

25-02-2026
Total pilgrims: 73,035
Tonsures: 27,090
Hundi kanukulu: 4,48CR
Waiting Compartments: 25.

Approx. Darsan Time for Sanvadarshnam (with out SSD Tokens) - 12-15H

wwwthesouthindiatimes.com facebookthesouthindiatimesyahooin

thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in @thesouthindiatimes

VIJAY DEVERAKONDA, TIED KNOT WITH RASHMIKA MANDANNA ON THURSDAY, HAS SHARED HIS FIRST POST AFTER THE WEDDING CEREMONY.



WEDDING BELLS

US JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ACCUSED OF WITH-HOLDING TRUMP-RELATED EPSTEIN FILES



WORLD NEWS

MARKRAM LEADS FROM FRONT AS SOUTH AFRICA BEAT WEST INDIES BY NINE WICKETS IN SUPER 8S CLASH



T20 WORLD CUP

IN BRIFS

PRIYANKA GANDHI CALLS FOR 'MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY' OVER NAMES IN 'EPSTEIN FILES'

WAYANAD (KERALA) : Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday called for "moral accountability" from public office-bearers whose names



appear in the 'Epstein files', alleging that such accountability was lacking in India. Speaking to reporters in Wayanad, Vadra said that across the world, those in public office whose names appear in the 'Epstein files' have resigned. Her remarks come at a time when Congress is demanding the resignation of Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, whose name figures in the 'Epstein files' released in the United States.

ECI HOLDS ALL-PARTY MEETING IN CHENNAI AHEAD OF 2026 TAMIL NADU ASSEMBLY POLLS

Chennai, Feb 26: The Election Commission of India on Thursday held extensive consultations with recognised national and state political parties in Chennai as part of its preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu. The meetings were chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, along with the Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu and other senior officials. Representatives from six recognised national parties attended the meeting: Aam Aadmi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress and National People's Party. Five recognised state parties also participated: All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam, Naam Tamilar Katchi and Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi.

UPHOLD SPIRIT OF TELANGANA MARTYRS: CM REVANTH TO NEW OFFICERS

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

Anumula Revanth Reddy addressed the valedictory ceremony of the training programme for newly recruited Group-1 and Group-2 officers, congratulating them on successfully completing their training and stepping into public service.

"Just recently, you were students. Yesterday, you were unemployed. Today, you are officers," the Chief Minister said, reminding them that they are now entrusted with serving four crore people of Telangana under the Praja Palana (people's governance) framework.

He underlined that the people of Telangana may endure hunger, but they will never accept domination. Recalling historical struggles, he said leaders like Komaram Bheem and Ramji Gond did not fight for kingdoms but rebelled against oppression. Similarly, Sammakka and Saralamma revolted against the mighty Kakatiya Empire in pursuit of justice and dignity, and are today revered as forest deities. They became martyrs for social justice, equality, freedom and equal opportunities, he said. The Chief Minister urged the new officers to remember the aspirations of the people and the sacrifices of martyrs while discharging their duties. He highlighted that out of nearly six lakh aspirants, 582 candidates secured Group-1 posts and 775 secured Group-2 posts on merit.

Noting that Group-1 posts were not filled for nearly 15 years, he said the present people's government fulfilled long-pending aspirations by conducting the examinations transparently. The govern-



Telangana Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy urged newly appointed Group-1 and Group-2 officers to uphold transparency, serve the poorest with dedication, and draw inspiration from reformist leaders as the government strengthens administrative excellence through global training collaborations.

ment undertook reforms in the Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC), appointing individuals with subject expertise as Chairman and Members, and ensuring stringent measures to prevent question paper leaks.

Referring to legal challenges, he said some vested interests approached courts soon after the

results were announced, but the government stood firmly by the merit-based selection process and fought the case up to the Supreme Court to protect the interests of genuine candidates. The Chief Minister cautioned officers not to forget their responsibilities after assuming office and not to fall morally. "You are the eyes and ears of the government. It is your responsibility to ensure welfare schemes reach the poorest of the poor," he said. He stated that he met them not mechanically but with emotional attachment, and advised them to remember legendary civil servant S. R. Sankaran before entering their offices, drawing inspiration from his dedication to the poor.

BLUEPRINT TO BE PREPARED TO COMPLETE IRRIGATION PROJECTS: CHANDRABABU

Amaravati (TSIT) : Asserting that the coalition government is committed to supplying water to all regions in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday announced that a blueprint to complete irrigation projects will be prepared soon. Speaking on budget allocations to the irrigation sector in the Assembly session, the Chief Minister said that the state government is focusing on water security, which is essential to attract investments and industries.

He stressed the need for linking of rivers right from Vamsadhara to Penna to ensure water supply to all the regions in the state and stated that efforts are on to prepare



necessary plans.

The Chief Minister said that Rs 20,000 crore was spent on the irrigation sector during the past 20 months. As a result, water was supplied to the Paramasamudram tank in Kuppam through the Handri Neeva canal.

Stating that all the irrigation projects were developed during the TDP regime, the Chief

Minister said that Telugu Ganga, Galeru Nagari and Handri Neeva projects were launched during former chief minister NT Rama Rao's regime to supply water to Rayalaseema. Through the Pattiseema lift irrigation, 100 TMC of water was supplied to Rayalaseema. He assured the completion of the Veligonda project to benefit the Markapuram and Prakasam districts. He said that the Polavaram project will be completed before the Godavari pushkaram, and the Chintalapudi lift irrigation scheme will be completed to supply water to the upland areas of both Krishna and Eluru districts.

Rahul, Priyanka lay foundation stone for 100 homes in Wayanad, call survivors 'family'

Wayanad (TSIT): In a significant outreach to landslide-affected families in Wayanad, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday laid the foundation stone for 100 houses being constructed by the Congress for survivors of the Chooralmala-Mundakkai disaster.

Addressing beneficiaries, Priyanka recalled her first visit to the region soon after the tragedy struck on July 30, 2024. "What I saw that day will never leave me," she said, recounting how families had lost homes, livelihoods, schools and businesses overnight.

What struck her most, she added, was the unity and courage displayed by people across religious lines. Though she was not the MP at the time, Priyanka said she now feels like a member of the community. "Between then and now, I have become a part of your family," she said,



What I saw that day will never leave me," she said, recounting how families had lost homes, livelihoods, schools and businesses overnight.

describing how she had met proud farmers forced to take up daily wage work and small traders struggling after their shops were washed away.

She said the party had raised the issue at multiple forums, including Parliament, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking a national disaster declaration, and written to the Prime Minister.

India & Israel elevate ties to special strategic partnership, vow to soon conclude free trade deal

JERUSALEM (TSIT) India and Israel on Thursday elevated their "time-tested" relationship to a special strategic partnership and agreed to soon firm up a "mutually beneficial" free trade deal even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi strongly backed the Gaza peace initiative, asserting that humanity must never become a victim of conflict.

Following talks between Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu, the two sides inked a plethora of agreements to expand cooperation in areas of trade, agriculture, energy, cyberspace and digital payment.

India and Israel also vowed to expand their already close defence partnership by working towards joint development and joint production of military hardware under the framework of the transfer of tech-



nologies. In his media statement, Modi said India's security interest is linked to peace and stability in the Middle East, adding that New Delhi fully supports the Gaza Peace Initiative.

"India's stance is clear: humanity must never become a victim of conflict. A path to peace has been created through the Gaza Peace Plan. India has fully supported these efforts," he said. "In the future as

well, we will continue dialogue and cooperation with all countries," he said. PM Modi landed in Israel on Wednesday on a two-day visit. It is his second visit to Israel in nine years. In his remarks, the prime minister said India and Israel have a united view that there is no place for terrorism in the world and both sides stand shoulder-to-shoulder in countering terrorism and its supporters. "Our relationship is founded on the strong bedrock of deep trust, shared democratic values, and human sensitivities. Our bond has stood the test of every trial of time," he said.

"Today, we have taken the historic decision to elevate our time-tested partnership to the status of a 'Special Strategic Partnership'," he said.

Advertisement for 'Hi Life Brides' featuring a bride in a pink lehenga. Text includes 'OPENS TODAY', 'THE BREATHTAKING BRIDAL COLLECTIONS ARE HERE', 'HI LIFE BRIDES BRIDAL COUTURE | JEWELLERY | ACCESSORIES', 'OVER 250+ ICONIC DESIGNERS & JEWELLERS', '27 & 28 FEB', 'TAJ WEST END BENGALURU', and '10 am - 8 pm | Valet Parking | Entry fee Rs.100'.

## Amit Shah unveils SSB projects in Bihar, announces crackdown on infiltration along Nepal border

Patna, Feb 26: Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday inaugurated and laid e-foundation stones for multiple infrastructure projects of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) at the Border Outposts in Leti and Indarwa in Bihar's Araria district.



Addressing SSB personnel and residents in the border region, Shah underscored the need for heightened vigilance along the India-Nepal frontier. While noting that India shares cordial ties with Nepal, he cautioned that hostile elements could attempt to exploit the open border.

He stressed that the SSB must remain alert and bolster its intelligence gathering to prevent anti-national forces from using the route to enter India. Highlighting the importance of grassroots-level inputs, the Home Minister called for closer coordination between security personnel and villagers in border areas, saying effective communication is key to receiving timely and accurate information.

Reiterating a major electoral promise, Shah announced that the Centre is preparing to launch a decisive campaign against infiltration in Bihar's Seemanchal region. He asserted that the effort

would go beyond merely removing names from voter rolls and would focus on identifying and removing infiltrators from Indian territory.

According to Shah, the upcoming drive will include demolition of illegal encroachments within a 10-kilometre radius of the international border and steps to identify and deport those found residing unlawfully. He alleged that infiltration impacts electoral outcomes, diverts welfare benefits meant for the poor, reduces job opportunities for local youth, and poses a threat to national security.

Recalling his time campaigning in Seemanchal, Shah said he had spent four days in the region and sought continued public backing to fulfil the com-

mitments made then. He further claimed that demographic shifts linked to infiltration have significantly affected states such as West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar. Referring to the political situation in West Bengal, Shah expressed confidence that the BJP would form the government there and stated that completing border fencing and expelling infiltrators would be top priorities once that happens.

Concluding his address, the home minister said the NDA government in Bihar has received a clear mandate on issues of border security and infiltration, adding that safeguarding the frontier remains central to the government's broader vision for the state's development and welfare.

## President Droupadi Murmu to lay foundation stone in Jamshedpur; unprecedented security in place



Ranchi, Feb 26: Droupadi Murmu is scheduled to visit Jharkhand on Thursday to lay the foundation stone of the Shri Jagannath Spiritual and Cultural Charitable Centre Trust at Kadma Marine Drive in Jamshedpur. As per the official itinerary, the President's MI-17 helicopter will land at Sonari Airport at around 12 noon. She will first attend the groundbreaking ceremony at Kadma and later proceed to Tata Manipal Medical College in Baridiha.

At the medical college, the pro-

gramme will begin with a photo session with students who have secured top positions in various semesters. The President will then interact with meritorious students during an introductory conference organised by the college administration. She is also expected to tour the campus and participate in a tree-plantation drive.

The college management has announced plans to develop a "Draupadi Murmu Sports and Food Complex" on the campus in the long term. Only 200 invitees

have been permitted to attend the event.

Several dignitaries are slated to be present on the occasion, including Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Governor Santosh Gangwar, Singhbhum MP Jaba Manjhi, Jamshedpur MP Vidyut Baran Mahto, MLAs Saryu Rai and Purnima Sahu, along with Tata Steel CEO T V Narendran.

To ensure foolproof arrangements during the President's visit, nearly 4,000 police personnel and 125 magistrates have been deployed across the city and along the convoy route. Officials described the security measures as unprecedented.

