colony, T.Narasipura Town, Mysore District, Measurement: East to West 6.096012 Meters and North to South 6.096012 Meters. Bounded by: East: Site No.118, West: Road, North: Survey Number, South: Site No 55"					
6	DRBMY000418410 & DRBMY000448367 and DRBLMY000512658	SRINIVASA (Borrower) & SAKAMMAS (Co-Borrower)	13-Oct-25 Rs.9,12,327.81/- Rs.3,36,698.58/- & Rs.94,204/-	02-Sep-25	20-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All that piece and parcel of the RCC House property situated bearing No.8/1A, Property measuring 27 feet x 15 feet, Situated at No.8/1A, 9th Cross, Kytthamamahalli, Narzarbad Mohalla, Mysuru, Mysuru District, Bounded by: EAST: Road, WEST: Property of C.Ramalingu, NORTH: Property of Bhairava, SOUTH: Galli."					
7	DRHLMY000503433	UMASHANKAR K (Borrower) & CHANDRAKALAM & GOWTHAMI J (Co-Borrower)	01-Sep-25 Rs.19,39,180/-	02-Aug-25	19-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All that piece and parcel of property bearing No.LIG - 74, situated at HUDCO Extension, Gangolthi, Chamaraja Mohalla, Mysore City, Measuring East to West 7.40 meters and North to South 8.40 meters. Bounded By: East By: House No. 72, West By: House No. 76, North By: House No. 73, South By: Road."					
8	DRHLMY000584716 & DRHLMY000605089	VINAY N (Borrower) & BHARATHIBS (Co-Borrower)	25-Mar-25 Rs. 30,97,038/- & Rs. 7,69,504/-	04-Mar-25	20-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All that piece and parcel of Site bearing 94, formed in laad bearing Sy.No.51/1 and 51/2 totally measuring 6 Acres 17 Guntas layout known as "JAJJI ENCLAVE" situated at Shydandahally Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mysore Taluk, measuring East to West 12.00 Meters and North to South 9.00 Meters Bounded by: East by: 9.00 Meter Road, West by: Private Road, North by: Site No.93, South by: Site No.95"					
9	HHOMTUM00051493 & DRBMTUM00048367 and DRBLBLR000517203	MUBARAKKHAN PEERKHAN (Borrower) and SAJIDA KHANAM & AYUB KHAN (Co Borrower);	10-Dec-25 Rs: 1,33,869/- Rs: 4,09,108/- & Rs: 55,695/-	02-Aug-25	20-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All the piece and parcel of the Residential Site bearing Khattha No.6/5/2976 (Old Khattha No.2976), formed in Sy No.6/5, measuring towards East to West 34 Feet and North to South 17 Feet, situated at Ward No.10, Veerasagar Extension, Tumkur and bounded On: East By: Conservancy, West By: Road, North By: Site belongs to Irshad Khan, South By: House belongs to Bhaseer Saheb"					
10	DRBLTU000582785	MANJUNATHA A (Borrower) and MANJULAG M (Co Borrower);	25-Mar-25 Rs.4,94,440/-	04-Mar-25	24-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All the piece and parcel of the Residential Building bearing Municipal Khattha No. 729/639/1 (old Khattha No.729/639) and PID No. 28-501-231 measuring 13X40 feet is situated at A K Colony, Ward No. 15, Gubbi Town, Tumkur District and bounded as follows: East by: Siddagamma's house, West by: Vacant Site of Raju, North by: Town Panchayat Road, South by: Conservancy."					
12	DRBLHSS000608298	SHIVASWAMY B (Borrower) and POOJASHREE SR & RAJAMMA B (Co Borrower);	25-Mar-25 Rs. 7,24,779/-	04-Mar-25	24-Feb-26
Description of Secured Assets: "All that piece and parcel of site property situated within the limits of Nitru village, Nitru Gram Panchayath, Hassan Taluk, Hassan District having Property ID No. 151600603901100600, Gram Panchayath Khattha No. 314/276, property No. 496, survey No. 209/2 on measuring East-West 12.192 meters and North-South 9.144 meters and Totally measuring 111.48 square meters and Constructed plot area 118.48 square meters and the entire property bounded as follows: East by: Site property No. 29, West by: Road, North by: Site property No. 07, South by: Site property No. 05."					

Date: 25-02-2026  
Place: Mysore/Tumkur & Hassan

Sd/- Authorized Officer,  
DCB Bank Limited

# EDITORIAL

## If You Don't Care About Taj Mahal's Architect, Why Cry

Did you know that there was a bust of the architect Edwin Lutyens outside Rashtrapati Bhavan? I certainly did not.

I knew that Lutyens had designed the building as a palace for the British Viceroy and that it had been inaugurated by the Raj in 1931 with celebrations that had not been attended by most freedom-fighting Indian leaders. In fact, they had been described by Jawaharlal Nehru as being marked by "vulgar, ostentation and wasteful extravagance".

But that they had decided to keep a bust of the architect on display was news to me, as I imagine it was to most Indians. Lutyens is better known in England than he is here, and most Indians can't even pronounce his name (it's nearer "Luchens" than "Lootyens"). If he is ever mentioned in India, then it is in the context of the city of New Delhi, where he designed the buildings in which Prime Minister Modi and his ministers have resided for over a decade. Curiously, the term "Lootyens elite" is used not to describe the elite who actually live in those buildings but as a general abuse for English-language speaking Indians. Did you know that there was a bust of the architect Edwin Lutyens outside Rashtrapati Bhavan? I certainly did not.

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Advertisement - Scroll to continue

So I don't think it matters much to us in India whether a bust whose existence we were unaware of is removed or not. But there has, nevertheless, been some measure of debate over the decision to replace it with a bust of C Rajagopalachari, the first Governor-General of independent India.

Will Every Building Have A Bust?

The argument against its removal runs like this: it's all very well to remove reminders of Raj oppressors such as Viceroys, Generals and Governors, but why extend this principle to architects? Lutyens did no harm to Indians. He only designed buildings.

It's not an entirely unreasonable argument, but it embodies the principle that any-

## Why Trump's Deals With South Korea And Japan Should Be A Warning For India

On February 2, 2026, President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the finalisation of a framework for an interim agreement between the US and India, ending months of economic uncertainty. However, on February 20, the US Supreme Court struck down most of Trump's tariffs, ruling that he exceeded his tariff authority in using a law reserved for national emergency. India and the US deferred their trade talks following the order, with India saying that it is studying its implications. As for the US Supreme Court ruling, uncertainty still hangs over the question of tariffs, because soon after the order, Trump announced that he would soon sign an order to increase global tariffs to 15%, the maximum allowed under a never-used trade law. As of now, global tariffs of 10% have been in force since 12.01 am on Tuesday. As the world waits for clarity, it may be important to focus on the challenges that could arise if a deal is indeed finalised between India and the US. Based on the current broad outline, foremost among the challenges New Delhi could face is the possibility of changing goalposts and pressure tactics. Trump's dealings with South Korea and Japan have become cautionary tales highlighting the difficulty of negotiating with Trump's America. Trump's America Is Unreliable The US's trade deals and its engagements with South Korea and Japan offer a window into the kinds of challenges India could run into. Three trends are noteworthy: expansive use of tariffs, strategic miscommunication and divergences, and shifting goalposts. As part of the trade deal, South Korea and Japan pledged USD 350 billion and USD 500 billion in investments in the US, respectively, in exchange for a reduction in tariffs on their exports. Nonetheless, despite the deal, their economic relations with the US remain on edge due to the looming uncertainty over tariffs, their expansiveness and the arbitrariness of their application. While much of this can be attributed to President Trump's impulsive personality, an amorphous definition of the US' national security and leaning towards business interests over the administration, these are equally consequential. How Trump Arm-Twisted S. Korea Increasingly under Trump, tariffs have now become a toolkit of coercion to achieve political



objectives beyond trade. This has emerged as the first challenge for the US's allies. Economic ties are no longer isolated from other aspects of bilateral relations. Jamieson Greer, the US Trade Representative, cited South Korea's non-adherence to its digital services commitment as another reason for the tariff increase, indirectly hinting at the investigation against Coupang, a US technology company operating in South Korea. In the case of the India-US trade agreement, one of the biggest impediments is India's import of Russian oil. Section 4 of the Executive Order signed by Trump on February 6 this year establishes a monitoring mechanism as a pressure point. The second challenge is related to strategic communication and divergences. In the

case of South Korea, there has been significant misunderstanding, despite numerous meetings at the highest level, including with foreign and industry ministers, and even the Prime Minister. For instance, Trump's characterisation of South Korea's delay in passing the trade agreement through the national assembly as "not living up to its deal" underscores a lack of understanding of both South Korea's political system and the details of the US-South Korea MoU, which does not mention any clear implementation timelines for the deal. Japan Still Confused While South Korea has faced increased tariffs, Japan has been spared. However, despite close engagement with Japan, confusion persists regarding the agreement's details, particularly

