

13-02-2026
Total pilgrims: 64,222
Tonsures: 24,882
Hundi Kanukalu: 420 CR
Waiting Compartments: 27

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 12 H

EC sets Feb 17 deadline for filing FIRs against 4 officers over 'ghost voter' issue

KOLKATA: The Election Commission has set February 17 as a deadline for the West Bengal government to ensure that FIRs are registered against four officers over the alleged inclusion of 'ghost' voters in the electoral rolls in two districts, an official said on Saturday. The commission had earlier ordered the suspension of two electoral registration officers (EROs) and two assistant electoral registration officers (AEROs) from Baruipur Purbha in South 24 Parganas and Moyna in Purba Medinipur districts over alleged inclusion of "fake" or "ghost" voters in the electoral rolls.



DEADLINE



Trump revokes landmark ruling that greenhouse gases endanger public health

WORLD | NEWS

"Has Technical Problem": Sunil Gavaskar On India Star Days Ahead Of T20 World Cup Match vs



SPORTS | NEWS

IN BRIFS

J&K POLICE, BSF RECOVER HEROIN WORTH CRORES SUSPECTED TO BE DRONE DROPPED ALONG IB

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Police, along with the Border Security Force (BSF), have recovered heroin worth crores in a joint operation. The narcotics are suspected to have been drone-dropped along the International Border in the Ranbir Singh Pura sector of Jammu. The official spokesman said that, in a significant achievement on the anti-drug trafficking front, Jammu Police and the BSF made a major breakthrough by recovering a large quantity of narcotics (suspected to have been dropped by a drone) worth Rs 40 crore in the RS Pura sector of District Jammu, near the International Border. Acting promptly on inputs from the BSF regarding suspicious drone activity near the International Border, a cordon and search operation was launched jointly by Jammu Police and the BSF during the intervening night of February 13-14 at Nai Basti Karotana, Baspur area of the R S Pura sector, near the International Border, he said. He added that during the search at first light, two yellow-colored packets of narcotics were recovered from a wheat field at Nai Basti Karotana. The area is near the International Border, and the substance is suspected to have been dropped by a drone from Pakistan into Indian territory.

CM REVANTH GREETES TELANGANA PEOPLE ON MAHA SHIVRATRI



Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the people of the state on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri. In his message, the Chief Minister prayed for peace, prosperity, and overall well-being of Telangana. He expressed hope that Lord Shiva's divine blessings bring happiness, joy, and good health to every household across the state. CM Revanth Reddy also extended special wishes to devotees observing Maha Shivratri fasts and night-long prayers, stating that their devotion and spiritual discipline would be rewarded with divine grace.

CM REVANTH HAILS MINISTERS, SETS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy concluded a review meeting with ministers and congratulated them on the party's strong performance in the recent municipal elections.

He said the good results were achieved due to collective teamwork and coordinated efforts by ministers, leaders, and grassroots cadre. The Chief Minister appreciated party workers for their tireless work and commitment toward ensuring the Congress party's victory.

Revanth Reddy stated that the outcome reflects people's growing trust in the present government. He noted that in two years, the government delivered development and welfare programmes that the previous regime could not accomplish in ten years.

He urged ministers to uphold public trust and continue moving the state forward on the path of develop-



ment. The same spirit should guide the party in all upcoming elections, he said.

Chief Minister also directed ministers to consistently take welfare and development schemes to the people and focus on strengthening urban governance. He emphasized that municipalities and municipal corporations in the state should be developed into national model civic bodies through focused action and effective implementation.

T'gana civic poll results a mandate for Congress' welfare model: Rahul

New Delhi (TSIT): Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi on Saturday described the party's performance in the Telangana local body elections as an endorsement of its governance model centred on welfare, dignity and inclusive growth.

"Heartfelt thanks to every Congress 'karyakarta' and leader. This victory belongs to you and to the people of Telangana," LoP Gandhi said in a post on X. The ruling Congress secured close to 60 per cent of the urban local bodies, winning 64 of the 116 municipalities and three of the seven municipal corporations. "Our vision of a Prajasa Telangana, where progress reaches every family, remains unwavering," Rahul Gandhi said in the X post.

The principal Opposition, the BRS, won 13 municipalities



and three corporations, while 38 municipalities produced no clear majority. This has led to intense efforts by both Congress and BRS to secure support from independents and smaller parties ahead of the election of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons. Despite the fractured outcomes, Congress leaders claimed the party was in a position to control about three-fourths of the municipalities.

In the previous municipal polls in 2020, the then ruling TRS, now BRS, had dominated more than 100 urban local bodies. The Congress has also bagged the Mancherial, Ramagundam and Nalgonda corporations. In the 60-member Kothagudem corporation, Congress and the Communist Party of India won 22 seats each, with leaders from both sides describing the contest as friendly.

PM Modi inaugurates Northeast's first highway-based emergency landing facility in Assam

Guwahati, Feb 14 (TSIT): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the Northeast's first highway-based Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) at Moran in Assam's Dibrugarh district, marking a major milestone in India's defence infrastructure and operational preparedness.

Arriving at the newly developed emergency runway aboard an Indian Air Force (IAF) C-130J Hercules, the Prime Minister was received by Himanta Biswa Sarma, union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and other senior leaders. In a ceremonial welcome, Chief Minister Sarma presented the Prime Minister with an Assamese gamocha and japi, while Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh felicitated him with a commemorative memento.

The ceremony featured a spectacular fly-past by IAF combat aircraft, including Sukhoi 30 MKI, Rafale fighter jets, and the indigenously developed Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH). Both the Sukhoi 30 MKI and Rafale successfully landed on the highway-based strip, earning loud



cheers from the assembled crowd. The Moran facility, the first of its kind in the Northeast, is expected to enhance the IAF's operational flexibility, particularly in strategically sensitive regions.

Following the inauguration, the Prime Minister departed for Guwahati, where he is scheduled to inaugurate a new bridge over the Brahmaputra

River connecting Guwahati and North Guwahati. He will also inaugurate Assam's first Indian Institute of Management (IIM) campus and a National Data Centre in the city.

Later in the day, Prime Minister Modi is expected to address a large gathering of BJP booth-level karyakartas at the Veterinary College ground in Khanapara, Guwahati.

Jaishankar reiterates India's support for UNSC reform during meeting with G7 counterparts in Germany

Munich (TSIT) External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday met his counterparts from the G7 countries as he reiterated India's support for reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC) at the Munich Security Conference. The meeting comes after India concluded a free trade agreement (FTA) with the 27-nation European Union in January.

Jaishankar in a social media post said he was pleased to engage with G7 Foreign Ministers and reiterated India's support of the UN@80 agenda, particularly meaningful reform of the UN Security Council. The external affairs minister said he emphasised India's role in "safeguarding sea lines of communication, serving as a first responder, strengthening port security, and contributing to resilient submarine cable infrastructure." "Our conversation brought out the many convergences and shared interests between India and the G7," the minister added. Jaishankar started his Munich Security Conference with a roundtable 'Delhi Decided: Mapping India's Policy Calculus',

organised by the Ananta Aspen Centre, a non-partisan organisation. The external affairs minister said he highlighted the "importance of a nimble and dynamic foreign policy to meet the demands of multipolarity".

In a discussion with Indrani Bagchi, CEO Ananta Centre, Jaishankar said he also noted the significance of the India-EU FTA and the India-US trade deal in that regard. "The discussion looked at India's growth strategy, the choices before key partners, and why strategic autonomy remains a steady anchor as global dynamics evolve," the Ananta Centre said. India and the 27-nation bloc on January 27 announced the conclusion of negotiations for the free trade agreement.

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Restrictions imposed for 60 days in border areas of J&K's Kathua

Jammu (TSIT): Restrictions are imposed on movement in the border areas along the international border for a period of two months (60 days) in view of the sensitive situation in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the order issued by the District Magistrate Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, the security situation in the border areas has become sensitive and the movement in border areas is required to be restricted to ensure the utmost safety of the villagers and prevent any anti-national activities.

As per the order, to curb such activities in the border areas, there are sufficient grounds to initiate proceedings under the relevant section for the immediate prevention of danger to human life and disturbance to public tranquillity, and it is necessary to impose restrictions to



limit unnecessary movement in these areas.

The District Magistrate stated that, in exercise of the powers vested in him, unnecessary movement has been restricted within a 5-km strip from the International Border, falling under the Area of Responsibility of the Unit from forward Border Outpost Paharpur to Border Outpost Karol Krushna.

"Movement of heavy vehicles, including trucks, tippers and multi-axle vehicles, is prohibited on the old Samba-Kathua road between 9 pm to 6 am," an order further read. It further read that the order shall come into force from February 14, 2026, and shall remain in effect for a period of 60 days from the date of its issuance or until it is rescinded, whichever is earlier. "Since it is not possible to serve prior notice of this order, it is being issued ex parte and addressed to the general public," it stated, adding that any violation of the order shall invite punitive action under the relevant sections.

CM Revanth Meets CPI Leaders Palla Venkat Reddy and E.T. Narsimha

Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy held a meeting with CPI leaders Palla Venkat Reddy and E.T. Narsimha to discuss key public and policy-related issues. The interaction focused on current governance matters and people-centric development initiatives in the state.



Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Kumar Goud was also present during the meeting.

According to sources, the discussion covered welfare measures, grassroots concerns, and coordination on issues affecting various sections of society. The leaders exchanged

views on strengthening public delivery systems and addressing local challenges through constructive dialogue.

The meeting reflects continued engagement between the state leadership and representatives from different political and social platforms on matters of public interest.

Rahul alleges 'betrayal' of cotton farmers, textile exporters over India-US tariff issue

New Delhi (TSIT): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Centre over the reported tariff disparity affecting Indian garment exports to the United States, accusing the government of misleading the public and endangering the interests of cotton farmers and textile exporters.

In a post on X titled "18% Tariff vs 0% - Let Me Explain," Gandhi alleged that the Modi government had failed to secure favourable terms for India under the India-US trade framework while Bangladesh was granted zero-tariff access for garment exports to the

American market, subject to importing US cotton. "Let me explain how a Prime Minister skilled in falsehoods and his Cabinet are spreading confusion on this issue — and how they are betraying India's cotton farmers and textile exporters through the India-US trade agreement," Gandhi wrote. According to Gandhi, Indian garments are facing an 18 per cent tariff in the US market, while Bangladesh is benefiting from a 0 per cent tariff arrangement on the condition that it imports American cotton.

He said he raised the issue in Parliament, questioning why Bangladesh was receiving a special



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concession. "After the announcement of an 18% tariff on Indian garments, when I raised in Parliament the issue of the special concession being granted to Bangladesh, a minister from the Modi government responded: 'If we want the same benefit, we will have to import cotton from the United States,'" Gandhi stated.

He further asked, "Why was this fact hidden from the country until now?" Gandhi described the situation as a policy trap, arguing that India faces a difficult choice. "If we import American cotton, our own farmers will be ruined. If we do not, our textile industry will fall behind and suffer severe damage," he said.

Gandhi also warned that Bangladesh could reduce or stop cotton imports from India, which would further affect Indian producers.

"In India, the textile industry and cotton cultivation form the backbone of livelihoods. Crores of people depend on them for their survival. Any blow to these sectors means pushing millions of families into unemployment and economic distress," he wrote. The remarks come amid heightened political debate over trade negotiations and export competitiveness. India's textile sector is one of the country's largest employment generators, particularly in states such as Gujarat,

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana. Cotton cultivation supports millions of farmers across central and western India. Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet of striking a deal that could adversely impact both farmers and exporters.

"A farsighted government acting in the national interest would have negotiated a deal that protected and ensured the prosperity of both cotton farmers and textile exporters," he said. "Instead, Narendra 'Surrender' Modi and his ministers have struck an agreement that could inflict deep harm on both sectors," Gandhi added.

Rahul Gandhi's policy is to lie loudly, repeat it; people have identified his factory of lies: Shah

KARAIKAL: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the interests of Indian farmers and fishermen have been fully secured in the recent FTAs and the Indo-US trade deal signed by the country, and slammed top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for misleading them with "lies" and trying to create an "illusion". Also, Shah praised Prime Minister Modi's decisive leadership by taking resolute action against terrorism—the surgical strikes after the Pulwama attack, and later Operation Sindoor. He paid Shradhanjali (tributes) to the CRPF jawans who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. Launching a scathing attack

on the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Shah charged that Gandhi "has started a new tradition of telling lies daily" and asked him to "carefully" go through the fine-print of the recent deals clinched with the UK and EU, besides the US, which has particularly come under sharp attack from the Congress MP. "Its Rahul Gandhi's policy to lie, lie loudly, repeat it. But people have identified your lie manufacturing factory," he said in his address at a well-attended BJP rally in this poll-bound Union Territory. "Rahul Gandhi wants to mislead the country's fishermen and farmers. He intends to spread illusion by telling

lies," Shah charged. In the Free Trade Agreements signed with the UK and the EU, besides the Indo-US trade deal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ensured "100 per cent protection" for farmers, fishermen and livestock breeders, Shah said. Asking Gandhi to go through the provisions in the FTAs and the trade deal carefully, Shah reiterated that the interests of the Indian stakeholders has been ensured "100 per cent." Fishermen would benefit from the FTAs. He charged that farmers' interests were "sold off" during the UPA regime headed by the late Manmohan Singh. "The FTAs and trade deal will not cause any harm to



our farmers. The harm to farmers was done during your Manmohan Singh government. Several global agreements were signed back then in which the interests of farmers were sold off. Here, Narendra Modi ji has ensured the protection of farmers and livestock rearers," he said. PM Modi has worked to provide 100 per cent protection to farmers, brothers and sisters involved in animal husbandry, and fishermen, Shah stated. Further, the top BJP leader targeted the previous Puducherry Congress re-

gime led by V Narayanasamy (2016-21) over corruption and cited a recent CAG report and alleged that "the entire development fund of Rs 15,000 crore was swallowed" in the union territory during the grand old party-led government. A probe into the matter has begun and Rs 15,000 crore is "Puducherry's three-year budget." Narayanasamy's government had turned the UT into an "ATM for the Gandhi family" and his objective was to fill the coffers of the Delhi high command, Shah charged. "They openly auctioned off PG and diploma seats. They even sold the reserved seats for SC and ST to wealthy people out of greed for mon-

ey. They did the Centac scam, (medical admission scam) and the CBI is investigating it. They left the transport mafias free to trouble the public," he alleged. For five years, the Congress government created an atmosphere of corruption and disorder in Puducherry. In those years of bad governance, not only was there corruption, but institutions here did not function properly, he said, adding, disorder was at its peak. "Earlier, Puducherry's decisions were taken by the Gandhi family in the Delhi court, but now Puducherry's decisions are being taken by Puducherry itself." In the last five years, the AINRC-BJP regime ended corruption, and "we have

changed disorder into order." And now is the time, in the next five years, to make Puducherry a developed territory, he said, adding, there was a need to move forward with the resolve to make the UT developed in every aspect. The leader emphasised that in the coming five years, the primary concentration would be on building an ecosystem that connects the products of Puducherry's fishermen to the international market. Furthermore, he asserted that Puducherry would be transformed into a center of excellence for IT software, AI, and data centers, ensuring that every youth in Puducherry is provided with ample employment opportunities.

