

10-02-2026  
Total pilgrims: 73,983  
Tonsures: 21,900  
Hundi Kanukalu: 423 CR  
Waiting Compartments: 15  
Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 12 H

**Lamborghini crash accused arrested in morning, granted bail by afternoon**

KANPUR: Shivam Mishra, the main accused in the Lamborghini crash that injured several people on Kanpur's VIP Road earlier this week, was granted bail just hours after his arrest on Thursday. The 35-year-old son of local tobacco baron K K Mishra was produced before the court of the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate around 10 am, where police sought 14 days of judicial custody.



MORNING-BAILED



**Minnesota immigration enforcement surge is ending, Trump border tsar says**

WORLD | NEWS

**MS Dhoni Asked To Pay Rs 10 Lakh By Madras High Court**



SPORTS | NEWS

**INBRIFS**

**Heroin worth Rs 3.2 crore seized in Assam, two arrested**

Cachar (Assam): In a major crackdown on cross-border narcotics trafficking, the Assam Rifles and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized heroin valued at ₹3.2 crore and arrested two alleged drug peddlers in Assam's Cachar district, officials said on Thursday. According to a defence spokesperson, the operation was launched on Wednesday night following specific intelligence inputs about the movement of narcotics in the district. Acting swiftly, Assam Rifles personnel coordinated with the DRI to conduct a joint raid along National Highway-306.

**Punjab Police foil terror plot, arrest UP man with IED and pistol**

Chandigarh: In a major intelligence-driven operation, the Punjab Police's Special Operations Cell in Amritsar has dismantled another Pakistan-backed terror module, averting what officials described as a significant terror plot. One suspect was arrested and an improvised explosive device (IED) encased in a metallic shell with a remote-control mechanism was recovered along with a foreign-made pistol and ammunition, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said on Wednesday. The arrested individual has been identified as Shubham Kumar, also known as Shubham Srivastav, a resident of Sarosa village in Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district.

**TDP issues strong warning to party's 'controversial' MLA**

Amaravati: The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leadership has warned party MLA Kollikapudi Srinivasa Rao that it will not tolerate further indiscipline. TDP state president Palla Srinivas on Thursday met Rao and issued him a clear warning on behalf of party's national president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The party has taken serious note of Tiruvuru MLA targeting other party leaders despite warnings given in the past. According to TDP sources, Palla Srinivas told Rao in clear terms that no individual is bigger than the party.

**CM Revanth seeks defence land, rail funds, airport clearances in Delhi meetings**

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy held a series of high-level meetings with Union Ministers in New Delhi, seeking central approvals and cooperation for key infrastructure and development projects including the Musi Rejuvenation Project, new railway corridors, and airport expansion works.

**Musi Rejuvenation & Gandhi Sarovar Project**

The Chief Minister met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and requested the transfer of 100 acres of defence land required for the Musi Rejuvenation Project. He explained that the project aims to restore the Musi River through environmentally sustainable urban development measures.

CM Revanth Reddy also invited the Defence Minister to attend the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Gandhi Sarovar Project planned at Babu Ghat, located at the confluence of the Isa and Musi rivers — the site associated with the immersion of the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi. The project is proposed as a world-class educational, cultural, spiritual, and environmental center featuring a national museum, knowledge center, and handloom promotion facilities.

**SEEKS CENTRE'S SUPPORT**



CM Revanth Reddy proposed developing Shamshabad as a high-speed rail tri-junction connecting Hyderabad with Chennai, Bengaluru, and Pune, offering 500 acres for the project.

**Railways: Krishna-Vikarabad Line & High-Speed Corridors**

In a separate meeting with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, the Chief Minister urged the Centre to fully fund the Krishna-Vikarabad railway line, stating that the State Government is ready to bear land acquisition costs. He highlighted the industrial potential of the route, including limestone deposits and proposed cement and textile hubs around Kodangal, Tekalkode, and Daulatabad.

The CM also proposed allocation of 500 acres near Shamshabad Airport for upcoming high-speed rail corridors linking Hyderabad with Chennai, Bengaluru, and Pune. He suggested Shamshabad be developed as a tri-junction for high-speed connectivity and requested early initiation of land acquisition and project works. The Railway Minister reportedly responded positively.

**Airports: Mammoor & Adilabad**

The Chief Minister also met Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammoohan Naidu and pressed for early execution of the Mammoor Airport project in Warangal with international standards. He said land acquisition has been completed and requested approval for cargo, maintenance, and overhaul facilities.

**India approves 114 Rafale jets, defence projects worth Rs 3.6 lakh cr**

New Delhi (TSIT) The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) today approved a major acquisition — the purchase of 114 Rafale jets, an additional six US-made Boeing P8-I surveillance planes for the Navy, Scalp missiles, and the new technology High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (HAPS). DAC, the apex decision-making body of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, met today and accorded 'Acceptance of Necessity' (AoN) for proposals for services at an estimated value of about Rs 3.6 lakh crore (approx USD 39 billion). The payment schedule will be spread across several financial years, and AoN is the first step towards the acquisition process.

The Rafale purchase will now go to Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is expected to give a final nod. India and France are looking to seal the deal for the jets when Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron meet in India from February 17-19.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) had moved a formal proposal in September last year to MoD seeking 114 more Rafale fighter jets as part of its multi-pronged plan to add more aircraft. IAF already flies 36 Rafale jets, while the Navy has ordered 26 marine variants of the same jet. Increasing numbers would reduce maintenance costs. A Rafale flight training and Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facility is operational at the IAF base in Ambala.



**INDIA AND FRANCE ARE LOOKING TO SEAL THE DEAL FOR THE JETS WHEN MODI AND FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON MEET IN INDIA FROM FEBRUARY 17-19**

IAF has the capacity — space, spares, tooling, and trained manpower — to immediately take in two squadrons (some 36-38 planes). The jets will be acquired under a 'Make in India' scheme, with Dassault Aviation — the maker of the Rafale — partnering with an Indian firm. The French plane maker will integrate Indian weapons, missiles, and ammunition on all 114 jets and will also provide secure data links to allow digital integration of the jets with Indian radars and sensors, sending imagery to ground-based controllers. The French plane maker will be providing transfer of technology (ToT) for making airframes.

Its suppliers, like engine maker Safran and avionics provider Thales, will be part of the ToT. The indigenous content is expected to be between 55 and 60 per cent once ToT for airframes, engines, and avionics is done.

**India examining US proposal to join Gaza Peace Board: MEA**

New Delhi (TSIT) India is examining the invitation from the US to join President Donald Trump's proposed Board of Peace for Gaza, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Thursday. "We have received an invitation from the US side to join the Board of Peace, and we are currently examining the proposal," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

He underlined that India has consistently supported efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability and dialogue in West Asia. "As you know, India has consistently supported the efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability, and



dialogue in West Asia. Our Prime Minister has welcomed these initiatives that provide a pathway toward long-term and sustainable peace in the region, including Gaza. As for the invitation from the Board

of Peace, we are currently reviewing it," Jaiswal said.

India was invited by US President Donald Trump to be part of the Board of Peace for Gaza along with other global partners. Washington has projected the proposed body as a new international mechanism to usher in peace and stability in Gaza and potentially respond to other global conflicts. Originally conceived as an authority to oversee governance and coordinate funding for Gaza's redevelopment after two years of Israeli military offensive, the board is expected to supervise reconstruction and stabilisation efforts in the conflict-ravaged strip.

**NATIONWIDE STRIKE DISRUPTS TRANSPORT AND BANKING SERVICES**

The protesting unions have demanded the rollback of the four labour codes

New Delhi (TSIT): The nationwide general strike called by a joint forum of central trade unions against the BJP-led central government's alleged "anti-worker, anti-farmer and pro-corporate policies" disrupted normal life in several states on Thursday, with transport, banking and industrial operations affected.

The strike was organised by a joint platform of ten central trade unions, including INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC. The forum claimed that nearly 30 crore workers across the country had been mobilised in support of the bandh.

The protesting unions have



demanding the rollback of the four labour codes, alleging that they dilute workers' rights, reduce job security and make it easier for employers to hire and terminate staff. They have also called for the restoration of MGNREGA and the scrapping of the proposed Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025.

**Rahul should refrain from doing politics on national security issue, says BJP**

CHENNAI (TSIT): Senior BJP leader Vanathi Srinivasan on Thursday asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to refrain from doing politics on national security issue and instead focus on constructive politics. Taking strong exception to the Congress leader for causing pandemonium in the Lok Sabha, allegedly over a memoir of a former Army chief, she said the Congress leader was deliberately playing politics with the country's security. "Rahul Gandhi, rejected by the people, is creating anarchy in the Lok Sabha. When there are a thousand things to do in politics, he is needlessly politicising the country's security. This will make him forfeit even the position as Leader of the Opposition," the Coimbatore South MLA said in a post on X.

**'Patience will pay': Shivakumar on leadership change**

NEW DELHI (TSIT): Amid speculation over a leadership change in the Congress-led Karnataka government, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Thursday said 'patience will also pay'.

The Siddaramaiah government is set to complete 1,000 days in office on Friday. Shivakumar denied that there was any power tussle between him and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

On reports that some legislators are embarking on a foreign tour from February 16 to March 3, supposedly to delay power-sharing between the chief minister and his deputy, Shivakumar said he was unaware of such a development. "I am not aware of



it. I have seen only in newspapers," he told reporters New Delhi. After meeting senior leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi as well as All India Congress Committee president Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi, Shivakumar said the matter concerning a change of leadership was not discussed with them. He reiterated that the party's central leadership will take a call at an appropriate time in the interest of the state.

**Kharge slams caste discrimination, flags Odisha anganwadi boycott**

New Delhi (TSIT): Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday strongly condemned "persistent caste-based discrimination" in India, citing a shocking case from Odisha where parents have boycotted an Anganwadi centre for three months because the helper-cook is a Dalit woman.

Kharge described how the Anganwadi, meant to support children's physical and cognitive development through nutrition and early education, has been effectively shut down due to caste prejudice.

"Anganwadi is supposed to be a place for the physical and cognitive growth of children," he said, emphasising that the ongoing boycott deprives

young students of their rightful nutrition and hampers their overall development. He expressed outrage at the parents' discriminatory attitude toward the Dalit woman worker, underscoring that children should not suffer due to adult biases.

Kharge stressed that every child has a fundamental right to receive proper nutrition under government schemes designed to combat malnutrition. The Congress leader extended his criticism to similar incidents in other states, including Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Chandigarh, where caste discrimination has led to tragic outcomes.

He referenced cases of Madhya Pradesh, where a person urinated on a tribal labour-



er, a Dalit government employee who committed suicide amid alleged workplace harassment and institutional bias in

**HIGHLIGHT POINT:**

■ Mallikarjun Kharge condemned caste-based discrimination after parents in Odisha boycotted an Anganwadi for three months because the cook is a Dalit woman, calling it a violation of constitutional rights and demanding strict action.

Gujarat. In Chandigarh, an ADGP (Additional Director General of Police) from the Dalit community died by suicide, with his note alleging sustained caste-based discrimination, mental harassment, and humiliation by superiors within the police force itself.

Kharge noted that such events reveal how caste prejudice permeates not just social spheres but also professional environments, undermining the dignity,

career progression, and personal safety of marginalised sections. Kharge pointed out that treating employees differently based on caste violates key constitutional provisions, including Articles 14 (equality before law), 15 (prohibition of discrimination), and 17 (abolition of untouchability).

He demanded that the government treat such cases with utmost seriousness, ensuring strict and timely action against perpetrators. "Whenever there is a need to act in such matters, we hear excuses from the government that Dalits have been deprived," Kharge remarked sarcastically, urging immediate intervention to uphold constitutional values and protect vulnerable communities from systemic bias.

# No major impact on normal life due to one-day nationwide strike call

**NEW DELHI:** Normal life largely remained unaffected by the strike call given by a joint forum of central trade unions across the country on Thursday to protest against the alleged "anti-worker, anti-farmer and anti-national pro-corporate policies of the central government".