about processes, procedures and decision-making. Howard Lutnick, the US Commerce Secretary, has said that the US [read Donald Trump] can "pick and choose" which projects to select, irrespective of the merits of the project, directly contradicting Ryosei Akazawa, Lutnick's counterpart, who stressed the importance of profitability and the screening process. While mechanisms exist for Japan to turn down projects or delay them, the consequences could be severe: penalties and auto or reciprocal tariffs. The third pertains to shifting goalposts. The Trump administration has often deviated from or changed the terms of agreements it had previously made with its allies. For instance, the deal with South Korea promised "no less favourable" terms than those offered by its adversaries (Taiwan) for semiconductor chips, particularly memory. However, the administration has changed the trade terms, after sealing a deal with Taiwan, exempting it from additional semiconductor tariffs quotas. The new deal links MFN (most favoured nation) status to company-specific investment in US manufacturing, effectively creating new conditions for countries like South Korea, thereby violating the earlier agreement. Following this deal, the administration announced 25% tariffs on chips, putting the South Korean memory chip companies in a difficult position. This new status quo signals the US's growing expectation of increased investment from South Korea even in the chip sector. Such a proposition ignores existing investments already made by South Korean companies such as SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics, which amount to roughly USD 40 billion. Additionally, there is a risk of a second tranche of tariff announcements on semiconductor imports and derivative products. In each of the trade agreements with Korea and Japan, two observations cannot be ignored. Trump has the final authority over decisions, including renegeing on the deal, and the agreements are not legally binding. Violating them has serious repercussions for the other party, but not for the US, given its predominant economic position. New Delhi Must Know What It's Dealing With Drawing from these three critical challenges, New Delhi must understand that it is dealing with a mercurial president and a volatile administration.

## Wealth files, questions of trust



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(The disclosure of officials' assets has sparked a new debate on transparency and accountability.)

The public disclosure of the property details of Haryana's IPS officers has once again sparked widespread debate about administrative transparency, accountability, and ethics. When the public is exposed to the fact that many senior law enforcement officers possess assets worth crores of rupees—land, plots, houses, farmhouses, or other investments—it naturally arouses both curiosity and questions. These questions aren't just about statistics, but about the trust the public places in administration and governance. In a democratic system, public office is not only a symbol of authority, but also of responsibility and ethical conduct. Police and administrative officers, in particular, represent the power of the state. They enforce the law, control crime, and protect the rights of ordinary citizens. Therefore, when their financial status becomes a topic of discussion, the public wants to understand how this wealth was acquired, whether it is completely legal, and whether there is an effective system of oversight. Making property details public is certainly a positive step. It increases transparency in governance and empowers citizens to access information about those in power. A fundamental principle of democracy is that power should not be hidden from the public. In India, it has been a tradition for many years that senior government officials disclose details of their movable and immovable assets to the government. But when this information is made public, its importance increases, as society itself can monitor it. However, simply revealing the figures

doesn't solve the problem. The real question is whether these details are thoroughly vetted. Is it ensured that the declared assets match reality? Are the sources of income completely clear? If this process becomes a mere formality, the objective of transparency remains unfulfilled. Transparency is meaningful only when it is accompanied by accountability. It should also be kept in mind that it would not be fair to view all government officials with the same prism. There are many officers in the country who have set an example of honesty, simplicity, and service. They have not compromised on their duties even in difficult circumstances. There are also many officers who work in remote areas for years, striving to bring about positive change in society. Therefore, it is essential to approach any discussion with a balanced perspective. It would not be fair to blame the entire system based on a few cases. But on the other hand, it's also true that public suspicion of the administrative system has grown over the past few decades. Numerous cases of corruption have eroded public trust. When ordinary citizens navigate offices for everyday tasks, hear complaints of bribery, or grapple with the complexities of the system, they develop a sense that the system needs reform. In such an environment, when news of massive wealth acquisitions emerges, suspicion deepens. This is why asset disclosures should not be viewed merely as news, but also as an opportunity to improve the system. The government and relevant institutions should ensure regular and independent audits of asset declarations. If any discrepancies are found, impartial action should be taken. This will boost the morale of honest officials and send a clear message to those involved in corruption. Another important aspect is strengthening ethical values within the administrative system. Laws and rules are essential, but rules alone cannot sustain the entire system. Equally important are a sense of service, a sense of responsibility, and the dignity of public life within officials. When a person reaches a high position, society places greater expectations on them than on ordinary citizens. These expectations extend not only to efficiency but also to character and conduct. The role of the media is also crucial in this context. Newspapers and other media have a

responsibility to uncover facts, but also to present them responsibly. Instead of sensationalizing news, it's crucial to understand its broader social and administrative context. If the media promotes balanced and factual discussions, it will foster a healthy debate in society. The role of civil society is equally important. Democracy isn't solely run by the government or officials; it also requires the active participation of the public. If citizens are aware, ask questions, and demand transparency, the system will naturally become more accountable. Laws like the Right to Information Act are a result of this thinking, and have played a crucial role in making governance more open. It's also worth considering that officials working in government services today face numerous challenges. Working amidst ever-increasing expectations, political pressure, administrative complexities, and social change—all of these are difficult to navigate. Therefore, it's more useful to approach the system from a perspective of reform rather than just criticism. Strengthening the administration requires addressing all aspects—transparency, training, technological improvements, and ethical leadership—simultaneously. The digital age has further enhanced the possibilities for transparency. Corruption can be reduced if property details, administrative decisions, and financial processes are more systematically available online. This system has proven quite effective in many countries. India is also taking steps in this direction, but much remains to be done. Ultimately, it's essential to understand that democracy is founded not only on law but also on trust. Public trust is what gives legitimacy to government and administration. If this trust is weakened, the foundation of the system itself weakens. Therefore, any step that strengthens transparency and accountability actually strengthens democracy. The issue of the assets of Haryana's IPS officers must be seen in this broader context. It's not just a story about a few names or figures. It reflects the relationship that exists between the public and the administration. If this opportunity is used to make the system more transparent, accountable, and ethical, this news can become not just a topic of discussion but also the beginning of positive change.

## West Bengal Polls: Why Both Trinamool And BJP Want To Woo The Rajbanshis

The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in West Bengal since the 2019 Lok Sabha polls has been exceptional. From raising its Lok Sabha tally from just two seats to 18 in 2019, to wiping out the Congress and the Left parties in the 2021 assembly polls to emerge as the main opposition in the state, winning 77 of 294 seats, the BJP's march has been powered primarily by the Rajbanshi and Matua communities of the state, spread across the northern and eastern border regions, respectively. The BJP's stunning performance in 2019 was a jolt for Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress. Well into her second term then, Mamata wasted no time focusing on north Bengal - both in the context of her government's initiatives and the Trinamool Congress's organisational push. The efforts in north Bengal yielded some results for her party in the 2021 assembly polls. The BJP still gathered most of its strength from north Bengal to make it to 77 seats but had to yield some to the Trinamool. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP went down from 18 to 12 seats in Bengal but continued to derive support from north Bengal, where the Rajbanshis are a dominant SC community, and from Matua-dominated areas across districts on the eastern Bangladesh border. The BJP's Rajbanshi and Matua campaign was largely driven by the citizenship plank. The Centre's NRC-CAA move generated fear

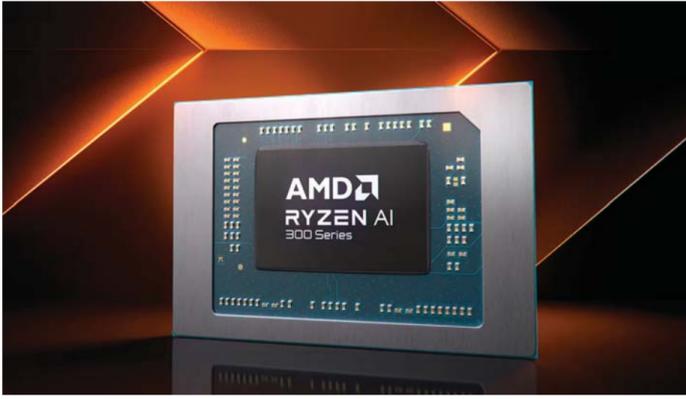


among the Matuas, who came from East Pakistan - or today's Bangladesh - post-Partition. The Rajbanshis have been demanding a separate "Kamtapur" and want their language to be recognised in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, among other things. They hope that the BJP government at the Centre would be able to deliver these things. But while such issues take time to be resolved, Mamata Banerjee has been trying to sway the Rajbanshis away from the BJP. The community dominated over 22 of the 54 seats in north Bengal. Before the rise of the BJP, the region used to

be a stronghold of the Congress as well as of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) and Left allies. The Trinamool was a weak player there. In the Matua-dominated Nadia, North and South 24 Parganas, as well as in some other pockets along the eastern border, Mamata has already made her moves. She first divided the Matua vote by sending Mamata Thakur, a family member of the community's spiritual leader Harichand Thakur, to the Rajya Sabha on a Trinamool ticket. This was aimed at countering the BJP's Shantanu Thakur, another member of the

same family. Mamata has also tried to capitalise on the apprehensions around the SIR process - the community is uncomfortable with the exercise and fears getting uprooted after having spent generations in Bengal. Mamata has sought to assure them that she will "not allow anyone to be disenfranchised". The fear of losing "voting rights" has also added to the anxiety, which Mamata seemingly addressed when she went to the Supreme Court to "fight for the rights of the citizens". Since then, there has been no let-up in the Trinamool's messaging. The BJP, in any case, has called it Mamata's "desperation". Between 2019 and 2024, the Trinamool Congress's general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, also worked on building a strong organisational machinery in the region. Not only did it pick Prakash Chik Barik, who hails from the tribal community in Alipurduar, as its Rajya Sabha member in 2023, but he also contested the 2024 general election from his home seat (though he lost to the BJP). The Bangabanshi award conferred on February 21 upon the BJP's Rajya Sabha MP, Ananta Maharaj, alias Nagendra Roy, from Cooch Behar, should be seen in the same light. The idea was to bring the Rajbanshi language into the limelight on World Mother Language Day. All these steps have gradually improved the Trinamool's foothold in the BJP-dominated region. Whether they'll yield results is a question for the polling day.