Access to justice can't remain an abstract ideal reserved for legally empowered: CJI Surya Kant

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday said access to justice cannot remain an abstract ideal reserved for the legally empowered and must translate into real outcomes for marginalised citizens. Speaking at the 11th biennial meeting of the Commonwealth Judicial Educators (CJE) here, CJI Kant said judicial leadership cannot be confined to administrative authority or institutional hierarchy and must be understood as an intellectual and ethical orientation. "Access to justice cannot remain an abstract ideal reserved for the legally empowered. It must translate into real outcomes for the last person standing in the line, the marginalised citizen whose faith in the justice system rests upon its accessibility, responsiveness and humanity," the CJI said. While placing stress on integration of technology into the justice system, he said that AI must assist, and not replace, judicial reasoning. CJI Kant said judicial leadership demands not only administrative foresight but deep empathy, and the courts must be vigilant to ensure that procedural complexity does not transform into a barrier for those in need of protection. The CJI said the convergence of arbitration, mediation and specialised courts reflects an overarching transformation: from a litigation-centric paradigm to a justice-centric ecosystem. "This transformation acknowledges that justice must be accessible not only in principle but in practice—timely, efficient and responsive to the needs of litigants," he said. CJI Kant said courts must continuously earn public trust through clarity of reasoning, trans-



parency, and consistency. "Judges must appreciate not only the doctrinal aspects of constitutional law but the philosophical foundations that give those doctrines meaning. Comparative constitutional dialogue, historical study, and ethical reflection are essential components of this educational process," he said. He said courts must act as guardians of constitutional identity even as they adapt to changing realities. "In an increasingly interconnected world, this responsibility also carries an outward dimension, engaging with global judicial communities to share," he added. The CJI asked Commonwealth judicial platforms to increasingly recognise jurisprudential contributions emerging from India and the wider Asian region, as it would strengthen shared learning and better reflect the Commonwealth's collective commitment to accessible, people-centred justice.

Punjab, Haryana CMs pay tributes to Pulwama terror attack martyrs

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his Haryana counterpart Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday paid homage to the CRPF personnel who lost their lives in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama on this day in 2019, saying that the nation will forever remember their sacrifice. In a post on X in Punjabi, Mann said, "We pay our heartfelt tribute to all the martyrs who laid down their lives in the Pulwama terror attack. Our nation will forever remember the sacrifice of these brave soldiers." The Haryana chief minister also paid tributes to the CRPF personnel and said, "The supreme sacrifice of mother India's valiant sons is an indelible symbol of the nation's unity, security, and resolve. Their indomitable courage and patriotism forever inspire us to stand united and firm against terrorism." On February 14, 2019, 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed, and five were injured in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, when a suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100 kg of explosives into their bus in Pulwama district. Days later, India launched a retaliatory attack, which came to be known as the Balakot airstrike.

Sharad Pawar keen to contest Rajya Sabha polls; merger of NCP factions unlikely: Raut

NEW DELHI: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday claimed that NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar wants to contest the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls, and the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will hold discussions about it. Talking to reporters, Raut also said it is unlikely that the NCP (SP) and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which late deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar headed, will unite. "I had a discussion with Sharad Pawar saheb. I asked his opinion about this (whether he will contest the Rajya Sabha polls). He told me that he will contest the Rajya Sabha polls. He has told me," Raut said. Raut, who is also a member of the Upper House of Parliament, said Pawar (85) is a senior lawmaker in the country with nearly 60 years of legislative experience. Pawar has informed his position to the Congress that he wants to contest the Rajya Sabha polls, Raut said.



NCP (SP), the Congress and Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena (UBT) are the partners in the MVA. "Now the MVA (leaders) will sit together and have discussions on this," he said. Seven members, including Pawar, are retiring from the Rajya Sabha in April. MVA can potentially send one candidate to the Rajya Sabha due to its depleted strength. Pawar has had an uninterrupted presence in either of the two Houses of the Maharashtra legislature or in Parliament since 1967. Raut also claimed that the chances of the two NCP groups merging are slim. Following the death of Ajit Pawar in a plane crash in Baramati in Pune district on January 28, Sharad Pawar had claimed that it was his late nephew's wish to unite both NCP factions. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis had virtually dismissed Sharad Pawar's claim, saying if the merger talks were really in progress, then Ajit Pawar would have shared details with him. NCP leaders have indicated that such a unification is a remote possibility.

Cabinet approves Rs 10k cr fund for startups to mobilise venture capital, support deep-tech entities

NEW DELHI: The government on Saturday said it has approved a Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds to mobilise venture capital and support deep tech, tech-driven innovative manufacturing startups, and early-growth stage enterprises. This was the second part of the Fund of Funds (FoF) scheme under the Startup India initiative. The first was established in 2016. The FoF 2.0 has been designed to continue the momentum of investments in startups, with an expanded scope over FFS 1.0. "The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of the Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 with a total corpus of Rs 10,000 crore for the purpose of mobilising venture capital for the startup ecosystem of the country," a government statement said.



The Cabinet approved the second tranche of the Startup India Fund of Funds Scheme on Friday. The scheme, it said, is designed to accelerate the next phase of India's startup journey by mobilising long-term domestic capital, strengthening the venture capital ecosystem, and supporting innovation-led entrepreneurship across the country. In 2016, the government constituted a Fund of Funds worth Rs 10,000 crore to provide seed capital and enable

startups to take calculated risks. Following the successful utilisation of the first tranche, a second phase of Rs 10,000 crore was sanctioned in the Union Budget for 2025-26. There are about 100 unicorns at present. A unicorn refers to a startup valued at USD 1 billion or more. Since the launch of Startup India in 2016, the number of government-recognised startups has risen from about 500 units recognised as startups to over two lakh at present.

More than 49,400 startups were recognised in 2025, the highest in a single year. "The Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 follows the strong performance of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS 1.0), which was launched in 2016 to address funding gaps and catalyse the domestic venture capital market for startups," the statement said. Under the part of the fund, the entire corpus of Rs 10,000 crore has been committed to 145 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs). Such supported AIFs have invested over Rs 25,500 crore in more than 1,370 startups across the country in various sectors, such as agriculture, artificial intelligence, robotics, automotive, clean tech, consumer goods and services, e-commerce, education, fintech, food and beverages, healthcare, manufacturing, space tech, and biotechnology, amongst others.

This fund played a key role in nurturing first-time founders, crowding in private capital, and helping build a strong foundation for India's venture capital ecosystem. While the first phase built the ecosystem, the second phase is designed to take Indian innovation to the next level. The new fund will have a targeted, segmented funding approach to support deep tech and tech-driven innovative manufacturing. It will prioritise breakthroughs in high-tech areas that require long-term capital. The focus will also be on empowering early-growth stage founders to provide a safety net for new and innovative ideas, reducing early-stage failures caused by a lack of funding. Further, it will encourage investments beyond major metros so that innovation thrives in every corner of the country.

Centre approves 11.56 Km metro extension from Noida Sector 142 to Botanical Garden

NEW DELHI: The Centre has approved an 11.56 km extension corridor with eight elevated stations from Noida Sector 142 to Botanical Garden of the Noida Metro Rail Project. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. According to the statement issued by the government on Saturday, after operationalisation of the corridor, Noida and Greater Noida cities will have an active Metro Rail Network of 61.62 km. Representing an advancement in the city's infrastructure, the extension corridor from Noida Sector 142 to Botanical Garden (Noida) acts as a major expansion of the Noida Metro Rail Network, it

will not only enhance connectivity but also stimulate economic activity and ease urban mobility for both residents and commuters related to employment, business, education & general transit," the statement read. Promising to deliver enhanced connectivity, reduced traffic congestion, environmental benefits, economic growth and improved quality of life, the proposed extension corridor is set to be a transformative development for the city. By addressing key urban challenges and providing a foundation for future expansion, it will play a crucial role in shaping the city's development trajectory and sustainability, the statement read.

Union minister Pradhan attacks Bengal govt over infiltration

KOLKATA: Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday said infiltration had become a serious issue in West Bengal and alleged that the state was being handed over to infiltrators. Addressing a BJP teachers' cell conference here, the Union education minister also pitched the Centre's eastern development vision, saying India's overall progress depended on the rise of eastern states. Crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for articulating the approach, he said, "Kolkata is the capital of Purvodaya. The first ray of development of the east should come from Kolkata." Pradhan alleged, "This state government plans to hand over Bengal to infiltrators and invite once again a situation like 'Banga Bhanga'. My state Odisha has also been affected by this." He claimed that corruption was rampant, while poverty

in the state was "hurting the country." Launching a broader attack on the Trinamool Congress administration, Pradhan called for a "satta parivartan" (change in power), alleging the current dispensation had surrendered governance to corruption and infiltration. "Time has come for a change of power in Bengal to remove this corrupt administration," he said, urging people to work towards installing a BJP-led "double-engine government". He also criticised Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's budget, alleging it was "more for infiltrators and madrasas" than for the general public, and claimed central funds meant for children's nutrition under the mid-day meal scheme had been diverted. "Those who have stolen the money of Bengal's children, we are going to send them to

jail," he said. The minister alleged that the state's refusal to implement the National Education Policy had deprived it of major central benefits, including funds for over 1,000 PM SHRI schools and a proposed grant for Jadavpur University as a 'Centre of Excellence'. Citing education indicators, he claimed the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education in the state was about 25 per cent compared with the national average of 30 per cent, and said thousands of schools faced severe teacher shortages, with around 4,000 allegedly having none. Referring to teacher eligibility test candidates, Pradhan acknowledged their unimaginable hardship due to "wrong policies" of the TMC regime and promised that if the BJP came to power, the government would find ways to resolve their issues.

Pro-people governance reflected in 1,000 days: Siddaramaiah

HAVERI: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said that his government had set records in welfare delivery and economic growth, asserting that its 1,000 days in office reflected its commitment to inclusive development. The CM inaugurated the government's 1,000-day celebration and a programme to distribute title deeds to one lakh beneficiaries, organised jointly by the district administration and the Revenue Department. "We are distributing title deeds to one lakh beneficiaries for the second time through the Revenue Department. So far, we have created a record by distributing title deeds to 2.20 lakh families," he said on the occasion. "It is our pro-people government that has made the state's GDP number one in the country. The state is also moving at record



speed in GST tax collection," he said, presenting data to substantiate the claim. Siddaramaiah said his government has completed two years and nine months. "Out of the 590 promises made, we have fulfilled 243 promises. The remaining promises will also be fulfilled in the remaining term," he claimed. Referring to his previous tenure, he said that even during 2013-18, the Congress government fulfilled all promises made and im-

plemented 30 additional promises not mentioned in the manifesto, thereby creating a record of "walking the talk". The chief minister said that so far, through the guarantee schemes, the state government has availed direct benefits to the tune of Rs 1.18 lakh crore to the people of the state. "Our government has successfully completed 1,000 days in office. Only the Congress government walks the talk," Siddaramaiah stated. He added that his government believes in inclusive development for people of all castes, religions and languages, and is committed to reducing inequality. "The government completed 1,000 days on February 13. Our achievement convention during these 1,000 days reflects our commitment. We stand for the poor, Dalits, backward classes, minorities, women and workers," Siddaramaiah reiterated. He assured that district demands would be addressed after reviewing the state's financial position. Praising Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, Siddaramaiah said there had been "revolutionary progress" in the department after he took charge. Targeting the BJP, the chief minister said the party, which failed to fulfil its promises while in power, was spreading negative propaganda that the state treasury is empty.

NISAR to deliver 100m soil moisture data every 13 days across India: ISRO

BENGALURU: ISRO on Saturday said that NISAR is systematically imaging the Indian landmass in S-and L-bands to deliver high-resolution and wide swath data with a repetitivity of 12 days. "This data has been effectively utilised to demonstrate the generation of soil-moisture products at a high resolution of 100m, it said. Being a key indicator of crop health, irrigation needs and drought risk, soil-moisture plays a vital role in India's agriculture and water management, the space agency said. According to a ISRO statement, the soil-moisture products, demonstrated using both S-and L-bands data, provide consistent estimates across India's diverse agro-climatic regions - from irrigated plains and rainfed farmlands to semi-arid and high-rainfall zones.