According to reports, a mixed response was seen in states including Odisha, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab. Normal life was affected in Odisha due to a 12-hour nationwide agitation, as per reports. Public transport, markets, educational institutions, and business establishments were affected as major roads, including national and state highways, were blocked. The bandh's impact was felt in all major urban areas, including

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Balasore, Berhampur and Sambalpur. In Jharkhand, banking, insurance and coal sectors have been affected by the strike, Bank of India (BOI) Employees' Union state Deputy General Secretary Umesh Das said. Left parties and the Congress have also extended their support to the strike in the state. In Chhattisgarh, several nationalised banks remained closed as employees joined the strike. Staff of insurance companies, post offices, along with labourers and farmers, also participated in the agitation, affecting operations in their respective sectors. Mining activities in the mineral-rich state were partially hit. However, transport services in the state functioned normally, and shops, markets and most business establishments re-



operations at the Bhilai Steel Plant continued as usual. Normalcy was affected in port operations in Tamil Nadu, and

workers staged protests. Port operations in Thoothukudi and Chennai bore the brunt of the agitation. The industrial hub of Sriperumbudur also witnessed significant activity as workers from several manufacturing units held gate meetings and demonstrations in solidarity with the strike. While production in some major automobile and electronic facilities continued with reduced manpower, the movement of goods in the Sriperumbudur-Oragadam industrial belt faced delays due to the scarcity of transport vehicles. In Kerala, though the state government declared a dies-non (a day when no legal business is carried on) for government employees, attendance at offices was expected to remain low as transport vehicles remained off

the roads. Apart from government offices, shops and businesses were also likely to remain closed due to the nationwide 24-hour strike. Travellers were among the worst affected, with KSRTC and private buses remaining off the roads. Auto-rickshaw unions also announced that they would not operate during the strike. Punjab's ruling party, AAP, has extended support to the nationwide strike. The party announced that its cadre across Punjab and the rest of the country would join the shutdown shoulder-to-shoulder with workers and farmers. The agitation drew a mixed response in Goa, with banking operations affected while essential services remained undisturbed. Nationalised banks and offices of

many insurance companies remained shut in the coastal state. Over 25,000 civilian employees working with defence establishments across Madhya Pradesh reported to work an hour late on Thursday to support the strike. Markets, schools and colleges remained open across the state. The strike call failed to evoke any response in West Bengal as vehicles plied normally and state government and private offices recorded usual turnout. Similarly, the strike call failed to evoke much response in Tripura. Government offices, banks, educational institutions, and markets remained open, while road transport and train services operated as usual across the state. It had little impact in Gujarat, with most services and commercial establishments functioning as usual across the state.

## Parliament passes Industrial Relations Code Bill 2026

**NEW DELHI:** Parliament on Thursday passed the Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Bill, 2026, with an aim to bring legal clarity. Piloting the bill, Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in the Rajya Sabha said, "When the Industrial Relations Code of 2020 was passed, the three Acts were subsumed in that". He informed the House that those three laws were the Trade Union Act 1926, Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act 1946 and Industrial Dispute Act 1947. He explained that the government has the power to repeal these three laws, and there is no dispute in this. "I am not bringing any change in the system. This amendment is brought for legal clarity. We have not enabled the Code that repeals these three laws. The government can also do it itself. It is only for bringing legal clarity," he said. He said that in this case, there is no need for scrutiny by the standing committee, and no change has been introduced. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that this reflects poorly on the government,

as the amendment is brought so late and the government is doing so after the apex court asked it to do so. He said that his party supports the bill. The other members who spoke on the bill in the Rajya Sabha are Dola Sen (TMC), V Sivadasan (CPI-M), M Thambidurai (AIADMK), Niranjan Bishi (BJD), A R Reddy Alla (YSRCP) and R Girirajan (DMK). The bill was passed by voice vote in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. Earlier in the day, the bill was passed by voice vote in the Lok Sabha also. The bill would help avoid any "future unwarranted complication" over the continuity of certain laws replaced by the Industrial Relations Code of 2020. Replying to a debate in the Lok Sabha on the Bill, Mandaviya said the four Labour Codes implemented nearly three months ago ensure a guarantee of minimum wage. These Codes also ensure compulsory issuance of appointment letters, as well as uniform wages for the same work irrespective of gender, he said.

## RERA doing nothing except facilitating defaulting builders: SC

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Thursday said it is high time all states rethought the constitution of the real estate regulatory authority (RERA) as the institution is doing nothing, except facilitating defaulting builders. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the people for whom RERA was created were "completely depressed, disgusted and disappointed" and asserted that it won't mind if the institution was abolished. The observations came from the bench, which permitted the Himachal Pradesh government to shift the office of RERA to the place of its choice. The bench issued notice on a plea filed by the Himachal Pradesh government and others challenging an order of the Himachal Pradesh High Court in a matter pertaining to the shifting of the state RERA office from Shimla to Dharamshala. The high court had earlier stayed a June 2025

notification concerning the shifting of RERA office till further order. Later, in its order passed on December 30, 2025, the high court directed the continuance of the interim order. The top court stayed the high court's December 30 direction. "Except facilitating the builders in default, this institution is doing nothing. Better abolish this institution, we don't mind that," the CJI said. "...high time that all the states should revisit and rethink of even constituting this authority," the bench said. In its petition filed in the apex court through advocate Sugandha Anand, the state said the decision to shift the Himachal Pradesh RERA office from Shimla to Dharamshala was taken to "decongest" Shimla city, and it was purely on administrative considerations. Senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for the state, told the bench about the matter and said, "This is about the



RERA, which we seek to shift to Dharamshala". An advocate, appearing for the respondent, said 90 per cent of the projects with which the authority deals are in Shimla, Solan, Parwanoo and Sirmaur, which are within a radius of a maximum of 40 km. He said around 92 per cent of complaints which are pending before RERA are only from

depressed, disgusted and disappointed. None of them are getting any effective relief. For whom this institution actually is now serving, you will find out when you meet these people," the CJI said. The top court also observed that Shimla is "completely over exhausted". While issuing notice on the plea, the bench said, "The state is permitted to shift the office of RERA to the place of its choice. However, it shall be subject to the final outcome of the writ petition pending before the high court". The advocate general of Himachal Pradesh told the bench that, as per a policy decision, the state is developing Palampur, Dharamshala and other cities. The CJI asked, "What is the logic of having a retired bureaucrat? How he will be able to help in developing Palampur. You need to avail services of some architect who is environment friendly,

who knows Palampur area, Dharamshala area and these entire areas. Only those persons will help". The bench was also informed that the district judge, Shimla, hears the appeals against the orders passed by RERA. "With a view to ensure that the persons affected by the orders of RERA are not caused any inconvenience to visit Shimla for the purpose of filing appeals, it is further directed that appellate power may be shifted from principal district judge, Shimla, to principal district judge of Dharamshala," the bench said. On February 9, in a separate matter, the apex court set aside an interim order of the Himachal Pradesh High Court staying the decision of the state government to shift the OBC commission from Shimla to Dharamshala. The top court had said such issues pertain to policy decisions and ordinarily do not fall under the judicial domain.

## Govt favouring industrialists over labourers: Opposition in LS

**NEW DELHI:** The opposition on Thursday accused the government of favouring industrialists over workers while drafting the industrial relations code, even snatching away their right to protest for demands. Initiating a discussion on the Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Bill, Congress member Kodikunil Suresh said that instead of dialogue, the government has chosen to dominate labourers. Suresh, a former Union Minister of State for Labour, said the strike call given by workers on Thursday was a "warning signal" and reflected the government's policy failure in dealing with the labour force. "Today's strike is a warning signal. Central trade unions, public sector unions, banking employees, electricity

and transport employees, and unorganised labour; such a broad alliance against the government is indicative of policy failure," he said. The Congress leader said the law mandates workers to give a 14-day notice before going on strike. Pointing out that participation of women in labour force has declined, Suresh said the new codes do not help overcome this problem. "The UPA government was a pro-labour government unlike the current regime. We introduced MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), upheld social justice, introduced Food Security Act and helped labourers across sectors," he said, also accusing the government of privatising Public Sector Undertakings. Samajwadi Party leader

Afzal Ansari questioned the government's legislative practices and asked why it has to amend laws within five years of their enactment. "This amendment is a cover-up of the law's shortcomings," he said. Ansari said there is no safety for labourers in India. "During Covid, migrant labourers were treated horrifically by the Union government. They were lathi-charged and left without any means to support themselves. Time and again, this government has proved that they do nothing for the labourers," he said. Opposing the amendment bill, Trinamool Congress leader Kalyan Banerjee said the original law had taken away the livelihood of the country's labourers. "Labour force is India's key

strength, after agriculture. This law gives away all powers to the employers," Banerjee said. He said the government is becoming more friendly with industrialists and removing checks for them. "These are your heydays. But remember, everyday will not be a heyday. A day will come when the labourers and agricultural workers will show their power by giving their mandate against the government," Banerjee said. Shiv Sena-UBT member Arvind Sawant said the government was protecting industrialists and not labourers. "For over 20 years, people have been working as contract labourers. If people keep working at the same wage for years, how will development happen?" Sawant asked.

## Govt ignored voices of workers, farmers while making decisions concerning their future: Rahul

**NEW DELHI:** With trade unions observing a day-long strike against the Centre's policies, the Congress on Thursday expressed support for them and Rahul Gandhi alleged that the government ignored the voices of workers and farmers while making decisions concerning their future. Gandhi wondered whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi will listen to them now or if there is a "grip" on him too strong. Employees and workers associated with a joint forum of central trade unions observed a day-long strike on Thursday to show their "resistance to anti-worker, anti-farmer and anti-national pro-corporate policies of the central government". The forum has claimed that 30 crore workers are being mobilised for a "general strike" to protest against the new labour code, among other issues. Congress president Mallikar-

jun Kharge said all the country's trade unions, farmers, and workers are on the streets against the Modi government's trade deal, labour laws and the "snatching away of MGNREGA". "We stand firmly against the anti-people TRAP DEAL, which has mortgaged the future of millions of toiling farmers, workers, and labourers. Succumbing to foreign pressure, the Modi government has tampered with the lives of crores of citizens of the country," he alleged. Taking a swipe at Prime Minister Modi, Kharge said those who chanted "Abki baar Trump sarkaar" have harmed India's national interest, and the biggest opposition to this comes from our workers, small traders, and the common people. "From the streets to Parliament, our struggle will continue," Kharge added. Gandhi alleged that the gov-

ernment ignored the voices of workers and farmers while making decisions concerning their future and asked whether Prime Minister Modi will listen to them now or if there is a "grip" on him too strong. Gandhi's attack on the government came a day after he alleged that the India-US interim trade deal was a "whole-sale surrender", with India's energy security handed over to America and farmers' interests compromised. In a post on X in Hindi, Gandhi said, "Today, lakhs of workers and farmers across the country are on the streets to raise their voices for their rights." He said that the workers fear that the four labour codes will weaken their rights. "Farmers fear that the trade agreement (with the US) will harm their livelihoods. And weakening or eliminating MGNREGA could take away the last source of support for villages," the Leader of Opposition in

Lok Sabha said. "Will Modiji listen now? Or is there a 'grip' on him that is too strong? I stand firmly with the issues and struggles of workers and farmers," Gandhi said. Speaking with reporters in the Parliament House complex, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also expressed support for the workers and farmers, saying whatever the government is doing is completely wrong. "They are betraying the farmers. The kind of trade deal they have signed will result in sufferings for farmers. We are supporting the labour unions in their strike today," she said. In a no-holds-barred attack on the Modi government, Rahul Gandhi, while participating in the debate on the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, claimed that Indian interests had been "surrendered" under the trade deal to protect the BJP's financial architecture.

## Cong MPs should make Rahul understand he cannot speak in LS violating its rules: Rijju

**NEW DELHI:** Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju on Thursday said he has asked several Congress MPs to make Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi understand that a privilege notice could be moved against him if he speaks in the Lok Sabha, violating its rules and procedures. This comes a day after Rijju said a notice for a privilege motion will be brought against Gandhi for "misleading" the House and making "baseless statements". "I have told several Congress MPs that they should make Rahul Gandhi understand a bit that speaking outside the rules attracts privilege notice," he told reporters in the Parliament House complex on Thursday, when asked about the



privilege notice. "I have told them to explain it to Rahul Gandhi. He may not be aware of the rules (of the Lok Sabha)," he added. Rijju said there are several Congress MPs who are "educated and mature".

In a no-holds-barred attack on the Narendra Modi government, Gandhi on Wednesday alleged the India-US interim trade deal was a "wholesale surrender", with India's energy security handed over to America and farmers' interests compromised. Participating in the debate on the Union Budget in Lok Sabha, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha also alleged that Indian interests had been "surrendered" under the trade deal to protect the BJP's financial architecture. Soon after Gandhi concluded his speech, Rijju slammed the LoP, dismissing his claims as "full of lies", and said the treasury benches will seek expunging of his "lies" from the

records of the House proceedings. Addressing a press conference later in the Parliament House complex, the parliamentary affairs minister had alleged that Gandhi made "baseless and false" allegations against the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rijju had said the leader of the opposition also made a "serious allegation" against Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, taking his name in the Lok Sabha without giving any prior notice. "It is a serious breach of privilege. We are going to file a privilege notice against Rahul Gandhi for misleading the House and making baseless statements," the minister had told reporters.