## FACEBOOK OWNER META TO BUY AI CHIPS IN DEAL WORTH UP TO USD 100 BILLION



**New York:** Facebook owner Meta Platforms will buy artificial intelligence (AI) chips from Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) in a deal that will also give it the opportunity to buy up to a 10 per cent stake of the chip company. Meta will buy AMD's latest chips, the MI450, to help power data centres. The 6-gigawatt agreement will see shipments supporting the first gigawatt deployment set to start during the second half of this year. The agreement could potentially be worth more than USD 100 billion. Shares of AMD jumped more than 9 per cent before the market opened on Tuesday, February 24. The companies said that AMD issued Meta a

performance-based warrant for up to 160 million shares of its common stock at USD 0.01 a piece, structured to vest as long as certain milestones are achieved. The first tranche vests with the initial 1-gigawatt of shipments, with additional tranches vesting as Meta's purchases scale to 6 gigawatts. News of the AMD deal comes just days after Meta announced a long-term partnership where it will use millions of chips and other equipment from Nvidia for its artificial-intelligence data centres. AMD is looking to keep pace with Nvidia in the AI craze that's widely viewed as the biggest tectonic shift in technology since Apple co-founder Steve Jobs unveiled

the first iPhone. NVIDIA carved out an early lead in tailoring its chipsets, known as graphics processing units, or GPUs, from use in powering video games to helping to train powerful AI systems, like the technology behind ChatGPT and image generators. Demand skyrocketed as more people began using AI chatbots. Tech companies scrambled for more chips to build and run them. While the appetite for AI chips is still large, there are some concerns about how much companies like Meta are spending on AI and whether they can make back their huge investments through higher profits and productivity in the future.

## Telangana Ease of Doing Business 2.0 soon: Industries Minister Sridhar Babu



**Hyderabad:** Telangana will soon roll out the Ease of Doing Business 2.0 as part of its strategy to position the state as a preferred global investment destination, said IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Tuesday, February 24. He added that the state aims to grow to 1 trillion dollars by 2034 and 3 trillion dollars by 2047. Addressing the Growth X 2026 conference organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), Babu said the proposed policy will be developed through stakeholder consultations with an aim to accelerate industrial growth, strengthen investor confidence and provide

greater assurance to investors. Sridhar Babu also said that growth must be planned and not accidental, and that the Congress government in the state has prepared its "Telangana Vision 2047" to guide a long-term economic expansion. "To achieve these goals and ensure balanced regional development, the government has adopted a three-pronged strategy - "CURE, PURE and RARE." He stated that the government's agenda is to bring every region - from urban centres to rural areas - onto the growth path," he stated. The Industries Minister also said that technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) are reshaping work culture and business models, and that the future will depend on strong ecosystems rather than individual companies. Moreover, he clarified that the Telangana government seeks to function not merely as a regulatory authority granting approvals but as a collaborative partner working alongside industry. The minister further said that technologies like artificial are reshaping work culture and business models

## MARKETS SLUMP NEARLY 1 PC; TRUMP TARIFF WORRIES HIT INVESTOR SENTIMENT



**Mumbai:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty slumped nearly 1 per cent in early trade on Tuesday, February 24, dragged down by a sharp selloff in IT stocks amid rising fears of AI-led disruption. Besides, rising crude oil prices and renewed concerns over global trade after US President Donald Trump's latest tariff remarks also weighed on investors' sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 83.13 points, or 0.97 per cent, to 82,481.53 in early deals. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 230.15 points, or 0.89 per cent to 25,482.85. Eternal dropped the most from the Sensex pack, declining 3.82 per cent, followed by HCL

Technologies, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Trent, Adani Ports, ITC, and Titan. On the other hand, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, PowerGrid, Asian Paints, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Tata Steel were among the gainers. "The trend of weakness in tech stocks stemming from the potential AI impact continues. The weakness in the ADRs of Indian IT companies indicates that this segment will continue to remain under pressure," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said. He further stated that US President Donald Trump's

State of the Union address later in the day and the message that he would convey will be keenly watched by markets globally. "The EU freezing the deal with US in the light of the tariff changes following the Supreme Court verdict and Trump's warnings to countries backing away from deals indicate that the tariff drama has more in store for economies and markets. We will have to wait and watch how this drama plays out," Vijayakumar said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Shanghai's SSE Composite Index and Japan's Nikkei 225 benchmark were trading higher, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng quoting in the red.

## AIRLINE LOSSES TO NARROW TO RS 12,000 CRORE NEXT FISCAL: ICRA

**Mumbai:** Indian airlines are expected to reduce losses to an estimated Rs 11,000-12,000 crore next fiscal from a projected Rs 17,000-18,000 crore this financial year, ratings agency ICRA said on Tuesday, February 24, even as it maintained a "stable outlook" for the domestic aviation industry. ICRA also estimates the domestic air passenger traffic to grow by 6-8 per cent and touch 175-179 million passengers in FY2026-27. ICRA, in December 2025, had revised its domestic air passenger growth estimates to 0-3 per cent for the current financial year from 4-6 per cent envisaged earlier. The international air passenger traffic growth for Indian carriers is expected to remain relatively stronger, aided by low base effect, expanding e-visa/visa-on-arrival coverage, and the Central Government's focus on developing theme-based and iconic tourist destinations, the ratings agency said. ICRA said the international air passenger traffic is seen growing at 7-9 per cent for this financial year and 8-10 per cent next year, and



added that the current fiscal year has seen a period of modest domestic air passenger traffic growth due to cross-border escalations, weather-related disruptions, travel hesitancy following the June 2025 aircraft accident, the impact on business travel owing to the headwinds stemming from elevated US tariffs and operational disruptions at IndiGo in December 2025. ICRA has maintained a "stable outlook" for the Indian aviation industry, supported by expectations of modest growth in domestic air passenger traffic and a gradually improving operating environment, despite near-term challenges, said Kinjal Shah,

senior vice president at ICRA. "The Indian aviation industry is expected to report a net loss of Rs 170-180 billion (17000-18000-crore) in 2025-26, significantly higher than the estimated net loss of around Rs 55 billion (5,500 crore) in 2024-25. However, the same is likely to reduce to Rs 110-120 billion (11,000-12,000 crores) in 2026-27, led by growth in domestic air passenger traffic and expected normalisation of operations post disruptions seen in 2025-26 that had resulted in flight cancellations and passenger refunds," she said. The industry's debt metric, which weakened in 2025-26 with an estimated interest cover of 0.7-0.9 times from 1.8 times in 2024-25, is

also expected to improve to 1.3-1.5 times in 2026-27, despite increasing debt linked with new aircraft deliveries, according to Shah. The yields of the industry have declined in the April-December period of 2025-26 on a YoY basis due to a series of external events like cross-border escalations, airplane crash and operational disruptions at IndiGo in the first week of December 2025, ICRA said. Despite these challenges, the drop in yields was not as steep as the reduction in fuel cost per Available Seat Kilometre (CASK), as airlines strive to sustain the yield levels amid rising cost pressure from currency fluctuations and operational expenses related to flight cancellations and delays, it said. ICRA expects the yields to improve in the near term as temporary disruptions ease. Nonetheless, the movement in prices of ATF and the USD-INR rate will remain key monitorable. According to the ratings agency, the industry saw around 4 per cent capacity addition in CY2025, and the total number of aircraft stood at 865 as of December 31, 2025.