NEWBORN KIDNAPPED FROM TIRUCHY GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL RESCUED WITHIN HOURS



TIRUCHY: A newborn baby boy who was kidnapped from a government hospital in Tiruchirappalli was safely rescued within five hours, police said on Saturday, according to a Daily Thanthi report. The incident occurred at the Tiruchy Government Hospital, where Sukanya, wife of Vignesh from Thuraiyur, had delivered a baby boy on February 11. A woman who introduced herself as Meenakshi befriended Sukanya while staying in the same ward and offered assistance during her hospital stay. On Tuesday morning, Meenakshi took the baby from Sukanya, claiming she would get the child vaccinated, while Sukanya's relative had briefly stepped out. When the woman failed to return, the family searched the hospital and later lodged a police complaint. Based on CCTV footage, police identified the suspect and formed a special team, which traced and rescued the baby from Dharmampatti after about five hours. The child was found unharmed and reunited with the family. Meenakshi was arrested and later told police that she had taken the baby as she longed to have a child. The incident triggered concern among patients and staff at the hospital.

TAMIL NADU TO CONDUCT SYNCHRONIZED BIRD CENSUS ON FEBRUARY 14, 15

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu Forest Department will conduct a synchronised terrestrial bird census across all forest divisions on February 14 and 15, 2026, to bridge data gaps during the early phase of the migratory season and strengthen baseline information on terrestrial bird populations. According to a press release issued on Friday, the terrestrial bird census was carried out across all 38 districts, covering 1,093 terrestrial sites between March 15 and 16 last year. A total of 401 bird species, including migratory and resident populations, were recorded, with the overall count estimated at 2.3 lakh birds. For the 2026 exercise, the census will be conducted at a minimum of 25 locations in each forest division using the line transect method, with each transect measuring 2 km. Both direct count and acoustic survey methods will be employed to ensure comprehensive documentation of bird species across varied habitats. The synchronised exercise is expected to generate robust scientific data to support long-term monitoring and conservation planning across the State.

After Salem meet swipe, AIADMK accuses Vijay of lack of political clarity

CHENNAI: The AIADMK on Saturday launched a sharp counterattack against TVK leader Vijay, accusing him of lacking political clarity and attempting to build a party without ideological grounding, after the actor-turned-politician criticised both Dravidian majors at an executive meeting in Salem. In a strongly-worded statement, the AIADMK IT wing alleged that Vijay was "borrowing leaders" from other parties and pasting "stickers without political history or understanding." The party further claimed that TVK was recruiting individuals who had been expelled from other political outfits and running its affairs through WhatsApp groups in the name of party organisation.



Taking a dig at Vijay's corruption remarks, the AIADMK also questioned whether selling first-day, first-show cinema tickets for 2,000 did not amount to "looting." The IT wing further criticised Vijay's recent social media post in which he suggested that governance under the DMK had become "out of control" and rhetorically asked how someone mounting a horse could suddenly become "original." The rebuttal came after Vijay, addressing TVK executives in Salem on Friday, amid heightened election activity in Tamil Nadu, dismissed criticism that his party lacked political experience ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls. "They say TVK has no experience? What is your experience?" Vijay asked, in an apparent swipe at both the DMK and the

AIADMK. Referring to the legacy of former leaders such as C.N. Annadurai, M.G. Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa, he remarked, "Your experience is forgetting Anna and MGR. MGR forgot Jayalalithaa — is that your experience?" "Yes, we don't have experience. We have no experience in looting. Even if we try, it won't come to us," he said, accusing the Dravidian parties of corruption and misgovernance. With alliance talks and seat-sharing negotiations gaining momentum ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, the exchange signals an intensifying political battle between established Dravidian forces and Vijay's emerging political outfit.

Can't evict me from politics: Ramadoss

VILLUPURAM: PMK founder S Ramadoss has alleged that a group of individuals expelled from the party are attempting to force him out of politics through the propagation of false narratives, in a veiled attack on estranged son Anbumani Ramadoss, asserting that he would defeat those attempts. Speaking to reporters at his Thailapuram residence on Thursday, the veteran leader claimed that this faction has been consistently relying on falsehoods to undermine his leadership and the party's interests ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. He further alleged that these individuals have been targeting him and senior leader G K Mani with "abusive language".



The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) founder also raised concerns regarding the Election Commission of India's handling of the party's Mango symbol. He claimed that the poll body had sent communications to his estranged son Anbumani Ramadoss's address despite a Delhi High Court observation that leadership disputes should be settled in a competent court. Ramadoss stated that the party is currently in the process of discussing potential alliances for the upcoming state elections, and a final decision will be made public soon. The veteran leader asserted that he would continue to fight against those attempting to weaken the party through misinformation.

Inter state iridium scam: 6 held for posing as RBI officials, conning victims of over Rs 5 cr

CHENNAI: The Crime Branch CID of Tamil Nadu has successfully dismantled an inter-state gang involved in an elaborate Iridium trading scam. The gang, which specialised in impersonating senior officials of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has been cheating victims across the country. The breakthrough came following a complaint from a resident of Coimbatore, who was defrauded of Rs 3 crore. According to the investigation, the accused initially posed as businessmen dealing in Iridium trade. The victim was falsely told that several crores of rupees were lying deposited with the RBI and would be released upon the payment of Rs 10 lakh as 'processing charges' for



clearing the files. Fraudsters assured him that the funds would be credited within two months. After the initial payment was made, he was taken to New Delhi, where he was introduced to individuals impersonating officials from the Foreign Exchange Department of the RBI. They wore fake RBI identity cards, conducted a fake 'official interview', collected the victim's biometric finger-

prints, and issued forged documents such as credit advices and dispatch orders to gain the trust. Subsequently, additional sums of money were extorted from the victim under various pretexts, including claims that payments were required to expedite the release of funds by senior RBI officials. Following the complaint, a case was registered at the Krishnagiri CBCID unit for offences including cheating, criminal conspiracy, impersonation of RBI officials, and forgery using the name and emblem of the central bank. In a coordinated operation conducted on February 9 and 10 this year, six special teams led by Inspectors and comprising 25 police personnel apprehended the accused. The arrests were made with the assistance of local police in their respective states. The arrested individuals have been identified as: Sonu Kumar Dubey (Bihar), Aashish Kumar (Bihar), Gopal Sekar (Bihar), George Thomas (Telangana), Gulshan Darad (Jharkhand) and Srinivasan (Karnataka). All accused have been remanded to judicial custody.

CLASSROOM UNSAFE, COLLEGE MOVES CLASSES UNDER A TREE

CHENGALPATTU: While Gautama Buddha is said to have received enlightenment while sitting under a tree, more than 200 students of a government college in Chengalpattu are lamenting the lack of a proper classroom, forcing them to attend classes under a tree for over a month. Students in the Political Science department, particularly first-year students, at

Rajeswari Vedachalam Government Arts College, fumed that their education has been disrupted due to the acute shortage of safe classroom facilities. They also claimed that the classroom allotted to first-year students was closed after it became unsafe following rain damage. With no permanent alternative provided, classes were shifted to Anna Hall.

KUDOS TO CM STALIN FOR WELFARE, GSDP FINE BALANCE, HAILS SELVAPERUNTHAGAI

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president K Selvaperunthagai on Friday praised Chief Minister MK Stalin, stating that the DMK government has fulfilled 90 per cent of its 2021 Assembly election promises and continues to implement several landmark welfare schemes, including the Rs 5,000 aid to women. He noted that under the Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai



scheme, Rs 1,000 per month is being provided to eligible women, and an advance amount of Rs 5,000 covering February, March and April assistance, along with a special summer package, has

been credited to the bank accounts of 1.31 crore women beneficiaries. Highlighting Tamil Nadu's economic growth, he said the State's Gross State Domestic Product has reached Rs 31.19 lakh crore, with per capita income rising to Rs 3.61 lakh, significantly higher than the national average of Rs 1.96 lakh. He also pointed out that the State has attracted Rs 11 lakh crore in investments between 2021 and 2025.

Tamil Nadu inks pact with US firm to boost computing R&D



CHENNAI: The State government inked a deal with the USA-based KLA Corporation to set up a research and development centre and an innovation centre. Under the MoU, an assured investment of Rs 3,510 Crore over the next

of this new initiative, KLA India will focus on R&D for High-performance computing, Engineering software, and computing technology. KLA Corporation is providing technological solutions to the rapidly growing sector of the technological world.

In a statement, the government said that a subsidiary of KLA Corporation, KLA India, will create an R&D facility spanning 12 acres in Chennai

The leading company provides research and development services to chip manufacturers worldwide. The Tamil Nadu government is targeting a one-trillion-dollar economy in the state by 2030. Achieving this target, the government is attracting not only traditional sectors but also sunrise sectors. At an MoU signing event, Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanithi Stalin, Minister for Industries TRB Rajaa, and Secretary to the department V Arunroy participated.

10 years will create 4,000 top-class job opportunities. In a statement, the government said that a subsidiary of KLA Corporation, KLA India, will create an R&D facility spanning 12 acres in Chennai. As part

Keep your brain active to stay mentally sharp, advises neurologist

Mumbai, Feb 14: In an age where daily life is increasingly automated, experts are urging people not to neglect one of the most vital organs — the brain.

While physical exercise is widely promoted, neurologists stress that the brain too requires regular stimulation to remain sharp and resilient. According to Dr Vivek Kumar, Principal Director, Neurology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, mental exercise plays a crucial role in maintaining cognitive health and slowing age-related decline.



thoughtfully or participating in meaningful conversations help build new neural connections and strengthen mental agility. Highlighting the impact of modern digital habits, Dr Kumar cautioned against chronic multitasking. He noted that frequent task-switching can reduce efficiency by up to 40%, increase stress levels and contribute to burn-out. Citing data from the

American Psychological Association, he said nearly 40% of adults regularly multitask on digital devices, leading to lower productivity and heightened stress. Chronic multitaskers often struggle with working memory and filtering irrelevant information, resulting in mental fatigue. Meditation shows measurable benefits. Dr Kumar also underlined the proven benefits of meditation and

mindfulness practices. These techniques, including breathing exercises and quiet reflection, help reduce cortisol levels, lower blood pressure, ease anxiety and enhance cognitive functions. Research indicates that such practices may also assist individuals in managing depression, chronic pain and even symptoms linked to withdrawal from substances like nicotine and alcohol. The neurologist

advised people to seek attention if they notice early signs of cognitive decline, including:

- Memory loss affecting daily life
• Poor judgment and decision-making
• Reduced initiative or spontaneity
• Confusion about dates or locations
• Taking longer to complete routine tasks
• Repeating questions frequently
• Misplacing items often
• Noticeable mood or personality changes

Dr Kumar recommended three simple habits to maintain brain health:

- Solve puzzles such as Sudoku
• Learn new skills or hobbies
• Increase social interaction

Experts emphasise that just as consistent physical workouts strengthen the body, regular mental stimulation is essential to preserve focus, memory and emotional balance in the long run.

Twice-yearly injections may transform hypertension treatment, says Lancet review

New Delhi, Feb 14: The way high blood pressure is treated could soon witness its biggest shift in decades, with long-acting injectable therapies promising control with just two doses a year instead of daily pills.

A recent review published in The Lancet highlights how these emerging treatments, now in late-stage clinical trials, could redefine hypertension care. Despite the availability of effective oral medicines for years, global blood pressure control remains poor, largely due to poor adherence, weak health systems and long-term treatment fatigue.

Hypertension remains the leading cause of heart attacks, strokes and premature deaths worldwide. The World Health Organization defines it as blood pressure at or above 140 mm Hg systolic and/or 90 mm Hg diastolic, while normal levels are below 120/80 mm Hg.

Globally, an estimated 1.4 billion adults aged 30 to 79 live with hypertension, with nearly 44 per cent unaware of their condition. Among those diagnosed, fewer than one in four have their blood pres-

sure under control.

India mirrors the crisis. The Indian Council of Medical Research-INDIAB study in 2023 estimated that 315 million Indians, or 35.5 per cent of the population, have hypertension. Data from National Family Health Survey-5 showed that nearly half of hypertensive men and over a third of hypertensive women in the country do not have adequate control.

For decades, treatment has relied on combinations of daily oral drugs such as ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers and thiazide diuretics. While effective in theory, adherence remains a major challenge, especially as many patients also manage diabetes, obesity or cholesterol disorders requiring multiple medications.

New long-acting injectables aim to address this gap by targeting upstream molecular pathways that drive hypertension. One promising approach involves small interfering RNA agents that suppress angiotensinogen

production in the liver, thereby dampening the renin-angiotensin system central to blood pressure regulation. Zilebesiran, developed by Roche Pharma and Alynlym, is currently in global phase 3 trials. Another candidate, ziltvekimab by Novo Nordisk, targets inflammatory pathways linked to cardiovascular risk, aiming to reduce both blood pressure and broader vascular damage. Researchers are also exploring therapies that more precisely regulate aldosterone, a hormone that increases blood volume and pressure.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of TAMILAGA NEDDI KATCHI. The office of the party is located at No. 9/2, Manamada, Bus Stop North Side, Thalappatti (PO), Manamangalam Taluk, Karur, Tamilnadu-639003. This Party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act 1951. Names/address of the office bearers of the Party are as follows: President:- R. Jagun, S/O-Ramasamy, Resident of-8/24, Maravappalayam, Nayal Post, Karur-639117. General Secretary:- N. Baskaran, S/O-Natrayan, Resident of- 1/1, Vadakku Tharu, Puthampoor, Karur-639003. Treasurer:- Ravi Kumar, S/O-Subramanian, Resident of- 2/73, Salaithottam, Thenmalai, Thenmalai South, Thenmalai-639206. If any one has any objection to the registration of TAMILAGA NEDDI KATCHI they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, Nirvanah Sadan, Ashoka Road New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of the notice.