## Disability pension not ex gratia payment dependent on grace of State: SC

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Thursday said disability pension is neither a bounty nor an ex gratia payment dependent upon the grace of the State, and the government cannot be selective or uneven in its approach. A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe made the observations while dismissing an appeal filed by the Centre challenging an order of the Armed Forces Tribunal on payment of disability pension to ex-servicemen. The top court said disability pension is not a matter of largesse, but a recognition of sacrifice made in the service of the nation. "Pension, as authori-

tatively settled by this court, is neither a bounty nor an ex gratia payment dependent upon the grace of the State. It is a deferred portion of compensation for past service and, upon fulfilment of the governing conditions, matures into a vested and enforceable right. "Pensionary entitlements, therefore, partake the character of property, and cannot be withheld, reduced, or extinguished except by authority of law," the bench said. The apex court said the Union of India, as a model employer, is expected to act with fairness, consistency and even-handedness in the administration of benefits conferred upon those who have served the nation.

"When a benefit is recognised by a policy and affirmed by judicial pronouncement, its application cannot be selective or uneven. "Any such deprivation of accrued arrears which has become due to ex-servicemen in view of judicial determination as well as policy decision taken by the Union of India itself, would constitute deprivation of property and would amount to infringement of Article 300A of the Constitution of India," the bench said. The court reiterated that the right to receive disability pension is a valuable right and once found due, the benefit of the same has to be given from the date it became due.

We need politics of growth, not politics of hatred, CM tells Industrialists

CHENNAI: Chief Minister MK Stalin on Thursday said the Dravidian model government believes in growth-oriented politics and not



continues to provide confidence to industries, entrepreneurs and investors. He emphasised that social justice and industrial growth must go hand in hand. "The State's economic growth stands at 11.19 per cent. The manufacturing sector has recorded a growth of 14.7 per cent, which is significantly higher than the national average. Tamil Nadu accounts for 41 per cent of India's electronics exports," he said.

in politics driven by hatred or resentment. Addressing industrialists at the Conversion Conclave event which was organized by the Industries department, Stalin said Tamil Nadu

NAME CLARIFICATION

I, MERAMAN LAKHMANBHAI SUVA, residing at [Flat No.S1, 03rd Floor, Homs Javeshiya Apartment, Thiruvallur 01st Main road, Opp. Sai Siddharth Store, Thendral Nagar, Anagaputhur, Anagaputhur, PD: Anagaputhur, Dist: Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu - 600070], hereby declare that the name appearing on my Degree Certificate as SUVA MERAMANBHAI LAKHMANBHAI and the name appearing on my Aadhar Card as MERAMAN LAKHMANBHAI SUVA both refer to one and the same person, i.e., myself. There is no change in my identity. The difference is only in the order/form of the name recorded in different documents. This declaration is made to clarify the above discrepancy for all official, legal, and administrative purposes. Henceforth, I shall be known as MERAMAN LAKHMANBHAI SUVA.

MERAMAN LAKHMANBHAI SUVA

New Low Pressure Area to form over Bay on Feb 15

Chennai: Despite dry weather prevailing over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal area during the last few days with no traces of rain, a new Low Pressure Area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal on February 15 which is expected to revive light to moderate rainfall activity. Met office on Thursday said there was no large change in minimum temperature over Tamilnadu, Puducherry and Karaikal area during the past 24 hours though chilly conditions continued to prevail in several parts of Chennai and its neighbouring districts.



next 7 days is that light rain is likely to occur at isolated places over Western Ghat districts of Theni, Virudhunagar, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli and

Kanyakumari of Tamil Nadu tomorrow, where as dry weather is likely to prevail over rest of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and Karaikal area. On February 14, light rain is likely to occur at isolated places over South Tamil Nadu. Dry weather is likely to prevail over North Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal area and it is likely to continue till February 16, while light rain has been forecast on February 17 and 18.

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tender for the following work up to 15:00 hours on 05.03.2026. Tender No.: B/E.221/TRS/RC/569 E-Tender No.ELS-BZA-eTN-20-2025-26 Dt: 11.02.2026 Name of the work: ELS/BZA- Electrical repair of Hitachi TM HS15250A Period of Completion: 24 Months (2 years) Tender value: (₹) 54,35,306.09 E.M.D: (₹) 1,08,700/- Cost of Tender document: (₹) 0/- Tender closing Date & Time: 05.03.2026 at 15.00Hrs.

1)Tender conditions/ other particulars such as the details of Name of work in full, the similar nature of the above work, eligibility criteria etc., are available in the Tender documents published in website at www.ireps.gov.in. 2)The prospective tenderers are advised to visit website www.ireps.gov.in before the date of tender closing to note any changes/corrigenda for any tender. 3)The Tender Notice is also displayed in the Notice Board located in the office of Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Traction Rolling Stock, Electric Loco Shed, Vijayawada which can be seen. 4)The Railway reserves the right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereto. Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS) Electric Loco Shed, Vijayawada

E-Tender No.ELS-BZA-eTN-21-2025-26 Dt: 11.02.2026

For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tender for the following work up to 15:00 hours on 05.03.2026.

Tender No.: B/E.221/TRS/RC/570 E-Tender No.ELS-BZA-eTN-21-2025-26 Dt:11.02.2026 Name of the work: ELS/BZA- Mechanical Rehabilitation of Hitachi TM Stators (type HS15250A)- Period of Completion: 24 Months (2 years) Tender value: (₹) 69,60,080.05 E.M.D: (₹) 1,39,200/- Cost of Tender document: (₹) 0/- Tender closing Date & Time: 05.03.2026 at 15.00Hrs.

1)Tender conditions/ other particulars such as the details of Name of work in full, the similar nature of the above work, eligibility criteria etc., are available in the Tender documents published in website at www.ireps.gov.in. 2)The prospective tenderers are advised to visit website www.ireps.gov.in before the date of tender closing to note any changes/corrigenda for any tender. 3)The Tender Notice is also displayed in the Notice Board located in the office of Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Traction Rolling Stock, Electric Loco Shed, Vijayawada which can be seen. 4)The Railway reserves the right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereto. Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS) Electric Loco Shed, Vijayawada

TENDER NOTICE

On Behalf of The President of India, Sr.Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, Secunderabad Division, South Central Railway, Secunderabad Invites Open Tenders For The Following Works Through E-Procurement of The Tenders

1. Tender No. & Date: C\_SG\_36\_591 Dt:10/02/2026 Closing dt:04/03/2026 Name of the work : 1. S&T arrangements at proposed yard modifications at SIRPUR TOWN STATION in view of iron ore siding, two number of ballast sidings and Yard remodeling. I.R.P.S M NO.11.05.16.25.3.54.015 of 2025.26 2. S&T arrangements interconnection with Extension of Raghavapuram (RGPM) station shunting neck on KZJ-BQP section (I.R.P.S M ID: 11.05.16.25.3.54.001 Approval Value: (₹) 4,79,77,342.18 Bid security EMD (₹) 3,89,900/- For further details visit the website www.ireps.gov.in. Sr.Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, A2457 Co-ord/Secunderabad

For further tender conditions/ details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at https://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

2-day IPMA Global PPF meet begins at Mahabs today

Chennai: The International Project Management Association (IPMA), a leading global authority on competent Project Management, is conducting the 2-day Indian edition of its premier international conference - IPMA Global Project Profession Forum (PPF) at a star city at the tourist spot of Mahabalipuram, about 55 km from here, from tomorrow.

FORM NO. INC-26

[Pursuant to Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014] Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of registered office of the company from one state to another BEFORE THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN REGION, CHENNAI IN THE MATTER OF SUB SECTION (4) OF SECTION 13 OF COMPANIES ACT, 2013 AND CLAUSE (A) OF SUB RULE (5) OF RULE 30 OF THE COMPANIES (INCORPORATION) RULES, 2014 AND In the matter of KOREMINDS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED ('the Applicant Company'), having its registered office at 4F, Ramaniyam Sanjivini, 72/1 LB Road Tiruvanniyur, Tiruvanniyur, Chennai, Chennai City Corporation, Tamil Nadu, India, 600041. APPLICANT Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Applicant Company proposes to make an application to the Central Government through Regional Director, Southern Region, Chennai, under Section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Applicant Company in terms of the Special Resolution passed at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting held on 16th January, 2026 at 10:00 AM to enable the Applicant Company to change its Registered Office from "State of Tamil Nadu" to "State of Karnataka".

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or sent by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of objection to the Regional Director, Southern Region at 5th floor, Shastri Bhavan, 26, Haddows Road, Chennai - 600006, Tamil Nadu, within fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below: 4F, Ramaniyam Sanjivini, 72/1 LB Road Tiruvanniyur, Tiruvanniyur, Chennai, Chennai City Corporation, Tamil Nadu, India, 600041 For and on behalf of the Applicant For KOREMINDS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED Sd/- MALLA PRABHAKAR REDDY SRIKANTH Director DIN: 11205966 Date: 13.02.2026 Place: Chennai

Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD CIN: U5922K12019DC039178, 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreeram Swami Temple, Cherpappur, Thiruvallur District, Thiruvallur, Kerala 680567.

DEMAND NOTICE Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd. having our registered office at 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreeram Swami Temple, Cherpappur, Thiruvallur District, Thiruvallur, Kerala 680567 (hereinafter referred to as 'MAHOFIN') and the Companies Act, 1956 and a Financial Institution within the meaning of sub-clause (iv) of clause (m) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) read with Notification No. S.O. 3466 (E) dated 18th December, 2015 issued by the Govt. of India, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, inter alia carrying on business of advancing loans for construction and/or purchase of dwelling units and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MAHOFIN and whereas MAHOFIN being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons. That in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are hereby informed by way of this public notice.

Table with 4 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower, Description of Secured Asset in respect of which interest has been created, NPA Date, Date of Notice sent & Outstanding Amount.

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, MAHOFIN shall be constrained to take up 13(1) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above, steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made thereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by MAHOFIN at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act. Take note that in terms of S-13(13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.

Place: TAMIL NADU, Date: 13-02-2026 Sd/- Authorized Officer, Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

SBFC Finance Private Limited

(erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Private Limited)

Registered Office:- Unit No. 103, First Floor, C&B Square, Sangam Complex, Vullabal Chakala, Andheri- Kuria Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400059

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers mentioned hereunder had availed the financial assistance from SBFC Finance Limited. We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/mortgagors have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non-Performing Asset on the respective dates mentioned hereunder, in the books of SBFC as per guidelines of Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of SBFC Finance Limited, under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices on respective dates mentioned herein below, calling upon the following borrowers/mortgagors to repay the amount mentioned in the notices together with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices. The notices issued to them on their last known addresses have returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same.

Table with 4 columns: NAME OF THE BORROWER / ADDRESS, DATE OF DEMAND NOTICE & NPA, LOAN AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT, Description Of Secured Assets.

In the circumstances as aforesaid, the notice is hereby given to the above borrowers, co-borrowers, to pay the outstanding dues as mentioned above along with future interest and applicable charges within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and the mortgagors under Section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act and the applicable Rules thereunder. Please note that under Section 13(13) of the SARFAESI Act, no Borrower shall, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of his secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor. Date: 12th February 2026 Sd/- Authorized Officer, SBFC Finance Private Limited Place: THIRUVALLUR/TAMIL NADU

Bandhan Bank SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given under the Securitization 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, the Authorized Officer issued demand notice to the borrower(s) on the date mentioned against the account stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular the borrower(s) that the undersigned has taken the symbolic possession of the property described herein below under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned against the account. The borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank for the amounts, interest, costs and charges thereon. The borrowers'/mortgagors' attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Table with 5 columns: Name of borrower(s), Guarantor & Loan Account No., Description of the property mortgaged (Secured Asset), Date of Demand Notice, Date of Symbolic Possession Notice, O/s Amount as on date of Demand Notice.

Place: Madurai Date: February 13, 2026 Authorised Officer Bandhan Bank Limited

Bandhan Bank SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given under the Securitization 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, the Authorized Officer issued demand notice to the borrower(s) on the date mentioned against the account stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular the borrower(s) that the undersigned has taken the symbolic possession of the property described herein below under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned against the account. The borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank for the amounts, interest, costs and charges thereon. The borrowers'/mortgagors' attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Table with 5 columns: Name of borrower(s), Guarantor & Loan Account No., Description of the property mortgaged (Secured Asset), Date of Demand Notice, Date of Symbolic Possession Notice, O/s Amount as on date of Demand Notice.