## Trump's new tariff comes into effect at lower than expected rate

US President Donald Trump's new global tariffs have come into effect at 10% despite a pledge to introduce them at a higher rate. After the Supreme Court blocked many of his sweeping import taxes on Friday, the president said he would introduce a 10% global rate. He then said on Saturday that the rate would be 15%. However, according to official documents, the tariffs have been set at the lower rate from Tuesday with no directive to increase the rate issued. The BBC has contacted the White House for comment. The White House is working to update the rate to 15% to reflect Trump's announcement, a White House official told Reuters, without saying when the change might come into force. "I think it simply adds to the chaos and mess," said Carsten Brzeski, an analyst with investment bank ING, referring to the fast-changing tariffs and their effects on businesses. "In terms of uncertainty we're back to where we were last year," he told the BBC's Today programme, adding there was now a higher risk



that the US's trading partners would retaliate. "The risk of a real fully-fledged tariff war - trade war - escalation is clearly higher than last year," he said. An executive order signed by Trump on Friday said the temporary 10% import duty was intended to "address fundamental international payments problems and continue the Administration's work to rebalance our trade relationships to benefit American workers, farmers, and manufacturers". The administration is applying the levy under Section 122 of the 1974 Trade Act, which allows the president to impose the charge for 150 days without congressional approval. The president has

argued that tariffs are necessary to reduce America's trade deficit - the amount by which imports exceed exports. But the deficit reached a fresh high last year, widening by 2.1% compared to 2024 and hitting roughly \$1.2 trillion (£890bn). The US has already collected at least \$130bn in tariffs using the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), according to the most recent official data. On Friday, the Supreme Court said the president had overstepped his authority by introducing sweeping tariffs using IEEPA last year, a decision that raised the possibility that businesses could get billions of dollars

in tariff refunds, Global transportation and postal company FedEx filed a lawsuit on Monday for a "full refund" on the import taxes it has paid under the IEEPA. Meanwhile, campaign group We Pay The Tariffs has said it represents over 900 US "demanding full, fast, and automatic refunds of unlawful IEEPA tariffs" in an open letter to the government. However, experts have raised doubts about the likelihood of the US handing money back, with Trump saying on Friday the issue would be fought in the courts "for the next five years". Supreme Court justice Brett Kavanaugh said in the ruling the refund process was likely to be a "mess". Trump has been highly critical of the Supreme Court's decision, calling it "ridiculous, poorly written, and extraordinarily anti-American". Good news, but will it stay that way? Fraser Smeaton, chief executive of fancy dress firm Morph Costumes, is a UK-based business that makes costumes in China and exports them to the US.

## Chocolate kept in anti-theft boxes as shops warn it's being stolen to order

Chocolate bars are being locked in plastic boxes in some UK shops as retailers and police forces warn thieves are stealing them to order. Sainsbury's said it had begun using "boxes on products which are regularly targeted", with £2.60 bars of Cadbury Dairy Milk locked up in one London branch. Chocolate was more recently being "sold on by criminals and is now being targeted more frequently by prolific offenders," according to the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS). Some individual police forces told us they had seen a specific trend of chocolate being targeted. The National Police Chiefs' Council said it was working to tackle this type of crime. In recent months some police forces have posted videos of chocolate being stolen to highlight the issue. West Midlands Police shared CCTV footage of a man grabbing trays of chocolate from a shop in Stourbridge, while



Wiltshire Police shared a video of a man dragging a whole shelving stand of chocolate out of a shop door. And earlier last year a man was arrested by Cambridgeshire Police with a coat full of Cadbury's Creme eggs. Cambridgeshire Police told the BBC: "Chocolate is one of a number of high-value items thieves often target, along with products such as alcohol, meat and coffee. "Retail theft has a real and lasting impact - not just on businesses, but on the staff who have to deal with related abuse and intimidation."

Meanwhile, the British Retail Consortium's annual crime report found there were 5.5 million detected incidents of shop theft last year, and 1,600 daily incidents of violence and abuse against retail workers. Although this was down by a fifth on the previous year, it was still the second highest on record. 'Swiping the whole shelf' Supermarkets have also been stepping up security on chocolate bars, with Tesco and Co-Op as well as Sainsbury's using the transparent boxes which customers have to ask staff to open.

## Harpic launches New Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner, its Biggest Innovation in bathroom cleaning in a Decade Welcomes Rohit Shetty as Brand Ambassador

24 February 2026: Harpic, India's No. 1 toilet and bathroom cleaner and a pioneer in home hygiene solutions trusted by over 100 million households\*, announced the launch of its most advanced bathroom cleaning innovation yet - New Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner. Marking Harpic's biggest innovation in the bathroom cleaning category in over a decade, the product is designed to remove the toughest and most prevalent bathroom stains to deliver an Ultra Clean bathroom. Bollywood Film-maker Rohit Shetty joins as brand ambassador, reinforcing the product's promise of powerful and confident stain removal. Indian households across urban regions struggle with persistent yellow stains, limescale buildup and tough stains like rust. Over time, consumers increasingly believe that these stains are impossible to remove and with no trusted solution that can truly tackle them, many rely on generic solutions such as detergents, bleach and phenyl. These products, however, are often ineffective against hard water stains and can be abrasive on surfaces, leaving bathrooms looking



dull. Addressing this long-standing consumer need for a trusted, versatile and effective cleaning solution, New Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner has been purpose-built for Indian bathrooms. As India's toughest stain removal specialist, it removes everyday stains like yellow hard water marks and limescale, as well as tough stains such as rust, delivering a visibly Ultra Clean and shiny bathroom. Living up to its promise, "New Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner - Kaisa bhi ho daag, poora bathroom ULTRA saaf," the launch campaign reinforces

Harpic's leadership in the bathroom cleaner category by offering consumers a powerful solution. Speaking about his association with the brand, Rohit Shetty said, "I know what's it like when people associate you with a certain style, it means they trust you to deliver every single time. And that trust pushes you to do more, do better and to raise the bar. Whether it's comedy, action or in the case of Harpic, solid safaai. Harpic has been a trusted name in hygiene for years, even being synonymous with bathroom hygiene. With New Harpic

Bathroom Ultra Cleaner, the brand is taking bathroom cleaning to the next level. I am glad to be associated with a product that is tough, dependable and designed for real Indian homes." Commenting on the launch, Gautam Rishi, Marketing Director, Hygiene, Reckitt - South Asia, said, "Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner is a strong new innovation engineered to tackle India's toughest hard-water stains, where most generic cleaners fall short. This launch strengthens Harpic's stain-removal leadership and raises the bar for bathroom hygiene. With Rohit Shetty onboard, we're delivering a tougher, high-performance solution designed for Indian homes." Anupama Ramaswamy, MD and Chief Creative Officer, Havas Creative India said, "Harpic has a new hero in its universe - Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner. It's tough and effective. And that is why it needed a launch that is unmissable and larger-than-life just like Rohit Shetty, who is the face of the brand. Team Havas Creative India has created yet another power-packed campaign that hits the screens very soon."

# More than 5,000 flights cancelled as US east coast digs out of record snow



A major storm hit the US east coast on Monday, bringing record-breaking snow that caused disruptions for millions and thousands of flight cancellations. Parts of Rhode Island and Massachusetts have seen nearly 37in (94cm) of snowfall, with more than 19in in New York City's Central Park, the National Weather Service (NWS) said. Weather warnings stretched from North Carolina to northern Maine, with some in place further north in parts of eastern Canada. More than 600,000 properties on the US east coast endured power outages, while the Boston Globe - a major US newspaper - said it will not go to print for the first time in its 153-year history due to the storm. Travel across the region has been severely limited, with some states and cities implementing travel bans during the worst period of the storm. The so-called "nor'easter" has now moved away from the US and across coastal parts of

eastern Canada - though strong winds are expected to persist, according to the NWS. Snow accumulations were anticipated to reach 1-2ft (30-61cm) near the north-east coastline, meanwhile. Rhode Island, the smallest US state, appeared to have received the most snow during the storm. In fact, it has become the worst snowstorm to ever hit the state, according to local media. Providence, the state

capital, received 36in (91cm) of snow, dwarfing the existing record for the single greatest snowstorm: 28.6in (72.6cm) set in February 1978. "It completely smashed it," Candice Hrencecin, an NWS meteorologist in Boston, told the New York Times. "We were just as shocked as everyone else." A ban on non-essential travel was implemented in Rhode Island and also in neighbouring Connecticut.

Later in the day, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey also imposed a travel ban. "White-out conditions are making travel extremely dangerous," she said in an online post. "If you get stuck, help will have a hard time reaching you... I strongly urge everyone to stay off the roads no matter where you live." A white-out is when snow significantly reduces visibility. Boston res-

ident and avid walker Bradley Jay said the storm had made him feel like a "prisoner". "I won't be able to really walk around town for another ten days. So I'm stuck inside," he told news agency Reuters. In Massachusetts, nearly 300,000 were without power, according to monitor PowerOutage, including 85% of customers in Barnstable County, which includes all of Cape Cod.

The Boston Globe, based in the state's capital, said that despite overcoming "the elements, technical snafus and a global pandemic", Monday's blizzard had made it "impossible" to print and deliver a paper for Tuesday morning. More than 2ft of snow had prevented its printing staff from getting to its printing press, the paper said. Subscribers will receive both Tuesday and Wednesday's edition on Wednesday. In New York City, a travel ban brought the city of more than eight million people to a near

standstill before it was lifted at noon local time (17:00 GMT). All roads, highways and bridges were closed. The city's police department is also investigating footage showing officers being pelted with snowballs in Washington Square Park. "I want to be very clear: the behaviour depicted is disgraceful, and it is criminal," NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch wrote on social media. Sandra Wu, a resident of Long Island, where up to 18in (46cm) of snow fell on Monday, said her family could not open the front door because of how much had accumulated. "My husband went out early through the garage to start digging us out, but it was pointless," she told Reuters, adding that she had never seen a storm this bad. In Connecticut and New Jersey, there were concerns that falling trees and branches could lead to dangerous road conditions and more power outages.