EDITORIAL

Azerbaijan's Anti-India Jabs Are Growing

Azerbaijan has suddenly discovered minority rights and concerns, only not those of minority communities in its territory, but in India. On February 3, it allowed the Pakistani Embassy in Azerbaijan to hold an event marking Kashmir Solidarity Day, with the country's ambassador to Baku, Qasim Mohiuddin, attending alongside diplomatic staff and media representatives. As usual, wild allegations were made against India, with the ambassador reaffirming Pakistan's "unwavering moral, diplomatic, and political support for the Kashmiri people and their right to self-determination".

Hosting Khalistani Representatives

While such "Kashmir Days" have become routine, this year, it was preceded by yet another event - a conference organised by a group calling itself the Baku Initiative Group (BIG) on (lack of) minority rights in India. This was actually a euphemism for driving the Khalistani narrative. In attendance were representatives of different Khalistani organisations, such as the Sikh Federation International (SFI), as well as the Minority Affairs Minister from Pakistan, Ramesh Singh Arora, whom the Azerbaijani press falsely introduced as a Minister from India's Punjab province. Doing away with all pretences, the conference openly called for international support for the establishment of a separate Khalistani state. A booklet titled *The Khalistan Movement: Past Roots, Global Dimensions and Modern Landscape* was also released.

An Absurd Move

The very act of hosting such a conference in Baku is so ridiculous that it evokes more amusement than concern. After all, Azerbaijan is no paragon of liberty and pluralism. It is an autocratic state where power remains controlled by a single family. It neither allows dissent, freedom of expression, nor a free press. It has no opposition, and critics of the government are routinely rounded up and silenced. The presidential and parliamentary elections in February and September, respectively, failed to meet standards for a free and fair vote. International observers found them "marked by the stifling of critical voices" and "devoid of competition". Take, for instance, the fact that in 2024, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe resolved not to ratify the credentials of the Azerbaijani delegation, concluding that the country has "not fulfilled major commitments" stemming from its joining the Council of Europe 20 years ago. "Very serious concerns remain as to [Azerbaijan's] ability to conduct free and fair elections, the separation of powers, the weakness of its legislature vis-à-vis the executive, the independence of the judiciary and respect for human rights, as illustrated by numerous judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and opinions of the Venice Commission," the Assembly said in a resolution. Baku also stands charged with war crimes in Nagorno-Karabakh, which it wrested from Armenian control during the 2020 war. It is accused of committing ethnic cleansing in the enclave - all very serious allegations. These are just some examples of the country's track record. Why, then, does it want to highlight "discrimination" elsewhere, especially in a functioning and vibrant democracy like India? The immediate temptation is to say that it is a good way to deflect from Baku's own deficiencies.

What Even Is 'BIG'?

The antecedents of the Baku Initiative Group are just as dubious. It appeared only in 2023 as a platform to ostensibly counter "colonialism" and neo-colonialism, but so far has trained its guns only on France, and now India - two countries that pursue close relations with Armenia, an arch-rival of Azerbaijan. The group has accused France of continuing to colonise New Caledonia, forcing the indigenous Kanak population into displacement. As for India, over the past few years, it has deepened cooperation with Armenia, including in defence. At the time of writing this piece, the Indian Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, was on a visit to Yerevan. In spite of its many defence partnerships, including with NATO-member Turkey, Azerbaijan has been very apprehensive of India's engagement with Armenia.

Scripted Posts, Late-Night Calls: How A 'Rescue Op' Saved UK PM Starmer's Job

A nation that once ruled half the world is now struggling to rule itself. A country that produced leaders, such as Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher, today finds itself engulfed in a deeply damaging leadership crisis. The impression one gets is that the political class has failed its people, institutions are losing public trust, and the country appears to be drifting. In this dark and anarchic political climate, the United Kingdom is being led by a prime minister whose most recent approval ratings suggest that just about 18% of Britons view him favourably, while roughly 75% view him unfavourably. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his governing Labour Party would possibly lose if a general election were held today. This, after returning to power with a decisive majority in June 2024. To be honest, Britain's Labour Party today appears leaderless. And the world is watching.

For months, Starmer's leadership has appeared brittle, weakened by U-turns, defined by risk aversion and a growing disconnect between Downing Street and Labour's parliamentary ranks.

Mandelson, A Monumental Mistake

The immediate trigger, however, is the fallout from the Jeffrey Epstein-linked revelations involving Peter Mandelson, the prime minister's controversial pick as Britain's ambassador to the United States. The disgraced figure of Mandelson must be haunting Keir Starmer, as the release of emails detailing the depth of Mandelson's association with the convicted sex offender has sent shockwaves through Westminster. The prime minister's chief adviser has already resigned. A growing number of governing Labour MPs are openly calling for Starmer himself to step down. Others are waiting - calculating, plotting, watching - ready to strike at what they believe is the right moment. The prime minister may have survived, at least for now but his authority stands eroded. Yes, he still wears the crown, but like Shakespeare's Macbeth, the title hangs loose, the emperor has no clothes and Westminster can no longer pretend otherwise.

Defiance Rings Hollow

Despite the upheaval in the party, Keir Starmer has so far been defiant. Speaking at a community centre (in



Hertfordshire) this week, he declared he would "never walk away from the country that I love." He cast himself as a fighter for those "held back by a system that doesn't work," invoked his working-class roots, and insisted he would lead Labour into the next general election. The rhetoric was familiar. Resolute words delivered against an increasingly fragile political reality. Even as Starmer spoke, senior figures in his own party were unconvinced. Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar publicly called for his resignation, citing "too many mistakes" in Downing Street. Others stayed silent, a silence that spoke just as loudly. For now, Starmer has survived.

Unsurprisingly, opposition figures have seized the moment. Conservative leaders have bluntly declared that Labour has "lost confidence in Keir Starmer" and that his departure is now a question of "when, not if". Coming from a party still recovering from its own implosions, the charge carries an uncomfortable weight. Starmer's deeper problem is not the opposition's attack, but his own party's exhaustion. Labour is restless but unprepared. Angry, but not organised.

That helps explain why an outright rebellion has yet to materialise. There is no obvious successor waiting in the wings. Alternative names are circulating. Angela Rayner, Rachel Reeves, Wes Streeting. But each comes with baggage or insufficient support. The party's predicament mirrors Britain's wider mood: tired of drift, fearful of

chaos, and paralysed by the absence of convincing alternatives.

Watch Out For Shabana Mahmood

It is in this vacuum that Shabana Mahmood's name has entered the conversation. Mahmood, the current home minister (Home Secretary), is a steady, institutional figure rather than a charismatic disruptor. Born in Birmingham with family roots in PoK, she was educated at Oxford and trained as a barrister. Since entering Parliament in 2010, she has built a reputation as a competent administrator, avoiding factional theatrics in favour of delivery and discipline. For Indian audiences, the significance is obvious. If Shabana Mahmood were to become prime minister, it would mark another historic moment after Rishi Sunak - a British Muslim woman of South Asian origin leading the UK. The uncomfortable question will be: how will the India-UK relations pan out under her? Her India policy might almost certainly be driven less by identity and more by British strategic interests. India today is central to the UK's post-Brexit trade ambitions and technology and defence partnerships. Any British prime minister would be constrained - and incentivised - to maintain stable ties with New Delhi.

That said, doesn't perception matter in diplomacy? Shabana Mahmood's background would inevitably draw scrutiny in India, particularly given sensitivities around Kashmir. India, on its part, will have to deal with her.

The Indian government is unlikely to expect bias, but it would watch early signals closely: her engagement with Indian leadership and continuity on treating Kashmir as a bilateral India-Pakistan issue. Will Mahmood keep personal identity separate from state policy?

The Kashmir angle

Also, there is a domestic British dimension that India will watch carefully. Shabana Mahmood's rise would place a politician with deep roots in Britain's Muslim and South Asian communities at the centre of power at a time when Labour is struggling to balance its electoral coalitions. Within the party, voices sympathetic to Kashmir and human rights in India have grown louder in recent years. As prime minister, Mahmood would be under pressure to manage these internal dynamics while preventing them from spilling into foreign policy. How firmly she draws that line would be closely studied in New Delhi.

Survival Sans Authority

For now, Keir Starmer has bought time, but heads sans party loyalty. His authority rests on temporary endorsements and managed optics, not genuine confidence. That he did so is being framed by his allies as a political recovery. In truth, it was a rescue operation. The turning point came when Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy posted a carefully worded message on X, urging respect for Starmer's "massive mandate".

After 'Babri Masjid' High, Humayun Kabir's Waning Influence in West Bengal

It has been over two months since the foundation stone for the Babri Masjid replica was laid at Beldanga in West Bengal's Murshidabad, and the political landscape has changed considerably since then. Humayun Kabir, the suspended Trinamool Congress MLA who went on to found the Janata Unnayan Party (JUP), was seen as a rising political force, but his influence appears to have waned considerably just weeks before the Bengal Assembly elections. On Thursday, the JUP chief led a 22-km 'Babri Yatra' from the Palashi (or Plassey) Monument to Beldanga. Kabir, who had drawn lakhs during the December 6 foundation event, was accompanied by only a few hundred supporters. Only 10,000 people had gathered even during the brick-laying event, which marked the beginning of the construction of the replica of the Babri mosque, on Wednesday. The launch of his party, on December 22, had drawn crowds more interested in the proposed mosque than in his political platform, and the trend appears to have only intensified since then. Ali Rahaman, who joined the 'Babri Yatra', told NDTV, "We have come from Bankura. It is a big day for us. This masjid is a big step for Islam and it is important because the Babri Masjid was demolished. But politics is different from this. We Muslims are supporting this because of its religious significance and not for politics." BJP's Campaign Hurting Kabir? Kabir continues to say he intends to play "kingmaker" in the upcoming Assembly elections and is prepared to back the BJP if it helps keep the Trinamool out of power. Ironically, however, it is the BJP's campaign - with its focus on infiltration, Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee's "appeasement" of Muslims and her "vote-bank" politics - which may be hurting the JUP chief. In the West Bengal Assembly, BJP MLA Agnimitra Pal recently said, "Madam Banerjee is spending a lot of money on madrassas, but only terrorists are being produced in them. No engi-



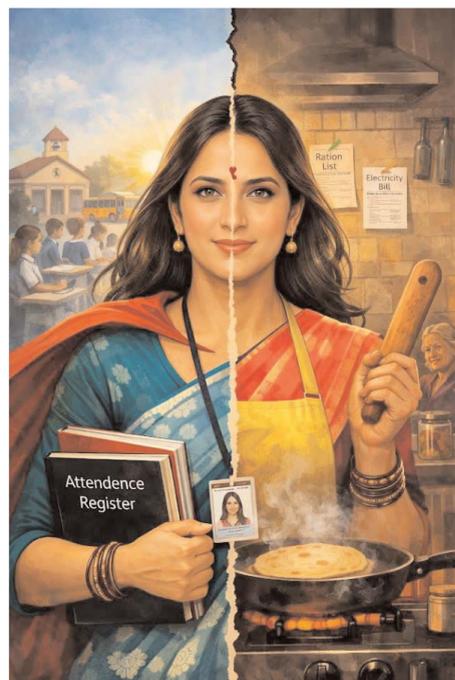
neers or physicians are being produced at all. Thus, by providing funding to madrassas, West Bengal is inciting terrorism." In both Murshidabad and Malda, Muslim-majority districts in which Kabir is hoping his fledgling party will do well, this approach by the BJP has made Muslims uneasy. Mamata Banerjee is also using this politically by attending every Muslim gathering and accusing the BJP of using Humayun Kabir to try to split the Muslim vote. Banerjee's approach is seen to be working, with Muslims now leaning more towards the chief minister and the Trinamool Congress. Kabir may still have some influence in his hometown of Beldanga at most, but even that is no longer a cakewalk. Several Muslim Trinamool leaders in the area are actually happy Kabir is no longer there, because their political significance has increased significantly, and they are putting in more effort to

make the party victorious. Other Challenges Banerjee is now banking on Hariharpur MLA Niamot Sheikh to take on Kabir in Murshidabad, and he seems to be getting along well with all the other Muslim leaders. The JUP chief has also been somewhat undermined by corruption charges against his family members as well as action against them. Days before the construction of the Babri replica was to begin, several properties of Kabir's close relatives were ordered to be seized by the Union Finance Ministry under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Another front on which Kabir is not getting traction is his attempts to tie up with the Indian Secular Front, which has its headquarters in south Bengal. No decision has been taken on seat-sharing and, sources said, the party does not want to see Kabir do well because it believes it is the true representative of Muslims in the state.