Place: Tamilnadu Date: February 13, 2026 Authorised Officer Bandhan Bank Limited

Bandhan Bank SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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Place: Tamilnadu Date: February 13, 2026 Authorised Officer Bandhan Bank Limited

# EDITORIAL

## Inside India's High-Stakes Push For Buying A Record 114 Rafales

The year was 1987, and this writer was doing his test pilots course at EPNER, the French Test Pilots School located at a quaint place called 'Istres', where all French aircraft prototypes were test-flown. In between our exhausting ground subjects (equations in the aerodynamics class whose length filled the span of the blackboard!) and flying instructions (all teaching in French!), we would, after every odd month, get a respite. All flying would stop, and the entire airbase would be out on the tarmac to see 'vol Rafale', that is, Rafale flying! And the Rafale technology demonstrator (which it was then) would turn, loop and twist with its afterburners lit, astonishing the viewers with its tight manoeuvrability. Little did I know that one day it would fly in Indian Air Force colours.

Rafale in French means 'a gust of wind'. While in the air, it is as elusive as a 'gust' to the adversary, its story of induction in the IAF has actually kicked up a storm of hurricane proportions. This essay will look at the reasons and implications of the impending announcement of the acquisition of 114 Rafales during the forthcoming visit of President Emmanuel Macron; the order, supposedly worth Rs 3.25 lakh crores (!), would make it the largest acquisition ever for the Indian armed forces - as well as the largest order worldwide for M/S Dassault, the manufacturer of Rafale. The year was 1987, and this writer was doing his test pilots course at EPNER, the French Test Pilots School located at a quaint place called 'Istres', where all French aircraft prototypes were test-flown. In between our exhausting ground subjects (equations in the aerodynamics class whose length filled the span of the blackboard!) and flying instructions (all teaching in French!), we would, after every odd month, get a respite. All flying would stop, and the entire airbase would be out on the tarmac to see 'vol Rafale', that is, Rafale flying! And the Rafale technology demonstrator (which it was then) would turn, loop and twist with its afterburners lit, astonishing the viewers with its tight manoeuvrability. Little did I know that one day it would fly in Indian Air Force colours.

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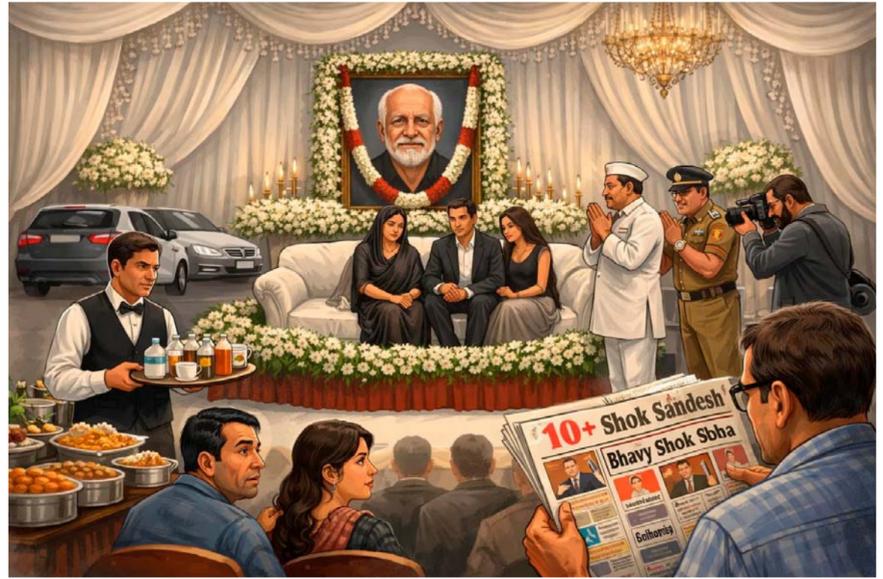
### Advertisement - Scroll to continue

The evaluation process for the Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) project for 126 aircraft started in 2008 - special security was put in place for the evaluation process, and that there was not a single 'leak' speaks of the high integrity of the evaluation. The team, over a period of almost two years, evaluated six leading aircraft in all types of the Indian environment and shortlisted the Eurofighter and Rafale. The government (not the IAF, as any acquisition is a government decision) decided to go for the Rafale in 2012; thereafter, the project went into prolonged slumber, a victim of inaction as the MMRCA project had become a political 'touch me not.' The real effect was on the IAF's operational capability as its squadron strength gradually dwindled. All Air Chiefs after 2010 kept emphasising the imperative need to urgently acquire a new aircraft, but what finally came in 2016 was a truncated contract for the purchase of 36 Rafales to equip two Squadrons. This gave breathing time, alright, but as MiG-21 squadrons continue to be phased out, the situation has become critical, with IAF strength reducing to 29 Squadrons. The media has been agog with news of a new IAF project for 114 Multi Role Fighter Aircraft - and foreign companies have made their pitch again through media articles and participation in the AeroIndia shows at Bengaluru. In the interim, India's neighbours were up to their tricks and the Rafale was seen in action recently in Op Sindoor.

# UNFORTUNATE GRANDEUR OF MOURNING CEREMONIES

- Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

A civilized society is defined not by its celebrations but by its mourning. The way a society embraces grief, the dignity and sensitivity with which it expresses it—this is the measure of its human maturity. Unfortunately, today our society seems to fall short of this standard. Mourning ceremonies, once a natural medium for sharing grief and offering support to the bereaved family, are gradually becoming platforms for pomp, display, and social competition. Today, in many parts of the country, when flipping through the pages of major newspapers, it's common to see ten, twenty, or even fifty condolence messages published on a single day for a single person. And not simple ones, but colorful, in bold font, sometimes occupying entire pages. Condolence messages are no longer information, but rather advertisements. Once, a six- or seven-line black-and-white condolence message was enough to announce the passing of a certain person and the condolence gathering being held at a certain location. Relatives and acquaintances would arrive without any fanfare. At that time, expressions of grief were characterized by simplicity, silence, and intimacy. Over time, this simplicity has been lost. Today, the size, color, location, and cost of a condolence message—everything has become a symbol of social status. It's unfortunate that we've turned even the ultimate truth of death into a status symbol. Now, we're focused on which family sent the largest condolence message, which sent it in color, and whose message appeared on the front page. The format of condolence meetings has also become a reflection of this trend. The practice of expressing condolences in a simple living room or courtyard is fading away. They have been replaced by grand pavilions, elaborately decorated pandals, white curtains, carpets, and lavish decorations. Often, condolence meetings are held in large banquet halls or wedding gardens, where the atmosphere feels more like a social gathering than a mourning one. A large, decorated portrait of the deceased is placed on



a stage, surrounded by garlands and decorative lighting. The bereaved family members also arrive fully dressed. Their attire, their body language, and their behavior do not convey any deep sorrow. It's not that they are not grieving, but the natural simplicity of grief, the silent pain, is drowned out by this grandeur. The number of people present at a condolence meeting has now become a measure of prestige, not sympathy. The number of people, the number of vehicles, the number of leaders, the number of officials—all of these are counted and discussed. Even after the condolence meeting is over, the assessment continues: "So and so didn't come" or "So and so important person also attended." As if the condolence meeting is not a tribute to the deceased, but an occasion for displaying social power. This trend isn't limited to the so-called upper class. Even lower- and middle-class families are now joining the fray. They know that such an event is beyond their financial means, yet social pressure prevents them from backing out. As a result, a condolence meeting, which should be an opportunity for mental solace, turns into a financial burden. Many

families find it difficult to bear this burden, but are forced to do so out of fear of what people will say. Food and beverages have become an important element of this grand event. Tea, coffee, mineral water, snacks, and sometimes even meals are provided. Attention is paid to the quality and variety of these arrangements. This scenario is completely contrary to the original spirit behind the condolence meeting. The purpose of a condolence meeting is not to feed people, but to share in the grief of the bereaved family. Even those attending mourning ceremonies are often left confused. The atmosphere makes it impossible to truly feel like they're attending a mourning service. New customs have been created, while old, simple, and dignified ones are gradually disappearing. Another worrying aspect is that even deeply personal sentiments like memorials and death anniversaries are now becoming a means of public display. Remembering a loved one is a personal experience. Their memory should live on in the mind, among family, and with simplicity. So why is there a need to spend year after year in large newspaper advertisements to inform the entire

society that you still remember your loved one? Does the value of remembrance lie in its publicity? This is not just a question of tradition, but also of sensitivity. When private grief becomes a public display, its soul is lost. Grief, which should be an occasion for introspection and humility, becomes a tool for ego and display. It's time for society to seriously address this trend. We must understand that death doesn't dictate one's social status. It makes everyone equal. Therefore, expressions of grief should be equal, simple, and dignified. The purpose of a condolence meeting is to pay tribute to the deceased and comfort the living, not to display one's power to society. The media, social leadership, and society itself must collectively exercise self-restraint in this regard. Newspapers should also consider whether promoting condolence messages as advertisements is further fueling this trend. Social standing should be determined not by the size of condolence messages, but by human compassion. Ultimately, the most beautiful form of mourning is one with fewer words, less ostentation, and more compassion.

## THE JF-17 'HYPE': HOW PAK IS PUSHING A JET THAT'S MORE NOISE THAN SUBSTANCE

The recently concluded Singapore Air Show featured a display of diverse regional air power. Islamabad brought to the show its JF-17 'Thunder' Block III, a Sino-Pakistani multirole fighter jet. Jointly developed by the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC) of China, the JF-17 has undergone multiple changes, from its Block I version debuting in the early 2000s, to the Block III iteration of today getting inducted into the Pakistani Air Force (PAF) by 2022. Block III can be classified as a 4.5-generation multirole combatant that mitigates to a great extent, Pakistan's dependence on the West, as well as Russia. Simultaneously, it enhances military collaboration between Islamabad and Beijing, considering that the JF-17, together with J-10CEs and PL-15Es, forms an interoperable air defence ecosystem of Chinese-origin equipment for deployment by the PAF.



'Thunder' Block III, a Sino-Pakistani multirole fighter jet. Jointly developed by the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC) of China, the JF-17 has undergone multiple changes, from its Block I version debuting in the early 2000s, to the Block III iteration of today getting inducted into the Pakistani Air Force (PAF) by 2022. Block III can be classified as a 4.5-generation multirole combatant that mitigates to a great extent, Pakistan's dependence on the West, as well as Russia. Simultaneously, it enhances military collaboration between Islamabad and Beijing, considering that the JF-17, together with J-10CEs and PL-15Es, forms an interoperable air defence ecosystem of Chinese-origin equipment for deployment by the PAF.

### Where It Started

In its early stages, PAF's fighter jet programme was driven by a need to reduce dependence on the West for fighter jets and replace its ageing fleet of Nanchang A-5C bombers, Chengdu F-7P/PG interceptors, and Dassault Mirage III/5 multirole aircraft. In the 1980s, Islamabad and the American company Grumman launched a Sabre II project, to collaboratively upgrade the PAF's Chengdu F-7 fleet. However, the project was abandoned following the imposition of sanctions on China in 1989, and on Pakistan following its 1998 nuclear tests. And so, in 1995, Pakistan and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly develop what was then known as the 'Super 7'.

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### Advertisement - Scroll to continue

Prototype production commenced in September 2002, with the first jet rolling out in May 2003. Its maiden flight took place in late August 2003 at Chengdu, and by March 2004, the flight test programme had completed 20 missions. It then became the 'Joint Fighter-17 (JF-17) to reflect the collaborative nature of the programme. The '17', interestingly, came from an attempt to depict the JF-17 as a successor to the US's F-16.