Three specialised "hit teams" will form the core of the high-security grid. One team will be stationed at Sonari Airport, the second at Kadma police station, and the third at Sidgora police station. Each unit comprises specially trained personnel equipped with advanced combat skills and precision marksmanship to respond swiftly to any potential threat. Additionally, 24 buildings along the convoy route have been identified as strategic points, with security personnel deployed on rooftops for surveillance. CCTV cameras and drones will monitor the movement, while officers equipped with binoculars will keep vigil. Rapid Action Police teams have also been stationed near the Kadma and Baridiha venues and at the Mango bus stand to maintain law and order.

## CBI CONDUCTS SEARCHES AT ANIL AMBANI'S OFFICE AND RESIDENCE IN FRESH RELIANCE COMMUNICATIONS LOAN FRAUD CASE



New Delhi, Feb 26 (UNI) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday said that it has registered a second case against Reliance Communications based on a complaint filed by Bank of Baroda on February 24, 2026, against Anil Ambani, promoter and erstwhile Chairman of Reliance Communications Ltd. (RCom), and others. This is a fresh case registered by the CBI for alleged offences of criminal conspiracy and cheating under the IPC, as well as criminal misconduct and abuse of official position under the Prevention of Corruption Act. According to the FIR, Bank of Baroda suffered a loss of more than Rs 2,220 crore in loans availed by M/s Reliance Communications Ltd., which were allegedly diverted and misutilised through fictitious transactions with related parties.

The CBI has further alleged that the books of accounts of Reliance Communications Ltd. were manipulated and irregularities were concealed. The loan account was declared a Non-Performing Asset (NPA) in 2017. However, based on a petition filed by Anil Ambani before the Bombay High Court, there was a stay on declaring the account as fraud. The stay was lifted on February 23, 2026, following which Bank of Baroda lodged the complaint and the CBI promptly registered the case.

It may be recalled that the CBI had earlier registered another case against Reliance Communications based on a complaint lodged by SBI, the lead bank of a consortium of 11 banks. Bank of Baroda was not part of that consortium. The present case pertains to a separate loan availed by Reliance Communications Ltd. from Bank of Baroda, the then Vijaya Bank and the then Dena Bank. Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank have since been merged with Bank of Baroda. After registering the case, the CBI conducted searches at the residence of Anil Ambani and at the registered offices of Reliance Communications Ltd. Various documents related to the loan transactions have reportedly been recovered.

## Multiple bomb threats trigger evacuations at passport and post offices in West Bengal

Kolkata, Feb 26: Kolkata witnessed another wave of bomb threats on Thursday as passport offices at Brabourne Road and Anandpur were evacuated following emails claiming explosives had been planted on the premises. Employees rushed out in panic, and police along with bomb squad teams, assisted by sniffer dogs, conducted thorough searches. No explosives were found.

Simultaneously, similar threats targeted several post offices across



the state. A warning email was sent

and bomb squads conducting search-

to the Howrah Maidan post office after work began, prompting an immediate evacuation. Authorities also responded to threats at the Asansol Head Post Office in West Midnapore and the Basirhat Head Post Office in North 24 Parganas, with police

at each location. No suspicious items were discovered.

These incidents follow a spate of threats over the past two days directed at courts in West Bengal. On Tuesday, emails warned of bombs in the Calcutta High Court, City Sessions Court, Suri Court in Birbhum, and Asansol Court in West Burdwan, with panic also reported at Hooghly District Court. Police conducted extensive searches, but nothing hazardous was found.

On Wednesday, the Asansol District and Sessions Court and the Suri District Court of Birbhum received similar threats, claiming RDX explosives had been planted. Once again, searches by police yielded no dangerous material. Authorities continue to investigate the source of these repeated email threats, while maintaining heightened security measures across courts, passport offices, and post offices in the state.

## One-day awareness conference for PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries at Mahabubabad district headquarters

Mahabubabad (TSIT): A one-day awareness program for 'PM Vishwakarma' beneficiaries and applicants was organized grandly at Sri Veerabhadra Crazy Food World, local Kuravi Road, Mahabubabad town, jointly organized by MSME-DFO Hyderabad and District Industries Centre (DIC) Mahabubabad, District Industries Centre (DIC) General Manager Srimannarayana Reddy, Assistant Director Dinesh, Lead District Manager (LDM) Yadagiri, and BC Corporation Officer Srinivasa Rao, DPRO Rajendra Prasad were present as the chief guests of the program. Highlights



of the meeting The beneficiaries were explained how to sell their products through online platforms in line with the changing times of digital marketing. Experts explained the importance of attractive packaging along with the qual-

ity of packaging items and its demand in the market. Government schemes provided complete understanding of various types of subsidies, loan facilities and other development schemes provided to artisans by the Central and State Governments.

GM Srimannarayana Reddy said that there is a great opportunity for artisans to grow economically through the PM Vishwakarma scheme and called on them to expand their businesses by adding technology. Vishwakarma beneficiaries, applicants and officials from different mandals of the district participated in this program.

## MGU Botany Department welcomes its juniors

Nalgonda, Feb 26 (TSIT): "This welcome party isn't just a celebration; it's a testament to the spirit of our Botany family - nurturing growth, one leaf at a time. To our new MSc cohort, welcome to the green heart of our university! You've chosen botany not just as a subject, but as a gateway to understanding life's quiet miracles right from the intricate dance of photosynthesis that powers our planet, to the resilient ecosystems fighting climate change," said Head of the Department of Botany of Mahatma Gandhi



University (MGU) Dr Madhavi. Participating as the chief guest at the Welcome Party organized by the final year students of the Department of Botany on Thursday, Dr Madhavi

wished the students best of luck in their future endeavours. Speaking on the occasion, Adjunct Professor Dr B Digambar Rao encouraged the students to dive into labs alive with ferns

and fungi, field trips blooming with discoveries, and research that could shape a sustainable future. Earlier the welcome party truly came alive with cultural performances by students with folk songs and dances and skits, showcasing their talent and team spirit. Teachers of Botany Dr P Sreenu, Dr Y Venkateshwarlu, Dr T Narsimha Swamy and Dr E Shrayya Puri were also present.

## Gurdaspur border outpost killings linked to ISI handlers, one accused shot dead

Gurdaspur, Feb 25: Two personnel of the Punjab Police were shot dead inside a border outpost in Punjab's Gurdaspur district in the early hours of Sunday in what investigators describe as a targeted attack with alleged links to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Deputy Inspector General of Police (Border Range) Sandeep Goel said preliminary investigations indicate that the killings were carried out at the behest of ISI handlers based in Pakistan. According to police, the three accused allegedly committed the crime for a promised payment of Rs 20,000. One of them had reportedly received Rs 3,000 as an advance.

The incident occurred at the Dorangla police outpost

in Adhian village, located around two kilometres from the international border in Gurdaspur district. The victims were identified as Assistant Sub-Inspector Gurnam Singh and Home Guard Ashok Kumar.

The matter came to light after the local sarpanch, Kamaljeet Singh, was alerted by the Dorangla Station House Officer that the two personnel were not responding to repeated phone calls. When he reached the outpost around 8.15 am, both men were found dead with bullet injuries. Police said the ASI was found seated on a chair with his hands in his pockets, while the home guard was lying on a cot.

Senior officers named three local youths — Ranjit Singh (19) and Inderjit Singh (21) of Adhian village,

and Dilawar Singh (19) of nearby Alinangal — as accused in the case.

Dilawar Singh and Ranjit Singh were initially apprehended. During interrogation, Ranjit allegedly disclosed the location where he had hidden the weapon used in the crime. However, while being taken for recovery of the firearm, the police vehicle overturned near Galrhi village due to dense fog, allowing him to escape. A red alert was sounded immediately and additional forces were deployed to prevent his escape towards the border. In the early hours of the following day, around 3 am, a police team attempted to intercept a motorcycle near Purana Shala on the Gurdaspur-Mukerian road. The rider allegedly opened fire while trying to flee.

## Collector, CP Launch TWJF Media Diary



Mancherial: District Collector Kumar Deepak and Ramagundam Police Commissioner Ambar Kishore Jha released the TWJF 2026 Media Diary on Thursday. The diary, designed as a resource tool for journalists, was unveiled at the Collectorate along with DCP A Bhaskar. Officials appreciated the federation's initiative.

## Multiple bomb threats trigger evacuations at passport and post offices in West Bengal

Kolkata, Feb 26: Kolkata witnessed another wave of bomb threats on Thursday as passport offices at Brabourne Road and Anandpur were evacuated following emails claiming explosives had been planted on the premises. Employees rushed out in panic, and police along with bomb squad teams, assisted by sniffer dogs, conducted thorough searches. No explosives were found.

Simultaneously, similar threats targeted several post offices across the state. A warning email was sent to the Howrah Maidan post office after work began, prompting an immediate evacuation. Authorities



also responded to threats at the Asansol Head Post Office in West Midnapore and the Basirhat Head Post Office in North 24 Parganas, with police and bomb squads conducting searches at each location. No suspicious items were

discovered.

These incidents follow a spate of threats over the past two days directed at courts in West Bengal. On Tuesday, emails warned of bombs in the Calcutta High Court, City Sessions Court, Suri Court in

Birbhum, and Asansol Court in West Burdwan, with panic also reported at Hooghly District Court. Police conducted extensive searches, but nothing hazardous was found.

On Wednesday, the Asansol District and Sessions Court and the Suri District Court of Birbhum received similar threats, claiming RDX explosives had been planted. Once again, searches by police yielded no dangerous material. Authorities continue to investigate the source of these repeated email threats, while maintaining heightened security measures across courts, passport offices, and post offices in the state.

Guarantees will not be stopped, says Shivakumar amid fiscal heat



Bengaluru, Feb 26 (TSIT) Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday asserted that none of the state's flagship guarantee schemes would be discontinued despite the financial pressures, while accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Centre of not extending a support. "Karnataka guarantees won't be stopped. Whatever the difficulties are, we are just moving ahead," Shivakumar said, striking a defiant note amid opposition criticism over the State's fiscal position. Positioning the Congress government as both welfare-driven and development-focused, he maintained that infrastructure and administrative work were continuing uninterrupted. "The development work is also continuing. The Karnataka government is a sound government. It is a government with good administration, and work is going on," he said. Taking a swipe at the BJP at the national level, the Deputy Chief Minister alleged that the Centre was not cooperating with the state. "Though the BJP at the national level is not helping us in any way, we are still managing," he remarked, framing the issue as one of resilience rather than constraint. Shivakumar also referred to public concerns surrounding more than Rs 21 crore transferred to the accounts of families of those who lost their lives under various circumstances. He said the government has examined these issues and noted that some beneficiaries themselves have indicated they do not require the assistance. "There is some demand from various sections, including women. All these issues have been looked at, and some people are coming forward. We are financially sound; we don't need this guarantee or power. That is what some of them have said. We'll discuss this issue," he added. The remarks come amid a broader political debate over the sustainability of Karnataka's welfare guarantees, with the ruling Congress defending them as social commitments and the opposition questioning their fiscal impact. Shivakumar's statement seeks to reinforce the government's resolve to continue the schemes while countering narratives of financial instability.