TEACHER STANDING BETWEEN STUDENTS AND STOVE

— Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

Some beliefs become so deeply ingrained in society that they are accepted as truth beyond question. "A teacher's job is the most comfortable"—this statement is one such social belief, one that people often repeat without stopping to consider the profound lack of understanding and neglect that lies behind it. The life of a female teacher is the most powerful, yet least heard, counterpoint to this notion. A female teacher's day begins not with the sound of an alarm, but with a list of responsibilities. While the rest of the family is still asleep, she's making tea, packing lunches, waking up the children, and ensuring nothing is left unfinished in the kitchen. For her, morning preparation isn't just about getting herself ready, but about getting the entire house "ready." She then leaves the house with her professional face, but her worries don't stop at the door. Whether the gas is turned off, whether the geyser is switched off—these questions follow her even in the crowded bus or auto-rickshaw. As soon as she arrives at school, she is expected to completely transform into an "ideal teacher." Her domestic fatigue, personal conflicts, and emotional pressure—all of which must be left at the school gate. There, she must smile, remain composed, patiently answer children's questions, and appear composed in every situation. This emotional labor, which is not counted on pay slips or evaluations, is the heaviest and



most invisible part of her job. Ironically, even within schools, claims of equality often prove unfulfilled. Free periods, which should be considered a time for relaxation and self-development, often become a time for stacks of notebooks, record files, and additional responsibilities for female teachers. On the other hand, this same time becomes an opportunity for informal discussions, tea, or relaxation for many male colleagues. This difference is not recorded in any written rules, but is deeply ingrained in practice. When she returns home in the

evening, her second shift begins. She's no longer a teacher, but a cook, a caregiver, a manager, and a problem solver. With a backpack slung over her shoulder and bags of vegetables in her hands, she's expected to show no trace of fatigue. Because if you see fatigue, the taunt is ready - "I told you, you won't be able to do it." The most painful moment comes when she tries to put her burden into words. "If it's so difficult, why don't you quit your job?" This sentence may sound simple, but it conceals a profound devaluation of a

woman's education, ambition, and self-respect. It's assumed that her job is a choice, a hobby she can give up if she wishes. It's forgotten that her degrees—M.A., B.Ed., and the nights and nights she's put in—are not mere decorations, but part of her very being and identity. Equally important is the question: will a woman's higher education still be seen as limited to a "good marriage" and "cultured children"? Are her intellectual abilities and professional contributions only valuable insofar as they do not conflict with family expectations? These questions are not just for teachers, but for society as a whole. In today's economic realities, a female teacher's job is no luxury. Amid rising inflation, EMIS, children's school fees, and health expenses—her salary has become the backbone of her family. She doesn't work to escape her home, but rather to ensure her home runs with dignity and stability. Despite this, her earnings are often belittled as "auxiliary income," as if her contributions are optional. Her struggles are no less on an emotional level. In her attempt to make time for everyone, she compromises most with herself. Her children's projects, her students' notebooks, her family's needs, and societal expectations—in the midst of all this, her own dreams, her fatigue, and her desires take a back seat. The gray hairs reflected in the mirror and the dark circles under her eyes remind her that the pursuit of perfection has distanced her from herself.

OIL REFINERY BLAZE HITS CUBA AS FUEL CRISIS DEEPENS

A fire at an oil refinery in Cuba has been brought under control quickly, as the country faces a deepening fuel crisis. Black smoke clouds could be seen billowing from the Níco López Refinery in the capital, Havana, on Friday. No-one was injured and an investigation into the blaze has been established, Cuba's energy ministry said in a post on X. The fire occurred close to where two oil tankers had been moored in Havana Bay. A fuel shortage in Cuba has been worsened by the US blocking oil shipments from Venezuela, a long-standing ally in the region, to the island. Venezuela was previously believed to have sent it around 35,000 barrels of oil a day before the US military captured former president Nicolás Maduro in a raid on the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, on 3 January. The US also confiscated Venezuelan oil tankers, cutting off key supplies of fuel to Cuba, and pledged new tariffs on countries that sell oil to Cuba. US President Donald Trump has urged Cuban leaders to "make a deal" or face unspecified consequences, after flows of oil and money from Venezuela



were cut off. Electricity cuts have impacted hospital emergency wards, dialysis patients and pumping stations amid the latest supply shortfalls. Cuba also has a shortage of aviation fuel, leading several airlines to suspend services to the Caribbean island nation, while some countries, including the UK, have warned against non-essential travel there. "Authorities have introduced fuel rationing, scaled back public services, and made temporary changes to healthcare, education, transport and tourism operations to conserve severely limited

energy supplies," the UK Foreign Office warned recently. As the oil embargo continues to make life and access to essentials difficult in Cuba, two Mexican ships carrying 800 tonnes of humanitarian aid arrived in Havana Bay on Thursday. United Nations human rights experts have described Washington's restrictions on Cuba's oil imports as an "extreme form of unilateral economic coercion". UN human rights chief Volker Türk said he was "extremely concerned" about the worsening crisis in Cuba. The US and Cuba have had a strained relationship

since the communist Fidel Castro overthrew a US-backed government in 1959. US economic and trade embargoes on Cuba have been in place since 1960. While steps were taken to improve diplomatic relations, particularly under former US President Barack Obama, the Trump administration has reversed many of these moves. Over the past year there has been a big rise in the number of oil tankers and other commercial ships being abandoned around the world by their owners. What is causing the spike? And what is the human impact on the affected merchant

sailors? Ivan (not his real name), spoke to me last month from an oil tanker that lies abandoned outside the territorial waters of China. He is a senior deck officer. "We had a shortage of meat, grain, fish, simple things for survival," said the Russian officer. "It's affected our health and our operational atmosphere. The crew was hungry, the crew was angry, and we tried to survive only day-by-day." The ship, which we are not naming to protect Ivan, is loaded with nearly 750,000 barrels of Russian crude oil with a nominal value of around \$50m (£37m). It had set sail from Russia's Far East for China in early November. It was reported abandoned in December, by global trade union organisation the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), after the crew said they had not been paid for months. The vessel remains in international waters. Such is the level of scrutiny surrounding it that China is understood to be unwilling to allow it into port. However, the ITF has intervened to get Ivan and his colleagues paid up to December, and arranged for food, drinking water and other essentials to be sent to the ship.

HCLTECH AND CISCO LAUNCH AI-POWERED FLUID CONTACT CENTER SOLUTION

- HCLTech, a leading global technology company, today announced the launch of an enhanced version of its Fluid Contact Center solution in collaboration with Cisco. The solution features AI and cloud-enabled capabilities to help enterprises transform customer engagement.
- It combines Cisco's AI-powered and cloud-based Webex Contact Center platform with HCLTech's expertise in Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) transformation to enable enterprises to adopt AI and GenAI-driven features that enhance service responsiveness and operational efficiency.
- The solution includes multilingual virtual agents, conversational IVR, agent-assist tools, analytics, proactive monitoring and industry-specific use cases. Built for flexibility and easy integration.

NOIDA, India, Feb 14, 2026

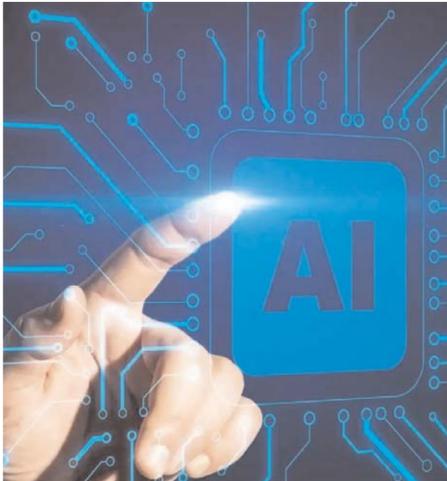
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flexibility and easy integration, Fluid Contact Center supports guided migration to CCaaS, simplifies technology adoption and provides end-to-end experience assurance to help enterprises significantly improve service delivery and enhance customer satisfaction. "As the contact center landscape is evolving rapidly, from reactive support to proactive and now predictive engagement, GenAI and cloud-native architectures are redefining what exceptional customer experience looks like," said Gurpreet Singh Kohli, Executive Vice President and Head of Networks and Contact Center Business Unit at HCLTech. "Our collaboration with Cisco, a trusted partner for more than three decades, is focused on reshaping customer journeys and delivering transformative CX out-

comes together" "At Cisco, we are committed to empowering our partners to deliver innovative solutions that elevate customer experience," said Shannon Leininger, Vice President of Global Partner Sales at Cisco. "By combining Cisco's AI-powered Webex Contact Center with HCLTech's AI and GenAI expertise, we are enabling enterprises to deliver smarter, more personalized engagement and set a new benchmark for modern contact center innovation." HCLTech and Cisco share a strategic relationship spanning over 30 years across multiple Cisco technology architectures, including engineering, IT and customer experience (CX)—supporting clients in more than 60 countries. Learn more about the HCLTech-Cisco alliance: <https://www.hcltech.com/cloud/cisco>.

AI won't kill IT services, will create more work: JP Morgan

New Delhi: Artificial intelligence (AI) is unlikely to replace IT services companies anytime soon, according to a new report by JP Morgan's Asia Pacific Equity Research team. Instead of shrinking the industry, artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to become another tool that helps companies deliver more work within the same budgets. In a note titled "India IT Services: Looking through the AI fog 2 — Discounted for extinction? Div/FCF yields at crisis levels," JP Morgan said fears that AI could wipe out Indian IT firms may be exaggerated. The report argues that AI will create new areas of work rather than reduce opportunities for IT vendors. The brokerage compared AI with earlier technology shifts such as offshore labour, enterprise software and cloud computing. In each of those cycles, new technology did not eliminate IT services but changed the way com-



panies worked. According to the report, AI will play a similar role by helping firms handle more projects without necessarily increasing budgets. JP Morgan said there is growing demand in areas such as modernising old legacy systems, rewriting customised SaaS applica-

tions where required, building AI agents for operations, ensuring trust and reliability in AI systems, and integrating physical AI solutions. All these areas, it noted, will need strong services support. The report also pointed out that enterprise technology teams

are often underfunded compared to business expectations. In such a scenario, AI is likely to be used to increase productivity rather than replace IT service providers completely. The brokerage warned that it is too simplistic to assume AI can automatically create enterprise-grade software and replace the integration and customisation work done by IT services companies. It described IT firms as the "plumbers of the tech world," highlighting their crucial role in making complex systems work smoothly in large organisations. According to the report, recent market weakness in IT stocks reflects investor concerns that rapid advances in AI could slow revenue growth and reduce the total addressable market for Indian IT companies. The report argues that AI will create new areas of work rather than reduce opportunities for IT vendors.

L&T Finance Ltd. scales Gold Loan footprint to over 260 branches

Mumbai, February 14, 2026: The Company's entry into Gold finance business began with 130 branches via an acquisition deal in June 2025. Within 8 months of acquisition, the Company has added over 130 new branches L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), (formerly known as L&T Financial Companies (NBFCs) in the country, today announced a major milestone in its retail strategy by doubling its Gold Loan branch network to over 260 branches nationwide. This rapid expansion was marked by the launch of its 130th new branch earlier this month since the acquisition of the gold loan business in June 2025. By matching its acquired portfolio with over 130 new branches in under a year, LTF has signalled a high-velocity play in India's secured credit landscape. By scaling operations across the North, West, East, and South regions, LTF is pursuing



geo-expansion to capture increasing demand for secured credit. LTF's Gold Loan business has expanded its footprint to 18 States and Union Territories, marking its strategic entry into Assam, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan. By seamlessly integrating physical proximity with digital agility, LTF continues to redefine the gold loan experience through rapid turnaround times and flexible credit solutions. Commenting on

this development, Mr. Raju Dodti, Chief Operating Officer, LTF, said, "We are elated to share that we have successfully doubled the Company's dedicated gold loan branch network in record time since our entry into this business, bringing the total count to over 260 branches nationwide, which will continue to increase given our aggressive branch expansion policy. Our rapid expansion is a testament to our 'Lakshya' strategy—transforming into a top-class, digitally-enabled, customer-centric retail power-

house. By adding nearly 1 branch per day over the past few months, we aren't just increasing our footprint; we are building a robust ecosystem of security and trust. By scaling across the North, West, East, and South, LTF is de-risking its portfolio through geographic diversification while capturing high-growth retail demand. It is also underpinned by operational excellence, featuring state-of-the-art security systems and an experienced workforce specialised to deliver gold-standard customer service."

62 pc Gen Z and Millennials continue to back gold as safest investment bet

Mumbai: Gold remains the most trusted investment for young Indians despite growing access to modern financial products, with 62 per cent of respondents choosing the metal as the first choice for investment, according to a survey. The survey also revealed that 66.7 per cent of respondents stated that gold purchases are largely their personal decisions, and nearly 62 per cent stated that their most recent gold purchase was below 5 grams, indicating the changing nature of how the Gen Z and Millennials look at gold. The Smytten PulseAI survey, conducted with 5,000 consumers aged between 18 and 39, captured how tradition-led buying is steadily giving way to a more individual, logic-driven approach. According to the survey, 61.9 per cent of respondents would choose gold if they had Rs 25,000 to invest today, far ahead of



mutual funds (16.6 per cent), fixed deposits (13 per cent), stocks (6.6 per cent) and crypto (1.9 per cent). During times of economic uncertainty, 65.7 per cent said gold feels like the safest option compared to bank savings, mutual funds or equities, it stated. These findings underline gold's enduring role as the financial fallback across both Gen Z and Millennials. The survey pointed to a clear move away from

large, infrequent purchases toward lighter, more regular buying, as 61.9 per cent of recent purchases were below 5 grams, with 27.5 per cent buying less than 2 grams and 34.4 per cent buying between 2 and 5 grams. For many first-time buyers, entry into gold is no longer limited to weddings. Nearly 24 per cent said their first gold purchase was triggered by their first salary or personal income, while 23.9 per cent cited an investment decision.