## Guthrie suspect believed to have visited home before she went missing



The suspect in the disappearance of Nancy Guthrie appears to have been at her front door prior to the night she went missing, a law enforcement source has told the BBC's US partner CBS News. The 84-year-old mother of NBC News anchor Savannah Guthrie was reported missing on 1 February, having disappeared from her home in Tucson, Arizona, the night before. Police believe she was abducted. The FBI previously released doorbell camera footage showing a masked person carrying a backpack, who it said was investigators' prime suspect. The source told CBS that the same man

was on her doorstep on another occasion. However, local police have not confirmed that the appearances were on different days. The broadcaster carried images, credited to the FBI, that appear to show a masked man, this time without a backpack, which were captured by Guthrie's Nest doorbell camera sometime prior to the date of the suspected abduction. It is unclear when exactly the images were taken. The story was first reported by ABC News. Arizona Sheriff's Department said in a statement on X: "There is no date or timestamp associated with these images."

## Celebrity doctor Peter Attia steps down from CBS over Epstein links



Celebrity doctor Peter Attia has stepped down from his role as a CBS News contributor after exchanges with Jeffrey Epstein were among documents published by the US Department of Justice. Attia appears to have exchanged a number of emails with the convicted sex offender, including a crass comment about women's bodies. Attia's spokesman said in a statement his role at CBS News "was newly established and had not yet meaningfully begun" and he would be step back to avoid becoming "a distraction from the important work being done at CBS". The anti-ageing influencer has repeatedly apologised for the messages but stressed he had no involvement in Epstein's criminality. Appearing in the files does not imply any wrongdoing. Attia was among 19 contributors appointed by new CBS News editor-in-chief Bari Weiss in January, following the network's takeover by Paramount. But Attia's appearance in the Epstein files has been met with anger by some of his fans. The author wrote that he went into Epstein "withdrawing when I don't see

him" and told the disgraced financier directly in one exchange that he missed him. In one email in 2016, Attia also joked with Epstein about the female anatomy and acts of sex. Epstein was convicted of soliciting a minor in 2008 as part of a plea deal after the parents of a 14-year-old girl told police that he had molested their daughter. He died in custody in 2019 while awaiting trial on charges including sex trafficking. Days after the documents were published, Attia shared a 1,000-word note on social media in which he rejected being "involved in any criminal activity" and stressed that he was "never on his [Epstein's] plane, never on his island, and never present at any sex parties". "My interactions with Epstein had nothing to do with his sexual abuse or exploitation of anyone." The health influencer said he visited Epstein at the late financier's New York City home on "seven or eight" occasions between 2014 and 2019, during which he never witnessed illegal activity or saw Epstein accompanied by anyone who appeared to be underage.

## GHANA DROPS COUP LEADER'S NAME FROM MAIN AIRPORT ON PUTSCH ANNIVERSARY



Ghana's government has removed the name of a coup leader, who helped overthrow founding father Kwame Nkrumah exactly 60 years ago, from the country's main airport. Kotoka International Airport will now be known as Accra International Airport, its original name. But the move has not been without controversy. Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka was among a group of officers who deposed

Nkrumah in 1966. He himself was killed at the airport the following year during a failed counter-coup attempt. The military government then renamed it in 1969 in his honour, portraying him as a "liberator" from what they saw as Nkrumah's authoritarian rule. But some argued his name contradicts Ghana's democratic values. The transport ministry said the government "considered it appropriate" to restore the earlier name. Critics of the move, including Kotoka's family, said it erased his legacy and service. Transport Minister Joseph Bukari Nikpe has been quoted in local media as saying that the change was aimed at projecting a neutral national image and reflecting the name of the capital city, Accra.

## French minister moves to block US envoy Kushner from government access



The French foreign ministry says US envoy Charles Kushner should be blocked from access to the government after he failed to explain comments about an alleged "rise" in violence in France. Kushner, father of Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, had been summoned to meet French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on Monday evening, but did not attend. Instead, he said he had a prior engagement and sent a deputy from the US embassy. This prompted an angry response from the ministry, which accused Kushner of an "apparent failure to grasp the basic requirements of the ambassadorial mission" and said Barrot had requested Kushner "no longer be

allowed direct access" to government ministers. The diplomatic row began when the US embassy in France posted comments on social media about the murder of far-right nationalist Quentin Deranque. The post warned that "violent left-wing extremism is on the rise" in France. Deranque, a 23-year-old maths student, died in hos-

pital on 14 February - two days after being beaten by a gang of masked young men in Lyon, in an attack which ministers from France's centre-right government blamed on "far-left" militants. But the US embassy's comments appear to have angered the French government. "We reject any use of this tragedy, which has plunged a French family

into mourning, for political ends," Barrot said over the weekend. "We have no lessons to learn, particularly on the issue of violence, from the international reactionary movement." BBC News has approached the US embassy in France for comment. Six men suspected of being involved in the fatal assault have been charged over Deranque's death, while a parliamentary assistant for a deputy from the radical left France Unbowed (LFI) party has also been charged with complicity. LFI leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who is a likely contender in next year's presidential election, has said his party had "nothing to do with this story" and condemned "all forms of violence".

## ROBERT CARRADINE, LIZZIE MCGUIRE AND REVENGE OF THE NERDS STAR, DIES AGED 71



Robert Carradine, the US actor best known for roles in *Revenge of the Nerds* and *Lizzie McGuire*, has died aged 71. In a statement, his family said the actor took his own life after living with bipolar disorder for nearly two decades. The Carradine family said they wanted to announce his cause of death to raise awareness of "the stigma that attaches to mental illness". "We want people to know it, and there is no shame in it," his brother Keith told Deadline. Lizzie McGuire star Hilary Duff led the tributes to her former on-screen father, writing on Instagram: "This one hurts. It's really hard to face this reality about an old friend."

Born on 24 March 1954, Carradine was the youngest son of John Carradine and a brother of actors David and Keith Carradine. Encouraged by his brother David, Robert Carradine auditioned for 1972's *The Cowboys*, a John Wayne film that became his first screen

role. He went on to appear in and Martin Scorsese's 1973 film *Mean Streets*, Oscar-winning *Coming Home* (1978), alongside Jane Fonda, *The Long Riders* (1980), with Mark Hamill, *The Big Red One* (1980) and Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* in 2012. But he

was best known for playing the head nerd, Lewis Skolnick, in *Revenge of the Nerds* - which became one of the most popular film franchises of the 1980s, and the father of Lizzie McGuire in the noughties Disney Channel series. Paying tribute, Lizzie McGuire star Duff said: "There was so much warmth in the McGuire family and I always felt so cared for by my on-screen parents. 'I'll be forever grateful for that. I'm deeply sad to learn Bobby was suffering. My heart aches for him, his family, and everyone who loved him." In a statement, Carradine's family announced his death "with profound sadness."

## Probe under way after illness kills 72 tigers in Thai tourist park



Authorities in Chiang Mai, a city in northern Thailand, are investigating the deaths of dozens of tigers at a popular tourist attraction. Seventy-two tigers died in the span of less than two weeks this month, across two facilities of Tiger Kingdom Chiang Mai, a park where visitors can touch and interact with the big cats. The local livestock department said samples from the tigers showed they were sick, it was already too late. "Somchuan Ratanamungklanon, director of the national livestock department, previously told local media - noting that it was harder to detect sickness in tigers compared to animals like common household cats or dogs. Somchuan told reporters on Tuesday that officials had collected samples from the tigers' bodies, the chicken they eat and their surroundings. The provincial livestock office had earlier said preliminary tests showed the tigers had been infected with feline parvovirus.

per virus is a highly contagious disease that attacks the host's respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems. While it is typically found among dogs, it can also infect big cats. Besides canine distemper virus, the provincial livestock office in Chiang Mai said last week that samples from the tigers' carcasses also tested positive for a bacteria associated with respiratory disease. "By the time we realised they were sick, it was already too late," Somchuan Ratanamungklanon, director of the national livestock department, previously told local media - noting that it was harder to detect sickness in tigers compared to animals like common household cats or dogs. Somchuan told reporters on Tuesday that officials had collected samples from the tigers' bodies, the chicken they eat and their surroundings. The provincial livestock office had earlier said preliminary tests showed the tigers had been infected with feline parvovirus.