Parameshwara slams Goyal's remarks on Rahul Gandhi

Bengaluru, Feb 26 (UNI) Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday objected to remarks made by Piyush Goyal against Rahul Gandhi, stating that such statements were completely inappropriate and would not help the political narrative of the ruling party. Addressing reporters in Bengaluru, the minister said this was not the first time that leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party had made remarks targeting Rahul Gandhi. He alleged that such statements were repeatedly made with the intention of lowering the morale of the Congress leader, but maintained that such efforts would not succeed politically or personally. Goyal called Rahul Gandhi as a puppet of anti-India forces and organisations. He also claimed that Rahul Gandhi had travelled abroad 247 times, suggesting that it had raised con-



cerns regarding adherence to government security protocols. Parameshwara said Rahul Gandhi has demonstrated

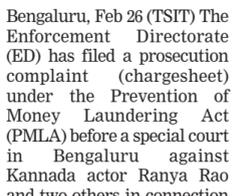
strong political resilience and has consistently faced criticism from rival parties. He added that Gandhi is fully capable of handling political pressure and challenging situations. The minister asserted that attempts to weaken his morale through public statements would not produce any political benefit for those making such remarks. He further said that political leaders should maintain dignity in public discourse and avoid making unnecessary personal comments. Parameshwara termed Goyal's statement as completely unacceptable, saying that democracy thrives on constructive debate rather than political attacks aimed at individuals. The Karnataka Home Minister said Rahul Gandhi is one of the key political figures in the country and is widely regarded as a prominent face of the Indian National Congress.

ASSETS CARE & RECONSTRUCTION ENTERPRISE LTD. Registered Office: 14th Floor, Eros Corporate Tower, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 Tel: 91-11-43115600 Fax: 91-11-43115618 Corporate Office: Unit No. : 502, C Wing, One BKC, Radisson Developers, Plot No. C-66, G-Block, Bandra Kuria Complex, Mumbai - 400015 Tel.: 022 68643101 E-mail : acre.acre@acredia.in Website : www.acredia.in CIN : U65993DL2002PL151769

POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property) WHEREAS, The Authorized Officer of Assets Care & Reconstruction Enterprise Ltd. acting in its capacity as trustee of ACRE 166 TRUST, ("ACRE"), under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice dated 01.12.2025 calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount as mentioned in the notice as on 01.12.2025 as below:

Table with columns: Sr. No., Borrowers, Loan Account No., Outstanding amount mentioned in the notice issued under Sec. 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002, Description of Immovable Property, and Amount Due. Contains 20 entries for various properties in Bengaluru.

ED files chargesheet against Ranya Rao in gold smuggling case



Bengaluru, Feb 26 (TSIT) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) before a special court in Bengaluru against Kannada actor Ranya Rao and two others in connection with an alleged large-scale gold smuggling and money-laundering network. The development marks a major advancement in one of the most high-profile smuggling probes in recent times. The chargesheet names Ranya, her alleged associate Tarun Konduru, and Ballari-based gold dealer Sahil Sakariya Jain as accused. The ED's investigation follows an FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in March 2025, based on a complaint from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI). The probe revealed that between March 2024 and March 2025, a total of 127.287 kilograms of foreign-origin gold, valued at approximately Rs 102.55 crore, was allegedly smuggled into India and sold in the domestic market through a network of handlers and jewellers. The proceeds, authorities said, were generated in cash and funnelled through hawala channels in India and abroad, before being routed

through multiple bank accounts to conceal the illicit origin of the funds. Ranya, 32, was earlier intercepted and arrested by the DRI on March 3, 2025, at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, upon her arrival from Dubai. Officials seized 14.213 kg of smuggled gold bars, worth about Rs 12.56 crore, concealed around her person, some wrapped around her body and others hidden in personal belongings. Subsequent searches of her residence uncovered gold jewellery valued at about Rs 2.06 crore and unaccounted Indian currency amounting to Rs 2.67 crore. Investigators have alleged that Ranya's frequent international travel profile - including multiple trips to Dubai - was exploited to carry out repeated smuggling runs. Media reports also suggest she may have earned commission up to Rs 4-5 lakh per kilogram of gold smuggled, indicating the financial scale of operations linked to her role in the network.

Karnataka govt makes body cameras mandatory for passport police verification



Bengaluru, Feb 26: In a significant move to curb harassment and corruption during the passport verification process, the state government has issued an official order making it mandatory for police personnel to wear body cameras while conducting field verifications. The order, issued by DG & IGP MA Saleem, aims to bring complete transparency to the process and ensure that citizens are not subjected to bribery demands or unnecessary delays.

# EDITORIAL

## Supreme Court-NCERT Row: How Do You Really Teach Children About Judiciary?

For once, Manipur is in the national and global gaze for the right reason. The Manipuri-language film Boong has won the British Academy of Film & Television Arts (BAFTA) award in the Children and Family category, the first time an Indian film has claimed that honour. At the grand stage of BAFTA, a small film from a troubled corner of the Northeast rang a bell that could be heard across continents. Let us also be honest: for nearly three years, Manipur has occupied the national consciousness for all the wrong reasons - ethnic violence, displacement, and the painful reality of buffer zones dividing neighbour from neighbour since May 2023. Highways have fallen silent. Townships have burned. Trust has thinned like old paper.

### THE TOWN THAT ONCE WAS

Written and directed by Lakshmi Priya Devi, or 'LP', as she is fondly called by her associates, the film tells the story of a boy searching for his missing father, hoping to reignite happiness for his mother. The child protagonist, played by Gugun Kipgen - a Kuki boy portraying a Meitei character - journeys towards Moreh, the border town that later erupted in flames. The irony is sharp: the shooting in Moreh wrapped up barely a week before violence engulfed the township. Many who stood behind and before the camera are today internally displaced. The Moreh preserved in Boong may well be the last visual memory of the town that was. Both communities that now stand estranged participated in the making of this "small film with a big heart". In that sense, Boong is a reminder that Manipur's social fabric, though frayed, was once interwoven in everyday collaboration. LP's camera caught what politics failed to protect. But while the symbolism is powerful, one must not romanticise the achievement without acknowledging the labour behind it. Credit must go squarely to the director and producers who chose to back a regional-language story in an era obsessed with crime and spectacle. Supporting Manipuri content is not a commercially safe bet. It demands conviction - in story, in language, in people.

### THOSE WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR BOONG

This moment should also be seen from a historical perspective. Long before Boong, Manipuri cinema had already stamped its artistic depth. In 1981, Imagi Ningthem, directed by the doyen Aribam Syam Sharma and based on a story by Maharaj Kumari Binodini Devi and shot and produced by Kongbrailatpam Iboh Sharma, won the Grand Prix at the Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes - the first Indian film to do so. A decade later, Ishanou, again a collaboration between Binodini Devi and Aribam, was officially selected in the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes Film Festival. Its digitally restored version returned triumphantly in 2023 to the Cannes Classics section, reaffirming that Manipuri cinema had already carved a space in the world cinematic landscape. However, there are hard truths: Manipur lacks the institutional and structural ecosystem that talents deserve. For decades, filmmakers here have worked with shoestring budgets and stubborn willpower. In the early 2000s, when insurgency and economic blockade choked theatrical exhibition, Manipur led the country in producing low-budget video features - sometimes 50 to 60 films annually. It was, by necessity, a parallel film economy driven by passion rather than profit. Today, the industry has transitioned into digital production, averaging around 20 to 25 certified features annually. This is no small feat for a state of its size. Importantly, it was through persistent advocacy by Film Forum Manipur that video films were eventually made eligible for entry into the National Film Awards - a structural change that acknowledged the reality of regional production practices. That insistence altered policy.

# INDIA'S WARM HOSPITALITY TO JEWISH COMMUNITY

On the occasion of the visit of the Honourable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Israel on 25th and 26th February, 2026, his second visit to strengthen a great friendship and strategic partnership between the two countries, we take a look at the deep bonds of culture and history between India and the Jewish community. This history goes back 3,000 years and is a significant reminder of India's warmth and hospitality to visitors since ancient times. In recent times, there has been a warm recognition of the bonds between the countries and the significant development of strategic ties. In keeping with India's ancient tradition of warmth and hospitality to visitors, the Jewish community was welcomed in India and flourished here, even 3,000 years ago. They were a prosperous community and well-integrated in society and business. It is notable to see that one of the grandest synagogues in the world was made in Pune, India. The Ohel-David Synagogue in Pune was built by the eminent Indian businessman and shipbuilder David Sassoon in 1863. The synagogue is a well-known landmark in Pune. The Jewish community lives happily and flourishes in India, and the Sassoon shipbuilding docks in Mumbai have been a shining example of the success of this community in this country. David Sassoon (1792-1864) was a Baghdadi Jewish merchant who settled in Mumbai after fleeing persecution in Iraq. He built a vast trading empire and funded major public institutions, including docks, libraries and synagogues in Mumbai and Pune. The Sassoon legacy reflects the prominence of Jewish entrepreneurs in India and forms part of the shared historical memory of India and the Jewish diaspora. The Jewish community of Mumbai is the largest in India and is vibrant till today. Though it has been dwindling, there are 3,500 to 4,000 individuals in Mumbai. There are two groups among them: the Bene Israel, who have been here for centuries, and the Baghdadi Jews, who came here in the 18th-19th centuries. Five centuries ago, the Jews were welcomed to Mumbai and were given special privileges, as well as allowed to practise their faith. Many of the community took to trade and commerce, while others took to professions such as medicine.



Synagogues and a Jewish cemetery were also built here. Over the centuries, Jews have not only contributed to the economy of Mumbai but have also helped to shape the cultural landscape of the city. Historic synagogues across Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal reflect centuries of peaceful coexistence and the absence of anti-Semitism in India. These synagogues today serve as cultural bridges in India-Israel relations, highlighting a shared heritage that predates modern diplomatic ties. The Jews in Kerala, also known as the Cochin Jews, have been settled in India since very early times. In fact, they trace their roots back to the ancient period. Initially they were based in the ancient port town of Kodungallur (previously known as Muziris) and then Kochi. They made their mark in the spice trade, as well as in handicrafts. In the 1950s, there was mass emigration to Israel, and very few Jews are left in Kerala. However, there are important heritage sites of the Jewish faith and worship. The Jewish community in Kerala are believed to have settled in the Kodungallur region, even as early as the reign of King Solomon in the 10th century BCE. They later shifted to the Cochin area, perhaps on account of floods. They were granted privileges by local Hindu rulers, as is seen in the 10th-century copper plate inscriptions. The Jews established many synagogues in Kochi, which include the well-known Paradesi Synagogue, which was built in 1568 in Mattancherry. The site attracts many tourists and stands as a tangible reminder of the historic links between India and the Jewish diaspora. The Cochin Jews are today one of the smallest religious communities in India, but they have a very rich heritage and legacy preserved in museums and cultural heritage sites. It is notable that India has preserved this ancient culture, going back 3,000 years. Cooperation in Modern Times The Battle of Haifa (23 September 1918) was fought during World War I when Indian cavalry units of the British Indian Army captured the city from Ottoman forces. Soldiers from princely states such as Jodhpur, Mysore and Hyderabad played a decisive role, and many who lost lives are buried in Haifa today. The battle is commemorated annually in both India and Israel, symbolising early military cooperation and the sacrifice made by

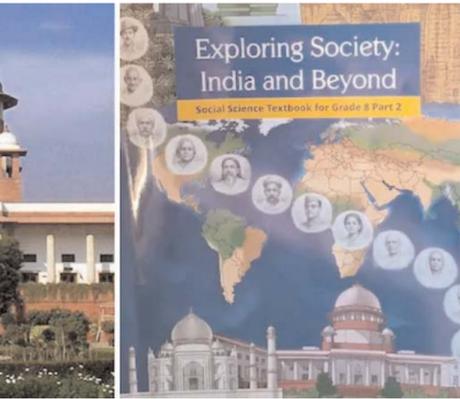
Indians. Teen Murti Chowk in Delhi was renamed Teen Murti Haifa Chowk in 2018 by Honourable PM Modi and Honourable PM Netanyahu. Malabar Street in Israeli cities such as Rishon Letzion commemorates the Malabar Coast of Kerala, from where many Cochin Jews emigrated to Israel. The name reflects the transplantation of Indian Jewish heritage into Israeli society. Such place names symbolise the enduring cultural imprint of Indian Jews within Israel's national fabric. Baroda (Vadodara) in Gujarat was historically associated with the Bene Israel Jews who prospered under princely patronage. The Gaekwad rulers welcomed Jewish families who integrated into commerce and education. These communities later formed part of the migration stream to Israel, contributing to people-to-people ties between Gujarat and Israel. A statue of Maharaja Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji, the "Good Maharaja" of Nawanagar (Gujarat), was unveiled on November 11, 2025, in Moshav Nevatim, Israel, honouring his compassionate rescue of nearly 1,000 Polish children, including many Jews, during World War II. The monument honours his legacy of providing refuge at Balachadi.

