

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



15-02-2026
Total pilgrims: 80,502
Tonsures: 24,608
Hundi kanukal: 3.74 CR
Waiting Compartments: 18

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 8-10 Hrs

TO BOOK YOUR ADS CALL

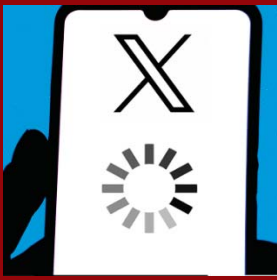
99484 80279, 73307 78889

Gold, silver fall as dollar strengthens

Gold and silver prices declined on Monday amid a stronger US dollar following in-line US inflation data. On MCX, gold April futures fell 0.56% to Rs 1,55,023 per 10 grams, while silver March futures dropped nearly 2% to Rs 2,39,501 per kg. US CPI rose 0.2% in January, with annual inflation easing to 2.4%, giving room for the US Fed to hold rates steady. Analysts said precious metals remain supported by geopolitical tensions and central bank buying, while investors await FOMC minutes and key US economic data for further direction.

GOLD RATE

X down globally: Users report issues logging in, accessing app



OUTAGE

CURRAN, OVERTON OVERPOWER BEN, GRANT'S CARNAGE AS ENGLAND BEAT ITALY TO QUALIFY FOR SUPER 8



T20 WORLD CUP

INBRIFS

28 schools in Ahmedabad and Vadodara get bomb threat

AHMEDABAD (TSIT): At least 28 schools in Ahmedabad and Vadodara in Gujarat received bomb threat emails on Monday, following which the campuses were evacuated, officials said. Search operations were immediately undertaken, they said, adding that nothing suspicious has been found so far. More than 15 schools in Ahmedabad received bomb threat emails, District Education Officer Rohit Chaudhary said. "All the schools were instructed to immediately inform the nearby police stations and follow security protocol," he told reporters. Vadodara Police Commissioner Narasimha Komar said as many as 13 schools in different localities of the city received bomb threat emails. The managements of these schools informed the police control room. Subsequently, the local police, Special Operations Group (SOG), Crime Branch and Bomb Detection and Disposal Squads (BDDS) personnel carried out a sanitisation exercise and evacuation of students and teachers, he said. "Sanitisation exercise of nine schools has been completed, and the process is underway for the remaining schools."

Seven killed in chemical factory fire

JAIPUR: Seven people were burnt alive in an illegal firecracker-manufacturing factory in the Bhiwadi town of Rajasthan's Khairthal-Tijara district on Monday, officials said. "Seven persons have died in the incident. It was a garment factory but firecrackers were being manufactured inside it illegally," Sumitra Pareek, Additional District Magistrate, said. She said that two people were trapped in the factory. The incident occurred in the Khushkhhera-Karoli industrial area in Bhiwadi. "The premises was leased out in the name of a garment factory but as per the preliminary report, firecrackers were being manufactured illegally," she said.

Congress dominates Telangana mayoral polls,

BRS fails to open account

District Collectors postponed the polling of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor posts to 11 Telangana municipalities.

HYDERABAD (TSIT): The State Election Commission, on Monday, February 16, announced the list of candidates declared as Mayors and Deputy Mayors for its seven municipal corporations in Telangana. Five Mayoral posts went to Congress, while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Communist Party of India (CPI) got one each.



CONGRESS WINS TWO HUNG MUNICIPALITIES Through crucial ex officio votes, the ruling Congress won Wardhannapet and Kesamudram, earlier declared hung municipalities in the recently announced poll results. In Wardhannapet, the Congress had bagged five seats, while six were won by the BRS. Independent candidate, Nethavath Shibharani-Rajender, won the remaining seat but declared support for the ruling party, resulting in a tie. On Monday, MLA KR Nagaraj cast his ex officio vote in favour of the Congress. Similarly, in the Kesamudram municipality, the Congress and the BRS won eight seats of the total 16. Mahabubabad MP P Balram Naik cast his ex officio vote in favour of the Grand Old Party.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman posts to 11 Telangana municipalities on Monday. These municipalities are Yellandu, Sultanabad, Ibrahimpatnam, Kagaznagar, Ketanapally, Khanapur, Zaheerabad, Inderesham, Dornakal, Jangaon and Thorur. The elections are likely to be held on Tuesday, February 17, an official from the Election Commission said, even as he did not mention the reason for the delay.

Modi hails Global Participation at India AI Impact Summit, Highlights Youth Potential

New Delhi (TSIT) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed pride over the growing international participation in the India AI Impact Summit, saying the event reflects both the rising stature of India in technology and the immense potential of its youth. The Prime Minister is scheduled to inaugurate the India AI Impact Expo 2026 today.



"The occasion is a testament to the fact that our nation is progressing rapidly in the fields of science and technology and is making a significant contribution to global development," Modi wrote.

ratnaa vasundharaa." He explained its meaning, noting that while excellence should be celebrated, it should not lead to astonishment, as the world is filled with extraordinary talent and virtues. The India AI Impact Summit has drawn participation from policymakers, technology leaders, researchers and entrepreneurs from across the globe. The event focuses on the responsible development and deployment of artificial intelligence, innovation ecosystems, and India's role in shaping global AI governance. India has been actively promoting digital transformation through flagship initiatives such as Digital India, expanding its startup ecosystem, and investing in emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, semiconductors and quantum computing. With a large pool of young engineers, researchers and startup founders, India is positioning itself as a key player in the global AI landscape.

BJP attacks Rahul Gandhi, calls him 'failed dynast'

NEW DELHI: (Feb 16) The BJP on Monday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, alleging that he is a "failed dynast" as neither his own party leaders nor allies have any confidence in him. This came after Bhupen Borah, former president of the Assam Congress, sent his resignation letter to party president Mallikarjun Kharge, claiming he was being "ignored" by the party leadership and not being accorded his due in the state unit. Reacting to the development, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla wrote on X, "No Confidence in Rahul Gandhi."

AI Impact Summit 2026 begins in India, global tech leaders converge in New Delhi

New Delhi (TSIT): The AI Impact Summit 2026 begins on Monday, with leading technology figures and policymakers from across the world converging in India to deliberate on the future of artificial intelligence, its governance, and its transformative impact on economies and societies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the India AI Impact Expo at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, marking the formal opening of the five-day summit that runs from February 16 to 20. The event has drawn participation from more than 100 countries, positioning India at the centre of global AI discourse. Prominent technology leaders such as Sundar Pichai and Sam Altman are set to headline key discussions, joined by senior government officials and industry executives from across the world. The summit will host a wide range of sessions, exhibitions and live demonstrations organised around the themes of People, Planet and Progress.

Bill Gates visits Real Time Governance Society Centre at Andhra Secretariat



Amaravati (TSIT): Gates Foundation Chairman Bill Gates on Monday visited Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) Centre at Andhra Pradesh Secretariat here to view utilisation of technology in governance. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu explained to him how faster civic services are being provided and the results being achieved through Real Time Governance. Bill Gates enquired about the functioning and progress of Data Lake, Aware 2.0, WhatsApp Governance, Sanjeevani project and Amaravati projects. He also witnessed presentations on the display walls in the RTGS during which CM Naidu apprised him of the fact that all government wings are interconnected with Data Lake. According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Bill Gates appreciated the efforts being made to simplify citizen services through Data Lake and WhatsApp governance. The Chief Minister also informed him that Real Time information is being gathered through Aware 2.0 following which decisions are being taken expeditiously. Bill Gates examined the way the state government is gathering public opinion on the implementation of various schemes and policies. The Chief Minister told Gates that the growth of the GSDP is being assessed regularly through Key Performance Indicators.

India-Bangladesh ties will be reset, but incrementally

New Delhi (TSIT) Ahead of the swearing-in ceremony of BNP leader Tarique Rahman as Bangladesh's prime minister, Mandarins in India's South Bloc are working overtime on the country's outreach to its eastern neighbour. For Indian policymakers, the real challenge in resetting ties with Dhaka is not one of intent but of calibration, understanding what is politically feasible in Bangladesh's new landscape, and what is not. "We should not think of an immediate reset in ties. It will be a gradual process ... However with foreign Secretary travelling to Dhaka for the swearing in ceremony along with Speaker Om Birla, informal talks are likely on the sidelines," said top officials of the Ministry of



External Affairs. The last one-and-a-half years are seen by South Bloc as "wasted time" on the Bangladesh front as the interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus was seen as jeopardising every attempt made at normalising relations. Pinak Chakravarty, former Secretary-Economic Relations in the Ministry of External

Affairs, told UNI, "There will be an incremental improvement in relations. The new PM has to settle in before decisions can be taken." Both countries may tackle issues such as "trade, rail connectivity and visas in the first instance, as these produce visible, tangible people-to-people benefits," added Riva Ganguly Das, former

Secretary-East in the MEA. Tarique Rahman has signalled a clear desire to stabilise relations with India. Throughout his campaign, he refrained from the familiar anti-India rhetoric that has periodically animated Bangladeshi politics. "Rahman has displayed considerable political maturity both during the campaign and in pronouncements afterwards," agreed Shantanu Mukharji, former National Security Advisor to Mauritius. The BNP leader's advisers have been unusually forthcoming, projecting goodwill and even extending an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The tone, at least rhetorically, has been constructive. Yet rhetoric and governance are two different arenas.

PM Modi 'surrendered' before Trump, US trade deal will devastate farmers' livelihood: Cong

NEW DELHI (TSIT) The Congress on Monday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "surrendered" before US President Donald Trump in agreeing to the India-US interim trade deal, which, it claimed, will "devastate" the livelihoods of crores of farmers across states.



Slamming the Centre, Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala said trade agreements should not become a path to slavery by "sacrificing a country's sovereignty". "Trade agreements are the path to economic progress. The very foundation of trade agreements is mutual public interest on equal terms. Trade agreements should not be a path to slavery by sacrificing a coun-

try's sovereignty. National and public interests cannot be sacrificed under the guise of trade agreements," Surjewala said at a press conference. Tagging Surjewala's statement at the presser, Congress general secretary in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the former explained how this trade deal will "devastate" the livelihoods of millions of farmers across states. "The prime minister has completely surrendered before President Trump - just as he did on May 10, 2025, when he abruptly and unexpectedly halted Operation Sindoor," Ramesh said on X. Through the US-India trade agreement, the Modi government has sacrificed the interests of India's farmers and farms, Surjewala alleged at the presser. "India's energy security was openly compromised. Serious questions have been raised about India's digital autonomy and data privacy. Instead of standing firmly in defence of India's interests, a helpless government compromised India's sovereignty and self-reliance," he claimed.

Amit Shah slams Congress over trade deal claims, says farmers' interests fully protected

Gandhinagar, Feb 15: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday accused the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi of spreading "lies" and misleading farmers over India's trade agreements with the US, UK and the European Union, asserting that the Centre has fully safeguarded the agriculture and dairy sectors.

Addressing a gathering in Gandhinagar after launching India's first Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Public Distribution System, Shah termed the



Opposition's allegations that trade pacts would harm Indian farmers as "laughable".
"I feel like laughing when Congress's Shahzada

Rahul Gandhi stands in Parliament and talks about protecting farmers. The Congress has a long history of misleading the country and now they are spreading lies about trade deals," Shah said.

He also challenged Gandhi to a public debate on the issue.

"Rahul Gandhi ji, decide any platform. Even the president of the BJP Yuva Morcha can come and debate with you on who has harmed farmers and who has worked for their welfare," he added. Shah asserted that

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ensured comprehensive protection for farmers, cattle-rearers and fishermen in every trade agreement signed with the European Union, England and the United States.