## How Muslim Voters In Bengal Will Shape The 2026 Assembly Poll Outcome

On December 6, 2025, the 33rd anniversary of the demolition of Babri Masjid, a suspended Trinamool Congress MLA named Humayun Kabir laid the foundation stone of a mosque modelled on the iconic structure in Murshidabad district. It was an act calculated for maximum political resonance, and it worked. Within weeks, the West Bengal Police had attached properties worth Rs 10 crore linked to Kabir's family in a narcotics case, the Trinamool had expelled him, and a new political outfit - the Janata Unnayan Party (JUP) - had been born. The 2026 assembly election battle for Bengal's Muslim vote has officially begun. The Demographic Arithmetic To understand why this matters, start with the numbers. Muslims constitute approximately 27% of West Bengal's population as per the 2011 census - a figure the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) now claims may be closer to 30% or higher given illegal immigration from Bangladesh over the intervening decade. Three districts - Malda, Murshidabad, and Uttar Dinajpur - have Muslim-majority populations of 50% or above. Two more, South 24 Parganas and Birbhum, hover above 35%. Spread across these geographies are 89 assembly seats where the Muslim population exceeds 30%, and 112 seats where it exceeds 25%. In the 2021 assembly elections, the Trinamool Congress won 87 of those 89 seats - a near-perfect sweep. Of the 112 Muslim-influenced seats, Trinamool captured 106, leaving the BJP with just five. The BJP's strike rate in constituencies with more than 30% Muslim population was nearly zero, with the party managing to win just one seat. These seats, in effect, acted as a structural wall the party simply could not breach. The Vote Consolidation Story According to Axis My India exit poll data from 2021, approximately 75% of Muslim voters backed the Trinamool. By the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, that figure had risen to 83%. Data from The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) suggests that concerns around the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the National Register of Citizens



(NRC) debate, and a broader sense of political vulnerability drove Muslim voters closer to Mamata Banerjee's fold rather than away from it. Will the current SIR exercise further consolidate this segment? This consolidation has a mirror image on the other side. In constituencies with a Muslim population of up to 10%, the BJP managed a 42% strike rate in 2021 (winning 33 of the 77 seats) - its only truly competitive zone. As the Muslim share of a constituency's population rose, the BJP's performance fell in almost perfect inverse proportion, dropping to 25% in seats with 20-30% Muslim population, 8% in 40-50% Muslim population seats, and 0% beyond that threshold. The Structural Math of Victory Herein lies the paradox at the heart of Bengal's politics. A simple majority in the 294-seat assembly requires 148 seats. With 106 of the 112 Muslim-influenced seats already in its column, the Trinamool needs to win just 42 more from the remaining 182 Hindu-majority constituencies. In 2021, it won 109 of those seats - a 60% strike rate - giving it the comfortable 215-seat majority it achieved. The BJP, by contrast, won 72 Hindu-majority seats (40% strike rate) but was effectively locked out of the Muslim heartland. For the BJP to win Bengal, it cannot simply consolidate Hindu votes in Hindu-majority seats - it has already done that in its competitive zones. What it needs to do is either dramatically expand its Hindu-majority

seat tally or, more dauntingly, find a way to crack the Muslim fortress. Neither prospect looks easy. Enter Humayun Kabir. That is the context in which Humayun Kabir's Babri Masjid gambit must be understood. The Bharatpur MLA, who has a complicated political history - he contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections on a BJP ticket before returning to Trinamool orbit - now claims he is building an alternative pole of Muslim political representation. His Janata Unnayan Party has announced plans to contest 182 assembly seats in 2026. The Trinamool's response has been instructive. Rather than attempting dialogue or accommodation, the party suspended Kabir and publicly distanced itself from the mosque project. Police action against his family followed swiftly. Kabir, predictably, called it political victimisation. The BJP, meanwhile, is playing both sides - describing Kabir as the Trinamool's 'B-team' even as the latter accuses him of having been the BJP's man all along. The mutual accusations suggest neither party fully controls the narrative. Dissatisfaction In The Trinamool Fortress VoteVibe's tracking data from late 2025 introduces an element of caution into any confident forecast for the Trinamool Congress. While 54% of Muslim respondents still want Mamata Banerjee as Chief Minister - a commanding majority - 26% rate her government's performance as poor or very poor.

# Enabling Safer, Smarter Banking with TVS Electronics Solutions

**Chennai:** TVS Electronics (TVSE), a leading player offering integrated end-to-end electronic solutions, highlights its comprehensive 'Make in India' hardware portfolio for BFSI sector, ensuring trusted, safe and fast transactions. As transaction volumes rise, digital adoption accelerates, and customer expectations continue to grow, financial institutions face increasing pressure to maintain speed, accuracy, security, and uninterrupted operations. TVSE addresses these demands by delivering reliable, scalable solutions that reduce operational risk, streamline daily workflows, and support consistent service delivery across branch networks and digital touchpoints. In an industry where precision and trust are essential, TVS Electronics solutions simplify the workload for staff and provide customers with a smoother and more secure experience. TVS Electronics offers a dedicated range of products to help BFSI's operate seamlessly without compromising on speed, security and accuracy.



Business Officer, Products & Solutions Group, TVS Electronics, "Banking today demands systems that are secure, resilient, fast, accurate and always available. From counterfeit detection to secure printing, from asset tracking to always on IT support, TVSE strengthens every layer of BFSI operations. At TVS Electronics, we focus on strengthening the operational backbone of financial institutions with technology that enables reliable service delivery across branches, digital platforms, and customer touchpoints, while allowing banks to scale with confidence."

## PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS FROM TVSE

### Securing Transactions Through Biometric Authentication

As digital transactions scale, authentication becomes fundamental to trust and compliance. Ensuring that transactions are carried out by the right account holder or operator is critical. TVS Electronics' fingerprint reader solutions integrate seamlessly into banking and payment workflows, enabling accurate biometric authentication integrated on products.

### Smarter and Safer Cash Handling & Digital Payment Momentum

TVSE's cash management

systems help staff process cash with confidence. Modern note counting machines use multiple layers of detection such as optical checks, magnetic sensors, infrared validation, and pattern analysis to identify counterfeit notes instantly. Features like fitness sorting and serial number reading improve traceability while maintaining a rapid workflow. Today, UPI and RuPay have moved payments beyond conventional modes, setting new expectations around speed, transparency, and convenience. TVS Electronics provides modern POS terminals, sound boxes and all-in-one payment devices built to handle high transaction volumes securely and reliably.

For banks and merchants alike, this translates into faster settlements and smoother day-to-day operations.

**Secure and Reliable Document Printing**  
Passbooks, cheques, account statements, and branch receipts remain essential. TVSE's specialty printers are engineered for this work. They ensure clean, compliant printing of sensitive documents that must be handled with care and precision.

### Extending Banking Through Self-Service Kiosks

As customer expectations evolve, banks are increasingly adopting self-service and unattended solutions to improve availability while reducing operational strain. TVS Electronics addresses this shift through its large-panel computing devices under the kiosk portfolio. Designed for continuous operation, these kiosks support services such as account enquiries, form submissions, bill payments, and service requests. This enables greater reach, better availability, and a smoother customer experience without expanding physical branch infrastructure.

According to Mr. C. Balaji, Vice President - Chief

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF BFSI RANGE OF**

# GENERAL MILLS INDIA OPENS A NEW MANUFACTURING PLANT IN NASHIK



**INDIA (February 12, 2026)** — General Mills India, part of General Mills Inc., a U.S.-based Fortune 500 food company, today announced the inauguration of a new manufacturing facility in Nashik, Maharashtra. The new, state-of-the-art plant marks a significant expansion of the company's manufacturing footprint in India and reinforces its long-term commitment to serving the fast-growing food and bakery sector in India. General Mills invested approximately INR 100 crore to build this plant, and it serves as the company's second manufacturing facility in Nashik. The facility has been built using advanced manufacturing technologies and global qual-

ity standards, with a strong focus on food safety, high quality, and responsible resource use. The new plant at Nashik will also ensure a more efficient supply chain, reducing lead times and enhancing the availability of Pillsbury products across the country. This improved accessibility will empower thousands of bakeries in India to leverage Pillsbury's consistent quality, thereby contributing to their own growth and the overall development of the bakery sector. Beyond manufacturing scale, the plant is expected to deliver meaningful economic impact in the region. It has already created numerous direct and indirect employment opportunities across

manufacturing, logistics, and support services, providing a boost to local livelihoods and skill development in the Nashik region of Maharashtra. Furthermore, the increased demand for raw materials and ancillary services will stimulate growth for local suppliers and businesses. "We're extremely proud to increase the availability of Pillsbury products across the country with the opening of our new plant in Nashik," said Balki Radhakrishnan, Vice President and Managing Director of Global Emerging Markets at General Mills. "Since 1999, our Pillsbury brand has been offering delicious, quality and convenient baking mixes in India.

## THINK Gas Swiftly Restores City Gas Supply After Pipeline Damage

**Anantapur 2026:** A city gas pipeline laid by THINK Gas (formerly AG&P Pratham) was damaged during un-intimated JCB excavation work carried out by the Anantapur Municipal Corporation Water Pipeline Department while rectifying a damaged water pipeline near Ram Nagar Comfort Apartment, Anantapur. The THINK Gas emergency response team acted promptly by isolating the affected section and restoring the gas supply within a short time, ensuring public safety and minimizing inconvenience to residents. THINK Gas has established a robust pipeline infrastructure in Anantapur district to supply Piped Natural Gas (PNG) for households and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) for transport users. Despite the presence of visible route markers, cautionary signage, and emergency contact boards along the pipeline route, the contractor involved in

the excavation failed to notify THINK Gas before starting work and did not submit any post-incident report. As per government regulations, any third-party planning to carry out excavation work must inform the City Municipal authorities or the City Gas Distribution company through the 'Dial Before You Dig' contact number. The incident occurred without prior intimation to the company, prompting THINK Gas to file an official complaint against the party responsible. As per the current legal provisions under IPC Sections 285 and 336, such unauthorized damage constitutes an offense punishable by imprisonment of up to 3 years and a fine of up to ₹25 crores. THINK Gas urges all contractors, agencies, and individuals to comply with this safety requirement. The toll-free number to contact THINK Gas before any digging activity is 1800 2022 999.

## Made in India – The story of Desh Bandhu Gupta, Lupin and Indian Pharma Book Launched in Mumbai

**Mumbai, February 12, 2026:** Made in India, written by Sundeeep Khanna and Manish Sabharwal, traces three remarkable journeys: the rise of India's pharma industry, the birth and evolution of Lupin and the extraordinary life of its founder, Desh Bandhu Gupta. Together, the three journeys illuminate how a country once completely dependent on imported medicines became the world's pharmacy. The book shares how an individual's life, shaped early by adversity, growing up without privilege or patronage, unpredictably nurtured hunger and drive, to navigate an unforgiving state, blend national health priorities and global standards, to build a multibillion-dollar enterprise whose medicines reach patients in over 120 countries. Made in India shows the distance travelled by a village boy from Rajasthan, who went on to become a teacher, professor and pharmaceutical employee, before founding a company worth \$10 billion. It is the story of how an unlikely entrepreneur, given his role



models, fought the system and left teaching and pharma jobs, going on to build a successful company, giving wings to a world-class industry and became a business icon for a nation. Written with candor by TeamLease Services co-founder Manish Sabharwal and journalist Sundeeep Khanna, the book confronts failures, financial crises, and the personal toll of leadership, alongside achievement and success, in the building of one of the world's biggest generics firms. This is a riveting portrait of entrepreneurship without mythmaking - of how institutions are built slowly, tested severely and rebuilt with resolve. Made in India weaves vivid anec-

dotes tracing Desh Bandhu Gupta's transformation from a humble professor to a pharma titan, finding his true calling in tending to the unmet needs of people. It issues a powerful call to future leaders, showcasing his journey of visionary entrepreneurship: rising from setbacks with raw grit and unshakeable conviction. Made in India also spotlights Desh Bandhu Gupta's wife Manju Gupta's pivotal role amid the trials and triumphs of building Lupin. Together, the couple also built community service and rural support programs, even as Lupin and India became a reliable global supplier of pharmaceuticals. India has today become

the world's pharmacy: Nearly half of the 400 billion pills Americans consume every year are made in India, as are 60 per cent of the world's vaccines. Of the 700 US Food and Drug Administration-approved factories that sell medicines in the US, a third are located in India. The co-creators of Indian pharma - Dr. Yusuf Hamied (Cipla), Anji Reddy (Dr. Reddy's), Parvinder Singh (Ranbaxy), Dilip Shangvi (Sun), Ramanbhai Patel (Zydus-Cadila), Habil Khorakiwala (Wockhardt) and DBG (Lupin) - matter more to India than their companies' revenues, exports or profits because they saw something no one else did.