Inflation eases in US as prices for used cars fall

Inflation in the US cooled last month as prices for energy and used cars fell. The consumer price index rose by 2.4% over the 12 months to January, the Department of Labor said. That was down from 2.7% in the prior month and marked the slowest pace since May. The retreat could add fuel to arguments by US President Donald Trump and others that the central bank was in a position to cut interest rates without stoking a new flare-up in prices. But some analysts have warned that further progress toward the Federal Reserve's 2% target could stall in the months ahead if companies start to pass on the costs of tariffs more fully to consumers or if labour shortages push up prices for services. For now, analysts said there were limited signs of any impact from tariffs, as prices for commodities, stripping out food and energy, held steady last month. Neil Birrell, chief investment officer at Premier Miton Investors, said the effects of tariffs remained uncertain, and



noted other data quirks that could be affecting January's figures. But he said the January report was likely to "ease the path towards a cut in rates sooner rather than later". "The US economy looks to be in fine fettle with growth strong, inflation stable, the job market looking firmer and a Fed that has room to manoeuvre," he added. The White House, which has been facing political pressure over Trump's handling of the economy, was quick to celebrate the

report, the latest to deliver good news on the state of the American economy. The US economy was "unbelievable", Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday, adding that "we right now have the hottest country anywhere in the world". Job growth last month was also stronger than expected, the Department of Labor reported earlier this week. "President Trump has defeated Joe Biden's inflation crisis," the White House said in a statement, adding

that the economy would "turbocharge even further" if the Federal Reserve made "long-overdue" interest rate cuts. Markets, which had a muted reaction to the inflation report, currently expect the Fed to cut rates in June. Atakan Bakiskan, a US economist at investment bank Berenberg, said recent job and inflation data meant "the year could not have started on a better footing for Fed officials". But he cautioned the bank was not fully in the clear. "We

lean toward the view that, sooner rather than later, labour shortages will exert enough upward pressure on wage growth such that services inflation will not come down enough for inflation to return to Fed's 2% target - a goal the Fed has now missed for 59 months - but hey, who's counting?" Prices for personal services, such as dry cleaning and haircuts, rose 1.6% from December to January, and were up nearly 7% from a year ago. January was also marked by jumps in prices for cigarettes, airfares and music streaming subscriptions. But for many items, price inflation was more moderate. Rents rose 0.2% from December to January, cooling from a 0.4% pace in the previous month. Prices for used cars and trucks dropped 1.8%, while energy prices slipped 1.5% over the month. Price rises also slowed for key grocery staples. Steak prices, for example, dropped more than 2% from December to January, though they are up nearly 13% from a year ago.

UK will deploy fleet of warships and fighter jets to Arctic, Starmer announces

While we've been listening to a panel of Spanish, Finnish and Danish leaders, Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado has also been speaking at the summit. Machado, who has been in hiding for most of the past year, calls in to the Munich Security Conference virtually. One of the first questions put to her is: why did you give US President Donald Trump your Nobel Peace Prize medal? She begins by explaining that her country has been under a "brutal" regime for the last 27 years, forcing a third of the country to flee. The Venezuelan opposition had asked for international support, but the US government under Trump's leadership was the only one to deliver, she says. "We are very grateful because of his actions on 3 January," she says, referencing the day that US forces seized then-president Nicolas Maduro from Caracas. Asked what

she got in return for giving up her Peace Prize medal, she says she is not expecting anything "specific", but says she is determined to work together with the US and others to rebuild the country. Asked when she intends to go back to her country, she says that she plans to go "as soon as possible". Shortly after a panel discussion in which EU leaders called for more pressure on Putin, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen says in a post on social media: "Now is the time to raise the costs of Russia's war higher than ever." She writes that she had a "good meeting" with the US delegation at the summit, adding: "Sanctions work. And they work best when coordinated". Earlier, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the US doesn't want to be the "polite and orderly caretakers of the West's managed decline". The panelists are asked: Is Europe ready to get



its act together? Finland's Alexander Stubb says he doesn't "buy the argument that the continent is doing badly", adding that he's actually very happy. Spain's Pedro Sánchez weighs in, saying he doesn't understand why the US administration sees the EU as a "threat". The US "needs to accept" that we're opening up and will have a more integrated

Europe, he says. Denmark's Mette Frederiksen says the world has been safest since the creation of Article 5. "We have been able to provide freedom, democracy, prosperity and wealth, only because of the wording in Article 5," she says, adding that it shows the allies are standing together. We're turning our attention back to the Munich Security

Conference. Finnish President Stubb tells the panel that Nato membership is needed for Ukraine in the long term. He adds that Ukraine has become "European, not Russian". Spanish PM Pedro Sánchez says "we need to do more within the EU", and calls the Russian invasion a challenge "against the EU as a whole". He adds that reforms are needed to make the EU more efficient. On Greenland, Sánchez adds that the EU needs to send the message that "territorial integrity is something we must all respect". Senator Chris Coons says Nato needs resources, and adds: "The thing we need to deliver is a restored trust". "Nato is working more closely than ever," he adds. Stepping away briefly from the panel discussion on Transatlantic security now, we can bring you a fresh statement from Downing Street: "The prime minister met the President of the

European Commission Ursula von der Leyen in Munich today. "Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to continue work that will bolster our collective defences in the face of growing threats to European security. "They agreed that Europe needs to step up and work towards becoming a more European Nato, while protecting our strong Transatlantic ties. "The prime minister shared his high ambition for the future UK-EU partnership. He set out his desire for further integration across the economy, defence and technology - in the interests of greater security, stronger growth and higher living standards for the British people. "There is no question where the national interest lies and I will always fight for what's best for the United Kingdom, he added. "They committed to take forward further work ahead of the next UK-EU summit.

POLICE ACTIVITY UNDER WAY NEAR NANCY GUTHRIE'S HOME



Police activity connected to the search for Nancy Guthrie, the missing mother of US news anchor Savannah Guthrie, is under way at a residence about two miles from her home. Armed police teams have been seen coming in and out the area, with a sheriff's vehicle blocking the road. It comes after local officials said investigators had found DNA at Guthrie's address which did not belong to her or anyone close to her. The 84-year-old disappeared in the middle of night from her home in Tucson, Arizona, nearly two weeks ago. Authorities believe she was taken against her will. The sheriff's depart-

ment said in a social media post that "law enforcement activity" was ongoing "related to the Guthrie case" without providing further details. Pima County Sheriff Chris Namos told local news station KOLD that investigators were "actively working a lead", the BBC's US news partner CBS reported. More than a dozen law enforcement vehicles, both marked and unmarked, have been seen in the area by BBC News, including Swat teams and forensics. Investigators have also found several gloves, with the closest discovered about two miles from Nancy Guthrie's home.

'Canadians are with you,' says PM at Tumbler Ridge vigil



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has attended a vigil in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, where hundreds gathered to mourn the eight victims killed in a mass shooting there this week. He visited the small town on Friday alongside other federal leaders across the political aisle, as well as Canada's Governor-General Mary Simon, in a show of national unity. "Canadians are with you, we will always be with you," Carney told the crowd in a speech that paid tribute to the victims, which included six young schoolchildren. Residents of the town are still reeling from the attack, with some visibly in tears and comforting one another as Carney and other leaders addressed their grief. Many refused to speak to the media on Friday, noting that the presence of journalists in their otherwise quiet town in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains had been overwhelming. Carney, who has spent much of his time in office on overseas trade missions, cancelled a planned trip to the Munich

Security Conference in light of the shooting. The prime minister invited the other federal leaders to travel to Tumbler Ridge on the same plane as him, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre said. "We all lead political parties. But today? There are no Conservatives. There are no Liberals, New Democrats, Greens or Bloc Québécois," Poilievre said in his own remarks at Friday's vigil. Ahead of the vigil, Carney and other leaders met families of the victims and first responders. They also laid flowers at a memorial near Tumbler Ridge Secondary School, which has grown over the week. Families of the victims and local residents attended, as well as people who drove in from nearby small communities in northern British Columbia, to pay their respects. "I never thought that it would happen here," said Colaina Hall, who drove two hours south from Fort St John to attend the vigil. "In our little northern communities, we're pretty tight-knit, we take care of one another."

Possible effect of Trump's climate policy change

US President Donald Trump has announced the reversal of the so-called endangerment finding, a key Obama-era scientific ruling that underpins much of US environmental legislation. As a result of this, experts are predicting various environmental and economic impacts, though the decision by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expected to be challenged in the courts from environmental groups. Here are some of the potential impacts. Fewer greenhouse gas emissions restrictions The most obvious outcome of the legislative change is that there will be fewer restrictions placed on greenhouse-gas-producing industries - in particular vehicle manu-

facturers. The 2009 endangerment finding was the result of a major report by the EPA, which identified six greenhouse gases, including carbon monoxide and methane, as endangering current and future generations. The EPA produced the report after a 2007 US Supreme Court decision that it was responsible for regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act - with the court ruling it was "without a doubt" that these gases counted as air pollutants. Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere, raising temperatures. The impact of the ruling until now has been notable. Greenhouse gas levels in the US peaked in the late 2000s and have been on a steady decline in the years since.

Can Bangladesh's new leader bring change after election landslide?

Just over two years ago, when Sheikh Hasina won an election widely condemned as rigged in her favour, it was hard to imagine her 15-year grip on power being broken so suddenly, or that a rival party that had been virtually written off would make such a resounding comeback. But in the cycle of Bangladeshi politics, this is one more flip-flop between Hasina's Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which have alternated holding power for decades. Except this is the first time that new BNP leader Tarique Rahman is formally leading the party - and the first time he's contested an election. His mother Khaleda Zia, who died of an illness



late last year, was the party's head for four decades. She took over after his father, Ziaur Rahman, 60, has on occasion been the de-facto chair of an emaciated BNP when his mother was jailed and more recently when she was ill, he's largely seen as an untested leader. "That he doesn't have prior experience probably works for him,

because people are willing to give change a chance," says political scientist Navine Murshid. "They want to think that new, good things are actually possible. So there is a lot of hope." The party says its first priority is to bring democracy back to Bangladesh. "All the democratic institutions [and] financial institutions, which have been destroyed over the last decade, we have to first put those back in order," senior BNP leader Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told the BBC shortly after the election was called. Bangladesh has a long history of such promises being made and broken, with parties becoming increasingly authoritarian once they come to power.

Orban rival accuses opponents of blackmail plot ahead of Hungary election

Less than two months before Hungary's election, opposition leader Peter Magyar has accused his rivals of planning to blackmail him with a secretly recorded sex tape, and says he is filing a complaint with authorities. Magyar, who leads long-time Prime Minister Viktor Orban in the polls, said he suspected there were plans to release a tape of him from August 2024, when he says he engaged in consensual sex with a now ex-girlfriend at a party. He was responding to a photo recently posted online of a bedroom in an apartment dating back to then. Leading figures in Orban's Fidesz party said they knew nothing about the claims. The BBC



has approached Orban's spokesman for comment. Magyar accused Fidesz of trying to blackmail him and made three allegations of unlawful conduct in a statement on Friday. Although no video has been published, he said one from that date would

have been "recorded with secret service equipment and possibly faked". Magyar made no mention in his statement of the ex-girlfriend he had been with at the time of the alleged incident, although he said on Thursday he had accused her

of extortion 15 months ago - an allegation she denied. She told Hungarian media that they were both victims regarding the alleged illicit video and she was ready to take legal action with him. Magyar accused Fidesz leaders of timing their campaign to coincide with the start of his nationwide campaign next week, and of trying to ruin the last week he was spending with his three sons ahead of the April election. Fidesz communications director Tamas Menczer accused Magyar of lying, while Orban's chief of staff Gergely Gulyas told reporters he could not comment on something he knew nothing about.

Casey Wasserman to sell talent agency after Epstein fallout - reports



Prominent American agent Casey Wasserman is reportedly set to sell his talent company after documents linking him to Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell were published in the US. Several high profile clients, including singer Chappell Roan, quit the firm this week after it emerged he flew on Epstein's private plane and exchanged flirtatious emails with Maxwell in 2003. US media reported Wasserman told employees he had "become a distraction" as he announced his intention to sell the major LA-based agency. The 51-year-old, who has also resisted calls to stand down from his role as chair of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, previously said he had no "personal or business relationship" with Epstein. "I'm deeply sorry that my past personal mistakes have caused you so much discomfort," Wasserman wrote in a memo on Friday, the Wall Street Journal reported. He continued: "It's not fair to you, and it's not fair to the clients and partners we represent so vigorously and care so deeply about." Wasserman has said he "deeply regrets" his discus-

sions with Maxwell, who is serving a 20-year prison sentence for facilitating the sexual abuse of teenage girls by Epstein. He said his emails with Maxwell "took place over two decades ago, long before her horrific crimes came to light". Wasserman has not been accused of wrongdoing by any of Epstein's victims, and the appearance of his name in the files does not imply criminal activity of any kind. Earlier this week, LA28 said Wasserman would remain chairman of the 2028 games after organisers reviewed his past interactions with Maxwell. They found his relationship did not go further than the exchanges that had already been documented, and that he had fully cooperated with an investigation. In a statement, the LA28 board said Wasserman and his then-wife flew on a humanitarian mission to Africa on Epstein's plane at the invitation of the Clinton Foundation in 2003. The board said the journey was long before "Wasserman or the public knew of Epstein and Maxwell's deplorable crimes". "This was his single interaction with Epstein.