## Supreme Court-NCERT Row: How Do You Really Teach Children About Judiciary?

The recent intervention of the Supreme Court of India over a Class 8 Social Science textbook issued by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has sparked a debate that extends far beyond a contested line in a civics chapter. The reference to "corruption in the judiciary" prompted a Bench led by the Chief Justice of India to question whether such phrasing was appropriate for middle school students and whether it risked undermining confidence in a constitutional institution. Predictably, the responses have been polarised. One camp sees the Court's concern as a legitimate effort to safeguard institutional dignity. Another views it as judicial overreach into academic space. Both positions miss the larger constitutional moment. The issue is not about silencing criticism or sanitising reality. It is about how a democracy introduces complexity to young citizens. In India's constitutional design, the judiciary occupies a distinct place. Through doctrines such as the basic structure principle articulated in Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, the Supreme Court has positioned itself as the guardian of constitutional identity. Unlike the executive or legislature, courts command neither the purse nor the sword. Their authority rests on legitimacy and public confidence. It is, therefore, understandable that the Court would be sensitive to how it is portrayed in school textbooks. Early adolescence is a formative stage.



Civic impressions acquired at thirteen often endure for decades. Yet, democracies cannot thrive on curated innocence. Young Indians are not insulated from public debate. They witness high-profile controversies, hear discussions on case backlogs, and see media scrutiny of institutions. If textbooks omit real challenges, they risk appearing disconnected from lived reality. The real question, then, is one of pedagogy. How should flaws be framed? Language matters. A phrase like "corruption in the judiciary" can suggest isolated wrongdoing or systemic decay. Adults may infer nuance. Adolescents may not. The danger is not rebellion but premature cynicism. If foundational trust erodes before civic maturity develops, disengagement can follow. Trust and transparency are not opposites. In fact, accountability mechanisms strengthen institutional legitimacy. Teaching students about impeachment provisions, ethical codes, judicial



review and appellate correction demonstrates that the system contains self-correcting features. Framing challenges within reform narratives cultivates informed trust rather than blind faith. At the same time, academic autonomy deserves respect. Curriculum design is primarily the domain of educators and scholars. Courts must tread carefully when engaging with educational content. The ideal path is collaborative rather than adversarial. Structured consultation between curriculum experts, constitutional scholars, and child psychologists can help ensure age-appropriate accuracy without compromising integrity. This episode offers NCERT an opportunity. Civic education can be staged progressively. At the middle school level, emphasis can remain on constitutional structure, values, and accountability mechanisms. At the secondary stage, case studies of reform and controversy may be introduced. Senior second-

ary classrooms can host deeper analytical debates on judicial activism, transparency, and institutional critique. Such tiered learning respects developmental capacity while preserving intellectual honesty. India's constitutional journey has been marked by landmark judgments expanding rights as well as legitimate criticism over delays and infrastructure deficits. Both truths coexist. The art of civic education lies in presenting them proportionately and progressively. Democracy depends on two pillars: accountability and legitimacy. Education must nurture both. If this controversy results in more thoughtful curriculum design and deeper institutional dialogue, it may ultimately strengthen constitutional culture. The classroom is where civic character is shaped. Teaching trust and teaching truth need not be competing goals. When balanced carefully, they become complementary lessons in sustaining the Republic.

## Congress's 'Jamaat' Experiment In Kerala Can Backfire Badly. But Does It Care?

The literary term 'hamartia' was introduced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, but it came to be popularly associated with the tragic heroes of Shakespeare. Hamartia is a fatal flaw or error of judgment that results in the downfall of Shakespeare's central characters. If hamartia were to be understood in the context of the politics of the day, the curious case of Kerala's Leader of Opposition (LoP), VD Satheesan, comes to mind. How he is seeking to whitewash the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and defend its principle of 'theo-democracy' - or 'Hukumat-e-Ilahiya' - as espoused by its founder, Syed Abul Ala Maududi, is a case in point. But why exactly is the Congress, buoyant after winning the local body polls held in December, warming up to the Jamaat-e-Islami in this election? The general defence from the party is to suggest that the consolidation of each and every vote matters. Sure, that makes sense arithmetically. However, Satheesan has gone one step further, issuing not once but twice a 'secular certificate' to the outfit. And this even as contrary voices emerged from the Jamaat itself on ideology, with secretary Shaikh Muhammad Karakunnu explicitly denying there has been any dilution towards the goal of an "Islamic Republic". But what explains this embrace? Once Bitten, Twice Not Shy? It is important to recall how the Jamaat dalliance had cost the UDF dearly in the previous assembly polls, when incumbent Pinarayi Vijayan beat a four-decade pattern of alternating governments in the state.



Back then, the UDF lost the delicate communal balance it had always upheld when the Church-backed Kerala Congress (Mani) quit the UDF to join the Left Democratic Front (LDF) on the eve of the local body polls. That led to Muslim groups commanding a greater space within the UDF - a fact that the LDF effectively milked, which, in turn, only exacerbated the polarisation between the Christian and Muslim communities in the run-up to the polls. Congress reckons that the situation has changed this time around, with the Syro-Malabar Church throwing its weight behind it. However, there is unease among the clergy on the brand of 'Political Islam' espoused by the Jamaat-e-Islami. To this, some Congress leaders are quick to point out that the Jamaat supported the Left in Kerala until the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. But they forget that there is a crucial difference: in the past, the Jamaat, unlike today, had little visibility and remained below

the radar outside Malabar. Another defence put forward by Congress leaders to justify the dalliance is the propaganda framework of the Jamaat-e-Islami, promoting 'Muslim opinion' through its news channel and newspaper. However, the jury is still out on whether this propaganda messaging actually gives the UDF an advantage or if it's a liability. Jamaat-e-Islami's Complex History The Jamaat-e-Islami has always punched above its weight in Kerala's public sphere despite having a limited following within the Muslim community. After distancing itself from the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and retracting its position on Jamaat members not joining government services, it started the Madhyamam daily in Malayalam in 1987. The daily was noticed for foregrounding the Bhagalpur riots of Bihar and was at the forefront of championing VP Singh. Through Madhyamam, the Jamaat was also engaged in a prolonged campaign to separate the IUML from the Congress.

Despite that vicious campaign in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, the IUML stayed put, though it eventually split, which led to the formation of the Indian National League (INL) under Ebrahim Sulaiman Saif. By targeting the Congress constantly, the Jamaat also succeeded in injecting a sense of alienation among Muslim youth. The news of former president Mohammed Najibullah's assassination and the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 1986 was celebrated as "Vismayam" (wonder) by Madhyamam. Smuggling Political Islam By smuggling political Islam into its coverage of international news and gradually becoming the Malayalam daily of choice among Malabar Muslims, Madhyamam succeeded in radicalising a couple of generations by varying degrees. It played an instrumental role in spreading hysteria among Muslim youth on issues such as the capture and assassination of Saddam Hussein and the Arab Spring; by that time, its agenda of political Islam had also become more blatant. Around that period, the Jamaat secured the licence for a news channel - MediaOne - and began broadcasting its political opinions across Kerala. MediaOne began to acquire wider visibility from 2023 following the Gaza war, when its editorial show 'Out of Focus' began to act as an unofficial spokesperson for Hamas. While people initially found it funny and began likening C Dawood - the vocal managing editor of the channel - to Comical Ali, the show's potential to polarise people became evident as the coverage turned borderline antisemitic.

# India's New Diamond Rule: Only a Natural Diamond Can Be Called a Diamond

The Bureau of Indian Standards introduces a clear terminology framework to protect consumers and bring transparency to every diamond purchase across India. Mumbai, 26th February 2026 - The Indian gem and jewellery industry has long faced challenges due to the use of multiple, inconsistent, and often confusing terms to describe diamonds and their alternatives—particularly across digital and e-commerce platforms. In the absence of a single, formal standard, consumers have often been left uncertain about what they are buying. The Natural Diamond Council (NDC) welcomes the adoption of IS 19469:2025 by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), a modified adoption of ISO 18323:2015 - Jewellery: Consumer Confidence in the Diamond Industry. The new standard establishes a clear and enforceable framework for diamond terminology, drawing a firm distinction between natural diamonds and laboratory-grown diamonds. This move strengthens consumer protection and supports greater transparency across the Indian diamond jewellery market. What the new standard means for consumers: Defining "Diamond": The word "diamond" used alone applies exclusively to natural diamonds. Sellers may



use qualifiers like "natural," "real," "genuine," or "precious." Laboratory-Grown Disclosure: Man-made alternatives must be explicitly disclosed at all times using only the full terms "laboratory-grown diamond" or "laboratory-created diamond". Shortened abbreviations such as "LGD," "lab-grown," or "lab-diamond" are no longer permitted in formal disclosure. Banned Misleading Language: The standard for

bids using terms like "nature's," "pure," "earth-friendly," or "cultured" for laboratory-grown products. Furthermore, using brand names alone without the approved "laboratory-grown" qualifier is deemed insufficient disclosure. Commenting on the development, Richa Singh, Managing Director, Natural Diamond Council, said: "This standard brings long-awaited clarity for consumers. When someone buys

a diamond, they deserve to know exactly what it is—clearly, honestly, and without confusion. Defining what can be called a diamond strengthens trust and protects the value of a truly natural diamond." The initiative has received strong support from the jewellery trade across regions. Sushma Chhajer, Founder SHRUTI SUSHMA says, "Fine jewellery is built on trust, provenance, and legacy. We support

the Government's efforts through IS 19469:2025 because clear disclosure protects craftsmanship, heritage, and the emotional value behind every natural diamond. We see the BIS terminology framework as a thoughtful step by the Government, one that protects long-term value rather than short-term narratives. When materials carry enduring value, the language used to describe them must be equally precise. Ambiguity may create momentum, but it erodes trust over time. The Government's introduction of IS 19469:2025 recognises the importance of disciplined terminology, ensuring that disclosure serves clarity rather than confusion. We see the BIS framework not as a shift in how we operate, but as a formal acknowledgement of principles responsible houses have long upheld, clarity in language, integrity in disclosure, and respect for the client's intelligence." The Natural Diamond Council remains committed to supporting the Bureau of Indian Standards and Indian authorities in the effective implementation of this framework. By removing ambiguity and misleading terminology, the industry takes a collective step toward protecting both the emotional and financial value of every diamond purchase.