"I want to assure the farmers, cattle-rearers and fishermen of this country that in every trade deal signed with the European Union, England and America, Narendra Modi has safeguarded your interests completely. There is no need to worry," he said.

Yogi Adityanath hails UP's transformation, highlights law, development, and investment gains

Lucknow, Feb 16: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday lauded the state's transformation since 2017, saying it has shed its former image of crime and unrest to emerge as a model of "technology, trust, and transformation." Addressing the Legislative Council during the debate on the Governor's Address, CM Yogi criticized the opposition for what he described as disrespect toward constitutional traditions during the speech, asserting that such conduct undermines democratic institutions.

Highlighting the shift in law and order, he said curfews and riots are now a thing of the past, replaced by governance rooted in the "rule of law." "Uttar Pradesh has moved from being a 'fear zone' to a 'faith zone,'" he declared, citing the participation of over 40 lakh devotees in the Triveni bath during Mahashivratri as evidence of improved security. He also pointed to the deployment of more than 44,000 women in the police force, alongside modern training centers and barracks, as milestones in strengthening the state's law enforcement infrastructure.

On the economic front, CM Yogi highlighted that the state, previously branded a "BIMARU" region, now contributes 9.5% to



India's GDP, with per capita income having tripled. He noted that no new taxes have been imposed in the past eight-and-a-half years, tax evasion has been curtailed, and the state has become revenue-surplus.

Industrial growth has also accelerated, with factories rising from 14,000 in 2017 to over 31,000 today. The One District One Product (ODOP) scheme has linked local producers to markets, while 96 lakh MSME units have created employment opportunities for youth. CM Yogi stressed that governments ignoring artisans face the same fate as previous parties like the Samajwadi Party. Farmers, he said, now benefit from reduced input costs, higher output, and direct benefit transfers.

Over Rs 95,000 crore has been disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, with sugarcane farmers receiving Rs 3.06 lakh crore. Additionally, 7,727 cow shelters are operational across the state.

In healthcare, the Chief Minister highlighted the One District, One Medical College initiative and an expanded medical infrastructure. The state has also strengthened forensic capabilities, with A-grade labs increasing from two to twelve, and six more under construction. Reaffirming his government's nationalist stance, CM Yogi emphasized mandatory respect for the national anthem and national song, warning that opposition to Vande Mataram will not be tolerated.

Assam Rifles, DRI seize drugs worth Rs 45 crore in Northeast crackdown

Agartala, Feb 16: In a significant blow to narcotics trafficking in the Northeast, the Assam Rifles, working alongside the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), confiscated methamphetamine tablets worth more than Rs 45 crore in Tripura and arrested one suspected trafficker, officials confirmed on Monday.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs, joint teams intercepted a truck at Mungiaikami in Khowai district. A meticulous search of the vehicle led to the discovery of nearly 4.5 lakh methamphetamine tablets, commonly known as Yaba or "party pills." The seized narcotics, estimated to be valued at ₹45 crore in the illicit market, are banned in India due to their highly addictive nature. These tablets typically contain a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine and are often referred



to as the "crazy drug." Authorities apprehended

Hafijul Hoque (42), a resident of Udalguri district in Assam, in connection with the seizure. Both the recovered contraband and the accused have been handed over to the DRI for further investigation and legal action.

Officials described the operation as part of an ongoing effort by the Assam Rifles and DRI to curb the growing threat of drug trafficking in the region and to prevent the spread of narcotics across vulnerable border states.

Separate Operation in Manipur

In a parallel action based on intelligence reports about cigarette smuggling, the Assam Rifles set up a mobile vehicle check post in Noney district of Manipur on Sunday. During the operation, a truck travelling from Churachandpur to Kangpokpi was stopped and

searched thoroughly.

The inspection resulted in the seizure of 88 cartons of foreign-made cigarettes valued at approximately Rs 2.9 crore. The consignment, along with the vehicle, has been handed over to the DRI for further legal proceedings. Two individuals were detained in connection with the case.

Preliminary investigations suggest that both the methamphetamine tablets and the smuggled cigarettes may have originated from Myanmar. Myanmar, which shares a 1,643-km unfenced border with four northeastern states — Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram — remains a critical transit route for illicit drugs, including heroin and methamphetamine, entering India. Authorities continue to strengthen surveillance and enforcement measures along the porous border to counter cross-border smuggling networks.

Kerala launches massive AI literacy drive

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), the technical arm of the state General Education Department, has launched a massive artificial intelligence literacy drive targeting the adult population. Titled 'Sarvam AI Mayam' (AI is Everywhere), the initiative is considered as the largest such artificial intelligence awareness programme to be implemented in the country, official sources said here on Sunday. Under the initiative, students of the Little KITEs IT clubs will provide AI training to 6 lakh parents through the state's public schools, according to an official statement. The programme, which is scheduled to run until June 30, 2026, is being implemented across 2,200 Little KITEs units, with each unit training an average of 300 parents, it said.

Sabarimala women entry issue: Govt will take appropriate stand through discussions, says minister

CLARIFYING THE GOVERNMENT'S STAND, STATE LAW MINISTER P RAJEEV SAID THE SUPREME COURT HAD ALREADY MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The ruling Left in Kerala on Monday said the Sabarimala women entry issue is a matter involving several constitutional complications, and so the government would take an appropriate stand through discussions. Clarifying the government's stand, State Law Minister P Rajeev said the Supreme Court had already made it clear that it would take the review petitions only after addressing seven constitutional questions.

So, the state government has enough time to inform its stand, he said, adding that it is not the time to say a "yes or no" in the matter.

He, however, said the government is here to protect the faith of believers and it would stand by them cutting across belief.

"This is not an issue that can be solved in one minute. Several constitutional complications are involved in it," Rajeev said. He said the state government, in its earlier affidavit, had suggested constituting a com-



mission of scholars having deep knowledge of Hindu beliefs to study the women's entry issue, but the apex court didn't consider it.

The stand of the state government is clear with that suggestion, he added. "We will present a good stand before the supreme court after examining the constitutional aspects. We have ample time," he said, adding that a stand would be taken after examining all aspects in detail.

The minister's remarks came soon

after the Supreme Court said that a nine-judge bench will commence a final hearing on a batch of petitions relating to discrimination against women in religions and at religious places, including Kerala's Sabarimala Temple. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said the bench, which will be constituted by the CJI, will commence the crucial hearing on the petitions on April 7.

Let institutions not be defunct: SC asks Centre to come up with scheme on tribunal reforms

The bench expressed concern over the vacancy crisis and the lack of a streamlined legislative framework that often leaves tribunals in a state of limbo.

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday took note of issues plaguing the functioning of quasi-judicial bodies and asked the Centre to submit a comprehensive and uniform proposal for the management of all tribunals across the country within four weeks. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi was hearing the long-standing matter of Madras Bar Association, a case centred on the independence and structural integrity of tribunals.

The bench expressed concern over the vacancy crisis and the lack of a streamlined legislative framework that often leaves tribunals in a state



of limbo. The CJI told Attorney General R Venkataramani that the government must act in accordance with previous judicial mandates. "Let the institutions not be defunct," the CJI said.

"Bring a uniform proposal before us covering all tribunals within four weeks. Give us a holistic scheme for all tribunals. Whether you want to bring a new legislation, a new

amendment etc," the CJI said. The bench asked the Centre to bring a "uniform proposal" that covers all tribunals, whether they are established under the Constitution or specific statutes.

It asked the Centre to clarify its roadmap, including whether it intends to introduce new legislation or comprehensive amendments to stabilise the functioning of these bodies. The attorney general suggested a pragmatic approach to prevent immediate vacancies.

He proposed that sitting chairmen be allowed to continue their duties until they reach the age of superannuation or until the fresh selection process is completed, whichever is earlier.

Odisha caste row ends; children return to anganwadi centre, consume food cooked by Dalit helper

KENDRAPARA: A three-month-long caste row at an anganwadi centre in a village in Odisha's Kendrapara district ended on Monday as upper caste children returned to the facility and consumed food cooked by a Dalit woman helper. Of the 20 children on the roll, 16 came to the anganwadi centre in Nuagaon village under Ghalimala gram panchayat with their parents and accepted the food cooked by the helper, with the absentees reporting ill.

The anganwadi centre remained shut since November 21 last year, following the appointment of Sharmistha Sethy, a Dalit woman, as a helper, with several upper caste families refusing to send their wards to the facility or



even accept nutritious food items supplied by the government for pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The caste row triggered nationwide outrage, and the matter was even raised in Parliament, with Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, voic-

ing concern over caste discrimination in the workplace. On Monday, Kendrapara Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) Dipali Mishra and Rajnagar MLA Dhruba Charan Sahoo were present at the anganwadi centre to welcome the children.

"I served ragi ladoos to the children. Later, I

cooked rice and 'dalma' (vegetable curry) and served the children. Seeing them eat the meals made me overjoyed. They also played with toys, bringing back life to the centre, which was left deserted for around three months," Sethy said.

"I hope caste discrimination will not lurk its ugly head in the village anymore," she added.

CDPO Mishra said the children, flanked by their guardians, had joyous moments at the centre.

"The centre functioned sans the children for almost three months due to some villagers' disagreement over the appointment of Sharmistha Sethy as the anganwadi centre helper. Now, the vibrancy is back," Mishra said.

UPI pips cash as India's top payment mode with 57 per cent share of total transactions

New Delhi, Feb 16 : UPI has emerged as the most preferred mode of payment, accounting for 57 per cent of total payment transactions in India, surpassing cash transactions at 38 per cent, primarily due to ease of use and instant fund transfer capability, according to an independent study commissioned by the Finance Ministry.

Digital payments now dominate everyday transaction behaviour, with 65 per cent of UPI users reporting multiple digital transactions per day. Preference for UPI is particularly pronounced among younger users in the 18-25 age group, where adoption stands at 66 per cent, indicating a strong behavioural shift toward



digital-first financial habits, the study stated.

It finds that 90 per cent of users reported increased confidence in digital payments after using UPI and RuPay cards, accompanied by a marked decline in cash usage and ATM withdrawals. Cashback incentives were identified as a key motivation for adoption by 52 per cent of

users, while 74 per cent cited speed of payment as the primary advantage.

Among merchants, digital acceptance has reached near universality, with 94 per cent of small merchants reporting adoption of UPI. About 72 per cent expressed satisfaction with digital payments, citing faster transactions, improved record-keeping,

and operational convenience, while 57 per cent reported an increase in sales following digital adoption.

The report highlights that incentives have played a critical role in reducing cost barriers for merchants and acquiring banks, accelerating merchant onboarding, and building trust in digital payment systems across income groups and geographies. Coordinated efforts of the government, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), banks, fintech players, and payment service providers have collectively strengthened India's digital payments ecosystem and advanced the vision of a less-cash, digitally empowered economy.



Chief Minister received Part-I report of the High-Level Committee on Union-State Relations, chaired by former Supreme Court Judge Thiru. Kurian Joseph, at the Secretariat - English Version...

Tamil Nadu signs MoUs for Rs 5900 cr investment in semiconductor, aerospace sectors

This project is slated to create 1,400 jobs, with more than 40 per cent of the roles designated for high-skilled technical personnel, stated the press release.

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government on Monday signed two separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Japanese electronics major MinebeaMitsumi and Bengaluru-based Aequs Group, involving a combined investment of Rs 5,980 crore.