## SECURE YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE WITH ICICI PRU SMARTKID 360

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched ICICI Pru SmartKid 360, a long-term saving product which allows customers to plan for their child's future financial needs, with guaranteed benefits. ICICI Pru SmartKid 360, gives MoneyBack or pre-decided payouts as per the child's future milestones such as school or higher education or early adulthood goals. Notably, customers can choose a fixed amount or increasing amount as payouts. Commenting on the launch, Vikas Gupta, Chief Product Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "ICICI Pru SmartKid 360 has been designed to cater to the parents need to financially secure their child's future. In addition to the MoneyBack benefits, the product provides a guaranteed maturity benefit in the form of a lump-sum payout, at the end of the policy tenure, which can support the child's transition into adulthood. A key feature of the product is the inbuilt waiver of

**ICICI Pru SmartKid 360, gives MoneyBack or pre-decided payouts as per the child's future milestones such as school or higher education or early adulthood goals.**

premium and continuity of benefits, which safeguards the child's future in the event of the life assured's unfortunate demise. Under this feature, all future premiums are waived, life cover amount is paid out to the nominee and other chosen policy benefits continue which can ensure the child's goals are not disrupted. In addition to the core benefits, ICICI Pru SmartKid 360 offers optional features such as Family Income Benefit, which provides regular income, supporting the family in case of the life assured's untimely demise."

## Tata Motors Launches 17 Next-Generation Trucks, sets New Standards for Safety, Profitability & Progress



**New Delhi 2026:** Introduces Azura Series — Excellence Reimagined for the ILMCV segment Launches Tata Trucks.ev—India's widest electric truck range, based on I-MOEV Architecture — Intelligent Modular Vehicle Architecture Brings world-class safety to Indian roads — trucks built to meet stringent European safety standards Boosts customer profitabil-

ity with industry best payload, fuel efficiency and Fleet Edge digital services In a landmark move set to transform the Indian trucking landscape, Tata Motors, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer and mobility solutions provider, today launched its next-generation portfolio of 17 trucks, spanning 7 to 55 tonnes, setting new benchmarks in safety, profits and progress. This comprehen-

sive launch introduces the all-new Azura series, the cutting-edge Tata Trucks.ev range, and significant upgrades to the established Prima, Signa, and Ultra platforms. Engineered to conform to stringent global safety standards (ECE R29 03), these trucks maximise earning potential, reduce total cost of ownership and enhance vehicle uptime to deliver greater success to transporters.

## CNH India Leads the Mechanization Movement with World-Class Crop Solutions

**Pune, February 12, 2026 :** CNH, a global leader in agriculture and construction equipment, celebrated its advanced, Made-in-Pune farm mechanisation products at the company's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Pune. The Pune plant houses CNH's strong R&D, engineering and manufacturing capabilities that design, develop and produce world-class harvesting and crop solution equipment in India for both domestic and global markets. The 280,000 square metre facility manufactures combine harvesters, sugarcane harvesters, small square balers, tractors, headers, cabs and implements. Equipped with advanced fabrication, automated paint systems, structured assembly lines and rigorous testing protocols, the plant supports mechanisation in multiple crops, across the country while also exporting part of its production overseas. Narinder Mittal, President & Managing Director, CNH India region



said, "The CNH Pune plant is a cornerstone of our manufacturing footprint in India and a symbol of our commitment to pioneering the mechanization movement in the country. As India moves further towards becoming a developed economy, agricultural mechanization will play a critical role in driving productivity, efficiency and sustainability across the farming ecosystem Our technology

leadership in sugarcane harvesters, combine harvesters and balers is demonstrated through machines that are technologically advanced, fuel-efficient, reliable and engineered specifically for Indian soil and farming conditions and we are proud to design and produce these solutions for Indian farmers." In 2023, CNH introduced India's first TREM-V emission stage compliant sugar-

cane harvester from this facility. CNH holds over 50% market share in both the sugarcane harvester and small square baler segments in India, and is the market leader in the cab combine harvester segment. Beyond advanced machinery, the company focuses on building skills and capabilities on the ground, creating a holistic 360-degree approach to transforming Indian agriculture.

Skill Development Training for young people, Agriculture Extension Education including Drone and Digital Technology usage, sustainable sugarcane cultivation and crop residue management programs are currently running in Maharashtra state. The Pune facility has also been recognized for its sustainability and safety practices. It is IGBC (Indian Green Building Council) certified, has received industrial safety awards for meritorious performance in 2022 and 2023, and follows energy and water conservation practices aligned to the Company's 2030 sustainability roadmap. Community initiatives in nearby villages include school infrastructure support and mobile healthcare services. With mechanisation levels still below 5% in sugarcane harvesting, under 30% in grain harvesting and merely 2% in crop residue management, the opportunity for growth in India remains significant.

# RUSSIA ORDERS BLOCK ON WHATSAPP IN MESSAGING APP CRACKDOWN

Russia has ordered a block on WhatsApp, as the Kremlin continues to tighten restrictions on messaging apps. Meta-owned WhatsApp said the move aimed to push more than 100 million of its app users in Russia to a "state-owned surveillance app". Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the BBC that the decision had been made "due to [Meta's] unwillingness to comply with the norms and the letter of Russian law". He has said Meta could resume operations if it "complies with [the law] and enters into dialogue". Asked whether authorities were trying to force Russians to use the state-developed Max app, Peskov said the "national messenger [is an] available alternative" for Russians. Russian internet regulator Roskomnadzor said this week it was further curbing access to messaging app Telegram as well, citing a lack of security. Telegram is highly popular in Russia and



said to be widely used by its forces in Ukraine. Pro-war bloggers have complained that the move was hampering communications on the ground. Even before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russian authorities had begun work on creating a domestic alternative to the global internet. Those moves have gathered pace during the war, along with a push

towards state-backed platform called Max. Critics have alleged Max could be used for surveillance by the Russian authorities, though state media have denied that. Max is now being promoted widely inside Russia, through TV advertisements and billboards, by local officials and by the media. Russia has argued that both WhatsApp and Telegram

have refused to store Russian users' data in the country as required by law. Authorities in Moscow also allege that WhatsApp is one of the main services used to defraud and extort money from Russians - a reason they cite for people to migrate to the Max app. WhatsApp said it was doing everything it could to keep people connected. "Trying to

isolate over 100 million users from private and secure communication is a backwards step and can only lead to less safety for people in Russia," it said in a statement. State-run news agency Tass reported earlier this year that WhatsApp was expected to be permanently blocked in the country in 2026. "Such harsh measures" are "absolutely justified" since Russia has designated Meta as an extremist organisation, Andrei Svintsov, a Russian official, was quoted as saying. WhatsApp was previously Russia's most popular messaging service, but since Meta was labelled as extremist in 2022, its apps such as Instagram and Facebook have been blocked in Russia and are only accessible through virtual private networks (VPNs). Russians are not banned from using its products. Digital rights project Na Svyazi (In Touch) has reported that Russia has increasingly been removing websites from the state-run

internet address directory, which is controlled by Roskomnadzor. It said that 13 popular resources were now missing from the National System of Domain Names (NSD), including YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp web, Instagram, the BBC and Deutsche Welle. Once an entry is removed, the site does not open without a virtual private network (VPN). Moscow has made extensive efforts to push Russians to its state-developed Max app, which critics say lacks end-to-end encryption and could therefore be penetrated by authorities. The app has been likened to China's WeChat - a so-called "super app" that combines messaging and government services. Since 2025, the authorities have mandated that the Max app be pre-installed on all new devices sold in the country. There have been reports of public sector employees, teachers and students being increasingly required to use the platform.

## Minnesota immigration enforcement surge is ending, Trump border tsar says



US border tsar Tom Homan said the immigration enforcement surge in Minnesota will end, telling reporters that President Donald Trump has approved his request to conclude the operation. "I will also remain in Minnesota a little longer to oversee the drawdown, to ensure its success," Homan said during the news conference on Thursday morning. Homan said Minnesota has become "less of a sanctuary state" since local officials have cooperated

more with federal immigration officers. The recent surge of more than 2,000 immigration officers to the state inspired nationwide protests after two US citizens were killed by federal agents last month. Officials in Minnesota have been able to "greatly reduce the number of targets" for immigration enforcement, Homan said, adding that Operation Metro Surge was a "great success". He mentioned the arrest of a number of undocumented immigrants, whom he referred to as "illegal aliens", including men he said were convicted of rape and other sexual misconduct. Homan said that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has always had a presence in Minnesota and will continue to have one. "A small footprint of personnel will remain for a period of time to close out and transition full command and control back to the field office," he said.

## TWO US NAVY SHIPS COLLIDE NEAR SOUTH AMERICA



A US Navy warship collided into a Navy supply vessel during a refuel operation, the US military's Southern Command confirmed to the BBC. Two people reported minor injuries during Wednesday's replenishment-at-sea operation, Southern Command said, and are in stable condition. The vessels - a guided missile destroyer and fast combat support ship - have both continued sailing safely from the site of the incident near South America. Southern Command did not say what caused the collision and said the incident was currently under investigation. The exact location of the crash between the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Truxtun and the Supply-class fast combat support ship USNS Supply was not immediately clear. The USNS Supply ship has been operating in

the Caribbean, according to the Wall Street Journal, which is part of Southern Command's area of responsibility. Southern Command is also responsible for parts of the South Atlantic and the South Pacific. US President Donald Trump has ordered a military buildup in the Caribbean the last few months as part of the administration's stated aim to target drug trafficking. Two people died on Thursday after the US military struck an alleged drug boat in the eastern Pacific, adding to a tally of at least 38 lethal alleged drug boat strikes in the region since Trump has re-entered office. The US has also used its military presence in the region to enforce sanctions against Venezuelan oil, after arresting the country's president Nicolas Maduro in a middle-of-the-night raid in January.

## Four takeaways from Pam Bondi's fiery Epstein testimony



US Attorney General Pam Bondi defended the justice department's handling of the files on the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and faced a barrage of angry questions on other issues during a fiery congressional hearing on Wednesday. Her testimony before the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee descended at times into a shouting match, with Bondi at one

point calling a Democrat a "washed-up loser". After another heated exchange, one lawmaker stormed out. Here are some of the key exchanges from the four-hour hearing. The hearing followed the release by the justice department earlier this year of millions more files from its investigations into the well-connected paedophile Jeffrey Epstein. Several of Epstein's victims were seated behind Bondi at the hearing, and lawmakers frequently referred to them. In her opening statement, Bondi called Epstein a "monster" and told the victims she was sorry for the abuse they endured. But lawmakers directed a litany of complaints at Bondi about how the justice department has handled its release of the files.

## KIM JONG UN CHOOSES TEEN DAUGHTER AS HEIR, SAYS SEOUL



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has selected his daughter as his heir, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers on Thursday. Kim Ju Ae - who is believed to be 13 - has in recent months been pictured beside her father in high-profile events like a visit to Beijing in September, her first known trip abroad. The National Intelligence Service (NIS) said it took a "range of circumstances" into account including her increasingly prominent public presence at official events" in making this assessment. The NIS also said it would keep close tabs on whether she will attend the North's party congress later this month - its largest political event that is held once every five years. The party Congress

is where Pyongyang is expected to give more details about priorities like foreign policy, war planning and nuclear ambitions for the next five years. On Thursday lawmaker Lee Seong-kwon told reporters that Ju Ae, who was previously described by the NIS as being "trained" to be a successor, was now at the stage of "successor designation". "As Kim Ju Ae has

shown her presence at various events, including the founding anniversary of the Korean People's Army and her visit to the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, and signs have been detected of her voicing her opinion on certain state policies, the NIS believes she has now entered the stage of being designated as successor," Lee said. Ju Ae is the only known child of

Kim Jong Un and his wife, Ri Sol Ju. The NIS believes Kim Jong Un has an older son, but this son has never been acknowledged nor shown on North Korean media. News of Ju Ae's existence first emerged through an unlikely source: the American basketball player Dennis Rodman, who revealed to The Guardian newspaper back in 2013 that he "held baby Ju Ae" during a trip to the secretive state. Ju Ae made her first appearance on state television in 2022. She was shown inspecting North Korea's latest intercontinental ballistic missile while holding her father's hand. She has since made frequent appearances on state media, softening her father's image of a ruthless dictator.

## Polls close in first election since Gen Z protests ousted Bangladesh leader

Votes are being counted in Bangladesh after its first election since student-led protests ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina in 2024. More than 2,000 candidates are vying for 350 seats in parliament, though none from the banned Awami League of Hasina, who fled after 15 years in power after a brutal security crackdown in which hundreds of protesters were killed. The election pits the centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) against a coalition led by the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami, which joined forces with a party born out of the student uprising. Results are expected on Friday and



there's widespread hope among voters of a return to democracy. For the first time since 2008, the outcome of an election in Bangladesh cannot be predicted with certainty. The past few elections were widely condemned as systematically rigged in favour of Sheikh Hasina.