# Primebook expands offline footprint through strategic partnerships with Sangeetha Mobiles and Pai International

February 26, 2026: Primebook India, the home-grown technology company behind India's Android-based laptop ecosystem, has announced a major expansion of its offline retail presence through strategic partnerships with Sangeetha Mobiles and Pai International Electronics. As part of this rollout, Primebook laptops will now be available across Sangeetha Mobiles stores in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, as well as at Pai International outlets in Hyderabad and Bengaluru. The expansion strengthens Primebook's omnichannel strategy, building physical retail access alongside its digital-first foundation. While online retail is expanding rapidly, personal computing remains a category where Indian consumers invest significant time in evaluation before making a purchase. Industry estimates indicate that offline retail accounts for approximately 66% of the country's consumer electronics sales, underscoring the continued relevance of physical stores in high-consideration categories. Consumers often prefer to experience a device physically before making a decision, especially

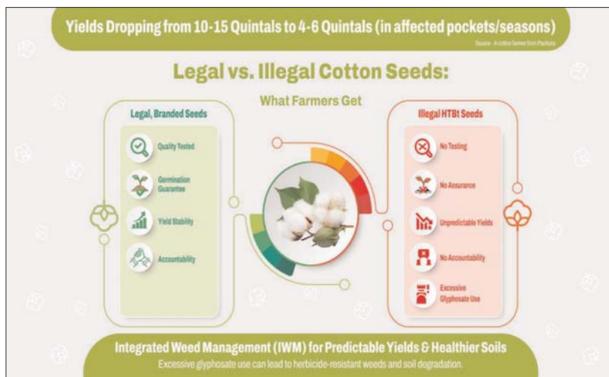


ly in categories like laptops, where performance, display quality, keyboard experience, and overall build influence buying confidence. As digital discovery increasingly blends with offline validation, physical retail continues to play a decisive role in shaping final purchase decisions. Primebook's offline expansion aligns with this evolving hybrid consumer journey. The retail rollout will

feature Primebook 2 Pro at ₹17,990 and Primebook 2 Max at ₹19,990, supported by Zero Down Payment EMI offerings designed to lower entry barriers in the personal computing segment. Commenting on the development, Chitranshu Mahant, Co-founder and CEO of Primebook, said, "Primebook was built to reimagine personal computing for a new generation of users.

# Protect Yields and Soil Health: Industry Urges Farmers to Avoid Illegal Cotton Seeds

February 26, 2026, Telangana : Agriculture experts and seed industry representatives continue to urge cotton farmers to remain cautious about illegal Herbicide Tolerant Bt (HTBt) cotton seeds being sold through unregulated channels. These unapproved seeds lack germination assurance and scientific validation, often leaving growers with unpredictable crop stands and unexpected financial losses. Field reports from affected pockets indicate that growers have seen yields fall from 10-15 quintals to 4-6 quintals in some seasons, reflecting the combined effects of weather variability, pest pressure and the use of unregulated seeds. One cotton farmer from Vidarbha shared his ordeal, noting that although illegal seeds seemed cheaper upfront, "The crop was uneven and my yield fell sharply. There was no one accountable when things went wrong." The use of illegal HTBt seeds has also accelerated dependence on glyphosate. Repeated spraying, encouraged by herbicide tolerance, not only inflates input costs but fuels the risk of herbicide-resistant "monster weeds" while gradually weakening soil structure and reducing long-term productivity. For durable control and healthier soils, agronomists and policy experts advocate Integrated Weed Management (IWM), combining cultural practices, mecha-



nisation and diversified modes of action rather than herbicide-only dependence. Dr. M. Ramasami, Chairman, Rasi Seeds, said he is deeply concerned about the rapid proliferation of illegal HTBt cotton seeds. "This unchecked spread is hurting farmers through reduced yields and poor fibre quality, and it is also destabilizing a seed supply chain built over the past four to five decades. Unless there is strict enforcement to curb these illegal seed sales immediately, it will severely undermine future investments in seed innovation and advanced technologies." Organizations working with farmers, including Godrej

Agrovet, continue to reinforce the importance of informed decision-making. N.K.Rajavelu, CEO - Crop Protection Business, Godrej Agrovet, said, "Integrated Weed Management, not herbicide-only dependence, supports predictable yields and helps maintain healthier soils over time." Experts strongly encourage farmers to opt for branded, legal seeds and ensure that they purchase only from registered, licensed dealers, avoiding unknown sellers who offer no accountability or guarantee. Making responsible seed choices today is essential for safeguarding tomorrow's yields and sustaining cotton-growing ecosystems.

# Sanofi Consumer Healthcare India Limited reports Q4'25 Revenue at 2,510 MN up by 47 %, Net Profit at 665 MN up by 50% Y-O-Y FY '25 Revenue at 8,784 MN up by 21%, Net Profit at 2,401 MN up by 33%

Mumbai, 25 February 2026: Sanofi Consumer Healthcare India Limited (BSE:544250 | NSE: SANOFICONR) releases its financial results for the fourth quarter, demonstrating sustained growth momentum across key business segments. Revenue growth for the quarter stood at 47% year-on-year. Domestic sales grew by 23%, supported by the relaunch of recalled products to the market. Profit after tax (PAT) for Q4 reached ₹665 million, an increase of 50% on a year-on-year basis. For the full year 2025, the Company reported revenue of ₹8,784 million, reflecting a growth of 21% over the previous year. Profit after tax for the year stood at ₹2,401 million, up 33% year-on-year, supported by disciplined cost management and improved product mix. Dividend of ₹75 per share was also declared for the year ended December 31, 2025. Commenting on the Q4'25



results, Himanshu Bakshi, Managing Director, Sanofi Consumer Healthcare India Limited, said, "This quarter's performance emphasizes the strength of our core portfolio and the disciplined execution of our growth agenda. Our domestic business has delivered healthy double-digit growth for two successive quarters, complemented by strong contributions from our export markets. The recognition we've earned for elevating our brands and championing the

issues that matter to consumers is a testament to our teams' commitment. As we continue to invest in our people and our brands, we remain focused on reinforcing our brand fundamentals and driving operational excellence to unlock the next phase of sustainable growth. Guided by science and driven by purpose, we remain committed to simplifying self-care, making it more accessible and effective for every consumer." Commenting on the full year results, Amit Jain,

Chairman, Sanofi Consumer Healthcare India Limited, said, "Our full-year performance reflects the strength of our strategy and the disciplined execution by our teams. By driving sustained growth, deepening penetration of our portfolio and accelerating digital transformation, we delivered meaningful outcomes for all our stakeholders. Our strong financial performance this year enables us to reward shareholders with a healthy dividend of ₹75 per share."

# ASCI launches its first ever influencer-led consumer awareness campaign on greenwashing and dark patterns

Mumbai, February 26, 2026: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has launched its first ever influencer-led campaign to raise awareness about greenwashing and dark patterns, two practices manipulating consumer choice in the digital age. This is part of ASCI Academy's agenda to educate consumers to navigate advertising in a more informed way. In recent times, greenwashing and dark patterns have emerged as key concerns. The greenwashing campaign will educate consumers to ask critical questions around sustainability claims, the decoding of eco-labels and distinguishing credible commitments from buzzwords. Influencers will also educate viewers about dark patterns, such as basket sneaking, hidden costs or confusing choices that nudge them into taking unintended decisions. The influencers partnering with ASCI are Shradha Jain

(@aiyoshreddha), Aalekh Kapoor (@aalekhkapoor), Sakshi Jain (@ca.sakshi-jain), Ashutosh Pratap Singh (@technical\_sapient), Pankti Pandey (@zerowasteadda), Vinod Kumar (@techsupreme\_), Aisha Ahmed (@aisharahmed) and Sangeetha and Kavya (@lifeonroads\_) Manisha Kapoor, CEO and Secretary General, ASCI, said: "Consumer Education is a key pillar of ASCI Academy. In addition to Ad-Wise, which is our school programme to build advertising literacy amongst a million school students, we are hoping to harness the credibility of voices trusted in the digital sphere to raise awareness around the two misleading practices of greenwashing and dark patterns. We aim to empower consumers to spot red flags and critically question claims they encounter in advertising." ASCI Academy's recently

launched e-learning course titled 'Ethical UI/UX Designs' is another intervention that offers advertisers the tools to eliminate dark patterns. The course covers deceptive tactics, their impact on consumers and compliant alternatives aligned with ASCI codes. ASCI's studies and guidelines have steadily been spreading stakeholder awareness about misleading practices. For example, the 'Conscious Patterns' report launched in 2024 revealed that 52 out of the 53 top Indian apps use dark patterns like drip pricing and privacy deception, often impairing user autonomy. ASCI's guidelines complement the Ministry of Consumer Affairs' Central Consumer Protection Authority regulations on dark patterns by targeting deceptive advertising-specific design practices. ASCI's guidelines on environmental and green claims, introduced in 2024.

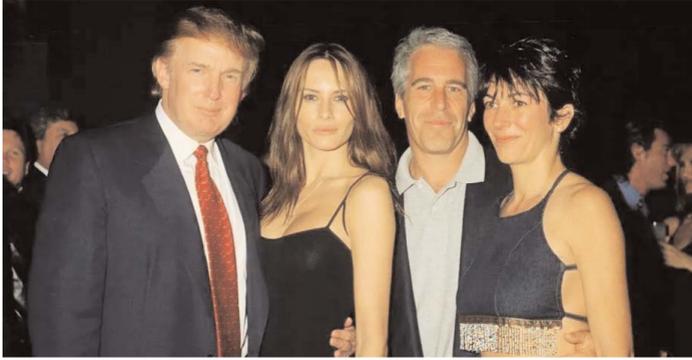
# Parachute Advansed portfolio expands its hair care range with the launch of Parachute Advansed Amla Hair Oil in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

26 February 2026 The launch combines the strengthening power of Amla with the trusted nourishment of Coconut to deliver strong and natural black hair for consumers. Marico Limited, one of India's leading FMCG companies, has launched Parachute Advansed Amla Hair Oil, the latest innovation in its iconic Parachute Advansed portfolio, in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. For generations, Amla has been celebrated in Indian households for its ability to fortify hair, enhance overall hair health and maintain natural black hair. The Parachute Advansed Amla Hair Oil harnesses this goodness of Amla, blending it with Coconut and other modern haircare ingredients to deliver deep nourishment. The range is available in two variants, enriched with high-performance ingredients such as Vitamin E and Rosemary, designed to meet consumers' evolving haircare needs while staying true to the brand's core promise. Together, these ingredients elevate the consumer experience, supporting strong and natu-



ally black hair with regular use. The product will launch first in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, stronghold markets for the brand. Speaking about the launch, Ashish Goupal, CEO - India Core Business, Marico Limited, said, "Amla has always been a symbol of strength and vitality in Indian haircare. With Parachute Advansed Amla Hair Oil, we have reimaged this timeless ingredient by blending it with the trusted nourishment of Coconut and select modern ingredients like Vitamin E and Rosemary. This innovation reflects our vision to set new benchmarks in haircare, offering consumers in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana a product that not only strengthens hair but also inspires confidence and beauty. It underscores Marico's commitment towards leading with purposeful innovation and elevating everyday haircare into an aspirational experience." Parachute Advansed Amla Hair Oil is available in multiple SKUs starting at Rs. 20 for 70 ml, and is available across general and modern trade. The launch further strengthens Parachute Advansed's portfolio, reinforcing the brand's strong equity and consumer trust in the region.