The agreements, signed in the presence of Chief Minister M K Stalin at the Secretariat, here, are expected to generate employment for 8,400 people across the semiconductor and aerospace sectors, an official release said.

NMB Minebea India Private Limited, a subsid-



ary of Japan's MinebeaMitsumi, has committed an investment of Rs 1,980 crore to establish a manufacturing and research and development centre in Tiruvallur district. The facility, to be located at the Mahindra Origins Industrial Park, will focus on a complete

manufacturing ecosystem for high-value semiconductors, including Insulated-Gate Bipolar Transistors (IGBT) and Integrated Circuits (IC), as well as motors and sensors. This project is slated to create 1,400 jobs, with more than 40 per cent of the roles designated for

high-skilled technical personnel, stated the press release.

In another significant development, the Aequs Group has pledged Rs 4,000 crore to bolster the state's aerospace manufacturing capabilities at the SIPCOT-Shoolagiri Industrial Park in Krishnagiri district. The group proposes to establish a specialised aerospace and defense manufacturing cluster for the production of aircraft engines, gearbox components, and precision engineering parts. This initiative is expected to provide employment to 7,000 individuals.

The release stated that these investments align with the Tamil Nadu government's ongoing efforts to maintain its position as a leading industrial and economic hub in the country while creating job opportunities for the youth and women.

The event was attended by Industries Minister T R B Rajaa, Chief Secretary N Muruganandam, and senior executives from both companies, including MinebeaMitsumi Director and President Katsuhiko Yoshida and Aequs Co-founder and Managing Director Rajeev Kaul.

ECI allots 'Whistle' symbol to TVK for Puducherry Assembly polls



CHENNAI: The Election Commission of India has allotted the 'Whistle' symbol to actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK),

for the forthcoming Puducherry Assembly elections, extending a similar concession granted earlier in Tamil Nadu.

In a communication dated February 12, the Commission informed Chief Electoral Officers concerned that the party's request for allotment of a common symbol under Paragraph 10B of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, had been accepted.

According to the order, the 'Whistle' symbol has been allotted to TVK for all Assembly constituencies in the Union Territory of Puducherry for the upcoming general elections. The concession enables candidates set up by registered unrecognised parties to contest under a common symbol during the election.

Express train to continue origination, termination from Tambaram

CHENNAI: Due to the ongoing redevelopment works at Chennai Egmore Railway Station, two express trains will continue to originate/terminate from Tambaram from February 20 to April 6, said a Southern Railway press release. Train No 22662 Rameswaram - Chennai Egmore Sethu Express will continue to short terminate at Tambaram from February 19 to April 5. The arrival time at Tambaram is 6.35 am. Train No 22661 Chennai Egmore - Rameswaram Sethu Express will continue to originate from Tambaram from February 20 to April 6. The departure time from Tambaram is 6.25 pm.

India aims for 60% childhood cancer survival by 2030, says health official

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Union government has set an ambitious target to achieve a 60 per cent survival rate for childhood cancer by 2030, Deputy Director General of Health Services L. Swasticharan said on Sunday. Speaking at an event marking International Childhood Cancer Day, observed globally on February 15, he emphasised the need to save every child and build a "Viksit Bharat 2047."

Swasticharan assured support for innovative funding models to improve access to treatment and financial assistance for children with cancer and their families. While India currently lacks a dedicated National Policy on childhood cancer, he said the existing health framework is flexible enough to incorporate initiatives aimed at universal health coverage for affected children. He also lauded nine states for signing



THE UNION GOVERNMENT HAS SET AN AMBITIOUS TARGET TO ACHIEVE A 60 PER CENT SURVIVAL RATE FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER BY 2030, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES L. SWASTICHARAN SAID ON SUNDAY.

MoUs prioritising childhood cancer and urged governments to work closely with stakeholders to leave no child behind.

The event, organised by CanKids KidsCan, highlighted progress in access to care, which has doubled from 27 per cent in 2019-20 to over 54 per cent in 2025. Experts stressed the next steps: achieving 100 per cent access, full financial protec-

tion, and the 60 per cent survival goal in line with national health priorities and the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer.

Professor Sameer Bakshi of AIIMS underlined the importance of capturing more childhood cancer cases to raise the national survival rate from 50 per cent to 60 per cent. He called for stronger coordination

among stakeholders to reduce system fragmentation and enhance outcomes.

Poonam Bagai highlighted the need for policy integration, dialogue, and actionable solutions, which the newly formed Technical Expert Group on childhood cancer aims to facilitate. Bagai, who also chairs CanKids KidsCan and serves as Vice Chairman of Pallium India, emphasised that even as a low-income country, India has made significant strides in treating childhood cancer and changing societal perceptions. The event also featured support from prominent figures including former IAS officer Karan Avtar Singh, CSR advocate Nikhil Pant, and banker Piyush Gupta. Childhood Cancer Survivors Excellence Awards were presented to Dr Tanveer Ahmed and Asian Youth sports climbing medallist Shivani Charak.

MK Stalin is best man to consolidate INDIA bloc: Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar

Aiyar reasoned that Stalin focuses on raising substantive issues rather than sloganeering and would not stand in the way of Rahul Gandhi becoming Prime Minister

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Veteran Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar on Monday suggested that DMK chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin as the "best man to consolidate" the INDIA bloc, while emphasising that a united national opposition requires strong leadership and strategic coordination.

Aiyar reasoned that Stalin focuses on raising substantive issues rather than sloganeering and would not stand in the way of Rahul Gandhi becoming Prime Minister.

Speaking to ANI, the Congress leader said, "What Stalin has done over the past one year is to raise every single point that is relevant to federalism in India." "He has never said 'suit-boot ki sarkar.' He has never said 'chowkidar chor hai'..." He has the great virtue that he won't stand in the way of Rahul Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister," Aiyar said.

Further, Aiyar he drew a historical parallel between Stalin and former Congress chief K Kamaraj, who had declined the prime minister-ship after Jawaharlal Nehru, stressing that leadership roles should prioritise unity over personal ambition. The Congress leader seemed to imply that Stalin could play a kingmaker role similar to that of former Congress president K Kamaraj. "If the INDIA bloc is consolidated, I think the best man to consolidate it is MK Stalin. When Kamaraj was asked to become the PM of India in succession to Jawaharlal Nehru, he had one sentence to say to everybody who asked him - 'No English. No Hindi. How?'" So, MK Stalin is in same position. Rahul Gandhi can become the PM of India, provided there is somebody to spend all his time consolidating the INDIA bloc," he said.

Aiyar's endorsement of Stalin to unify the national opposition alliance came amidst a critique of his own



party's leadership. The senior Congress leader also did not hold back his criticism of key figures of his party, expressing "complete contempt" for spokesperson Pawan Khera. "How stupid can a party be than to make Pawan Khera the spokesman... He's not a spokesman, he's a parrot. He

is saying whatever Jairam Ramesh tells him," Aiyar said. He also took a sharp jibe at AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal, calling him a "rowdy." "Can you imagine what is the condition of a party which raises a rowdy like KC Venugopal to the level of the Sardar Patel to Rahul Gandhi?" Aiyar said. Aiyar also predicted a win in the upcoming Kerala Assembly polls for the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF), despite his personal wish for a United Democratic Front (UDF) victory. "As a Congressman, I want the UDF to come to power."

Process paid Rs. -/- Adv. Vanashri V. Malvanekar

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF C. J. S. D. KALYAN AT KALYAN

Misc. Application No. 1600/2025 Exh No.05

Smt.Shyamala Venkatpathi Naidu, age : 60 yrs, Occ : Housewife, R/at : 106, Shree Sainath Niwas, Station Road, Near Ramnagar RTO, Dombivli (East), Tal- Kalyan, Dis-Thane.Applicant

V/s

Mr. Aditya Venkatpathi Naidu, age : 18 yrs, Occ : Student, Residing at : 106, Shree Sainath Niwas, Station Road, Near Ramnagar RTO, Dombivli (East), Tal Kalyan, Dis Thane ...Respondent

WHEREAS the above named applicants has filed this application for grant of HEIR SHIP CERTIFICATE in respect of the property mentioned in the application and described in the Schedule here under written belonging to Mr. D. Venkatpathi Kannama Naidu; the husband of applicant and father of opponent expired at Dombivli on 03.11.2019 leaving behind the applicant and Opponent as his only legal heirs.

If any one has any interest/Share/Claim in respect of the property mentioned in the schedule should appear in person or through duly authorized advocate within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice along with the documents and other evidence. If no one appears and objects this application this Court will proceed to pass the appropriate order.

Schedule of Immovable property

A) 50% share in Shop No. A/16, 'A' Wing, Ground Floor, Ambika Palace CHS Ltd., Kolkar Road, Village Ayre, Dombivli East measuring area 465 Sq. Ft Built up area Situate at village Ayre within the limits of Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation more particularly mentioned in the schedule of property mentioned herein below.

B) Land No. 49, Admeasuring Total area 1200 square feet in Punjai Survey No. 248/1 of Tirutanni Village, Tirutanni Taluka, Tamil Nadu. Rs.25,21,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Twenty One Thousand only) as per Index 2 and agreement

Sd/- By Order

Clerk Assistant Superintendent

Civil Judge S.D., Kalyan

BAJAJ FINANCE LIMITED

REGISTERED OFFICE : Bajaj Auto Limited Complex, Mumbai - Pune Road, Akurdi, Pune - 411035. BRANCH OFFICE : Bajaj Finance Ltd Sener Rivera Building No.70 First and Second Floor, Spurtank road Chetpet, Chennai- 600021. Authorized Officer's Details : Name: Mr. Kesavan K. Email Id: kesavan.k@bajajfinserve.in Mob No. 8668030659

APPENDIX - IV-A (See proviso to rule 8 (6))

e-Auction Sale Notice Under SARFAESI Act 2002

Sale of Immovable Assets Under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("ACT")

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and to the Borrowers/Co-borrowers/Mortgagor(s) in respect of below mentioned secured asset which is mortgaged with Bajaj Finance Limited ("BFL"), and possession of which had been taken by undersigned Authorized Officer of BFL under the provisions of the ACT will be sold by Auction for recovery of the amount mentioned hereunder and further applicable interest, charges, and costs etc.