# MEXICO HUNTS 23 INMATES SPRUNG FROM JAIL DURING WAVE OF VIOLENCE

Police in Mexico are searching a number of inmates sprung from a prison in Puerto Vallarta during a wave of attacks launched by the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) on Sunday. Puerto Vallarta, a beach resort on Mexico's Pacific coast, was among the towns where the CJNG blockaded roads and torched cars in retaliation for the killing by security forces of their leader, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho". During the unrest, armed men rammed one of the prison gates with a car, paving the way for 23 prisoners to escape, an official said. More than 70 people - including 25 National

Guard members - were killed in the operation to capture El Mencho and the violence which followed. Juan Pablo Hernández, security secretary for the state of Jalisco, said that his office was working with other states to capture the fugitives. Officials have not yet released details of the identities of the prisoners who escaped. Cartel members torched several vehicles across Puerto Vallarta on Sunday. Tourists and locals were urged to seek shelter and not venture out and footage they recorded showed black plumes of smoke rising above the popular beach resort. A number of airlines temporarily



halted their flights and at least two major cruise liners said their ships would skip planned stops in Puerto Vallarta. The Mexican government said

on Monday that most of the road blocks erected by cartel members had been cleared. But El Universal newspaper reports that in the state of Morelia, where

drug lord El Mencho was born, armed men continued to spread fear on Monday, torching cars and vandalising shops and public buildings. El Mencho was Mexico's most wanted man. Under his leadership, the CJNG became a powerful transnational criminal organisation which spread from its stronghold in the state of Jalisco into many other Mexican states, where it engages in drug production and trafficking. It often resorts to extreme violence and has been behind a number of high-profile attacks on the security forces and government officials. The Trump administration had described El

Mencho as a "top target for the Mexican and United States government as one of the top traffickers of fentanyl into our homeland" and had offered a \$15m (£11.1m) reward for information leading to his capture. The drug lord was captured by Mexican security forces in the town of Tapalpa, in Jalisco state, on Sunday. Mexico's defence minister said they were able to locate him by following one of his "romantic partners". He died shortly after being captured due to injuries in the firefight which broke out between his security guards and Mexico's special forces sent to arrest him.



# WHY HAS IT GONE SO WRONG FOR ASTON MARTIN?

When Aston Martin's new Formula 1 car first appeared in testing at the end of January, it drew admiring glances up and down the pit lane. In its all-black temporary colour, the car not only looked menacing, but also noticeably different from all its rivals. It included the sort of innovations that have become famous from design legend Adrian Newey, installed as managing technical partner at Aston Martin since March last year. But reality bit hard as soon as the car started to run. It was already late, and it managed just four laps on its first day in Barcelona before conking out at the entrance to the pit lane. Aston Martin's fortunes have barely improved since. The car was the slowest in the field by the end of pre-season testing last week, and had done the fewest miles. Team owner Lawrence Stroll looked like the bottom had fallen out of his world as he stalked the paddock in



Bahrain, his face betraying a combination of anger and despair. The few times the car was out on track amid myriad reliability problems, it looked a handful for the drivers. Publicly, Aston Martin and Honda were saying little. Privately, no-one was trying to hide the reality. They were in trouble, they knew it, and whatever was

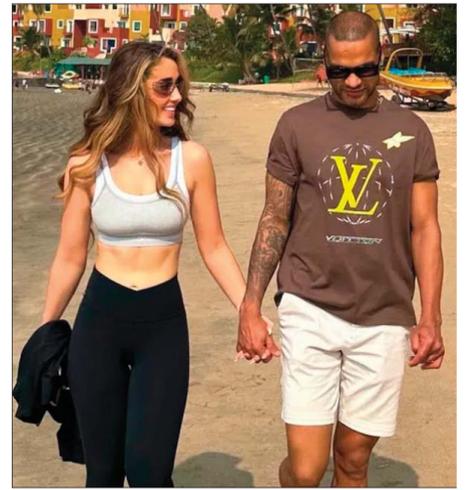
wrong - and it was a lot - would take time to fix. It all looked so promising. No Formula 1 team looked towards the 2026 season with greater expectations than Aston Martin. On paper, Stroll had put together a dream combination, one that seemed guaranteed to produce success. The signing of Newey in September 2024

seemed to be the final piece of the jigsaw the Canadian billionaire was creating to turn his team into championship contenders. In the previous years, Stroll had already inked a deal to become the factory engine partner of Honda, who won four consecutive drivers' titles with Red Bull and Max Verstappen from 2021-24, and two con-

structors' championships. He had funded a sparkling new factory, including a state-of-the-art wind tunnel and driver-in-the-loop simulator. He had put together an enviable sponsorship portfolio of boundless resources, including the full financial might of the state of Saudi Arabia, through its national oil company. And in the cockpit was another legend, Fernando Alonso. Ageing, certainly, now he is in his mid-40s, but still without question a major force behind the wheel. The past few years have not been easy for Aston Martin. A major step forward at the start of 2023, when Alonso first joined the team, led to six podiums in the first eight races and what could have been a win in Monaco, lost only to a wrong tyre choice during a late shower of rain. But in the second half of that season the team slipped back, as they failed to keep up with the development rate of their rivals.

# Shikhar Dhawan Fumes As Fake "No Girl Would Marry Me" Post Goes Viral

As former Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan takes a giant step forward in his personal life, some troll accounts have taken to social media and started spreading fake news. Dhawan, who is separated from his first wife, has often spoken about how much he misses hanging out with his son Zoravar, but never did he speak ill of his ex-wife. However, some manufactured posts quoting the former India opener have been going viral on social media. The retired cricketer, taking to the internet, slammed the fake quotes attributed to him and asked people to stop creating such content for clicks. Dhawan tied the knot with Sophie Shine, his long-time partner, in a ceremony attended by close friends and family on Saturday. In this moment of joy, however, he was forced to bust fake narratives on social media. "I have come across some posts on social media attributing a disappointing statement about my personal life. I have never carried baggage from the past, be it



on the pitch or outside. I firmly believe in the power of positivity while respecting my past," wrote Dhawan on his social media accounts. "This is a new chapter in my life, and I feel truly grateful for the love and blessings I have received from my fans, friends, family, well-wishers, and the media. I strongly

urge people not to trade on my name with clickbait, insensitive and false statements on social media. Let's spread love and positivity. Thank you," he added. The private ceremony in the Delhi-NCR region followed a period of personal rebuilding after his high-profile and emotionally taxing divorce from his first wife.

# NEW STADIUM CURSE - ARE EVERTON SHOWING HOW CLUBS STRUGGLE AFTER MOVE?

When Everton said a tearful farewell to their atmospheric Goodison Park home after 133 years in the summer, hopes were high that Hill Dickinson Stadium could become the fortress fans dreamed of. An unbeaten five-match start at their new ground, inspired by new signing Jack Grealish, raised expectations further. But defeat against Manchester United on Monday cemented Everton's status as the latest Premier League team to find the transition to a new stadium tough going. The Toffees have failed to win any of their past seven matches at their gleaming 52,769-capacity arena, following in the footsteps of other top-flight sides who have struggled



after moving grounds. BBC Sport takes a closer look at the curse of the new stadium in the Premier League era. Eight clubs - only counting teams who were in the top flight for both their last season at their old ground and first at their new, and excluding temporary homes - have moved stadiums since 1992-

93, but only one finished the next season with an improved record. Derby County went from an average of 1.6 points per game in their last year at the Baseball Ground to an impressive 2.1 as they adapted brilliantly to a debut campaign at Pride Park in 1997-98. Middlesbrough had an iden-

tical record between Ayresome Park and the Riverside, but the other teams all suffered a drop-off. Tottenham were always unlikely to match their stunning White Hart Lane finale of 17 wins and two draws when they moved to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium after a spell at Wembley. But seven years on they are still to establish their arena as a place teams fear to come, with some pundits claiming it is too welcoming for opposition players. Only Wolves have lost more home games in Europe's big five leagues this season than Spurs, with eight. West Ham had an immediate drop-off in their first season at London Stadium, dropping half a point per game on average. ?

# SACKED ALL BLACKS COACH ROBERTSON TO LEAD BARBARIANS

Sacked New Zealand coach Scott Robertson will return to rugby by taking charge of the Barbarians this summer. Robertson, whose two-year spell with the All Blacks ended in January, will lead the invitational side against world champions South Africa in Port Elizabeth on 20 June, before a match against Wales at Twickenham's Allianz Stadium on 27 June. "The Barbarians brings the rugby world together, so it's special to be a part of it and to honour the jersey," Robertson said. Robertson, who won seven successive Super Rugby titles with the Crusaders between 2017 and 2023, will not be short of options when he chooses to resume his career full-time.



New Zealand Rugby included a non-compete clause in his severance package which bars Robertson from

taking charge of a top-tier Test rival until early 2027. However it has been reported, external Robertson

would be free to join a rival international team earlier if they have fulfilled their 2026 fixtures against the All Blacks. Robertson revealed in 2022, external that his ultimate coaching ambition is to win the Rugby World Cup with both New Zealand and another nation. At club level, Premiership side Harlequins, who are searching for a figurehead after head coach Danny Wilson departed for Wales at the start of this season, have been linked with the 51-year-old, external Robertson, who has led the Barbarians on four previous occasions, is joined by Argentina head coach Felipe Contepomi in the team's set-up for this summer's matches.