# US justice department accused of withholding Trump-related Epstein files



The top Democrat on the congressional committee investigating Jeffrey Epstein has accused the US justice department of withholding files containing allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against President Donald Trump. Robert Garcia, who sits on the House Oversight Committee, said he had personally viewed documents containing the allegation that had not been made public. In response, the justice department said "NOTHING has been deleted", adding that documents were withheld only if they were "duplicates, privileged, or part of an ongoing federal investigation". Trump has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing in relation to the Epstein case and has recently said he has been "totally exonerated". The justice department has also previously said that some of the files contain "untrue and sensationalist claims against President Trump". White House

spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said on Tuesday that "by releasing thousands of pages of documents, cooperating with the House Oversight Committee's subpoena request, signing the Epstein Files Transparency Act, and calling for more investigations into Epstein's Democrat friends, President Trump has done more for Epstein's victims than anyone before him." Epstein, the

late convicted sex offender, appears to have been friends with Trump for a number of years. They later fell out - which happened in the early 2000s, according to Trump, two years before Epstein was first arrested. The justice department has released millions of files that show what the federal investigations into Epstein uncovered. The staged releases were prompted by an act signed off by the

president, who had earlier resisted the release of the material. Some files were redacted, and officials have acknowledged that other files were not released at all. The legislation allowed the justice department to withhold certain files to secure active investigations or prosecutions, and to protect the identities of victims. Garcia said the files he had seen "make it clear" that a woman "made

additional, specific allegations" against Trump that "are not reflected" in the records that have been made public by the department. He said he had written to US Attorney General Pam Bondi demanding that they be published. In its response, Bondi's justice department accused Democrats on the committee of "misleading the public while manufacturing outrage from their radical anti-Trump base". In a separate statement posted on X, the department also said it would review whether any files had been improperly withheld. As a member of Congress, Garcia is legally permitted to view the unredacted versions of the released Epstein files at the department, as the House Oversight Committee conducts its own investigation into Epstein. "This is [the] largest government cover-up in modern history. We are demanding answers," the Democrats on the committee

said in statement on Wednesday. Garcia's letter to Bondi came after US media reports suggested three FBI witness interviews with an alleged Epstein victim were missing from the publicly released files. NPR first reported that indexes and serial numbers in the files suggested the FBI had conducted four interviews with the woman in 2019 as part of its investigation into Epstein's accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell, who was jailed in 2022 for sex trafficking. But three of the interview summaries and related notes, totalling more than 50 pages, are not available on the justice department's website, according to reports by NPR and others including the New York Times. The woman told federal agents that Epstein raped her as a minor in the early 1980s, according to one of the heavily-redacted documents. According to other entries in the files, a woman

## Hong Kong tycoon Jimmy Lai wins appeal against fraud conviction

Jimmy Lai, Hong Kong's pro-democracy media tycoon, has won an appeal against a fraud conviction in 2022, which had seen him sentenced to nearly six years in jail. On Thursday, Hong Kong's Court of Appeal quashed the convictions of Lai and another defendant who had been accused of illegally subletting office space. But the 78-year-old will remain in prison. Earlier this month, he was sentenced to 20 years in jail for colluding with foreign forces under the city's national security law. Lai, a British citizen, is a fierce critic of Beijing and is one of the biggest figures in Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement. He has been detained since 2020. Lai's daughter Claire described the ruling on Thursday as "nothing more than a PR move by the Hong Kong authorities". "No one should be fooled into thinking... [it] is anything more," she told the BBC. "The rule of law is broken there, and my father is still unjustly imprisoned



and will remain so for nearly 20 years unless urgent action is taken to secure his release." Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, who leads Lai's international legal team, echoed this, saying the decision "changes nothing" and that Lai risks dying in prison because of ill health. "No one should be fooled into thinking that this fraud appeal belatedly succeeding suggests the Hong Kong system operates fairly or justly," she told the BBC. In 1995, Lai founded Apple Daily, a local tabloid that was critical of Beijing and became Hong Kong's largest pro-democracy paper.

## ISRAELI SOLDIERS SHOT A PALESTINIAN BOY AND STOOD AROUND AS HE BLEED TO DEATH, CAUGHT ON VIDEO



This story contains details and video that some readers may find distressing. Last November, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy named Jad Jaddallah was shot at close range by Israeli soldiers in a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. As Jad lay collapsed in an alley, the soldiers created a cordon around him and blocked two Palestinian ambulances from reaching him. According to video footage and eyewitness testimony, the soldiers - 14 in total - then stood around Jad casually for at least 45 minutes while he bled from one or more gunshot wounds. All Israeli soldiers receive training in trauma treatment, and any Israeli combat unit should contain a specifically trained medic, but none of the soldiers appeared to give Jad life-saving medical aid. At points, they appeared to ignore repeated attempts from Jad to get their attention. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) told the BBC that soldiers had provided "initial medical treatment", but a spokesperson refused to give any details about the nature or timing of the treat-

ment. The IDF has also accused Jad of throwing a rock, which, under their rules of engagement, can permit soldiers to use lethal force. But the footage of the incident shows an IDF soldier dropping an object next to Jad after he was shot, then taking a photograph of it - an action Jad's family and a leading human rights group say appears to be an attempt to frame him. The soldiers eventually loaded Jad into the back of an Israeli military vehicle, but at some point, either before or after they did, he died. It is still unclear where on his body or how many times he was shot, because the Israeli military has refused to return his body to the family and declined to answer any questions about his injuries. Shot from close range Jad was born and raised in al-Fara, a refugee camp in the West Bank that is home to about 10,000 Palestinians. Along with other similar camps in the occupied territories, it is subject to frequent Israeli military raids, which Israel says are necessary to counter armed groups operating there. In many respects, Jad's death was not unusual.

## SINGER D4VD CONFIRMED AS 'TARGET' OF INVESTIGATION INTO MURDER OF TEEN

Newly unsealed court filings have revealed that US singer D4vd - real name David Anthony Burke - is the target of a grand jury investigation into the apparent murder of a 14-year-old girl, whose remains were found in his car in September. The filings were released after D4vd's family were summoned by a California court to testify before the grand jury. Dawud Burke, D4vd's father, fought against the summons in a Texas court, and in doing so included portions of material from the California case that had not been previously available to the public. The filings confirm that D4vd has been identified as a "target" of a grand jury investigation in Los Angeles and that he may be subject to pro-



ceedings for one count of murder. He has not been charged or officially named as a suspect in the case and an indictment has not been announced. Grand jury proceedings remain ongoing, according to US media. D4vd has not commented on the case, but his representatives previously said he was cooperating with police. A lawyer for the singer did not immediately respond to the BBC's request for comment.

## US AND IRAN HOLD TALKS SEEN AS CRUCIAL TO PREVENT CONFLICT

US and Iranian officials have met in Geneva for a third round of indirect talks seen as crucial to averting conflict, with President Donald Trump threatening to strike Iran if a nuclear deal is not reached. The discussions come amid the largest US military build-up in the Middle East since the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, and with Iran vowing to respond to an attack with force. Thursday's talks were adjourned after three hours. Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi, who is acting as the mediator, said negotiators had exchanged "creative and positive ideas" and would return after taking a break. "We hope to make more progress," he added. But the chances of an agreement



remain unclear. While Trump has said he prefers to solve the crisis through diplomacy, he has also said he is considering a limited strike on Iran to pressure its leaders to accept a deal. The president, however, has done little to explain what he is demanding in the negotiations and why there could be the need to take military action now,

eight months after the US bombed Iranian nuclear facilities during a war between Israel and Iran. Iran has rejected the US demand to stop the enrichment of uranium in its territory, but there have been indications that it is prepared to offer some concessions about its nuclear programme. As in the previous two rounds of discussions

earlier this month, the Iranian delegation is being led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, while the US is represented by special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. In recent weeks, the US has sent thousands of troops and what Trump has described as an "armada" to the region, including two aircraft carriers along with other warships, as well as fighter jets and refuelling aircraft. Trump first threatened to bomb Iran last month as security forces brutally repressed anti-government protests, killing thousands of people. But since then, his focus has turned to Iran's nuclear programme, which has been at the centre of a long-running dispute with the West.

## CUBA SAYS GROUP SHOT ON US-REGISTERED SPEEDBOAT PLANNED 'ARMED INFILTRATION'

Cuba has accused 10 people aboard a US-registered speedboat it intercepted off its coast on Wednesday of planning "an infiltration with terrorist aims". Border guards shot dead four people and injured the other six on the boat, the Cuban interior ministry said, alleging that those aboard the Florida-registered vessel had fired first. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington was investigating the "highly unusual" incident. The deadly shooting comes at a time of increased tension between the two countries, less than two months after US forces



seized Cuba's close ally, Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, and stopped his successor from supplying it with oil. Cuba's interior ministry said in an online statement that the speedboat had entered Cuban territorial waters and was "one nautical mile off Cayo

Falcones", on Cuba's northern coast, when it was intercepted. It added that the commander of the Cuban boat was injured in the firefight that ensued. Cuban officials have so far named one of the men killed in the clash, as well as the six survivors, who they said were evacuated

and given medical assistance. The Cuban authorities said they had established that all 10 of those on board the speedboat were Cuban nationals residing in the US. They also identified an 11th person they said had been arrested and had confessed to being part of the alleged plot. The Cuban authorities added that most of them had "prior records involving criminal and violent activity". Handguns, assault rifles and improvised explosive devices were recovered from the speedboat, along with other tactical gear, according to the statement.

## GIRL, 14, SHOT DEAD AS SOUTH AFRICA'S 'TAXI WARS' HIT SCHOOL



Police in South Africa are investigating a fatal shooting at a secondary school in the coastal city of Cape Town that killed a 14-year-old pupil and a taxi operator. An unidentified man opened fire on a taxi as the driver waited to pick up pupils on Wednesday, shooting the driver, another man and two children, police said. Two pupils, aged 14 and 16, were also injured in the attack, which has been linked to long-running deadly turf wars between rival taxi associations. "It is unacceptable that our children continue to be exposed to danger as a result of ongoing conflict within the taxi industry," said Isaac Sileku, a senior Western Cape official. Violence has plagued South Africa's highly competitive and lucrative taxi industry for decades. While minibus taxis continue to dominate the market, the rise of e-hailing services is increasing tensions, leading to violent and sometimes deadly clashes between operators. Wednesday's attack took place as students at Atlantis Senior Secondary were leaving school, when gunshots rang out and sparked panic. Police

arrived at the scene and found a minibus taxi parked outside the school, with the body of a 42-year-old taxi operator inside. He had multiple gunshot wounds. In the school grounds, officers discovered the body of a 14-year-old girl who had been shot multiple times in the chest. Police said she had been shot while attempting to run from the gunfire. "A 14-year-old learner [female] sustained a gunshot wound to her back. Another 16-year-old female was grazed by a bullet," said police spokesperson FC van Wyk. He said it was not yet clear how many gunmen were involved, adding that detectives and officers from the Taxi Violence Investigations Unit were investigating the attack. This was the second attempt on the taxi operator's life this month, local media reported. In a statement, the Western Cape regional authorities condemned the "senseless act", saying "no learner should ever face danger while travelling to or from school". "Violence of this nature undermines community safety, disrupts education, and instils fear among residents," it added.