The secured asset described below is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS AND WHATEVER THERE IS" under Rule No. 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules ("the Rules") for recovery of the dues detailed as under: **Particulars of e-Auction**

Name & Address of Borrower & Co-Borrower's	HARIKUMAR R (BORROWER), AT - NO 21, OLD NO.10, 1ST FLOOR, UNITED INDIA COLONY, 3RD MAIN ROAD, KODAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI-600024. PHA TRADING COMPANY (CO-BORROWER), AT - PLOT NO 51 2ND FLOOR, CC VINAYAGAR APTS, PLOT NO 37 A & 37B 6/480, RAJESWARINAGAR, 3RD STREET, PODICHALUR, CHENNAI-600074. PRIYAMVADHA (CO-BORROWER) AT - NO 21, OLD NO.10, 1ST FLOOR, UNITED INDIA COLONY, 3RD MAIN ROAD, KODAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI-600024.
Loan Account Number	4030HL35933973
Statutory Demand Notice u/s 13(2) Date & Amount	Notice dated 21-Nov-24 Demand amount ₹ 52,03,060/-
Outstanding Amount as on 10/02/2026	₹ 60,23,719.55/- (Rupees Sixty Lakh Twenty-Three Thousand Seven Hundred and Nineteen and Fifty-Five Paise Only) as on 10/02/2026
Description of Immovable Property	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF THE PROPERTY BEARING FLAT NO F-1 IN THE FIRST FLOOR MEASURING 1054 SQ.FT. SUPER BUILT UP AREA ALONG WITH ONE CAR PARKING TOGETHER WITH 516 SQ.FT. UNDIVIDED SHARE IN ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF LAND ADMEASURING 2800 SQ.FT. BEARING NO.18/37 PLOT NO.37 VADVEL STREET FORMERLY KNOWN AS SRI MUTHUKUMARASAMY NGAR PRESENTLY KNOWN AS HINOSTANT LEVER COLONY LAYOUT PROVIDED IN THE SURVEY NO.20/1A182 AS PER PATTA SURVEY NO.20/8 OF PAMMAL VILLAGE, ALANDUR TALUK KANCHERUPURAM DISTRICT, BOUNDED AS - NORTH - PLOT NO.36 SOUTH - PLOT NO.38 EAST - PLOT NO.4 WEST - 30 FEET WIDE VADVEL STREET
Reserve Price in INR	₹39,00,000/-
EMD	₹3,90,000/-
e-Auction date and time	06/03/26 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
e-Auction Portal	https://bankauctions.in
Last date of submission of EMD	05/03/26
Bid Increment Amount in Rs.	₹ 25,000/-
Encumbrance Known to Secured Creditor	Not Known
Date of Inspection of Property	From 12/02/26 to 05/03/26 on working day between 9.30 AM to 5.30 PM with Prior appointment

Public in General and Borrowers in particular please take notice that if in case auction on date scheduled herein fails for any reason whatsoever then secured creditor may enforce security interest by way of sale through private treaty, at the discretion of and to the secured creditor. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link https://www.bankauctions.in and https://www.bajajfinserve.in/sarfaesi-auction-notice

Date - 17.02.2026, Place - Chennai Authorized Officer, For M/s BAJAJ FINANCE LIMITED

ICICI Home Finance Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India

Branch Office : ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd, Apex Chamber, Office Portion Bearing No.3, 3rd Floor, No.20, Thyagaraya Road, T Nagar Chennai- 600017

Notice for sale of immovable assets through Private Treaty

Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets through Private Treaty Under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8(b)(iv) Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

ICICI Home Finance Company Limited (ICICI HFC) conducted several Auctions for the sale of the mortgaged property mentioned below, however, all such e-Auctions failed. Now, an interested buyer has approached ICICI HFC with an offer to purchase the said property for an amount of Rs. 10,00,000/-. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below-described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", by way of Private Treaty as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs. Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	Sarfaesi Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	P Sakthiyendran (Borrower) Christine Sakthiyendran (Co-Borrowers) Loan No. LHCTN00001462332 & LHCTN00001463167	Flat No. F1, First Floor, Plot No. 1, Rose Nagar, Nandhiyaram, 445/1, 442/4, Sub Divided S No. 442/4A.1, Chengalpatt, Chennai, Tamil Nadu- 600001	Rs. 21,68, 076/- February 13, 2026	Rs. 10,00, 000/- To 1,00, 000/-	February 27, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	March 05, 2026 02:00 PM To 03:00 PM	March 04, 2026 before 04:00 PM	Physical Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- https://BidDeal.in) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before March 04, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit a signed copy of the Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before March 04, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.

The general public is requested to submit their bids higher than the amount being offered by the interested buyer mentioned above. It is hereby informed that in case no bids higher than the amount being offered by the aforementioned interested buyer is received by ICICI HFC, the mortgaged property shall be sold to the said interested buyer as per Rule 8(b)(iv) Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the sale or submission of bids, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article.

The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit https://www.icicifhfc.com/

Date : February 17, 2026 Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited" Place : Chennai CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

Pakistan Cricket And Lessons In How To Destroy A Sport, Completely

I am not entirely certain who I felt more sorry for after the conclusion of the latest instalment of the India vs Pakistan cricket "rivalry" (if one can still call it that). My heart went out to the ticket-buying public in Colombo. According to news reports, about 18,000 Indian and 12,000 Pakistani fans travelled to Sri Lanka for this match, which was a sellout. Did those in the stadium get their ticket's worth? Not to mention the money they spent on travel, stay, food, etc? Definitely not. One also felt a twinge of sadness for the broadcasters. How could you expect each and every cricket fan who had tuned in to stay interested in a "contest" that was pretty much done and dusted in the first five overs of the second innings (by which time Pakistan had been reduced to 34/4 in their chase of 176)? How many people would have just lost complete interest in the match at the time?

Did I feel sorry for the Pakistan team and their entire cricketing establishment, though? Not really. After all, what I witnessed on Sunday didn't surprise me one bit. Sure, this was the biggest margin of victory ever by runs (61 runs) for India in a T20i match against the neighbours, but did we really expect this to be an even contest? Disappointing, Not Surprising

In the answer to that question lies the root of the disappointment we all felt, despite India's commanding performance that officially took them into the Super Eights stage. Most of us wanted to see an even, well-fought contest. While we did see India play good, solid cricket, we didn't get to see a good cricket match. But then, India vs Pakistan cricket, which at one time was billed as a contest that rivalled the Ashes and maybe even overshadowed the hallowed Test series, is just not a rivalry anymore. The "mother of all cricket battles", as TV headlines screamed at one time, is now the mother of all no-contests. There's no bilateral Test cricket that is played between the two countries anymore, of course, and India is way ahead in white-ball cricket. And at the end of the day, Team India stamped their authority on the "contest" yet again, while Pakistan cricket, as their white-ball cricket Head Coach Mike Hesson (who is no stranger to Indian cricket fans) admitted "...probably took a little step back", at least when it comes to adapting to different conditions. For the record, this was India's 13th win in their last seventeen T20i matches vs Pakistan. This particular India vs Pakistan World Cup match had an extra layer of political sheen to it after the 'boycott saga'. Such was the level of humiliation the Pakistan fans felt after the 61-run thrashing that many of them said that the PCB should have just stuck to their stance of boycotting the match against India - it would have saved them the embarrassment of being reminded of the huge gulf that exists between the two teams in terms of overall quality and mental strength. This Team India, if you squeeze them, more often than not, will focus. Pakistan tend to fold.

A Bygone Era

However, while India's on-field prowess cannot be questioned, their policy of not shaking hands with the Pakistani cricketers (something that we see now also in senior women's international cricket and U-19 cricket) continues to raise a few eyebrows. There are certain things that fall within the bracket of "spirit of the game", and if two teams are playing each other, irrespective of what is happening between the two countries off the field, not shaking an opponent's hand can be seen as a mark of going against one of the longest traditions of the game. It just feels wrong. But make no mistake about it. This is here to stay. The moment the decision was taken not to shake hands with Pakistani cricketers on the field in the Asia Cup last year, the on-field relations between the two teams, which had been quite friendly for a long time, hit rock bottom. On Sunday, the call to continue to give the opponents the cold shoulder also added an icy element to the clash. Not only were there no handshakes, but the players barely even looked at each other. I was actually expecting some sledging from the players, but there were no words exchanged at all - either polite or nasty. Ironically, off the field, before the match began, former India captain Rohit Sharma, who is also the brand ambassador of the tournament, hugged and shook hands with Pakistan legend Wasim Akram.

Sonia-Rahul To Maken, Why Mani Shankar Aiyar Keeps Ditching His Verbal 'Filter'

Mani Shankar Aiyar has been known to create political storms with his words. The former Rajya Sabha parliamentarian used to joke that in the time of Rajiv Gandhi, he was always on "arsh" (cloud nine) while in the UPA regime under the then Congress chief, Sonia Gandhi, he was brought down to "farsh" (ground).

Now, in the Rahul Gandhi era, too, Aiyar has been shown the door several times. His humiliation was complete when the All India Congress Committee (AICC) media department head, Pawan Kherra, wrote on X, "Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar has had no connection whatsoever with the Congress for the past few years. He speaks and writes purely in his personal capacity." Aiyar was quick to retort in his trademark style and told the media, "I have not left the Congress. If Pawan Kherra is going to expel me, I will happily go outside and kick his backside after I have Mani Shankar Aiyar has been known to create political storms with his words. The former Rajya Sabha parliamentarian used to joke that in the time of Rajiv Gandhi, he was always on "arsh" (cloud nine) while in the UPA regime under the then Congress chief, Sonia Gandhi, he was brought down to "farsh" (ground). Now, in the Rahul Gandhi era, too, Aiyar has been shown the door several times. His humiliation was complete when the All India Congress Committee (AICC) media department head, Pawan Kherra, wrote on X, "Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar has had no connection whatsoever with the Congress for the past few years. He speaks and writes purely in his personal capacity." Aiyar was quick to retort in his trademark style and told the media, "I have not left the Congress. If Pawan Kherra is going to expel me, I will happily go outside and kick his backside after I have left." Aiyar also described Kherra as a "puppet", implying that the media department head was acting on behalf of 'someone else'. Many in the Congress think the allusion is to Rahul Gandhi. But those familiar



with the internal goings-on in the grand old party point towards Jairam Ramesh, the chairman of the AICC's communication department. The rivalry between Jairam Ramesh and Mani Shankar Aiyar dates back to the 1980s and requires a separate volume. Priyanka's Snub Aiyar's disillusionment with the Congress hit its peak when his third autobiographical account, titled A Maverick in Politics 1991-2024, was released in New Delhi, and no member of the Nehru-Gandhi family turned up at the India International Centre on December 16, 2024, for its launch. Aiyar had earlier gone to campaign for Priyanka Gandhi at Wayanad during the Lok Sabha bypolls. Priyanka had reportedly agreed to release his book, but her office feigned ignorance, declining to give any time or date. Aiyar isn't new to courting controversies. From alluding to a party colleague as a "gangster's moll" - when Arjun Singh, Sheila Dikshit and some others rebelled against then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao in 1995, Aiyar had alluded to Sheila as a "gangster's moll" in his magazine column - to calling Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee "nalayak" (useless person), the career diplomat in Mani Shankar Aiyar has let just one too many un-diplomatic gaffes to blot his political track record. He had once called Narendra

Modi a "neech kism ka aadmi" (indecent man) in retaliation for a remark the Prime Minister had made at the inauguration of the Ambedkar International Centre, about the Congress undermining the legacy of BR Ambedkar. "Nalayak Neta" And Other Gaffes In November 1998, Aiyar, appointed Congress spokesperson, had dubbed Atal Bihari Vajpayee a "layak vyakti, nalayak neta" (competent person, useless leader). "I have subsequently learned that the expression I used could have an unparliamentary connotation," he said in his apology. "Not being a native Hindi speaker, I seem to have inadvertently used an improper expression, for which I wish to tender my apologies to the Prime Minister for any offence unintentionally caused." Aiyar had told this correspondent. He said he had initially been "tempted to use the Hindi word 'ayogya' (undeserving), but in Tamil [Aiyar's mother tongue] it has a different and rather derogatory meaning". So, said Aiyar, he consulted a dictionary and surmised that there was a word, "nalayak", to describe a person as weak. Ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Aiyar had infamously dismissed Modi as a "chaiwalla" (tea seller), prompting the BJP leader to portray the remark as an insult to his "humble roots" and project the Congress as arrogant.