# PSG'S HAKIMI TO FACE TRIAL AFTER RAPE ALLEGATION



Paris St-Germain defender Achraf Hakimi says he is set to face trial after an allegation of rape was made against him. A woman has accused the Morocco captain of raping her at his home in the French capital in 2023, when she was aged 24. He denies the allegations. The public prosecutor's office in Nanterre, a western suburb of Paris, began a preliminary investigation in March 2023. "Today, a rape accusation is enough to justify a trial," Hakimi posted on X, external. "This is as unjust to the innocent as it is to the genuine victims. I calmly await this trial, which will allow the truth to come out publicly." No date has been set for the trial. BBC Sport has contacted the Nanterre prosecu-

tor's office for comment. Paris St-Germain host Monaco in the second leg of their Champions League knockout round play-off tie on Wednesday. Hakimi was named in PSG's initial squad, published last Tuesday. The 27-year-old was born in Spain but represents Morocco and has made 194 appearances for Paris St-Germain, winning the Champions League and Ligue 1 titles last season. His performances saw him honoured at the Best Fifa Football Awards ceremony held in Paris on Monday evening, where he was named in the Fifpro men's world team of the year. Morocco will face Scotland, Haiti and Brazil at the World Cup in the USA, Mexico and Canada this summer.



Pacquiao and Mayweather agree professional rematch

# SESKO AND LAMMENS ALLOW MAN UTD TO DREAM OF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Michael Carrick had a neat way of describing Benjamin Sesko's assimilation into life at Manchester United. "He is growing as a player," said United's head coach. "Sometimes it's big steps, sometimes it's little steps. He has taken some huge ones recently. "The confidence and belief he is playing with is great to see." The mighty strides Sesko has taken in United's latest two games have placed the club in a superb position to cement a return to the Champions League after a two-year absence. Without the Slovenian's contributions off the bench, United would have lost at West Ham on 10 February and drawn with Everton on Monday on their first visit to Hill Dickinson Stadium. Sesko's goals have put Carrick's men out on their own in fourth spot, three points behind Aston Villa and three ahead of

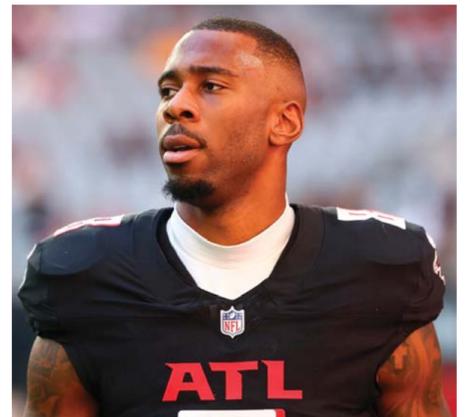


Chelsea and Liverpool. If his stoppage-time volley to earn a point at West Ham was a thing of aesthetic beauty, his latest effort in the 71st minute of the 1-0 win at Everton was a feat of physical excellence. It was a combination of endurance, running 70 yards at top speed after laying off a pass to Matheus Cunha, and calmness, to steady himself and

coolly slot home Bryan Mbeumo's square pass. "It was a great finish, a ruthless finish," said Carrick. "I like the way he put it away with real confidence." Watching the game for Sky Sports, former Liverpool and England defender Jamie Carragher looked at the goal admirably. "Sesko has gone over 80 yards and then finishes," Carragher said. "You expect

him to be breathing heavily and panting after that. But no, he still has the energy to really celebrate." Sesko has taken his goals tally to eight for the season. Remarkably, he only scored twice under Ruben Amorim, who signed him from RB Leipzig for £73.7m in August 2025. Now he has six in his latest seven games, starting with three in two matches while Darren Fletcher was in interim charge after Amorim's dismissal at the start of January. That return has led many observers to feel Sesko is unlucky not to have made the starting XI for any of the six games Carrick has had at the helm. United's boss understands the debate. But he doesn't feel it is especially important. "I get why everyone is talking about it and making a big deal of it, but it is not always as extreme," he said. "I have got a really good relationship with Ben.

# IRELAND DEFEAT REMINISCENT OF END OF MY ERA - JONES



Former head coach Eddie Jones says the scenes at the end of England's defeat against Ireland on Saturday reminded him of the acrimonious end of his own time in charge at Twickenham. England came into the Six Nations with hopes of winning a first title since 2020, but their campaign has been sunk by emphatic back-to-back defeats after they were overturned by Scotland in round two. Some home fans left Allianz Stadium early in the Ireland match, while fly-half George Ford was ironically cheered for finding touch after two earlier botched efforts. "I felt a bit sick at the end of the game," Jones told his Rugby Unity podcast, external "I've had that feeling - the grey sky looks like it is coming down on you, there is this eerie feeling in the stadium, it's only half full, and the ones that are there are looking for a bit of blood."

Jones' own tenure ended with a 27-13 loss to South Africa in November 2022, which concluded to a chorus of jeers. The Rugby Football Union sacked the Australian 10 days later after a review into his record of five wins in 12 matches across that calendar year. Jones believes that Steve Borthwick, who worked as his assistant during stints with England and Japan, made an error before the tournament starting in publicly stating his team's aim to travel to Paris on the final weekend with the title in their sights. The game had loomed as a meeting of the two pre-tournament favourites, but, while France have collected a maximum 15 points from their three opening fixtures, England could sink to the bottom of the standings if they lose to an impressive Italy in Rome in their next and penultimate match on 7 March.

## “I HOPE ‘BAND MELAM,’ WHICH IS SET TO RELEASE ON MARCH 13, BECOMES A BIG HIT,” SAID SIVAJI AT THE TEASER LAUNCH EVENT

**B**and Melam stars Court fame Harsh Roshan and Sridevi as the lead pair. Presented by Mango Mass Media and produced under the Kona Film Corporation banner by Kona Venkat, the film is directed by Satish Javvaji. Produced by Kavya and Shrivya, the movie is scheduled for release on March 13. The teaser was unveiled on Tuesday, and music director Thaman and actor Shivaji attended the event as chief guests. Sivaji said, “Band Melam is made with a beautiful love story. I was also approached for a role in this film, but I declined as I felt it might look routine. Sridevi is a very talented actress, and Roshan is a gifted actor who will reach great heights in the future. With Band Melam, all of them are going to move to the next level. We premiered Court on March 13 and it became a hit. Now Band Melam is also releasing on March 13. I hope this too becomes a big success.” Thaman said, “I am at this stage in my career because of Kona sir. My journey continued strongly after Dookudu. It's not that Kona sir has gold in his hands, his hand itself is golden. I'm happy to be here today for Band Melam. Watching Harsh Roshan and Sridevi reminds me of the days of Nuvve Kavali. I really like Vijay Bulganin's songs. I hope the film becomes a huge hit on March 13.” Kona Venkat said, “With Nimnu Kori, we understood how



much appreciation a heart-felt love story can receive. Because of that experience, I produced Band Melam. Nimnu Kori remains a memorable film in Nani's filmography. Director Shiva Nirvana narrated that story with emotion. When Satish narrated this story to me, I felt the same emotion. The conflict in this story is very fresh, and the climax will captivate everyone. We chose Roshan and Sridevi because they have both the right age and strong acting potential. Sai Kumar was shocked after hearing the story. Vijay Bulganin has given us wonderful music. The film releases on March 13, and I hope the audience makes it a success and gives us the strength to introduce more new talent.” Director Nandini Reddy said,

“I liked the teaser of Band Melam. I feel the director will speak more on the day of the film's release and success. Harsh Roshan and Sridevi have connected well with the audience. I share a twenty-year bond with Kona sir. His films should continue to succeed, and he should keep introducing new talent to the industry. I love Vijay Bulganin's music. I wish this movie becomes a big hit.” Shiva Nirvana said, “Kona sir is my godfather. Because of him, many directors and writers have entered the industry. Through Band Melam too, he is introducing new talent. I hope this film becomes a big hit. He should continue encouraging newcomers. Harsh Roshan will reach great heights in the industry. Sridevi is an excel-

lent actress. After watching the teaser, I felt like going to the theater with a group to watch the film. I hope Satish scores a hit with this movie. I like Vijay Bulganin's music very much. I wish Band Melam great success on March 13.” Venu Udugula said, “I really liked the teaser of Band Melam. It's clear that this is not a film made for commercial calculations or money alone. It is made with love and sincerity, portraying life with the essence of Telangana soil. I had already heard the story. The intense and philosophical base of the story has been shown effectively in the teaser. Thanks to Kona sir for encouraging such new talent. This is a Telugu film rooted in Telangana life.” Harsh Roshan said, “Band Melam is

a village love story set against a pure Telangana backdrop. My character showcases every emotion at its peak. The movie will connect with everyone. Thanks to Shivaji sir and Thaman sir for attending the event. The film releases on March 13. Please do watch it.” Sridevi said, “Just as you all supported us with so much love for Court, I hope you extend the same love and encouragement to Band Melam. I hope everyone liked our teaser. Our film is releasing on March 13. Please watch and support it.” Director Satish Javvaji said, “Thanks to everyone who attended the teaser launch of Band Melam. The film has come out very well. After Court, I am happy to come again with another good story.”