She has been convicted and sentenced to death in absentia for ordering the brutal crackdown against protesters 18 months ago, in which the UN says as many as 1,400 protesters were killed. Hasina is in exile in India from where she's rejected the charges against her and has ques-

tioned the legitimacy of the election. The ban on her Awami League contesting the polls casts a shadow over whether this election can be described as free and fair. But, for the first time in years, voters on the ground were telling the BBC they feel like they have a choice. More than 120 million people were eligible to vote, about four in 10 of them under 37. They were also casting their ballots in a referendum on constitutional change, which was proposed by the interim government that replaced Hasina and is aimed at fixing what it has called a completely broken political system.

## Police identify 18-year-old as suspect in Tumbler Ridge shooting



An 18-year-old has been named as the suspect in a shooting that killed eight people and injured dozens more in British Columbia, Canada. Police said Jesse Van Rootselaar was found dead at the scene from a self-inflicted gunshot injury. The motive for the attack is not yet known. Six people were killed and at least 25 others were injured at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School. Two others - the suspect's mother, 39, and stepbrother, 11 - were found dead at a nearby home. Hundreds of mourners gathered to exchange comfort and moments of silence in Tumbler Ridge's main square and outside the British Columbia legislature in Victoria on Wednesday night. "Schools should be safe," said Tumbler Ridge vigil attendee Gigi Rejano said, according to the AFP news agency, while others cried nearby and pictures of victims were laid near a tree. In Victoria, speaker of the legislature Raj Chouhan said, "We can only pray together, hold hands together and send our love to all those people", according to a local journalist. The shooting at the nearby home

occurred first, then the suspect went to the school, McDonald said. The victims at the school were a 39-year-old female educator, three female students, all aged 12, and two male students, one aged 12 and the other 13. Authorities do not believe there are other suspects involved in the shootings. Police said they had attended the suspect's family home on multiple occasions over the past several years, with some calls related to mental health concerns. Authorities said Van Rootselaar was born a biological male but identified as a woman. "I can say that Jesse was born as a biological male who approximately six years ago began to transition to female," Dwayne McDonald, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) deputy commissioner, said. Van Rootselaar was known to police, and "we've begun the process of reaching out to" the public health care system to "understand what interactions may have taken place," British Columbia Premier David Eby told a news conference outside the Tumbler Ridge town hall late on Wednesday evening.

# PORT CITY IN RUINS AS STORM RIPS THROUGH MADAGASCAR AND ON TOWARDS MOZAMBIQUE

At least 35 people have died after a powerful cyclone struck Madagascar, says the disaster authority in the Indian Ocean island. Cyclone Gezani made landfall on Tuesday, hitting the island's main port, Toamasina. Madagascar's disaster management office said there was "total chaos" - reporting that houses collapsed in the impact zone, where the bodies were found. Neighbourhoods were plunged into darkness as power lines snapped, while trees were uprooted and roofs ripped off. As many as 250,000 people are "affected or displaced", Environment Minister Max Fontaine Andonirina told BBC Newsday on Thursday.

Huge challenges include "disruptions to food-supply chains, to the fuel transport, to the medical access, because most of the major roads are cut", he added. One resident described to the BBC how she and her family covered inside as wind and rain lashed their home for six hours straight, before the windows smashed and water poured in. "We are trying to do our best... It's dangerous and I don't know if there will be enough people to help us, even though the authorities are trying," the woman, who gave her name as Denise, told BBC Newsday. "It's real and its worse" than it looks in videos being shared online, she added. Gezani is



the second cyclone to hit Madagascar this year. It comes 10 days after tropical cyclone Fytia killed 14 and displaced over 31,000 people, according to the UN's humanitarian office. The

island's rulers are now pleading for international help. "What happened is a disaster, nearly 75% of the city of Toamasina was destroyed," the country's military leader Colonel

Michael Randrianirina, who seized power in October, told the AFP news agency. "The current situation exceeds Madagascar's capabilities alone," he added. The cyclone's landfall is likely to have been one of the most intense recorded around the city in the satellite era, according to the CMRS cyclone forecaster on France's Reunion island, AFP reports. The National Office for Risk and Disaster Management said many were killed when houses collapsed. Cyclone Gezani hit Toamasina - the country's second-largest city - with winds reaching 250 km/hour (155 mph). "It's total chaos, 90% of house

roofs have been blown off, entirely or in part," the head of disaster management at the Action Against Hunger aid agency, Rija Randrianarisoa, told AFP. All acknowledge that a huge amount of work needs to be done. "It takes many, many years" to restore infrastructure and recover, Environment Minister Andonirina told the BBC, adding that parts of Madagascar ravaged by cyclones in the past three years still "have not been rebuilt as it was before". Cyclone season in the Indian Ocean around Madagascar normally lasts from November to April and sees around a dozen storms each year, AFP reports.

# Flipkart Turns Heads By Sponsoring Namibia In T20 World Cup

E-commerce giant Flipkart left many surprised as it announced the decision to sponsor the Namibia National Cricket Team for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. The partnership, which sees the Flipkart logo featured prominently on the shoulders of the Namibian jersey, raised many questions on social media, especially as the brand doesn't have any presence in the country. However, a viral response from the brand came in the form of an advertisement in which it revealed the clever strategy behind the move. The conversation started when Flipkart's official X (formerly Twitter) account shared a post featuring the Namibia jersey. Netizens quickly began questioning why an Indian e-commerce platform, traditionally associated with the massive Indian market, would choose to sponsor an associate nation like Namibia instead of a team that had



chances of going farther in the tournament. In a witty response that quickly went viral, Flipkart leaned into its brand identity of accessibility and "value for money." The brand's messaging suggested that while everyone "delivers" for the

big giants, Flipkart takes pride in delivering for everyone, everywhere - a cheeky way of aligning its decision to sponsor the Namibia team with its mission to reach every corner of the Indian market. The Explanation Beyond the

viral banter, marketing experts point to several savvy reasons for this unconventional partnership: In the advertisement, Flipkart explained that by being the primary sponsor for Namibia, Flipkart gains undisputed brand real

estate on the jersey, ensuring its logo is clearly visible during every match the team plays. Also, Namibia has been placed in Group A, meaning they will play high-profile matches against India and Pakistan in stadiums like Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium. This guarantees Flipkart massive domestic TV and digital viewership at a fraction of the cost of sponsoring the Indian team. Namibia has earned a reputation for being a "giant killer" in recent ICC events. By associating with a rising associate nation, Flipkart positions itself as a brand that supports growth and grit, creating a positive emotional connection with fans. As Namibia takes the field in Delhi and Chennai this February, the Flipkart logo will be a constant reminder of how a well-timed, unconventional sponsorship can generate more conversation than a traditional big-money deal.

# MS Dhoni Asked To Pay Rs 10 Lakh By Madras High Court

The Madras High Court has directed cricketer MS Dhoni to pay Rs 10 lakh towards the translation of content related to the defamation suit he filed against retired IPS officer G. Sampathkumar, seeking Rs 100 crore in damages for allegedly linking him to the 2013 IPL betting scam. Justice RN Manjula issued the directive while passing further interim orders on February 11 on Dhoni's suit. In her order, the judge said that, pursuant to the order dated October 28, 2025, the court's interpreter had taken up the task of transcribing and translating the contents of the CDs involved in the case. However, the order had been passed on the condition that the necessary charges be paid. The judge noted that, according to the interpreter, this was a humongous task requiring significant time and effort at least one interpreter and a typist would need nearly three to four months to complete the work. Since the full-time involvement of an



interpreter and a typist was required, along with additional costs for preparing copies, the charges for transcription and translation were fixed at Rs 10 lakh, payable by the plaintiff (Dhoni). The judge observed that, under normal circumstances in a civil suit, it is the plaintiff who must undertake such work and file the documents along with the claim. As the engagement of the official interpreter was necessitated by extraneous circumstances, as stated in the ear-

lier order dated October 28, 2025, it was obligatory for the plaintiff to bear the cost of the work done, the judge said. Directing the interpreter to complete the transcription and translation of the contents of the CDs before the third week of March 2026, the judge said the amount of Rs 10 lakh must be paid by the plaintiff into the Chief Justice's Relief Fund, Madras High Court, on or before March 12, 2026. The matter was then posted for further hearing on March 12.

# Who Is Crishan Kalugamage? The Pizza Chef Behind Italy's First-Ever T20 World Cup Win

Leg-spinner Crishan Kalugamage starred in Italy's first-ever win at the T20 World Cup. The 32-year-old returned figures of 3/18, setting up a 10-wicket win against Nepal in the Azzurri's maiden campaign. Chasing 124, brothers Justin and Anthony Mosca got Italy off to a flyer, racing to 16 runs in the first two overs. Ultimately, it was Kalugamage who was named Player of the Match at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai for his clinical opening spell. Who is Crishan Kalugamage? Born in Sri Lanka, Kalugamage moved to Italy with his parents as a teenager. He almost gave up hope of fulfilling his passion for cricket, unaware that Italy is



home to one of Europe's oldest cricket clubs, the Roma Cricket Club. A pizzaiolo by profession, Kalugamage's work often clashed with his sporting dreams. Despite working full-time at a pizzeria in Lucca, in the Tuscany region, he would carve out time from his grueling schedule to hone his leg-spinning skills. Growing up

in the Negombo region of Sri Lanka, he idolized the likes of Aravinda de Silva and Sanath Jayasuriya. He played at U-13 and U-15 levels in school before moving to Europe with his family. A passionate Inter Milan supporter, he is a big fan of Argentine forward Lautaro Martinez, who also wears the captain's armband for

the Nerazzurri. Having lived in Italy for over a decade, Kalugamage is fluent in Italian, acting as a vital communicator for the side. After the clash against Nepal, he expressed gratitude to his family and his countrymen, saying it was a "massive moment" for him. "Thank you so much to all the crowd and all my teammates, and I'm really happy about the win. I always, always, always want to help the team win the match and do my best for my nation, Italy. So I'm happy. I also worked hard with my coaching staff, and I'm really happy with my line and length; I took three wickets. So a massive moment for me after so many sacrifices.

# Delhi Cricket Body Clarifies After Video Of Cold Drink Getting Refilled Raises Question Marks On Hygiene

Among the venues hosting T20 World Cup matches, the Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium is a prominent one. Among other fixtures, it is also hosting the India vs Namibia T20 World Cup Group A match. Ahead of that game, a video from the stadium went viral. In the video, a vendor can be seen pouring unsold cold drinks from disposable glasses back into bottles. The video sparked concerns about the hygiene of soft drinks sold at the venue. The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) has now rejected claims of adulteration and poor hygiene. In a statement issued on Thursday, the DDCA denied the allegations made in the video. The association claimed that the drink was poured back into



the bottles as per agreed commercial arrangements and operational standards, and that the bottles were later disposed of "responsibly in line with established environmental and operational guidelines." In its statement, the DDCA said, "We have come across a video circulating on social media, particularly on X

(formerly Twitter), alleging that a vendor was seen pouring cold drinks back into bottles during a recent match." The video went viral following Tuesday's match between the Netherlands and Namibia. The DDCA clarified that the operation shown in the video was carried out by the authorised concessionaire

for the stadium in accordance with event guidelines. "In this regard, it is clarified that the pouring was undertaken by the authorised concessionaire for the stadium, in line with the event guidelines. The concessionaire was serving Coca-Cola products in accordance with the agreed commercial arrangements and operational standards," the statement said. The DDCA also claimed that strict hygiene protocols were followed. "We follow strict hygiene protocols at the venue. In the instance shown in the video, the vendor, while segregating wet and dry waste, poured the unused beverage back into the bottle before disposal as part of the waste collection process.

# HEARN 'EXPECTS' JOSHUA TO FIGHT BUT NO 'GUARANTEES'



Matchroom promoter Eddie Hearn "expects" British heavyweight Anthony Joshua to fight again following the death of two close friends - but admits there are no "guarantees". The 36-year-old sustained minor injuries in the road traffic accident in Nigeria on 29 December that killed Sina Ghami and Latif 'Latz' Ayodele. The two-time world champion returned to training in January, posting a video on social media of him working out with the message "mental strength therapy". Hearn, who has promoted Joshua since he turned professional after winning gold at the 2012 Olympics, believes he will step back inside the ropes this year. "I don't think there are any guarantees he fights again, but at the same time I expect him to, because it is something that he loves," Hearn said in an interview with First Round TV. "And it is something he can carry those guys with him through as well and it is something he wants to do. "From a boxing sense, physically it wasn't easy what he went

through either. People probably don't realise the extent of that. "He has been training, but he is not ready yet and won't be for a while to return to boxing training." Joshua has largely remained out of the spotlight since the fatal incident at the end of 2025, but made a rare public appearance when sitting cage-side at the PFL's event in Dubai on Saturday. He last fought on 19 December when he stopped YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul in the sixth round. After that victory, which improved his record to 29 wins and four defeats, Joshua said he was ready to face long-term rival Tyson Fury next. Fury ended his latest spell of retirement in January when announcing he would be returning to fight Arslanbek Makhmudov in the UK on 11 April. "Before this terrible incident we were geared up to fight in March and then fight Tyson Fury," Hearn said. "Obviously, that is not happening now and I don't know if it will ever happen right now.