What's Behind The US-Iran Nuclear Deadlock? Four Risks, Four Interests



When India's extended neighbourhood, the Gulf, is calm, India's economy enjoys an invisible subsidy. When it is tense, India receives a fresh invoice. That is why the United States-Iran engagement through the Oman channel matters to Delhi even if India is not in the room. The realistic hope is not reconciliation. It is something rarer in West Asia: predictability. This negotiation is shaped by four fears and four interests. Each side is trying to reduce one risk without paying for another. Washington wants an Iran that cannot sprint to a bomb. The Trump administration prefers diplomacy, but it is negotiating with escalation still on the table. President Trump is letting the talks continue while maintaining maximum pressure and reinforcing the regional posture by deploying a carrier strike group. This is coercive bargaining: talk seriously, or prepare for pressure that will not stay financial. Tehran wants sanctions relief and the political dignity of having its right to enrich acknowledged. It is willing to bargain over ceilings, sequencing, and monitoring. But it has drawn a line around missile capability. For Iran, missiles are not an add-on. They are deterrence in a region where hostile intent is assumed. Tehran warns that any American strike would trigger the atre-wide retaliation, including against US bases in the Gulf and Israel. That is how it prices deterrence, turning escalation into a regional bill. Israel is focused on one

idea: warning time. A nuclear agreement that trims enrichment while leaving delivery systems and regional networks intact looks, in Tel Aviv, less like a settlement and more like a postponement. A narrow nuclear deal reduces one danger while leaving another alive. Israel, therefore, pushes for missiles and the proxy ecosystem to be in frame, or for coercion robust enough to roll back Iran's capacity. The Gulf states sit closest to the blast radius. They want de-escalation that protects ports, pipelines, cities, and investor confidence without rewarding coercive tools. They lean toward diplomacy because they pay first for escalation, but they prefer constraints that bite. They want the crisis defused, not Iran empowered. Taken together, the overlap sits mainly on uranium enrichment. It thins quickly on missiles and proxies. That is why the Oman channel points to a thin deal: not a grand bargain, not Armageddon. That thinness is not a weakness; it is the only bargain available. The alternative is a sharper crisis. As President Trump warned, "Otherwise, it's going to be very traumatic." Enrichment is where progress is most realistic, because it is measurable. Cap levels, reduce stockpiles, neutralise the most sensitive material, restore tight monitoring, and sequence partial relief. If Washington can tolerate bounded enrichment, and Tehran can accept low ceilings, small quantities, and tight IAEA oversight, an agreement is possible. Even on the

nuclear file, the hinge is not enrichment alone. It is verification. The IAEA has described large declared stockpiles and a continuity of knowledge problem. That combination, scale plus uncertainty, turns every promise into a credibility challenge. Enriched uranium you can measure can be capped, blended down, or shipped out. The quantities you cannot account for are a crisis. Verification gaps turn any ceiling into a guess, and guesses do not survive crises. Ask the deal to carry every grievance, and it collapses. Here, the choice is between a workable compromise and a beautiful failure. Missiles are where the thin deal hits reality, and where the overlap disappears. The United States has, at times, signalled that it would prefer missiles and proxies in the frame. Iran refuses. Israel wants to shrink the warning time and insists missiles and proxies be in frame. The Gulf wants constraints because it lives with vulnerability every day. This is where diplomacy runs into doctrine. Missile capability is harder than centrifuges to verify because it can be dispersed and is dual-use. Moreover, missiles sit inside deterrence logic rather than inside a negotiable technical programme. At best, you get informal risk reduction measures: hotlines, notification norms, or tacit restraint. A missile inspection regime strong enough to satisfy Washington and Israel would look like strategic nakedness in Tehran. You can negotiate centrifuge

numbers. You cannot negotiate a nation's sense of vulnerability. One more truth sits awkwardly beneath the rhetoric. In the Western narrative, support for the Iranian people is voiced loudly. In real negotiations, it recedes quickly. When nuclear risk, missiles, and sanctions relief are on the table, the Iranian people become a secondary priority in hard power bargaining. Washington may still speak of protestors and repression, but the negotiating priority becomes containment and verification. Human rights rhetoric, in Tehran's ears, often sounds like regime change pressure by another name. Israel prioritises threat reduction. Gulf states prioritise stability. This is not cynicism. It is the logic of crisis diplomacy. The bigger the security stakes, the smaller the space for moral clarity. India's interest is clear. Avoid panic in the Gulf. We should not romanticise a deal, nor should we posture against one. A thin, verifiable nuclear stabilisation, even if it leaves missiles untouched, is still valuable. It reduces the probability of a regional scare that spikes energy prices, disrupts shipping, and unsettles the Indian diaspora across the Gulf. The downside of conflict there far outweighs any plausible upside. The talks may move to Geneva, for discretion and convenience, but the Oman channel endures. Geneva is geography, Oman is the channel. The Oman channel, however, will not deliver trust. It may deliver something useful: fewer surprises.

India's AI Summit 2026: Clarifying The Rules For Data That Powers AI

With AI ambitions in focus, India must now clarify how its data protection framework governs the personal data that trains and improves AI systems. Setting the Stage: AI Summit 2026 The Indian AI Impact Summit 2026 opens today at Bharat Mandapam with an ambitious agenda: Three Sutras: People, Planet and Progress and Seven Chakras covering Human Capital, Safe and Trusted AI, Inclusion, Science, Resilience, Democratizing AI Resources, and Economic Growth. The focus is clear: build computing capacity, strengthen data infrastructure, and position India as a central player in the global AI ecosystem. A Vision for Human-Centric AI IT Secretary S. Krishnan has described India's AI vision as "human-centric and inclusive", emphasising "democratic access to AI resources". Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to meet global AI leaders, including Sam Altman, Sundar Pichai, Dario Amodei, and Demis Hassabis. India signals that it aims not merely to adopt AI but to shape its trajectory globally. Yet, alongside infrastructure, a quieter but crucial question remains: how is the personal data used to train AI systems governed? The Legal Framework: DPDP Act 2023 India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 provides a comprehensive framework: Section 6 mandates consent for processing, Section 16 regulates cross-border transfers, and Section 33 prescribes penal-



ties for non-compliance. "Processing" is defined broadly, covering automated operations on personal data, which would appear to include AI training where identifiable data is involved. The Missing Guidance for AI Training Data However, neither the statute nor the draft DPDP Rules 2025 offer guidance on how consent, purpose limitation, and transparency principles apply when personal data contributes to model training and refinement. The law is technologically neutral, but neutrality is not clarity. India's Strategic Opportunity and Global Attention This matters strategically as India's digital ecosystem is large, diverse, and highly engaged with AI. Global firms see this environment as invaluable for testing, localisation, and iterative improvement. Offering AI tools at low or no cost immediately benefits users while creating rich feedback loops that refine models. In effect, access and data contribution are intertwined, a nuance policymakers can-

not afford to overlook. Learning from Europe: GDPR as a Benchmark Europe's GDPR guidance provides a useful benchmark. Supervisory authorities there have clarified how consent, purpose limitation, and automated decision-making apply to AI, creating an interpretive structure even without AI-specific statutes. India faces a similar inflexion point: infrastructure and investment alone will not establish leadership. Governance clarity must follow. Guidance for AI Training and Data Use Rather than suggesting entirely new rules, India could clarify how existing principles apply in AI training contexts, including: Consent in AI training scenarios: guidance on whether interactions with AI require explicit consent for use in model training. Purpose limitation for AI reuse: clarity on how secondary uses, like training, align with consented purposes. Transparency norms for training datasets: recommendations on what discl-

sures companies should provide about Indian data used to improve AI systems. Regulatory guidance on data provenance and model accountability: defining what documentation or reporting fiduciaries should maintain for AI training and validation datasets. Operationalising human-centric, ethical AI: concrete guidance on implementing principles of safety, inclusion, and trust in AI model development. These are not new mandates but practical clarifications to make India's AI framework actionable, strategic, and globally credible. Beyond Infrastructure: Completing the AI Architecture As the AI Summit deliberates on "Safe and Trusted AI", the conversation must extend beyond data centres and investment. Democratisation is not just about access to tools; it is about clarity on how the data powering these systems are used. India has laid the foundations of data protection. Its AI ambition now calls for completing that architecture.

AM/NS India expands value-added steel portfolio with world-class branded offerings Vibrance and Optima to power appliance and industrial manufacturing

Mumbai/ Delhi, 16 February 2026: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) today announced the strengthening of its value-added portfolio with AM/NS Vibrance and AM/NS Optima – two world-class, premium branded steel solutions engineered to meet the increasingly design-led needs of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) across appliance and industrial manufacturing ecosystems. With demand rising for steel that combines consistent surface quality, tight tolerances and reliable performance at scale, AM/NS India is expanding its value-added portfolio with branded offerings that reduce reliance on imports while making premium, internationally benchmarked quality available domestically. These two branded coated offerings now form part of a value-added product portfolio that includes Optigal®, Magnelis®, Optigal® Prime, Optigal® Pinnacle, and others – each validated for consistency, efficiency, and durability across diverse applications. Mr. Ranjan Dhar, Director and Vice President – Sales & Marketing, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), said: “For Original Equipment



Manufacturers (OEMs) focused on precision manufacturing and consistent brand quality; material choice directly impacts productivity, cost, and long-term performance. Against this backdrop, the addition of AM/NS Vibrance and AM/NS Optima is a significant step in expanding our branded steel portfolio to support OEMs productivity and value creation. These two coated steel offerings strengthen our position as a preferred solution provider with innovative, high-quality steel solutions in line with our brand promise – ‘Smarter Steels, Brighter Futures’. By making world-class value-

added steels available domestically, we are contributing to the ‘Make in India’ vision, while enabling our customers to build differentiated products with confidence and gain competitive advantage domestically and globally. The appliance and industrial manufacturing ecosystems continue to be key growth pillars for our value-added steel portfolio, as we advance purpose-led innovations that help our customers become increasingly ‘Aatmanirbhar.’ AM/NS Vibrance – Premium colour-coated steel AM/NS Vibrance is a premium colour-coated steel solution for appliance OEMs, combin-

ing strength, precision, and superior surface aesthetics. As appliances become increasingly visible design features in homes and commercial settings, manufacturers need materials that combine consistent colour, controlled gloss and refined finishes with durability and efficient manufacturability. AM/NS Vibrance meets these requirements through advanced coating technology applied over precision-engineered steel substrates, ensuring reliable performance from fabrication through end use. AM/NS Vibrance ensures that manufactured appliances are visually appealing and built to

last. It is well-suited for diverse appliance applications, including refrigerators, washing machines, microwave ovens, and water dispensers. AM/NS Optima – True Zero-Spangle Galvanised Steel AM/NS Optima is one of India’s most premium True Zero-Spangle Galvanised Steel products. It offers a higher degree of surface uniformity and control than conventional Galvanised Steel, enabling manufacturers to achieve cleaner, more consistent finishes. Built on superior precision-engineered substrates with uniform thickness and tightly controlled surface quality, AM/NS Optima steel bends predictably, offers finishes with visual harmony, and performs consistently across production runs. It empowers manufacturers to create highly refined, precise, and flawless surfaces that fulfill the most exacting applications. It is well-suited for multiple applications, including AC outdoor units, panels, and cleanroom installations. India’s consumer durables market – expected to become the world’s fourth largest by FY27 – is rapidly premiumising, driven by rising demand for appliances that offer flawless finishes and complement design-led living spaces.