## Russia says it has handed over 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers' bodies

Russia has handed over the remains of 1,000 soldiers to Ukraine and has received the bodies of 35 Russian soldiers in return, Russia's top negotiator has said. It comes as Ukraine's chief negotiator was preparing to meet US President Donald Trump's envoys in Geneva for a new round of talks aimed at ending the war which has entered its fifth year. Two previous rounds of talks hosted by Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner have included Russian negotiators, too, but have not led to a breakthrough. Hours before the latest talks, Russia launched 420 drones and 39 missiles in six different regions of Ukraine, injuring dozens of people, Ukraine's President Volodymyr

Zelesny said. Vladimir Medinsky, a top aide of Russian President Vladimir Putin, did not give any details about the exchange of bodies in his short announcement on Telegram, but included an image showing bodies being unloaded from a truck. Ukraine has not confirmed the exchange. During a previous round of trilateral talks held in the capital of the United Arab Emirates early this month, Ukraine and Russia agreed a rare exchange of prisoners-of-war. The two sides have, however, exchanged thousands of soldiers' bodies over the course of the conflict that began with Putin's decision to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The exchange is based on an agreement



reached by the two sides during negotiations in Istanbul in June 2025. Moscow and Kyiv agreed to return the bodies of up to 6,000 soldiers each, as well as all sick and heavily wounded prisoners of war and those aged under 25. Kyiv and Moscow regularly publish estimates of the other side's losses, but do not detail their own. Zelensky recently admitted 55,000 Ukrainian sol-

diers had been killed on the battlefield - a figure Western observers describe as an underestimate as it does not include those missing. And from public sources, the BBC has confirmed the names of almost 186,000 people killed fighting on Russia's side in Ukraine. The true death toll is generally accepted to be much higher, as many deaths on the battlefield are not recorded. So even

though estimates suggest more Russians are dying every day, Moscow has returned more bodies to Ukraine overall than it has received. No-one has explained the discrepancy, even though Russia has previously accused Ukraine of not abiding by the Istanbul agreement, and Ukraine has alleged Russian body returns were irregular and sometimes included Russians' remains - a charge Moscow has rejected. One possible explanation is that Russia captures more Ukrainian bodies given its troops have been on the attack most of the time and, therefore, more able to retrieve them from the battlefield. On the eve of the Geneva talks, President Zelensky had a telephone conversation with Trump and said

he expected the Geneva meeting would lead to trilateral negotiations at the beginning of March - thus creating "an opportunity to move talks to the leaders' level". "President Trump supports this sequence of steps," Zelensky said, adding: "This is the only way to resolve all the complex and sensitive issues and finally end the war." Putin, for his part, has refused to meet Zelensky, describing him as illegitimate - an argument centring on the fact that no presidential election has been held in Ukraine, despite the expiry of Zelensky's term in March 2024. However, Ukraine's constitution bars holding elections under martial law - imposed in the wake of Putin's invasion of his neighbour.



## Arjun Tendulkar, Saaniya Chandhok's Pre-Wedding Festivities Begin

Arjun Tendulkar, IPL cricketer and son of India great Sachin Tendulkar, is soon going to marry Saaniya Chandhok. Sachin recently invited top dignitaries like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Droupadi Murmu and others for the wedding ceremony, which is expected to be held on March 5, 2026. Now, IPL team Mumbai Indians has posted a video of Arjun and Saaniya together. "Jab beta koi ladki ko ghar leke aata hai, introduce karne ke liye, then you know ke beta bada ho gaya hai (When a son brings a girl home to introduce her, then you know that the son has grown up). They look madly in love with each other. Arjun, I have to say I am extremely proud of you to have found someone so special who loves you as much as you love her," said Sachin. Here's wishing Arjun and Saaniya, love, respect and a lifetime of



togetherness as they embark on a partnership like no other pic.twitter.com/prKlwXv24R — Mumbai Indians (@mipaltan) February 25,

2026 Arjun and Saaniya got engaged in August 2025. Arjun, who was recently traded from the Mumbai Indians to the Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian

Premier League (IPL), is a regular in the Indian domestic cricket circuit. Saaniya is a successful entrepreneur and comes from a prominent back-

ground. She is the granddaughter of well-known Mumbai businessman Ravi Ghai and has reportedly been a close part of the Tendulkar inner circle for quite some time. Arjun has carved out a distinct path in domestic cricket, transitioning from his early days in Mumbai to becoming a vital bowling all-rounder for Goa. A tall left-arm fast bowler and a capable lower-order batsman, he made a sensational Ranji Trophy debut for Goa in 2022 by scoring a century, famously emulating his father's feat of reaching three figures in his maiden first-class match. While he has faced the inevitable pressure of carrying a legendary surname, he has shown glimpses of his potential during his IPL stint with the Mumbai Indians. He will be under the spotlight again as he dons the LSG jersey next season.

## Trump joke 'overshadows' US women's Olympic success

A "distasteful joke" by US President Donald Trump has overshadowed the achievement of female athletes at the Winter Olympics, says USA women's ice hockey captain Hilary Knight. USA won both men's and women's ice hockey gold for the first time at the Milan-Cortina Games this month. The men's team received a congratulatory call from Trump, who invited them to his State of the Union address and said he would have to ask their female counterparts as well or he "probably would be impeached". The women's team later declined an invitation from Trump to attend Tuesday's speech in Washington DC. "It was sort of a distasteful joke, and unfortunately that is overshadowing a lot of the success, the success of just women at the Olympics carrying for Team USA and having amazing gold medal feats," five-time



Olympic medalist Knight told ESPN. The men's team was criticised after several players appeared to laugh when Trump made his comment, but Knight said: "I think there's a genuine level of support there and respect. That's being overshadowed by a quick lapse. "The guys were in a tough spot, so I think it's a shame this storyline and narrative has kind of blown up and [is] overshadowing that connection and genuine interest in one another and cheer-

ing each other on." Knight, 36, ended her Olympic career with 15 goals, the most by any US male or female player. She said she hopes the Trump controversy proves to be a "really good learning point, to really focus on how we talk about women, not only in sport but in industry". She said: "Women aren't less than, and their achievements shouldn't be overshadowed by anything else other than how great they are."

## Ranji Trophy Final Highlights Karnataka vs Jammu And Kashmir Day 2: J&K consolidate to 527/6

Skipper Paras Dogra made a gutsy 70 but his intentional head-butting of Karnataka substitute KV Aneesh overshadowed an otherwise solid batting performance from Jammu and Kashmir, who reached 527 for 6 at stumps on the second day of the Ranji Trophy final. Dogra along with keeper batter Kanhaiya Wadhawan (70), Sahil Lotra (57 batting) all made handsome contributions as it became a real toil for the Karnataka bowlers save Prasad Krishna (3/90 in 29 overs) didn't make much of an impact. Welcome back for Karnataka's reply. The umpires and the players are out in the middle. KL Rahul and Mayank Agarwal open up with their blades for



Karnataka. Auqib Nabi has the new ball in hand and is raring to go. Let's play... The stage is set for Karnataka - It was a tough fielding effort for Karnataka, but fast bowler Prasad Krishna stood out by taking 5 wickets, while Vyshak Vijaykumar, Vidyadhar Patil, Shreyas Gopal, and

Shikhar Shetty picked up one wicket each. Now, all eyes are on Karnataka's star-studded batting lineup. Having scored a massive 736 runs in their semi-final match, big names like Devdutt Padikkal, Mayank Agarwal, Karun Nair, and KL Rahul are more than capable of a strong reply.

The match remains perfectly balanced! A strong finish from J&K! The team carried their gritty performance into the second day. Though they lost the centurion Pundir and Abdul Samad (61) to sit at 327/4 by the end of the first session, the middle order kept the pressure on. Kanhaiya Wadhawan and captain Paras Dogra both scored a crucial 70 before falling as they finished Day 2 at a commanding 527/6. At the start of Day 3, Sahil Lotra added a powerful 72 late in the game to finish the innings on a high note. Jammu & Kashmir's dominant batting - Jammu & Kashmir put on a brilliant batting display, piling up a massive total of 584 runs.

## Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Arjun Tendulkar Send Warning To IPL Rivals With Fiery Knocks

India's Under-19 World Cup hero Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Arjun Tendulkar lit up the DY Patil Ground in Talegaon as DY Patil Blue pulled off a high-octane chase against Indian Navy on Day 4 of the 20th DY Patil T20 Cup on Thursday. Sooryavanshi smashed 63 off just 19 balls, hitting seven boundaries and five sixes. Tendulkar, meanwhile, remained unbeaten on 55 off 29 balls with seven boundaries and two sixes. Indian Navy posted 219 for four in their 20 overs, and in response, DY Patil Blue chased down the target with five wickets and five balls to spare, finishing on 225 for five. Sooryavanshi and Tendulkar were the standout performers with the bat for DY Patil Blue, while Sarfaraz

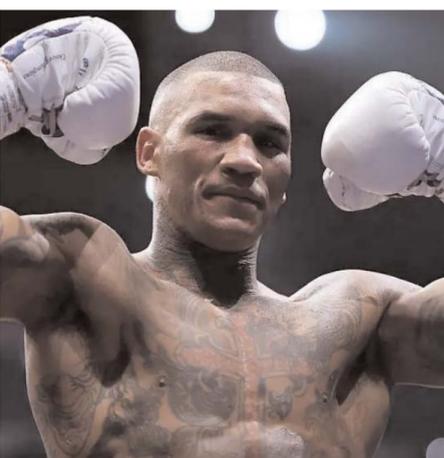


Khan also contributed with a handy 27 in the chase. 14 ball 50 for Vaibhav Sooryavanshi against the Indian Navy in the DY PATIL T20 CUP pic.twitter.com/KACl0UOJ3V — Rithik Rajeev Yadav (@Rithikdb5) February 26, 2026 In the other games, Route Mobile chased down CAG's total of 172 for nine

with five wickets in hand at the DY Patil Stadium. At the University Ground, Canara Bank overhauled a target of 216 for five with one over and four wickets to spare. BRIEF SCORES At DY Patil Ground, Talegaon Group C: Indian Navy 219/4 in 20 overs (Kumar Pathak 87, Nitin Tanwar 57\*); lost to

DY Patil Blue 225/5 in 19.1 overs (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 63, Arjun Tendulkar 55\*; Vishal Gaur 3/41) - DY Patil Blue won by five wickets At DY Patil Stadium Group B: CAG 172/9 in 20 overs (Prerak Mankad 43, Aman Mojkhad 34; Mohit Awasthi 2/36); Route Mobile 177/5 in 17.2 overs (Virat Singh 85, Vipraj Nigam 38\*; Ajay Singh Kookna 2/38) - Route Mobile won by five wickets At DY Patil University Group C: Nirlon 216/5 in 20 overs (Ishan Mulchandani 52, Aarya Desai 51, Bhupen Lalwani 40); lost to Canara Bank 221/6 in 19 overs (Atharva Taide 60, MG Naveen 49, KV Siddharth 37\*; Saurabh Singh 3/34) - Canara Bank won by four wickets.

## BENN TO FIGHT PROGRAIS ON FURY UNDERCARD



Britain's Conor Benn will fight Regis Prograis on the undercard of Tyson Fury's comeback fight on 11 April. Benn recently signed with Dana White's Zuffa Boxing in a one-fight deal reportedly worth about £11m. Benn, 29, will be the co-main event at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. "Last time I fought in London, Conor Benn was on my undercard, so this is a full-circle moment for me," said American former light-welterweight world champion Prograis. "But this circle will close with me teaching him a lesson. "He's not fighting some weight-drained super middleweight. I am in shape and will bring home this victory." Fury is signed to Frank Warren's Queensberry, but TKO president Mark Shapiro said on Wednesday that

Zuffa Boxing will promote the fight, which will be shown on Netflix. Prograis, 37, is a former world champion at light-welterweight, but has two losses in his past three outings, including to Jack Catterall and Devin Haney. Benn's most recent outing was in November when he defeated Chris Eubank Jr in a rematch. Both bouts against Eubank were at middleweight, but Benn intends to campaign at welterweight as he seeks to earn a world title shot. "My last fight there showed the world exactly who I am and what I'm about," he said. "Fighting on the biggest stages, in the biggest shows, I fear no-one." Fury, who has not fought since losing to Oleksandr Usyk in December 2024, will fight Russian Arslanbek Makhmudov.