## 'Vishnu Vinyasam' is a good entertainment that can be enjoyed by youth and family in theaters

IT STANDS IN THE TOP 5 IN SRI VISHNU GARU'S CAREER: PRODUCERS SUBRAMANIAM NAIDU G & SUMANTH NAIDU

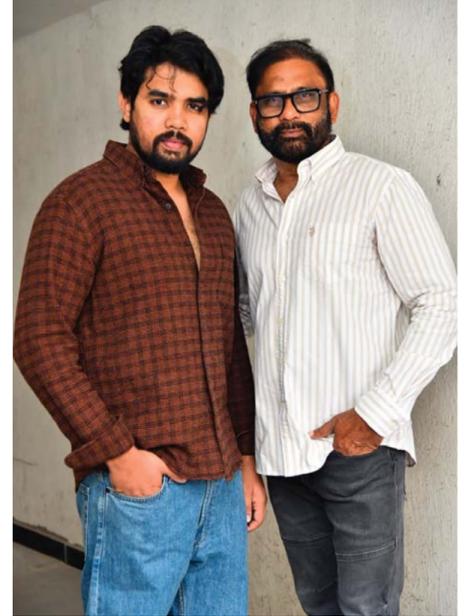
**K**ing of Entertainment Sri Vishnu is going to entertain with his hilarious joyride 'Vishnu Vinyasam'. Directed by Yadunath Maruthi Rao and produced by Sumanth Naidu G under the banner of Sri Subramanyeswara Cinemas, this film stars Nayana Sarika as the heroine opposite Sri Vishnu. The promotional content has already created a huge buzz. The film will be released worldwide on February 27. On this occasion, producers Subramanyam Naidu G and Sumanth Naidu G shared the details of the film in a press conference.

**'Vishnu Vinyasam' is an out and out entertainer. How much of the story you heard was transferred to the screen?**

“Comedy stories connect with the audience only after they are seen on screen rather than when they are heard. We enjoyed this story as much as we enjoyed it when we saw it. The film turned out very well. Vishnu improvises many dialogues on the spot. The audience also enjoys all of them a lot in this. We felt very happy after watching the final copy. What we had planned was conveyed wonderfully on screen.”

**What about hero Sri Vishnu's support?**

“Hero Sri garu was very supportive. Due to some unavoidable reasons, the two films



had to come out at the same time. However, in the one-week gap, they planned to bring a comedy entertainer first and then a thriller genre film. His support in this regard cannot be forgotten. Since they are two different genre films, the audience will definitely enjoy them in the theaters.

**What will 'Vishnu Vinyasa' be like?**

“This is a story based on a hero character. Along with

that, there will be another interesting track. There will be good family entertainment. The hero character believes in numerology. That character will be entertaining to the core. Also, the heroine track and the two families will be very interesting.

**What about the title?**

“There is a lot of comedy in this along with the story. If you watch Vishnu's single film, it will be about one-liners and comedy.”

## BIG B AND KAMAL HAASAN BEGIN 'KALKI 2' SHOOT



**M**umbai: Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has reunited with cinema icon Kamal Haasan after almost four decades, as the shoot for the much-anticipated sequel to “Kalki 2898 AD” has begun. Big B took to his blog where he shared a string of pictures from the sets of “Kalki 2” in the character of Ashwatthama, the son of sage and warrior Dronacharya. He even shared pictures with Kamal

and said that the two last worked together in the 1985 film “Geraftaar” directed by Prayag Raaj. Taking to his blog, the veteran actor shared that he would be missing his customary Sunday meeting with fans as he is currently shooting in Hyderabad. “Told them that this Sunday I shall not be able to come, since I was shooting in Hyderabad..but still they come..to confirm ..but apologies..work first..

rest later.” The octogenarian shared his excitement about collaborating with Kamal Haasan again after a long gap. “And meeting up with the great KAMAL HAASAN ... we shall be working together after ages .. last in Geraftaar.” Geraftaar also stars Poonam Dhillon and Rajinikanth. The film, which is one of the highest-grossing movies of the year 1985, follows the story of brothers Karan and Kishan, who are separated when Karan is framed for a murder, leading him to commit suicide. Talking about working on the sequel to the 2024 epic mythological sci-fi fiction film by Nag Ashwin, he said: “Kalki 2 begun the work .. and shall ever cherish the love and affection of anticipated presence on the Sunday .. but hopefully shall be with all this coming Sunday.”

## Meet Bhavitha Mandava: The Hyderabad model who made Vogue history



**H**Hyderabad: Bhavitha Mandava, a 26-year-old model from Hyderabad, is making waves in the global fashion industry. She gained fame after becoming the first Indian woman to open a show for Chanel at the Métiers d'Art Show in 2026, which was held on a subway platform at Manhattan's Bowery station. Bhavitha's journey into fashion began in a most unexpected way. While waiting at a subway station in New York City, she was spotted by a fashion scout. This chance encounter led her to walk as an exclusive model for Bottega Veneta in the Spring/Summer 2025 show. Despite being a student at New York University at the time, Bhavitha managed to juggle her academics and modeling career.

**Covering British Vogue**

Bhavitha's success continues to soar. She was recently featured on the cover of British Vogue's March 2026 issue, a major milestone in her career. In the feature, she is celebrated for her natural presence, confidence, and how she represents a shift toward greater diversity in the fashion world.

## How Shah Rukh Khan refuses to slow down despite major health issues



**H**Hyderabad: Veteran actor Govind Namdev recently shared his admiration for Shah Rukh Khan's unwavering work ethic, despite facing significant health challenges. Speaking on The Lallantop, Namdev revealed that King Khan is one of the few actors who works tirelessly around the clock, often managing to sleep only three to four hours a day.

● **Shah Rukh Khan's Intense Work Schedule**

Namdev reflected on his experience working with SRK during the 2000 film Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani. He shared that SRK works 24 hours a day, balancing several commitments, including gym workouts, learning dialogues, attending events, and performing. Namdev was astonished by Khan's energy and dedication, despite his severe health

problems, including chronic back issues.

“Ek hi hai banda jo 24 ghante kaam karta hai, sona bhi 3-4 ghante, ussi mei dand bhaitak bhi hai, udghatan bhi karna hai, dialogue bhi yaad karna hai, kahin perform karne bhi jaana hai, main hairaan ho gaya ki ye kaisa aadmi hai. (There is only one man who works 24 hours a day. He sleeps barely three to four hours, and in that time he also manages workouts, event inaugurations, learning dialogues and travelling for performances. I was stunned, what kind of person is he?)” He further added, “Physical bahut zyada problem hai, reedh ki haddi ki problem hai, kaafi problem hai, dekh kar hame bhi sikhaaya (He has serious back problems, issues with his backbone, and several other health concerns. But watching him, even we learned something.”

## “King Buddha” Shooting Across Global Buddhist Nations – Hollywood Director Satya Reddy Participates in World Peace Padayatra

**A** unique World Peace Padayatra is currently being undertaken by 60 Buddhist monks from Thailand, covering nearly 400 kilometers, starting from Swarnabhumi in Karnataka to Buddhabhumi at Nagarjuna Sagar in Telangana. As part of this spiritual journey, a 17-kilometer walk from Hyderabad to Turkayamjal was conducted today, where Hollywood Director Satya Reddy, along with the King Buddha film unit, actively participated in support of global peace.

success for the upcoming Hollywood film “King Buddha.”

**Director Satya Reddy Speaks**

**Addressing the gathering, Satya Reddy stated**

“We are rapidly progressing with our Hollywood project King Buddha (We Want World Peace), which was initiated in the United States. Shooting has already been completed in 10 countries, and filming is planned across 15 more Buddhist nations. The film features prominent actors from Hollywood, Bollywood, and South Indian cinema. Our vision is to release the film in over 100 languages worldwide.” He also recalled that revolutionary poet Gaddar

Garu, during the making of his earlier 100-day celebration film Ukku Satyagraham, introduced him to Buddhism and encouraged the inclusion of Buddha-related themes in cinema. Satya Reddy expressed that creating a full-fledged international film based on Gautama Buddha is both a great responsibility and a meaningful challenge.

**Global Promotions & Events**

**The director announced that:**

- Teaser and trailer launches will be held in Thailand and Malaysia.
- Pre-release events are planned in Delhi and Amaravati.
- The King Buddha

film team will continue participating in the Padayatra until its completion. He further expressed his aspiration to expand similar peace marches from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, promoting unity and harmony across India. Satya Reddy shared that evolving from Tollywood to Hollywood as a filmmaker is a matter of great pride for him.

**About King Buddha**

King Buddha is an international Hollywood project carrying the message of world peace. The film is being made with a global vision, focusing on the life of Gautama Buddha and the principles of Pancha Sheela, aiming to spread peace, compassion, and harmony across nations.