IDFC FIRST Bank launches FD backed Hello Cashback Credit Card with up to 5% Cashback

Hyderabad, February 2026: IDFC FIRST Bank launches Hello Cashback Credit Card, a fixed-deposit-backed offering designed to make credit more accessible for digitally savvy customers, especially young adults aged 18+ with online-first and UPI-led spending habits. The card enables customers to begin building their credit history while benefiting from a strong and clearly differentiated cashback proposition on everyday digital payments. Hello Cashback features a powerful tiered cashback structure, offering 5% cashback on online spends above 10,000, 3% cashback on online spends up to 10,000, and 1% cashback on in-store, contactless, and UPI transactions. Uniquely, the 1% cashback also extends to essential categories such as utilities, education, and insurance. The card is priced at a joining fee of 1,000 and an annual fee of 1,000, with the joining fee waived until March 31, 2026, and the annual fee waived on annual spends of 2,00,000 in the previous year, making it a compelling combination of rewards, access, and credit building.

- 10 Unique benefits of the
1. Everyone is eligible.
 2. Up to 5% Cashback on Online Spends: 3% cashback on online spends up to 10,000 per statement cycle, and 5% cashback on incremental online spends beyond 10,000, with cashback on online spends capped at 1,000 per statement cycle. No merchant restriction.
 3. 1% Cashback across In-store, UPI, & Essential Spends: 1% cashback on in-store purchases, UPI spends via the Bank’s app, and essentials including utilities, education, insurance, FASTag recharge, railway bookings, govt. payments, rent, jewellery, and wallet & gift card loads.
 4. Bonus Cashback on Travel Bookings: Additional 1% Bonus Cashback on flight and hotel bookings made via IDFC Bank app. Total cashback on travel bookings goes up to 6%.
 5. Monthly Cashback Cap of 1,500 across all categories per statement cycle.
 6. One fixed deposit. Two returns. The fixed deposit earns interest and powers cashback on every card spend.

7. 100% FD-Linked Credit Limit: Credit limit equal to 100% of fixed deposit value.
 8. Access to FD Funds via Card: ATM cash withdrawal limit up to 100% of FD value, interest-free for up to 45 days, with a nominal 199 + GST withdrawal fee.
 9. Instant Credit Limit Enhancement: Flexibility to link additional fixed deposits and increase credit limit instantly.
 10. Built-In Safety & Convenience includes insurance covers, purchase protection, lost card liability, roadside assistance, and 1% fuel surcharge waiver, making credit safer & convenient for first-time users.
- Fees & Eligibility**
The Hello Cashback Credit Card is available against a fixed deposit starting at 10,000. The joining fee of 1,000 + GST is waived until March 31, 2026 as an introductory offer. The annual fee of 1,000 + GST is: 100% reversed on annual spends of 2 lakh or more, or 50% reversed on annual spends between 1 lakh and 2 lakh. This makes it one of the most affordable and rewarding secured credit cards in the market.

GOBOULT Expands Mustang Partnership as It Targets 3,000 Crore Revenue by FY27-28

Hyderabad, February 16, 2026: GOBOULT, one of India’s fastest-growing wearables and audio brands, has announced a multi-year growth strategy focused on premiumisation, profitability, and long-term brand strength. After closing FY25 with revenues of roughly 800 crore, the company is now growing toward 3,000 crore by FY27 - FY28. The strategy marks a shift away from discount-driven expansion toward a more focused and continually growing premium product portfolio. A key driver of the company’s momentum has been a long-term partnership with Mustang, which has evolved into a core pillar of the company’s premiumisation strategy. Now entering its third year, the partnership has expanded beyond audio into a broader ecosystem spanning wearables and audio. GOBOULT is the only Indian company to incorporate a global automotive performance icon like Mustang into an audio and wearable ecosystem. The partnership has influ-



enced design decisions, material choices, and product experience rather than serving as a logo-led association. As part of this series expansion, GOBOULT today announced the launch of a new Mustang-led range comprising three smartwatches, Stallion, Racer, and Muscle, along with the Mustang Sprint TWS. The Mustang series marks an extension of GOBOULT’s premium offerings and

shows a clear signal of how the company is shaping its product roadmap. The portfolio has also gained steady traction, with Mustang-led products expected to scale from approximately 2 crore to 12 crore over the next phase. Varun Gupta, Co-founder, GOBOULT, said, “We are building toward a 3,000 crore wearables and audio business by FY27 / FY28 after closing FY25 at roughly 800 crore. What sets this

next phase apart is how we’re doing it. We are the first Indian wearables brand to build a deep, design-led partnership with a global automotive performance icon like Mustang. This experience and ecosystem is thoughtfully designed to reflect the DNA of a Mustang, with the intent to bring the confidence and character associated with Mustang into the everyday lives of consumers.” Currently, GOBOULT derives approximately 70% of its revenue from audio and 30% from wearables. Going forward, wearables are likely to account for a significantly larger share as GOBOULT expands into the mid-premium and premium segments. Premium and mid-premium items are planned to contribute around 70% by FY26, directly enhancing profitability and cementing the brand’s premium positioning. Offline revenue contribution is set to increase from 20% to 40%, owing to a higher presence and demand in Tier-2 and 3 cities.

TOUCH-A-LIFE FOUNDATION HOSTS TALHEALTHFEST 2026 IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad, India — February 16, 2026 — TALHealthFest 2026, a premier global healthcare and wellness conference hosted by Touch-A-Life Foundation, successfully brought together policymakers, clinicians, technologists, researchers, and social impact leaders for a transformative day of dialogue and collaboration focused on reshaping the future of healthcare. TALHealthFest serves a vital purpose: to build partnerships that expand healthcare access through TALHospitals, a pro bono network connecting underserved patients with hospitals providing free surgeries and life-saving consultations. Held at T-Hub, Hyderabad, the conference commenced with registrations and networking, followed by the inaugural address by Shri N. S. Boseraju, Hon’ble Cabinet Minister, Government of Karnataka. The welcome keynote emphasized the urgent need to integrate innovation, trust, and acces-



sibility to create sustainable healthcare ecosystems. Sai Gundavelli, CEO of Touch-A-Life Foundation, remarked, “Through Touch-A-Life Foundation, we’re leveraging technology to expand healthcare access where it’s needed most. TALHospitals connects underserved patients with hospitals providing pro bono care, proving that healthcare is truly global - not just local. Today, we’re launching TALMedora, a global platform connecting doctors worldwide. With

India spending just \$3 million on healthcare for 1.4 billion people, we believe technology and collaboration can bridge this gap - not through money, but through people volunteering their time and expertise.” “When we invest in science and technology, we invest in solving global challenges. Technology can create tremendous impact - even a person in a rural village can benefit from world-class healthcare through innovation. We aim to position India as a global inno-

vation leader, and platforms like TALHealthFest accelerate this mission. The Government of Karnataka is committed to supporting this innovation ecosystem and ensuring that technological advancement reaches every citizen,” the Minister stated. Sri Govinda Hari, Founder of AHPI and President of AHPI Telangana, emphasized, “Post-COVID, partnerships between government, non-profits, and hospitals are essential for expanding both quality and access.”

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



New Delhi 2026: In a landmark move set to transform the Indian trucking landscape, Tata Motors, India’s largest commercial vehicle manufacturer and mobility solutions provider, today launched its next-generation portfolio of 17 trucks, spanning 7

to 55 tonnes, setting new benchmarks in safety, profits and progress. This comprehensive launch introduces the all-new Azura series, the cutting-edge Tata Trucks.ev range, and significant upgrades to the established Prima, Signa, and

Ultra platforms. Engineered to conform to stringent global safety standards (ECE R29 03), these trucks maximise earning potential, reduce total cost of ownership and enhance vehicle uptime to deliver greater success to transporters.

“THE SECRET BEHIND WINNING THE T20 WORLD CUP? ROYAL STAG REVEALS THE #RS CODE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ROHIT SHARMA AND PADDY UPTON”

16 February 2026: At a time when cricket fever is at its peak, Seagram’s Royal Stag Packaged Drinking Water has unveiled the Royal Stag Code of Large (#RS Code), a first-of-its-kind, data-backed initiative with brand ambassador and former team India captain Rohit Sharma and Mental Conditioning coach Paddy Upton that goes beyond celebrating success to decoding it. Rohit Sharma, the only Indian to win two ICC T20 World Cups, embodies fearless individuality and success - living life his own way, authentic and perfectly aligned with Royal Stag’s philosophy of living it large. The #RSCode is the outcome of an in-depth data analysis of Rohit Sharma’s career using data science combined with Royal Stag’s brand ethos centered around celebrating the philosophy of Living in the moment and Living it Large. The process unearthed 4 unique personality traits that lay the foundation of decoding Success, the manifestation of which would be unique to every individual. The four defining traits consistently underpin Rohit’s success – traits that are a true reflection of Royal Stag’s long-standing philosophy. To bring credibility to the whole initiative, the campaign features



Paddy Upton, who anchors the initiative as a subject-matter expert, translating performance data into meaningful insights. This RS Code is built on four traits — Selfless, where team success always outweighs personal milestones; Driven where every moment is celebrated and is seen as the stepping stone for a new beginning; Fearless, which tests one’s ability to adapt to higher responsibilities and Inspiring, where one’s leadership is not only motivational but contagious. Together, these form the

Royal Stag Code of Large, #RSCode, a philosophy that transcends beyond cricket and applies to life. The RS Code is brought to life through a phased, digital-first campaign designed to build intrigue and engagement. It began with a teaser by Rohit Sharma and Paddy Upton, which sparked curiosity around the RS Code, followed by the official reveal through a high-impact Talk show between Rohit Sharma, Paddy Upton hosted by Vikram Sathe. It seamlessly blends data-backed

insights with storytelling and real moments, including a surprise appearance by Suryakumar Yadav that reinforces the ‘Inspiring’ trait of the RS Code. The campaign is powered by an innovative AI-driven #RSCode Finder that invites audiences to discover their own personalised Code of Large. By answering a few simple questions, consumers can decode their unique code, which is then revealed through a personalised video message from Rohit Sharma - creating a highly engaging and personal brand experience. Speaking about the campaign, Debasree Dasgupta, Chief Marketing Officer, Pernod Ricard India, said, “Speaking about the campaign, Debasree Dasgupta, Chief Marketing Officer, Pernod Ricard India, said, “Royal Stag as a partner of ICC, allows us to deliver a truly “Live it large” experience to die-hard cricket fans everywhere. This year, we are giving each fan the power to craft their own Live It Large Story through this unique AI platform that integrates with the brand’s commitment to relishing every moment in their journey to success. The Royal Stag Code brings our ‘Live It Large’ philosophy to life in a meaningful way.