Ronaldo becomes co-owner of Spanish side Almeria

## A 'NORMAL GUY' DOING 'BRILLIANT' THINGS - LAMMENS ON LIFE AT MAN UTD

Just a normal guy - a role model to show anyone what can be achieved. By that personal assessment, Manchester United goalkeeper Senne Lammens proves he is not your usual Premier League star. The Belgium international accepts he tries to avoid "box-office stuff" on the pitch. Off it, the low-key 23-year-old is the same. The easy way he speaks to pupils at a local primary school in a question-and-answer session, and plays with them in the playground, offer a fascinating insight into the character of a man who less than 48 hours earlier was memorably described as being "bloody brilliant" by David Moyes for his performance in a 1-0 win at Everton. "I try to show the world I'm just a normal guy, show these children that everyone can make it," Lammens says at the World Book Day event on



behalf of United's foundation. "There are people who have a mindset and lifestyle that's a little different to me. There's nothing wrong with that. But also, it probably makes the children feel it is more difficult to get there. "It's one of my best feelings when you get into those classes and see the children cheering for you with open eyes and they don't believe it. It's not that long ago I was there. I can still remember those times. "I don't only want to be looked at as a foot-

ball player, but also just a normal person with his own beliefs. I hope that doesn't change." Moyes' assessment came partly due to an eye-catching save Lammens made to deny a long-range effort from Michael Keane that was heading for the top corner at Hill Dickinson Stadium. But mainly it was for the unfussy way the £18.1m summer signing from Royal Antwerp dealt with a succession of corners fired into his six-yard box. "The trust that exists between

Lammens and his defenders is clear - and there is growing faith from United's supporters too. "The first thing you have to do as a goalkeeper is make saves," says Lammens. "But I take a lot of pride in doing the other things well. "Maybe it's not always the box-office stuff but if you know a little bit about goalkeeping, that's as important for your teammates to trust you and help out the team." Former United keeper Edwin van der Sar offered a positive assessment of Lammens' abilities on Sky Sports on Monday. Current Belgium number one Thibaut Courtois has also spoken highly of his compatriot. But, when asked for his own role model, Lammens looks to Germany. "My biggest idol was probably Manuel Neuer," he said. "I take pride in being an all-round goalkeeper."

## SPURS EXTEND WINNING RUN TO CLOSE GAP ON THUNDER



The San Antonio Spurs beat the Toronto Raptors to extend their winning run and close in on NBA Western Conference leaders Oklahoma City Thunder. Devin Vassell scored 21 points and De'Aaron Fox 20 as the visitors triumphed 110-107 at Scotiabank Arena to claim a 10th successive win for the first time since the 2015-16 season. Victor Wembanyama scored only 12 points for the Spurs but made a crucial block - his fifth of the game - with 44 seconds remaining. The Spurs improved to 42-16, while the Thunder are 45-15 after losing 124-116 at Eastern Conference leaders Detroit Pistons. Cade Cunningham and Jalen Duren scored 29 points apiece for the Pistons, while the NBA's Most Valuable Player Shai Gilgeous-Alexander missed a ninth straight game for the Thunder

because of injury. The Pistons improved to 43-14, going ahead of the Thunder for the league's best record and extending their lead to the top of the Eastern Conference above the Boston Celtics, who lost 103-84 at the Denver Nuggets. Nikola Jokic scored 30 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Nuggets. The Milwaukee Bucks overcame the continued absence of two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo with a calf injury to win 118-116 at home against the Cleveland Cavaliers. The Cavs were without new signing James Harden after he suffered a broken thumb in Tuesday's win over the New York Knicks. The Houston Rockets beat the Sacramento Kings 128-97 - their biggest victory of the season - while the Golden State Warriors won 133-112 at the Memphis Grizzlies.

## “A film the whole family can watch together... Everyone will definitely like it” – Producer & Hero Sai Simhadri at the ‘Son Of’ Pre-Release Event

Under the Sai Simhadri Cinema banner, actor Sai Simhadri has produced and starred in the film ‘Son Of’. The movie is directed by Battula Satish. The film is set to release on February 27. As part of promotions, a pre-release event was held on Wednesday. Producer-actor Ashok Kumar, Rama Satya Narayana Raju, Line Venkat, Kanna Ravi, Ramakrishna Goud and others attended the event as chief guests.

### Producer & Hero Sai Simhadri said:

“When Satish narrated the story of ‘Son Of’ to me, I was shocked. After hearing it, I felt like it mirrored incidents from my own life. You could say this film is made based on real-life events. A father gives us discipline, education, and time management. Instead of money, they should pass on the value of hard work as a legacy. This film reached this level only because of Shobha Rani garu. When I asked for five theatres, she gave me 300 theatres. Our movie is releasing on February 27. It’s a film that fathers, sons, and the whole family should watch together. Everyone will definitely like it.”

### Actor & Producer Ashok Kumar said:

“The title ‘Son Of’ is very good and connects with everyone. From the title itself, we can understand that the film revolves around father-son sentiment. It’s



great that Sai came from America and is making such a meaningful film here. Meera Raj looks wonderful in this movie. I request everyone to watch and support this emotional family film releasing on February 27.”

### Distributor Shobha Rani said:

“Sai Simhadri faced difficulties regarding the release of ‘Son Of’. At that time, he approached me and said even five theatres would be enough. But now, we are releasing the film in 300 theatres. After watching the content, many came forward

to release it. We are releasing it in multiple languages on a grand scale.”

### Heroine Meera Raj said:

“The journey of ‘Son Of’ will always remain special to me. The shooting was completed very positively, and that positivity continues even now. Thanks to Sai Simhadri and director Satish for giving me this opportunity. Our film is releasing on February 27. I hope everyone watches and supports it.”

### Producer Rama Satya Narayana Raju said:

“Shobha Rani garu is releasing ‘Son Of’ on a grand scale. It’s

being released at the level of a star hero’s film. After the trailer, the range of ‘Son Of’ changed completely. It will become a big hit on February 27.”

### Music Director Rishi said:

“Thank you to everyone who attended the event. This is my first film. Thanks to Bhaskarabhatla garu for giving me this opportunity. Sai Simhadri worked on this film with full dedication. Aditya Music supported us greatly. Please watch and support our film releasing on February 27.”

### Political Leader & Businessman Kanna Ravi

said:

“I’m happy that Shobha Rani garu is releasing this film produced by Sai Simhadri. I wish ‘Son Of’ great success.”

### Ramakrishna Goud said:

“Shobha Rani garu distributes films wonderfully. Sai Simhadri and Meera look excellent in this movie. I request the audience to make this film, releasing on February 27, a big hit.”

### Rama Devi said:

“I liked the trailer of ‘Son Of’ very much. I also watched the film. I strongly believe it will achieve great success.”

## MEGA POWER STAR RAM CHARAN, AR RAHMAN, BUCHI BABU SANA, VENKATA SATISH KILARU, VRIDDHI CINEMAS’ PEDDI 2ND SINGLE RAI RAI RAA RAA ON MARCH 2ND

Mega Power Star Ram Charan’s much-talked-about rustic action spectacle Peddi is steadily building unstoppable momentum ahead of its grand summer release. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the ambitious pan-India project is getting ready for a worldwide theatrical release on April 30, setting the stage for a massive holiday-season showdown. Produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under the Vriddhi Cinemas banner, Peddi features Janhvi Kapoor as the female lead.

The film’s promotional wave has already created ripples across platforms. The First Shot glimpse and the blockbuster first single Chikiri Chikiri, composed by Oscar-winning music director AR Rahman, received tremendous response, shattering records and clocking staggering viewership numbers.

Riding high on that success, the makers are ready to elevate the buzz further with the launch of the second single, Rai Rai Raa Raa, scheduled to release on March 2. The song poster showcases Ram Charan in a raw, earthy avatar. With rugged attire, unkempt hair, a thick beard, and a massive hammer slung over his shoulder, Ram Charan is seen flashing smile, even as chaos unfolds in the background with people running around him. With AR Rahman’s power-



ful music already setting benchmarks and the film gearing up for aggressive promotions, Peddi is shaping up to be one of the most awaited mass spectacles of the year. Adding to the film’s scale, the cast features Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyendu Sharma, and Boman Irani in key roles. Ram Charan will be seen in a first-of-its-kind

role in the movie. The film boasts an exceptional crew- Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman handling the music, popular cinematographer R Rathnavelu capturing the visuals, National Award-winning editor Navin Nooli overseeing the cuts, and Avinash Kolla crafting the film’s rich world through detailed production design.

## Natural Star Nani’s Aaya Sher From The Paradise Tops Music Charts Worldwide In 9 Countries



Natural Star Nani’s highly anticipated project The Paradise has found its defining moment early on with the release of its first single, Aaya Sher. Directed by Srikanth Odela and produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under SLV Cinemas, the film has music scored by Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander. Within no time, the song Aaya Sher grown into a worldwide phenomenon. Aaya Sher has stormed the YouTube Global Charts, trending in 9 countries. It clinched the top position in India and the UAE, while secured impressive ranks across markets like the UK, Australia, Singapore, Canada, Saudi Arabia, the USA, and New Zealand.

For a Telugu track, this kind of global spread is nothing short of exceptional. Beyond charts and numbers, the song’s real power lies in its raw impact. Nani’s intense screen presence, paired with his now-iconic hook step, has struck a chord with audiences worldwide. The grounded, no-frills floor move has exploded on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, with fans and creators across continents jumping on the trend. The Paradise has clearly set the tone for what lies ahead. With Aaya Sher already echoing across borders, the film’s promotional journey has begun with a roar- one that’s being heard far beyond Indian cinema circles.

## ‘HEY BHALWANTH BREAKS EVEN: FILMMAKER REVEALS AT THANKMEET FOR BREAK EVEN DONE EVENT

Hilarious entertainer ‘Hey Bhalwath is made by promising protagonist Suhas and Shivani Nagaram. Directed by Gopi Achchara, this film was produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the banner of Trishul Visionary Studios. The successful duo of Bunnyvas and Vamsi Nandipati brought this film to the audience under the banners of Nandipati Entertainments and Bunny Vas Works. The film, which was released on Friday 20th of this month, has been hailed by the audience as a hilarious entertainer and has been praised by the critics, and it is going to be a blockbuster talk. In this context Producer B. Narendra Reddy said, “This is the first success under our banner. Everyone who saw it was very satisfied. He congratulated him for making a good



film. I went to some theaters and watched the movie in the middle of the audience. Everyone is enjoying the movie so much. It gave me great satisfaction. I felt that I had made a good movie. I want all those who have not seen the movie to watch this movie. Director Gopi Achchara said, “I am happy

that everyone who has seen this movie is praising it. Especially the audience in the US also liked this movie. My gratitude to all those who are responsible for this success. Heroine Shivani Nagaram said, “Thank you to the audience for making this movie a success. Thanks to everyone who anchored and loved our

content. This is content that everyone likes. Everyone who has seen the movie says it is a good movie. The entire team worked hard for the film. Suhas said, “After the movie Ambaji Peta, I was scared because the collections of my movies were not even showing minimum numbers. I got the courage to

see the collection of this movie. There were good collections in overseas as well. After many days my movie OTT also got good fancy rate. Producer Narendra Reddy, who is responsible for this, Thanks to Vamsi Nandipati’ said. Vamsi Nandipati said, “I am very happy. Breaking even for this film is something that gives me a lot of happiness. Very few people would boldly say that our film has broken even. I am happy that Ma Hey Bhalwath has entered such a category. If a producer stands up, many good films will come out. The movie will be a successful movie only if the producer recovers the money. This movie is successful in that regard. Soon we are doing another film with director Gopi. We made this movie with a budget of around 10 crores. OTT, satel-

lite and other rights, theaters collections all together we achieved that ten crores investment. The collections were particularly good in the US. He said that we will go into the profits zone in the coming days.

### Nakala to receive Nandi Award: Producer Vamsi Nandipati

“I made a small speech at the event. That is not my statement. It went wrong. I remembered someone’s statement about 12 years ago. At that time they said this. I have immense respect for God and awards. There is great devotion towards God and there is also respect for awards. Ever since I was a child, I always wanted to receive an award like Nandi Awards. I came to the film industry with that dream. I will not be wrong about such great awards.

## VIROSH WEDDING ALBUM OUT: RASHMIKA-VIJAY’S BIG DAY IN PICTURES