'WE ARE NOT PROTECTED' SAYS HEBRON MAYOR AS ISRAEL EXPANDS WEST BANK CONTROL

A Palestinian official in the occupied West Bank has described Israel's latest expansion of control there as "the end of the road" for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Asma al-Sharabati, acting mayor of Hebron, said new legal changes recently announced by Israeli cabinet ministers would leave Palestinian authorities shut out of decisions on urban planning and development, even in areas under Palestinian control. Hebron is a regular flashpoint in the West Bank - a divided city, where soldiers guard hundreds of Israeli settlers living alongside Palestinians in an Israeli military garrison. On Sunday, the Israeli security cabinet

passed major changes to the established division of powers in the West Bank, set up three decades ago under the US-backed Oslo Accords, signed by both Israeli and Palestinian leaders. They include expanding Israeli control beyond its military occupation, into the provision of municipal services in Palestinian-run areas, as well as broad powers to take over so-called "heritage sites" across the West Bank - to protect water, environmental and archaeological resources, they say. Israel also says it will take over planning authority at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, one of the holiest sites in Judaism, which sits inside the city's Ibrahim Mosque. "Now they



can simply put their hands on any building and declare it is ancient, and the Palestinian authorities are not part of any decision on urban planning or development of the area," said al-Sharabati. She told us she had not received any formal notification of Israel's plans, and was picking up the details from Israeli news. A

few metres from Hebron's bustling vegetable market, through the grey steel gates of the Israeli checkpoint, is a tense and deserted landscape, where Palestinian shops are shuttered, and streets closed off to protect Israeli settlers. Issa Amro, a Palestinian activist, lives inside that volatile divided area, known

as H2. The long and winding route to his house takes us through the back gardens of Palestinian homes, and along stony pathways, to a hill overlooking the neighbourhood. When we arrive, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish couple are picnicking under the trees outside. A local settler appears from a neighbouring house and follows us a little way down the path. Inside Issa's house, a plaque reads "Free Palestine". Through his window, a vast Israeli flag can be seen fluttering over the streets below. He points out the Palestinian buildings nearby, emptied of residents after years of tension and expanding Israeli control. But Issa says these new changes are different. "They were

expanding a lot without any legal basis," he said. "Now they [will be] the law. They are changing the status from Occupied Territories to a legal dispute. It's part of Israel now without any rights for me. It's annexation of the land without me, as a Palestinian." Israel plans to start providing municipal services to Jewish settlers in Hebron, and open up land ownership across the West Bank to private Israeli citizens. Palestinians are banned from selling property to non-Palestinians under both Jordanian and Palestinian law. Some of those who sold covertly to Israelis in the past now face real risks from Israel's planned publication of classified land registry there.



THE SAMBA-DANCING SKIER MAKING BRAZIL OLYMPIC HISTORY

Lucas Pinheiro Braathen made history for Brazil by clinching his nation's first Winter Olympic medal with gold in the giant slalom. Born in Oslo to a Norwegian father and Brazilian mother, Pinheiro Braathen won World Cup medals for the country of his birth before announcing his shock retirement in 2023 having lost his "joy of living". Exactly a year to the day, having regained his love for skiing, he returned to the sport in the green and yellow of Brazil - wanting to honour his heritage on his mother's side. In snowy conditions in Bormio, the 25-year-old delivered a masterclass on the Stelvio piste to beat Swiss great Marco Odermatt to gold by 0.58 seconds, with Odermatt's team-mate Loic Meillard taking bronze. Pinheiro Braathen's gold also marks the first medal won by any South American country at the Winter Games. "There is nothing about today, in the heat of



the moment, where you are, in any form, in a cognitive state," he said. "I was skiing completely according to my intuition, and my heart today, and that's what enabled me to become an Olympic champion. "It had nothing to do with the medal, it had nothing to do with the history that I had the potential of writing. "I just wanted to ski as the person I am. I know I can be the best in the world, if I do that to the greatest extent." In a race featuring 81 starters from 62 nations - including Madagascar, Eritrea and Kenya - Pinheiro Braathen

had opened up a 0.95sec lead over Odermatt after the first run, with only seven skiers within two seconds of his pace. Odermatt, the defending Olympic champion, put pressure on the Brazilian with a scorching second run, but only a crash would have denied Pinheiro Braathen the top step of the podium as he held his nerve in worsening weather. It means Odermatt, the current and four-time overall World Cup leader across the alpine skiing disciplines, leaves the Milan-Cortina Games without an Olympic gold, despite

being expected to dominate. Who is Pinheiro Braathen? Pinheiro Braathen's parents split when he was young and despite his 'ski bum' father getting custody, he spent his childhood criss-crossing the Atlantic and cultures. Initially, he resented skiing. He felt far more comfortable playing football in Sao Paulo, and wanted to turn professional like his hero Ronaldinho. He told his father his feet were "made for beaches and not hard-shell boots".

But aged eight, he started to change his mind, enticed by the high speeds involved in ski racing. His nomadic lifestyle continued for many years, moving home 21 times before he turned 22. "I'm a person of cultural duality," he told Associated Press. "Two perspectives always presented from birth and so for me I always find that I've never been living a life where I'm only presented to one reality, one culture or one way of living. "It's

always been these polar opposites and so I think that has shaped me to become who I am today and how I want to live my life." That is as an eccentric, flamboyant character. He loves fashion, has walked the runway in Copenhagen and owns an apartment in Milan, Italy's fashion capital. He paints his fingernails and is no stranger to samba dancing in the finish area, wanting to bring more colour to alpine skiing. "People seeing themselves in a sport they were told wasn't for them, that stays with me," he said before the Games began. "And the messages that say, 'I've never watched skiing before, but now I do'. Kids asking where they can try snow. "Norway taught me how to be an athlete, how to brave the cold. Brazil taught me how to be myself." Pinheiro Braathen won 12 medals on the World Cup circuit for Norway but stunned the skiing world when he retired aged just 23.

With Girlfriend Mahieka In Company, Hardik Pandya Spotted Wearing Bathrobe In Hotel Lobby

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) might have a strict no stay-with-family policy during the T20 World Cup 2026 for its players, but Hardik Pandya is managing to find ways of spending time with his girlfriend Maheika Sharma without breaking the rule. In a video that emerged on social media, Hardik could be seen walking inside the team hotel while holding Maheika's hand. But what left the fans stunned was the fact that Hardik was wearing a bathrobe while walking in the hotel lobby. Not long after the video emerged on social media, the news of Hardik getting a new tattoo emerged. On the occasion of Valentine's Day, the all-rounder got inked, while also dedicating the tattoo to his ladylove. The tattoo features two leopards and the initials of Maheika's name, 'M', behind his neck. What Hardik Pandya Said About Maheika Sharma Hardik and Maheika's relationship



was confirmed in 2025. Recently, the cricketer dedicated his T20I performances to his ladylove. The India all-rounder even expressed gratitude towards Maheika for being a big supporting figure in his life. "A lot of credit goes to the loved ones which I had. Special mentions to my partner as well. She's been nothing but the best to me since she has entered my life and a lot of great things have happened since she has arrived," he

said. "I think I've been a very honest and very real person in life as well, which has helped me a lot. I don't really sugarcoat a lot in my life. It's never about the other person, it's never about how others think or how others perceive. It is always about how I feel inside. Now it's time where Hardik Pandya wants to just play the sport and enjoy every second on the ground. Bigger and better will be the motto in my life."

Mohammad Amir Doubles Down On Abhishek Sharma, Insults Him Yet Again

Former Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir sparked a major debate after labeling Indian batter Abhishek Sharma a 'slogger.' Speaking days ahead of the T20 World Cup clash between India and Pakistan, he claimed there are high chances of Abhishek failing as he plays a high-risk brand of cricket. Amid criticism over his remarks, Amir reiterated his stance during a Pakistani news channel, saying that the 25-year-old is yet to test himself in overseas conditions. "He is a slogger, according to me. A player who doesn't even know how to defend a ball, how can I consider him a proper batter? He comes and swings his bat and he



is managing to get that connection of late... if he performs [in South Africa, England, and New Zealand], I will be the first one to acknowledge that he is a proper batter," Amir said on the Geo TV show 'Hasna Mana Hai'. During the same discussion, veteran Pakistan batter Ahmed Shehzad held a different

view. "Everyone has a different opinion. I really like Abhishek. For Amir, getting Abhishek out might be a piece of cake," said Shehzad. Abhishek is currently recovering from a stomach infection, raising doubts over his participation in the clash against Pakistan on February 15. Following a golden duck

against the USA in the campaign opener, Abhishek missed the second clash at New Delhi against Namibia due to the same. Following the toss against Namibia yesterday, Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav had said about Abhishek, "Abhishek is still not fine; he will miss a game or two." According to media reports, his training session in Colombo will be an indicator of his readiness for the high-pressure game. If he bats for a long duration like he normally does during nets, then he is likely to be available for the match. During Abhishek's absence, Sanju Samson opened the batting alongside Ishan Kishan.

Bangladesh Reveals ICC Chairman Jay Shah's Stunning Plan To End Row With BCCI

Sunday's high-stakes clash between India and Pakistan in the ICC T20 World Cup is set to serve as more than just a sporting spectacle in Colombo. The match is positioned to be a critical venue for high-level cricket diplomacy involving all five Asian cricket boards. The International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman Jay Shah is expected to arrive in Colombo, where his presence is likely to facilitate an informal but significant meeting involving the top brass of the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi cricket boards. At the heart of these discussions is Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief Aminul Islam Bulbul. According to a report in PTI, Bulbul con-

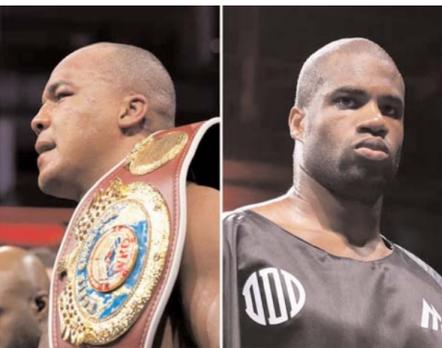


firmed his attendance in Colombo, while also noting that he will be at the venue to watch the India-Pakistan match, where he expected to break the ice with the BCCI after tense exchanges over the past few weeks. Following a period of tense exchanges and administrative friction over the past few weeks, Islam expressed

a desire to "break the ice" with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the International Cricket Council (ICC). The initiative has reportedly been a coordinated effort by the ICC to foster regional harmony. Speaking to the Bangladeshi newspaper Prothom Alo, Islam revealed that the invitation

for this high-profile fixture came directly from the ICC. According to the BCB chief, the governing body is keen on leveraging the gravity of the World Cup to align its most influential members. "The ICC has taken a decision," Islam remarked. "The major stakeholders of the ICC are these five Asian countries, and for the India-Pakistan World Cup match on the 15th, they want representatives of all five Asian countries to be present at the ground together, watch the match together, and talk to one another." This strategic gathering aims to neutralise recent hostilities and ensure that the administrative side of the game remains as robust as the on-field competition.

WARDLEY DEFENDS TITLE IN ALL-BRITISH BOUT WITH DUBOIS



Fabio Wardley will make the first defence of his world heavyweight title against Daniel Dubois in all-British affair on Saturday, 9 May in Manchester. The 31-year-old was crowned WBO champion in November when Oleksandr Usyk relinquished the belt instead of making a mandatory defence against the Ipswich fighter. Dubois has previously held the IBF title and his meeting with Wardley at the Co-Op Live Arena pits two rivals who are known for their devastating punching power. Wardley, who has won 20 of his 21 professional fights, including 19 by way of knockout, said: "I've never been in this game to play around. I'm committed to big fights only. "I'm the champion, this is a voluntary defence, and I chose this. One thing you can't ever say about me is I've shied away from a challenge. "I've always gone looking for the biggest tests, and I'd back myself against anyone in this

division. "This is one of the biggest fights that can be made in the heavyweight division right now and the best part is, it doesn't need the extra stuff, this fight sells itself." Dubois, 28, stopped compatriot Anthony Joshua in September 2024, but his reign as the IBF title holder was ended by Usyk at Wembley in July 2025 - his second defeat at the hands of the Ukrainian. Promoter Frank Warren said the fight was "another piece of British heavyweight history being made". "This is quite simply the most exciting and explosive fight available for Fabio's first defence of his WBO world title, and it tells you everything about him that this is the fight he demanded," he added. "For Daniel to be attempting to become a two-time world champion at just 28 is equally remarkable. This will be his sixth world title fight, and across that run only Oleksandr Usyk has been able to defeat him."



Hull claims fifth European title with victory in Riyadh

Snakes Found In Pakistan's Dugout Ahead Of T20 World Cup Match vs India

Arch-rivals India and Pakistan are set to take on each other in a T20 World Cup 2026 Group A match at R Premadasa Stadium, Colombo on Sunday. A Super Eight spot will be in sight when the two teams face off. Days ahead of the match, a snake appeared in the Pakistan dugout. It happened in the evening on Friday, just when Salman Agha and Co. were about to reach the venue for training. The video of the incident is going viral on social media. Pakistan are likely to go with four specialist bowlers - two spinners and two pacers - in their T20 World Cup blockbuster game against arch-rivals India, claimed a PTI report. A source close to the team told the news agency that head coach Mike Hesson and captain Salman Ali Agha were keen to go into



the match with both specialist spinners Abrar Ahmed and Usman Tariq and also two specialist fast bowlers in Shaheen Shah Afridi and Salman Mirza. The team management is also likely to make a call on dropping one all-rounder from among Shadab Khan, Muhammad Nawaz and Faheem Ashraf. "The only problem for the team management is: if they go in with four specialist bowlers, they have to make a call on who will sit out

among Faheem, Shadab and Nawaz," the source said. He said with Saim Ayub, Sahabzada Farhan, Salman Ali Agha, Babar Azam and Usman Khan occupying the top five positions, the team management has to decide who to play at number six and seven followed by the four bowlers. The source said there is a likelihood of Nawaz sitting out since he is a left-arm spinner and India have left-handed batters in Abhishek Sharma,

among Faheem, Shadab and Nawaz," the source said. He said with Saim Ayub, Sahabzada Farhan, Salman Ali Agha, Babar Azam and Usman Khan occupying the top five positions, the team management has to decide who to play at number six and seven followed by the four bowlers. The source said there is a likelihood of Nawaz sitting out since he is a left-arm spinner and India have left-handed batters in Abhishek Sharma,

'Intense, aggressive, entertaining' - what will new boss Tudor bring to Spurs?