TRUMP'S NEW WORLD ORDER HAS BECOME REAL AND EUROPE IS HAVING TO ADJUST FAST

Downtown Munich is best-known for chic shops and flashy fast cars but right now its streets are bedecked with posters advertising next generation drones. "Europe's security under construction" boasts the slogan on an eye-catching set of sleek black-and-white photographs, festooned across a scaffolding-clad church on one of this town's best known pedestrian boulevards. Such an unapologetic public display of military muscle would have been unimaginable here just a few years ago, but the world outside Germany is changing fast, and taking this country with it. The southern region of Bavaria has become Germany's leading defence technology hub, focusing on AI, drones and aerospace. People here, like most other Europeans, say they feel increasingly exposed - squeezed between an expansionist Russia and an economically aggressive China to the east, and an increasingly unpredictable,

former best pal, the United States, to the west. According to a recent Eurobarometer poll, more than two-thirds of Europeans (68%) feel their country is under threat. This autumn, Germany's Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance warned for the first time since the Cold War that war is no longer "unlikely". While emphasising that this is a safe country, it also recommends that Germans keep food supplies to last three to ten days at home. Just in case. Germany is the number one single donor of military and other aid to Ukraine, now that the US has halted any new direct aid. Opinion polls suggest voters here want to feel better protected at home too. The question for this country, along with others in Europe is whether traditional alliances with the US, in Nato and the EU can suffice, or whether they should be diversifying into ad-hoc coalitions alongside other like-minded nations



such as Australia, South Korea and Japan? By 2029, the German defence budget will be higher than the UK and French equivalents combined, Nato's Secretary General Mark Rutte pointed out to me. He described the 150bn they say they will spend on defence as "a staggering amount". It's some-

thing the United States notices and appreciates, he said. Donald Trump is far from the first US president to insist that Europe do more for its own security, though his tone has been noticeably more threatening than that of his predecessors. The precarious state of transatlantic relations was the main focus

of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) this week-end. It's the world's biggest annual defence meeting, bringing leaders, security experts and defence industries together. While it's easy to dismiss speech-heavy get-togethers like this as wind-baggy talking shops, in the turbulent times we live in, they can make a difference - especially the informal private huddles between global decision makers, far away from the glare of the cameras. The most eagerly - and for some the most anxiously - anticipated speech at this year's conference was that of the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, who represented the Trump administration here. European leaders and top diplomats were seriously on the edge of their seats. But why was a simple 30-minute address given so much importance? It's because Europe-US relations have never been so frayed as they are now, over the last 80 years since World War Two.

And this isn't a bust-up between buddies that will easily blow over. Denmark still furious In the just over 12 months since Trump returned to the White House, he has at times insulted and undermined European leaders, slapped big tariffs on their exports, and most shockingly of all to his allies in Nato, threatened Danish sovereignty over its territory, Greenland, refusing for a while to rule out taking the island by force. Speaking at the MSC on Saturday, Denmark's still clearly furious prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, said Trump's designs on Greenland remained "the same" despite ongoing trilateral talks between representatives of Greenland, the US and Denmark. Trump has ruled out taking Greenland by military force for now, and he's backed away (for the moment, at least) from slapping economic sanctions on allies, including the UK, France and Germany.

Navalny's mother says she always knew he was murdered after poison finding



The mother of the late Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny says the assessment that her son died of poisoning has validated her belief that he was murdered. On Saturday, the UK and European allies put out a statement saying Navalny, who died in 2024, was killed using a poison developed from a dart frog toxin, and that "only the Russian state had the means, motive and opportunity to deploy this lethal toxin". "This confirms what we knew from the very beginning," Lyudmila Navalnaya said while visiting her son's grave in

Moscow on Monday - the second anniversary of his death. "We knew that our son did not simply die in prison, he was murdered." Russia has firmly rejected the accusations. "Of course, we do not accept such accusations. We disagree with them, we consider them biased and unfounded. And, in fact, we resolutely reject them," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. Navalny's widow Yulia has also marked the two-year anniversary of his death, writing in a social media post: "We have achieved truth and we will achieve justice one day too."

Nigeria warns against enlisting abroad after reports of deaths in Ukraine



Nigeria's foreign ministry has issued an urgent warning over what it describes as the increasing illegal recruitment of its citizens to fight in foreign conflicts. It comes after Ukrainian officials said they found the bodies of two Nigerians who they said were killed in combat last year. Nigeria has not confirmed those deaths but in a statement on Sunday, foreign ministry spokesperson Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa revealed that "several Nigerians who have fallen victim to such unfortunate situations were deployed to combat zones after being misled and coerced into signing military service contracts". Kenya has issued a similar warning to its citizens. According to Nigerian officials, investigations and security reports indicate that some nationals were enticed with promises of well-paid employment, security work, educational opportunities or migration incentives, only to find themselves thrust into active war zones. In some cases, victims were allegedly forced to sign

contracts written in foreign languages without proper legal advice, and their travel documents were confiscated upon arrival. Intermediaries are also said to arrange travel using tourist or other non-military visas. Ebienfa cautioned Nigerians against accepting such offers, emphasising that they not only endanger lives but may also violate Nigerian and international laws concerning mercenary activities and foreign enlistment. The Nigerian government stated it was working with local and international partners to investigate these cases and enhance public awareness. Its diplomatic missions abroad have been directed to strengthen consular support and issue advisories to citizens. Ukrainian intelligence estimates that more than 1,400 individuals from 36 African countries have been recruited to fight for Russia. Ukraine itself has previously faced criticism for attempting to recruit foreign nationals, including Africans, to fight on its side.

BONDI BEACH SHOOTING ACCUSED FACES COURT FOR THE FIRST TIME

Accused Bondi Beach gunman Naveed Akram faced court for the first time on Monday, two months after he and his father allegedly carried out Australia's worst mass shooting in almost 30 years. The 24-year-old appeared in a Sydney court for about five minutes via video link from prison. He faces 59 charges relating to the Bondi Beach shooting, including 15 counts of murder and one of committing a terrorist attack. Naveed and his father, Sajid, allegedly attacked a Hanukkah event at the famous beach on 14 December, killing 15 people and injuring more than 40. Sajid, 50, was shot dead by police at the scene, while Naveed was critically injured and later trans-

ferred from hospital to prison. Monday was the first time Akram had been seen on screen and spoken since his arrest - saying just one word when Deputy Chief Magistrate Sharon Freund asked if he heard a discussion about an extension of suppression orders: "Yeah". The court orders cover the identities of those who survived the shooting, but allow the survivors to self-identify if they wish. Outside court, Akram's lawyer, Ben Archbold, said it was too early to say what plea his client would enter, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. He said Akram was doing "as well as can be expected" while in custody in Goulburn supermax prison.

'It's never too late': Savannah Guthrie's new plea for mother's release as FBI analyses glove

Savannah Guthrie has issued a plea for her 84-year-old mother's release two weeks after she disappeared in a suspected kidnapping, telling anyone involved that "it is never too late to do the right thing". In her latest video appeal, the US TV anchor addresses "whoever has her, or knows where she is" - adding that Nancy Guthrie's loved ones "still have hope". It comes as investigators analyse DNA found on a glove that they recovered. The glove being studied appears to match one that was worn by a suspect who appeared in doorbell-camera footage taken the night Nancy Guthrie went missing. Authorities believe the suspect in the video kidnapped Guthrie in the early hours of 1 February. The FBI said on



Sunday that investigators recovered the glove from a field near the side of the road about two miles (three km) from Guthrie's home in Tucson, Arizona. The agency collected about 16 gloves from various locations near her home, though most turned out to have been discarded by people

searching for Guthrie. "The one with the DNA profile recovered is different and appears to match the gloves of the subject in the surveillance video," the FBI said. The agency said it has received preliminary DNA test results on the glove and is still waiting for "quality control and official confir-

mation" before entering an "unknown male profile" into its database. Earlier this week, investigators released video footage taken from a doorbell camera at Guthrie's front door that showed a masked man wearing gloves and a backpack. In the video, the suspect walks toward the camera and tries to cover it with his gloved hand before grabbing some brush from the front yard to block the camera's view. After conducting a forensic analysis of the video, the FBI announced earlier this week that it believed the man was between 5ft 9in and 5ft 10in (175-177cm) tall with an average build. The FBI also highlighted the backpack the suspect was wearing in the video, identifying it as a 25-litre Ozark Trail Hiker Pack.

Pressure grows for release of remaining Venezuelan political prisoners

Pressure is growing on the Venezuelan interim government to free the remaining political prisoners being held in the country. A pressure group campaigning on detainees' behalf, Foro Penal, said on Sunday that it had been able to verify that 444 political prisoners had been released since US forces seized Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro last month. But hundreds more remain behind bars, according to a tally kept by Foro Penal, even though the Trump administration has pressured Venezuelan officials to speed up their release. Activists say the health of some relatives who have gone on hunger strike



to demand the release of their loved ones is quickly deteriorating. Opposition party Vente Venezuela posted footage of one of the relatives - who appears to be unconscious - being tended to by others outside the Zona 7 detention centre in the cap-

ital, Caracas. According to a pressure group, 10 people went on hunger strike on Saturday to demand that their relatives, who are being held at Zona 7, be freed. They have been holding a vigil outside the police detention centre since 8

January, when the head of Venezuela's National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, first announced that "a significant number" of prisoners would be freed as a goodwill gesture to demonstrate what he said was the interim government's will "seek peace". While the Trump administration has praised Venezuela's interim government for the progress it has made so far, activists within the South American country have denounced delays and a lack of transparency in who is being freed. Members of the opposition have also denounced that those who have been released have been barred from speaking out publicly.

Bondi criticised after saying all Epstein files have been released



The US Department of Justice (DoJ) has said it has released all of the files required by the Epstein Files Transparency Act, but lawmakers have argued the release is insufficient. A letter sent to members of the US Congress on Saturday from US Attorney General Pam Bondi and her deputy said all documents held by the DoJ had been released. It contained a list of names appearing in the files. Kentucky Republican Representative Thomas Massie, who co-wrote the law, called for the DoJ to also release internal memos outlining past decisions on whether to charge Jeffrey Epstein and his associates. Millions of new files relating to the late sex offender Epstein were released by the DoJ earlier this month. At the time, the deputy attorney general said three million pages were not released. This was due to the existence of personal medical files, graphic depictions of child abuse or other material that would jeopardise investigations, said Todd Blanche on the day of the documents dump. In the latest letter, Bondi and Blanche wrote: "In accordance with the requirements of the Act, and as described in various

Department submissions to the courts of the Southern District of New York assigned to the Epstein and Maxwell prosecutions and related orders, the Department released all records, documents, communications and investigative materials in the possession of the Department' that 'relate to' any of nine different categories." No records were withheld from the DoJ's release "on the basis of embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity", the letter added. The individuals listed in the letter include people who "are or were a government official or politically exposed person", and whose name appeared at least once in the files, the letter says. The names appear in the files in a "wide variety of contexts", including some people who had "extensive direct email contact with Epstein or Maxwell" and others who were merely referenced in documents or news articles contained in the files, Blanche and Bondi wrote. Donald Trump, Bill Gates, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, and Bill Clinton - who are included in the list - all had documented past relationships with Epstein and Maxwell.

IRAN MUST ABANDON ENRICHED URANIUM AND NOT PRODUCE MORE, NETANYAHU SAYS

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says the US must require Iran to relinquish all of its enriched uranium and be barred from enriching more, as part of any nuclear deal with Tehran. In a speech in Jerusalem on Sunday, he outlined several conditions he wanted, including that "all enriched material has to leave Iran" and that "there should be no enrichment capability". His comments come as Iranian and US officials prepare for a second round of talks in Switzerland on Tuesday. Iran will consider compromises to reach a nuclear deal if the US is willing to discuss lifting sanctions, Iranian deputy foreign minister Majid Takht-

Ravanchi told the BBC in Tehran. However, Iran regards zero enrichment as a red line and a violation of its rights under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The US has piled pressure on Iran to reach a deal and has built up its military capabilities in the Middle East, sending two aircraft carriers - including its largest-ever warship - to the region. Additional American naval forces will protect against any potential threats in the region, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told a news conference in Slovakia. He said US President Donald Trump "prefers diplomacy and an outcome of negotiated settlement" over direct attacks on Iran. Trump's top envoy Steve Witkoff and son-



in-law Jared Kushner are set to meet Iranian negotiators including Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who is travelling to Geneva. "No-one's ever been able to do a successful deal with Iran, but we're

going to try," Rubio said. Under the 2015 nuclear deal, from which Trump withdrew, Iran had agreed to limit its nuclear activities and allow international inspections in return for the lifting

of crippling economic sanctions. Ahead of the latest round of talks, Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC Tehran has offered to dilute its 60%-enriched uranium as evidence of its willingness to compromise. Highly enriched uranium, at near weapons-grade level, has deepened suspicions that the Islamic Republic is moving towards the development of a nuclear weapon, something it has always denied. "We are ready to discuss this and other issues related to our programme if they are ready to talk about sanctions," Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC. He would not confirm whether this meant lifting all or some sanctions. He also did not say whether Iran

would consider agreeing to ship more than 400kg of highly enriched uranium out of the country. Washington has been pushing for a deal with Tehran, but Netanyahu said he raised "scepticism" with Trump during a recent meeting at the White House. "I said that if a deal is to be reached, it should have several components... that we believe are important not only for the security of Israel, but for the security of the world," Netanyahu said. One of Israel's key demands include curbing Iran's development ballistic missiles, which have been used to strike Israel. Tehran has so far refused to discuss its ballistic missile programme with US officials.