Aston Martin 'look four seconds off top teams'

# India's Likely Playing XI vs Namibia, T20 World Cup: Gautam Gambhir Set For Team Selection Headache

The Indian cricket team finds itself navigating a potential crisis as they finalise their preparations for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2026 Group A fixture against Namibia. While India secured a victory in their previous outing against the United States of America, the performance was far from clinical, leaving the squad with more questions than answers. With a high-stakes encounter against arch-rivals Pakistan looming on the horizon, the team management had hoped for a seamless lead-up; instead, they have been met with a medical room at full capacity. The primary concern involves the explosive opening pair of Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan. Sharma, whose aggressive intent has been a hallmark of India's recent strategy, was hospitalised following a severe stomach ailment. Although



he was discharged on Wednesday, the physical toll makes a quick return highly improbable. In his absence, Sanju Samson is the frontrunner to reclaim an opening berth. However, the selection headaches were compounded when Ishan Kishan sustained an injury during a net session, potentially forcing a tactical rethink that could see Suryakumar Yadav or Tilak Varma promoted to the top. Beyond the opening slot, several other changes are

expected as India looks to sharpen its "A-game" before the Pakistan clash. Head coach Gautam Gambhir has his task cut out, especially in the wake of the injury and illness issues. After missing the opener against the USA due to a high fever, India's pace spearhead is expected to return to the XI. To accommodate him, the management may have to make a tough call on Mohammed Siraj, despite Siraj's impactful three-wicket haul in the previous match. With the

match being held at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi-a venue often conducive to spin-there is growing clamour for Kuldeep Yadav's inclusion. If the pitch appears particularly dry, he could replace one of the seamers or even Varun Chakaravarty to provide a different wrist-spin dimension. Having recovered from a side strain, Washington Sundar is now available. His ability to bowl in the Powerplay and provide lower-order batting depth makes him a strong candidate to replace Rinku Singh if the team opts for an extra bowling cushion against the Namibian middle order. India's likely XI vs Namibia, T20 World Cup: Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav, Shivam Dube, Hardik Pandya, Rinku Singh, Axar Patel, Varun Chakaravarty, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh.

# 'Shocking' or correct - why Ukraine skeleton slider was banned



The biggest controversy of the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics came to a head on Thursday morning, as Ukraine's Vladyslav Heraskevych was banned from competing. Heraskevych, who was his country's flagbearer at the opening ceremony, wished to compete in the men's skeleton while wearing a special helmet featuring artwork depicting Ukrainian athletes killed during the Russian invasion. But the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said this contravened the Olympic charter - the rules and bylaws for the organisation of the Games - and informed him on Tuesday that he would not be allowed to compete in the helmet. After two days of discussions in which Heraskevych refused to back down, it was confirmed on Thursday morning that he had been disqualified. Heraskevych wore the helmet in all his training runs before the competition began and carried it through media mixed zones and in multiple interviews. But IOC rules dictated that he

would not be allowed to wear it during official competition. They cited rule 40.2 of the Olympic Charter, external, which states: "All competitors, team officials or other team personnel in the Olympic Games shall enjoy freedom of expression in keeping with the Olympic values and the fundamental principles of Olympism, and in accordance with the guidelines determined by the IOC Executive Board." These are the athlete expression guidelines, external, determined in 2023 and which have been codified into Olympic law. This states that: "The focus at the Olympic Games must remain on athletes' performances, sport and the harmony that the games seek to advance. "It is a fundamental principle that sport at the Olympic Games is neutral and must be separate from political, religious and any other type of interference. Specifically, the focus on the field of play during competitions and official ceremonies must be on celebrating athletes' performances."

## “FUNKY WILL GIVE YOU TWO HOURS OF BREEZY LAUGHTER,” SAY THE TEAM AT THE PRE-RELEASE PRESS MEET



**F**unky marks the coming together of Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen, who has carved a unique identity with diverse films, and director K.V. Anudeep, known for his comedy entertainers. The film is presented by Srihara Studios and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas. Bheems Ceciroleo has composed the music, and Kayadu Lohar plays the female lead.

Releasing a day ahead of Valentine's Day on February 13, Funky has created strong anticipation among audiences. The teaser, trailer, and songs have already received an excellent response, raising expectations further. As the film gears up to bring a

wave of laughter to theatres in just a few hours, the team recently held a pre-release press meet. They expressed confidence that Funky, a complete family entertainer, will offer a wholesome dose of fun and emerge as a big success.

**■ SPEAKING AT THE PRESS MEET, VISHWAK SEN SAID:**  
“First, I have to talk about Bheems garu. He has given wonderful music to our film. Usually, people say songs in my films are good. But in my last two films, the songs didn't meet expectations. Now, for Funky, Bheems garu has delivered all good songs. I believe the songs will receive even more love after the film's release. Funky is releasing tomorrow (February 13). Come watch it with your friends and family and enjoy it.

The film will entertain you so much that you won't even realize how two hours have passed.”

**■ KAYADU LOHAR SAID:**  
“By now, you all already have an idea of how Funky is going to be. We are very excited to show this film to you. I thank producer Naga Vamsi garu for giving me this opportunity. It was a pleasure working with director Anudeep garu. Among all the directors I've worked with so far, Anudeep garu has a very unique style. Vishwak Sen is an amazing actor with great talent. He is very cool. Reaching this level without any background is not an ordinary achievement. Funky is my first full-fledged comedy film in my career. I hope you all like it. Please watch and enjoy it with your family on

February 13.”

**■ DIRECTOR K.V. ANUDEEP SAID:**  
“First of all, thanks to our media friends for supporting us. I thank Vishwak Sen for agreeing to do this film right after hearing the story. Even though Kayaadu Lohar doesn't know Telugu, she would quickly learn and deliver any dialogues written on the spot. I am grateful to Naga Vamsi garu for giving me this opportunity. Bheems has given excellent music. Editor Naveen Nooli has made the film even better with his work. Thanks to cinematographer Suresh garu, co-writer Jagan, and everyone who worked on this film. Funky releases on February 13. It's a good family entertainer, and I hope you all watch and enjoy it with your family.”

## “Hey Bhagavan” will make audiences laugh: MEGA SUPREME HERO SAI DURGA TEJ AT THE ‘NOT A TRAILER’ LAUNCH EVENT

**T**he successful duo Bunny Vaas and Vamsi Nandipati, who recently delivered blockbuster films like Little Hearts, Raju Weds Rambai, and Eesha, are now bringing a full-length out-and-out entertainer titled Hey Bhagavan to audiences under the banners of Nandipati Entertainments and Bunny Vaas Works. The film stars Suhas, Shivani Nagaram, senior actor Naresh, and anchor Sravanti in key roles. The film is directed by Gopi Achara and produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the Trishul Visionary Studios banner. The movie is set for release on February 20. As part of promotions, a trailer launch event titled Not a Trailer was held in Hyderabad on Thursday. Mega Supreme Hero Sai Durga Tej attended as the chief guest and released the trailer. Speaking on the occasion, Sai Durga Tej said, “The movie trailer is very good. This film will make audiences laugh. Suhas works very hard. He is proving his talent not only in Telugu films but also in Tamil movies. Hey Bhagavan will entertain everyone. I hope this film brings huge success to the entire team.” Another guest, director Ram Abbaraju, said, “This film is coming with a very unique point and will entertain everyone. I believe Hey Bhagavan will become another hit in Suhas' career. I hope this film brings a good name to the entire team.”



Bunny Vaas said, “First credit should go to Vamsi Nandipati, who has been involved with both the story and the team from the beginning. I recently watched the first copy and laughed a lot. If I laugh so much at a film that is not mine, it definitely won't go wrong. Sai Durga Tej has always been at the forefront of encouraging small films. Suhas is growing step by step with great effort. I hope this film also becomes a success. All the best to the team.” Vamsi Nandipati said, “Some stories cannot be shown through trailers. This story must be experienced in the theatres. That is why we are conducting this event titled Not a Trailer. At the pre-release event, we will give ₹20,000 prize money to the top five people who guess the story correctly. We are confi-

dent this will be a hit on February 20. Thanks to Sai Durga Tej and Ram Abbaraju for supporting us. The censor process was completed yesterday and they said they enjoyed it a lot. This will be a big hit in Suhas' career. I believe he will create a record as a hero who crosses one million in North America.” Hero Suhas said, “This is an out-and-out comedy entertainer. Audiences will enjoy it thoroughly. I am happy to work with Naresh sir. His acting in the climax will be next level. Tej anna always supports me and sends his wishes for every film of mine. He also encouraged me and convinced my parents when I wanted to enter the industry. Last February, we scored a hit with Ambajipeta. I am confident this film will also be a hit.”

Shivani Nagaram said, “Special thanks to our special guest Sai Tej for giving us positive support. The whole team worked very hard and passionately for this film. This is like Ugadi Pachadi — it has all elements like comedy, love, and emotion. Everyone will definitely be entertained.” Actor VK Naresh said, “This is a wholesome entertainer. Reviewers who look for freshness will definitely like this film. It will feel new with father-and-son emotions.” Director Gopi Achara said, “Special thanks to Sai Durga Tej and director Ram Abbaraju for supporting us. Usually trailers touch the movie's main point. But we wanted to show the main point only in the film, so we released it as Not a Trailer. This story revolves around father-and-son emotion.

## ‘Sathi Leelavathi’ is a Complete Entertainer... I Request Everyone to Watch Our Film on March 6 and Make It a Big Hit: Lavanya Tripathi Konidela at Press Meet



The film ‘Sathi Leelavathi’, starring Lavanya Tripathi Konidela and Dev Mohan, is produced by Naaga Mohan under the banner of Durgadevi Pictures and presented by Anandi Art Creations. The movie is directed by Tatineni Satya. It

was announced on Wednesday that the film will be released on March 6. On this occasion, a special event was organized to announce the release date of ‘Sathi Leelavathi’. Speaking at the event...

**Lavanya Tripathi Konidela said:**  
“When we started Sathi Leelavathi, I was pregnant. I completed the shoot in just three months. I could finish the shoot only because of the support from the director and producers. It was a pleasure

working with Saptagiri garu. All the artists in this film have performed wonderfully. Dev Mohan garu's performance will impress everyone. This is a complete entertainer. Everyone will like this movie. I request you all to watch the film on March 6 and make it a big hit.”

**Director Tatineni Satya said:**  
“Just mention old sathi leelavathi is a cult classic there would not be any comparison between the two films ... i myself is a great fan of that old film and made the new sathi leelavathi to the new generation husband and wife conflict ...i would only pray if i get 50% of the old classic sathi leelavathi and people watch it in theatres and enjoy the entertainment with their family and people saying its a good film.

## I made Seetha Payanam for audiences of all sections. It's a film families can watch together in theatres” – Director & Producer Action King Arjun

Seetha Payanam, directed by Action King Arjun and starring Niranjan and Aishwarya Arjun as the lead pair, is produced under the Shri Ram Films International banner. With this film, Aishwarya Arjun makes her debut as a heroine. Action Prince Dhruva Sarja also plays a key role. The film releases on February 14. As part of the promotions, Arjun Sarja interacted with the media.

language, people can relate to it. It's a feel-good subject that works everywhere. That's why I decided to release it in four languages.

**Did producing a film with your own daughter affect the budget planning?**  
When I work with my family, I have complete control over the budget. I know exactly where to spend and how much to spend. That gives me a high level of comfort.

**Why did you choose Telugu to introduce your daughter?**  
The film industry has given me so much. Telugu audiences have always shown me immense love. So, I wanted to launch Aishwarya here first.

**Was another hero initially considered? Did that change the story?**  
Yes. I had the story ready and we initially considered Vishwak Sen. Sometimes things don't go as planned. But we didn't change even a single scene in the script. Niranjan stepped in for that role. We have no issues with Vishwak Sen; everything is settled. Life is a circle there are no grudges. If things align, we might work together again.

Usually, star sons are launched. You are launching your daughter. Why? Not just sons- daughters are heirs too. We shouldn't discriminate. We should support their interests.