Tottenham have appointed Igor Tudor as their head coach for the remainder of the season. Provided he receives a work permit, the Croat will step in following the departure of Thomas Frank, who was sacked with Spurs 16th in the Premier League on 22 February. "It is an honour to join this club at an important moment," said Tudor. "I understand the responsibility I have been handed and my focus is clear. To bring greater consistency to our performances and compete with conviction in every match. "There is strong quality in this playing squad, and my job is to organise it, energise it and improve our results quickly." Tottenham sporting director Johan Lange said Tudor will bring "clarity, intensity and experience of stepping into challenging moments and producing impact". "Our objective is straightforward - to stabilise performances, maximise the quality within the squad and compete strongly in the Premier League and Champions League," added Lange. Tottenham are into the

knockout stages of the Champions League after finishing fourth in the league stage under Frank. Tudor's first game in charge will be a significant one as Spurs host north London rivals Arsenal in the Premier League on 22 February. That will allow the 47-year-old less than a week to attempt to implement his style of play once the players return to training on Monday - and they could be in for a shock. "His style is intense," George Boxall, a football journalist based in Marseille, where Tudor managed between 2022 and 2023, tells BBC Sport. "The players do a hell of a lot of running. There's lots of intensity, lots of pressing. "He is a really strong personality and he could be a good appointment for Tottenham if they feel they need an electroshock." "If you don't run, you don't play" Tudor has been out of work since being sacked by Juventus in October 2025 and is set for his first spell in England, after previously taking charge of clubs in Italy, France, Turkey, Croatia and Greece.

Seetha Payanam Movie Review

Directed and produced by Arjun Sarja, Seetha Payanam arrives as a Valentine's Day release that blends romance with emotional depth and family sentiment. Rather than sticking to a routine love-story template, the film unfolds as a heartfelt journey exploring gratitude, relationships, and moral responsibility. With a calm narrative style and a strong emotional backbone, the film focuses more on storytelling and values than commercial highs.

STORY

The story follows Seetha (Aishwarya Arjun), whose life changes drastically after a life-threatening incident. Thankful for surviving, she sets out on a meaningful journey to express gratitude to those who helped her. During this trip, she encounters Abhishek (Niranjana Sudhindra), a reserved yet intriguing personality. What begins as a simple acquaintance slowly deepens into an emotional connection.

PERFORMANCES

Aishwarya Arjun delivers a poised and expressive performance in her debut lead role. She convincingly balances innocence with emotional strength. Niranjana Sudhindra brings subtle intensity to his character, making the evolving romance feel organic. Arjun Sarja appears in a significant role that carries emotional weight and reinforces the film's moral theme. Dhruva Sarja makes a dynamic appearance that



THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES REVIEW & RATING: 3/5

adds energy and fan moments. Sathyaraj shines in emotionally charged family sequences. Prakash Raj adds depth to crucial dramatic scenes. Kovai Sarala provides well-timed light-hearted moments that ease the emotional intensity.

TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS
Music by Anup Rubens enhances both romantic and emotional segments effectively. The cinematography captures scenic road visuals and intimate emotional frames beautifully.

Dialogues are simple yet meaningful, focusing on relationships and gratitude. The production design maintains a clean and sincere tone throughout.

WHAT WORKS
Strong emotional foundation
Sincere performances
Family-oriented storytelling
Impactful climax
Balanced blend of romance and drama

WHAT COULD BE BETTER
Slower pacing in the first

half
Tonal shift may surprise viewers expecting a commercial entertainer

FINAL VERDICT
Seetha Payanam is a relationship-driven emotional drama that connects more with family audiences than mass-market viewers. It stands out for its sincerity, heartfelt performances, and meaningful message. Bottom Line: An emotional journey with a thoughtful message and satisfying payoff.

HEY BHAGAVAN" WILL MAKE YOU LAUGH... AND TOUCH YOUR HEART: SUCCESSFUL PRODUCER VAMSI NANDIPATI

The successful duo Bunny Vasu and Vamsi Nandipati, who recently delivered blockbuster films like Little Hearts, Raju Weds Rambhai, and Isha, are now bringing a full-length, out-and-out entertainer titled "Hey Bhagavan" under the banners of Nandipati Entertainments and Bunny Vasu Works. The film stars Suhas, Shivani Nagaram, senior actor Naresh, and anchor Sravanthi in key roles. Directed by Gopi Acharya, the film is produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the Trishul Visionary Studios banner. The movie is set to release on February 20. In this context, producer Vamsi Nandipati interacted with the media on Thursday. Here are the highlights.



dom. Only if the content is strong can we do anything.

Has the production of small films reduced now?

After Little Hearts and Raju Weds Rambhai, small films actually increased. Recently, in just one month, around 300 film titles were registered in the chamber. There is clarity now that OTT business alone is not working. However, films made only for OTT are also increasing.

Will you direct films in the future?

No, I won't direct. My goal is to produce good films as a producer.

Your association with Bunny Vasu?

Bunny Vasu is like a brother to me. We have been traveling together from the beginning. If he approves something, it's as good as my approval. Our opinions are usually the same.

Details about Polimera-3?

Pre-production work for Polimera-3 is going on. We plan to start in April or May. We are planning to release it in South Indian languages, except Hindi. We are also thinking of adding a star in the lead role. We will announce soon.

Your future plans?

I am doing a project with ETV Win. It will be announced on the 27th of this month. I am also doing a few more projects with ETV. Are you releasing Shivaji's film "Sampradayini Suppini Suddapooani" in theatres?

the title "Hey Bhagavan"?

"The father character's name in the film is Bhagavan, so we titled it "Hey Bhagavan." However, due to recent censorship objections, there is a chance the title might change. They say it is a sensitive title. Similar titles existed earlier, but now they are objecting. Discussions are ongoing with the censor board. It may change to "Hey Bhavan."

are releasing them with good buzz. Whatever you touch turns to gold.

What is your strategy as a producer?

More than a producer, "creative strategist" is the right word. I personally oversee everything. If the director feels something needs improvement, I give suggestions. Changes are made only if they agree. I believe if the director is happy, the film will be good. Everything happens with their approval.

How do directors get convinced about your suggested changes?

Creative freedom belongs to the directors. If we explain convincingly, they agree. It may also be because of our past successes. But directors must be given complete free-

What kind of film is "Hey Bhagavan"?

"Hey Bhagavan" is an entertainment film. I have been involved in this project from the story level and I am also presenting it. The core point of the film has fun. There is also a business element in the movie. That element helps a son understand his father. The film has both fun and emotion. It will make everyone laugh out loud and also touch their hearts.

Why did you highlight the business element in the trailer and teaser?

We added it to create curiosity and buzz. However, no one has been able to guess what that business actually is.

What is the justification for

How will this film help Suhas' career?

The commercial success Suhas has been waiting for over the past few years will come with this film. It will definitely become the biggest commercial hit in his career and a milestone film for him. You also have films with Satyadev and Srivishnu. After completing films, you

A SOULFUL MELODY CHAATU CHAATU FROM PURUSHAHA UNVEILED BY STUDENTS AT KASTURBA GANDHI COLLEGE FOR WOMEN



When everyday married life is narrated with humour and an honest slice-of-life tone, it naturally turns into a far more entertaining ride. Purushaha seems to be

walking exactly on that path- rooted, funny, and instantly relatable. The film is already sparking curiosity with its trendy, offbeat promotional style. Backed by Battula Saraswathi and

produced by Battula Koteswara Rao under Kalyan Productions, the film marks the debut of Pavan Kalyan Battula, directed by Veeru Vulavala. The first single Jaali

Padedevadu sung by Oscar winner MM Keeravani was already a chartbuster. Today, the film's second single has been dropped. The students at Kasturba Gandhi Degree & PG College for women unveiled the song. This song captures a college girl revealing the depth of her feelings for her beloved. She admires Pavan silently from a distance, cherishing him in her heart. Yet, she lacks the courage to express her love, choosing instead to hold it within. Lyricist Ananta Sriram beautifully conveys that sweet ache and unspoken affection. Shraavan Bharadwaj's music adds a classic, soulful touch to this love song, with brilliant instrumentation enhancing its emotional pull. Chinmayi Sripaada's vocals elevate the track even further, bringing grace and warmth to every note.

SONAM KAPOOR CHANNELS OLD-WORLD HYDERABAD WITH SATLADA HAAR

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor is embracing her maternity phase with signature style as she prepares to welcome her second child. Known for her bold and thoughtful fashion choices, the mom-to-be continues to redefine maternity wear with looks that blend tradition and modern elegance. In her latest appearance, Sonam opted for an ethnic ensemble that stood out for its cultural depth and refined styling. She chose a layered saree look featuring a soft pink Kalamkari saree by Asha Gautam, paired with a pistachio-and-pink Baluchari saree from The Far East Art Studio. The Baluchari textile drew inspiration from a 19th-century archival piece preserved at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, lending her outfit a strong historical connection. Sonam complimented her look with a multi-layered pearl necklace, statement



gold jhumkas with red accents, bangles and a bold ring. Her hair was neatly tied back with a clean centre part, complemented by a small bindi and softly defined eye makeup. The understated beauty look ensured the focus remained on the sarees and jewellery. The highlight of her ensemble was the traditional Hyderabad Satlada Haar, a seven-stringed necklace

crafted with pearls and precious stones. Originating from the royal households of the Nizams and Nawabs of Hyderabad, the Satlada continues to be a timeless symbol of elegance and heritage, especially popular among brides. Sonam's pearl-and-emerald Satlada added a regal charm to her maternity fashion statement, once again showcasing her ability to merge history with con-

temporary style. Several celebrities have previously embraced this royal necklace. Actress Deepika Padukone wore a Satlada Haar for her mehendi ceremony in 2018, while Nayanthara chose the Hyderabad Nizami Satlada for her wedding in 2022. Former actress Namrata Shirodkar has also been seen flaunting the iconic piece at wedding events.

BAND MELAM WILL DEFINITELY BECOME A BLOCKBUSTER – SUCCESSFUL DIRECTOR BOBBY AT THE GLIMPSE LAUNCH EVENT

Presented by Mango Mass Media and produced by Kona Venkat under the Kona Film Corporation banner, Band Melam is directed by Satish Javvaji and stars Harsh Roshan and Sridevi in lead roles. The film is scheduled for release on March 13. The movie's glimpse was released on the occasion of Valentine's Day by Trivikram on social media. Director Bobby and writer BVS Ravi attended the press meet as chief guests. Director Bobby said, "I insisted that the glimpse of Band Melam be released on Valentine's Day. After watching it, I found Roshan's number and called him immediately. He will become a big star in the future. He

performed very naturally and confidently. Sukumar garu likes my love stories a lot and often asks whether I will direct my story or if he should. If I ever make a love story, I would definitely make it with Roshan. Sridevi has a strong social media following and has performed wonderfully in this film. I wish her great success ahead. Satish Javvaji looks silent, but his writing carries sharp satire. This film will surely become a blockbuster. I feel we might even start seeing men wearing 'thaali' after this film. His writing and conviction clearly reflect in the film. I hope to work with Vijay Bulganin soon. Satish Muthyala's visuals are impressive. When Kona garu earns, it

feels like we all earn. Just like he was confident during Ninnu Kori, he is equally confident now. This film will make a big impact." Producer Kona Venkat said, "In 2017, Shiva Nirvana came to my office, introduced by Shiva Turlapati, and narrated a story I loved immediately. That film later became Ninnu Kori. I felt the same excitement when Satish Javvaji narrated Band Melam. A single dialogue from this film convinced me to produce it. I am not a regular producer, I only produce films when I truly like the story. When I heard this story, I could only imagine Roshan and Sridevi in the lead roles, and I decided to make the film only if they agreed. Everyone,



including Vijay Bulganin and Satish Muthyala, joined the project. Writer-editor Shiva Mupparaju worked like an unseen pillar. We

planned to release a song but decided to release the glimpse at the last minute. Trivikram immediately supported us when we asked

him. Bobby and BVS Ravi are very important in my life. Band Melam will remain a memorable film forever. This project began

because of my cousin Shivaraju Rajasekhara. I hope the audience will love this film." BVS Ravi said, "I already watched Band Melam. I had heard the story earlier, but I was surprised after watching the film. Satish has directed it beautifully and will become a very good director. Everyone will talk about Satish Muthyala's visuals. Vijay Bulganin will impress once again with his music. Harsh Roshan and Sridevi performed wonderfully. The film releases on March 13, please watch and make it a success." Roshan said, "I thank the Wall Poster team, Nani Anna, and the audience for supporting me with Court. Everyone has heard the name Band Melam, and

with this film it will stay in people's hearts forever. Thanks to Kona Venkat garu for supporting us, and to Bobby garu, BVS Ravi garu, and Trivikram garu for launching the glimpse. Special thanks to director Satish for this opportunity. Our film releases on March 13, please support it." Sridevi said, "Band Melam is very special to me. This is the first story I heard after Court. People still remember me as Jabili, and with this film they will remember me as Rajamma. My character will make the audience laugh and cry. Thanks to Satish garu for giving me this role, to Kona garu for producing the film, and to Vijay Bulganin for the music I love so much.