WESTON & STOECKER WIN GB'S SECOND GOLD OF DAY

Team GB made history by winning two Winter Olympic titles on one day for the first time as Matt Weston and Tabitha Stoecker clinched mixed team skeleton gold in thrilling style. It came after Charlotte Bankes and Huw Nightingale won the snowboard cross mixed team event earlier on Sunday. Weston produced a stunning race to make more of his own history in Cortina - he is the first Briton to win two gold medals at a Winter Olympics having claimed individual gold just two days ago. Stoecker, 25, had given Weston a tough task with her run of 1:00.77, 0.18 seconds off the pace of the Germans, with the British pair - ranked top seeds - the last to run. But 28-year-old Weston, who won Team GB's first medal at the Games, showed why he is the best skeleton racer in the world with a sublime 58.59secs run to clinch a second medal with a final time of



1:59:36. It is also the first time Great Britain have won three gold medals at a single Winter Olympics. "The individual event is amazing but doing it as a team when we're normally an individual sport is amazing," said Weston. "To have my team-mate by my side as Olympic champions, two-time for me which is

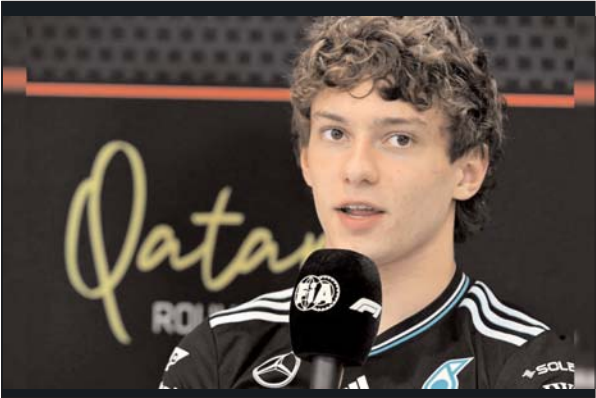
crazy. I'm looking forward to the celebrations!" A second British team, Marcus Wyatt and Freya Tarbit, missed out on a medal by an agonising 0.01secs as the two German teams of Christopher Grotheer and Jacqueline Pfeifer and Axel Jungk and Susanne Kreher took silver and bronze, respectively. The

mixed event, making its debut at Milan-Cortina, sees the sliders hurtle down the track one after the other with a quick reaction time crucial as five red lights going off prompts them to set off. Pushing off before the lights go out results in heavy penalties or even disqualification and that led to many of the

sliders erring on the side of caution with some hesitant starts. Janine Flock, who won gold on Saturday in the women's event, blew the Austrian team's chances when she incurred a one-second penalty for reacting too soon at the start, opening the door for both British teams to get on the podium. But the two German teams were too good and the only way Wyatt and Tarbit could have got on the podium would have been if Weston and Stoecker had not. Two-time world champion Weston came into this Games stating that only gold would be good enough and he will now walk away as the most decorated man in British Winter Olympics history. After finishing 15th in Beijing four years ago, Weston's rise in the sport has been meteoric and his two Olympic golds add to the three Crystal Globes - overall World Cup titles - he won consecutively from 2024.

KIMI ANTONELLI LEADS GEORGE RUSSELL AS MERCEDES TOP FINAL DAY OF 1ST WEEK'S F1 TESTING IN BAHRAIN

Mercedes drivers Kimi Antonelli and George Russell were the fastest at the end of three days of Formula 1 preseason testing in Bahrain on Friday. Antonelli topped the afternoon session, replacing Russell behind the wheel. Russell led the way in the morning as the teams can run only one car on track in the test. Three more days of testing are scheduled next week in Bahrain, after a secretive "shakedown" test in Spain last month. Russell said Mercedes still has work to do before the first race of the season, the Australian Grand Prix on March 8. "Barcelona was very smooth, and probably smoother than we actually anticipated, in terms of reliability, in terms of performance," he said. "We've got to Bahrain and in both regards we've taken a step back. "We've got another test, a month until Melbourne. We're obviously very focused on the performance but you've also got to finish the race if you want to fight



for the result. Being a driver, you're always focused on the performance, and a number of the team members are really focused on reliability and working hard on that." Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton tested for the entire day and was second to Antonelli by more than half a second. McLaren's Oscar Piastri also participated in both sessions and placed fourth. Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Isack Hadjar followed. The drivers are testing new cars amid sweeping changes for 2026 that have made cars smaller and lighter and highlighted

the strategy of charging an on-board battery and using electrical energy to boost speed. Hadjar praised team's new power unit, saying it "seems so far reliable, powerful, so I'm very happy so far. Very surprised already from the Barcelona shake-down to here, like how many laps we managed to achieve. "It just seems easier to push to the limit compared to last year's car. It's a bit slower in general, and also lighter, smaller." Charles Leclerc led the way for Ferrari on Thursday, going fastest by half a second from champion Lando Norris.

"Never Count Him Out": Sania Mirza Backs Novak Djokovic Amid Grand Slam Drought

Indian tennis legend Sania Mirza has backed Serbian legend Novak Djokovic, insisting that it is far too early to write off the great tennis player despite his Grand Slam title drought since the end of 2023. Speaking to ANI, Mirza dismissed suggestions that time may be running out for the 24-time Grand Slam champion, emphasising that champions of Djokovic's calibre should never be underestimated. "We can never count Novak Djokovic out. That is the truth about it. He beat Jannik Sinner at the Australian Open 2026 semifinals. And he's somebody who has clearly



shown us that, even after all these years and at this age, he can still beat the best players in the world and be among the best. So you can never count Novak out," Mirza said. Djokovic last won a Grand Slam title after defeating Daniil Medvedev in the final of the 2023 US Open.

Since then, the Serbian legend has featured in two finals-2024 Wimbledon, where he lost to Carlos Alcaraz, and the 2026 Australian Open, where he lost again to Alcaraz. Djokovic's recent performances have reignited the debate around his longevity and ability to continue

competing at the highest level. His victory over world No. 2 and Italian star Jannik Sinner at the 2026 Australian Open semifinals served as a reminder of his enduring class and competitive spirit. As the season progresses, all eyes will remain on the former world No. 1 to see whether he can add to his already historic Grand Slam tally and further cement his legacy as one of the sport's greatest players. Mirza also believes that replicating Serena Williams's dominance is no easy feat, but sees potential in a handful of current players who could shape the next era of women's tennis.

Sumit Nagal Bows Out Of Chennai Open; Doubles Top Seeds Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha-Pruchya Isaro Through To Semi-Finals

Former champion Sumit Nagal bowed out of the Chennai Open ATP Challenger with a 6-4 6-7 3-6 loss to Russian Petr Bar Biryukov in the second round on Thursday. The India No. 1 won the first set against big-serving left-hander Biryukov, ranked No. 305 in the world. Nagal also had three break points in the second set on Biryukov's serve, but failed to convert them. With no breaks of serve, the set went into a tie-break, which Biryukov won before taking a 3-0 lead in the decider. Although Nagal fought back to level the final set at 3-3, Biryukov earned another decisive break in the eighth game and held serve to close out the game in two



hours and six minutes. In the longest match of the day, fourth seed Ilya Simakin overcame Australia's Philip Sekulic 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (1) in just under three hours. Simakin will

next face Biryukov for a spot in the semi-finals. Earlier in the day, Indian qualifier Sidharth Rawat, ranked No. 715 in the world, was defeated by Maks Kasnikowski, ranked

No. 419, in straight sets. The Pole advanced to the last eight with a 6-2, 6-3 win. In the doubles draw, top seeds Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha/Pruchya Isaro advanced to the last four with a 6-4, 6-1 win over wildcard duo Lohithaksha Bathrinath/Abhinav Sanjeev Shanmugam. They will next face the all-Indian pairing of S.D. Prajwal Dev/Nitin Sinha. The third seeds made it through to the semi-finals with a 4-6, 6-2, 10-8 win over fellow Indians Ishaque Eqbal/Manish Sureshkumar. Second seeds Siddhant Banthia/Saketh Myneni were knocked out 7-5, 6-4 in the last quarter-final of the day by the Indo-British duo of Sasikumar Mukund/Jay Clarke.

Vinicius Jr Bags Brace As Real Madrid Beat Real Sociedad To Claim Top Spot In La Liga



Vinicius Junior won and converted two penalties as Real Madrid thumped Real Sociedad 4-1 on Saturday to move provisionally top of La Liga. An impressive performance from Trent Alexander-Arnold on his first start in two-and-a-half months also helped Los Blancos move two points clear of champions Barcelona, who visit Girona on Monday. Madrid's convincing display inflicted a first defeat for visiting American coach Pellegrino Matarazzo, in his 10th match at the helm of Real Sociedad. Young striker Gonzalo Garcia and Fede Valverde were also on target for Alvaro Arbeloa's Madrid, who face an important Champions League play-off match against Jose Mourinho's Benfica on Tuesday in Lisbon. "We did great work in attack and in defence... you could tell that we were defending as a team during the whole game," Valverde told Real Madrid TV. "We've had long weeks where we've

been preparing a lot, and now we will fight for La Liga and the Champions League." Fit to start his first game since early December after a thigh injury, it did not take Alexander-Arnold long to make an impact. The England defender's cross was met with a delicate finish by Garcia, starting in place of French superstar Kylian Mbappe, who was feeling some knee discomfort. "Trent is a very intelligent boy, who understands the game very well, and has quickly understood what we want from him," Arbeloa told reporters. "We're lucky to have a player like this, who can play inside or outside... at set-pieces, with his kick he can set us off on the counter-attack very well, he's a great player." Real Sociedad pulled level after 21 minutes when Yangel Herrera was clumsily felled by Dean Huijsen in Madrid's box. Mikel Oyarzabal powered the spot-kick down the middle, but La Real's joy was short-lived.



'Extremely stupid' - ski jumper disqualified over boots

Mohun Bagan Beat Kerala Blasters 2-0 In Season Opener As Delayed And Truncated ISL Finally Begins

Defending champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant began their Indian Super League campaign with a comfortable 2-0 victory over Kerala Blasters in the season opener at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharathi Krirangan in Kolkata on Saturday. A first half strike from Jamie Maclaren (36th minute) and a second half injury-time goal from Tom Aldred (90'6) secured three points for the Mariners. Mohun Bagan SG head coach Sergio Lobera named a very strong lineup with all the familiar faces, including Dimi Petratos, Jamie Maclaren and Alberto Rodriguez, taking the field for the Spaniard's first match in charge of the Mariners. New signings Mehtab Singh, Robson Da Silva, and Amey Ranawade were the fresh faces in the whole match-day squad. On

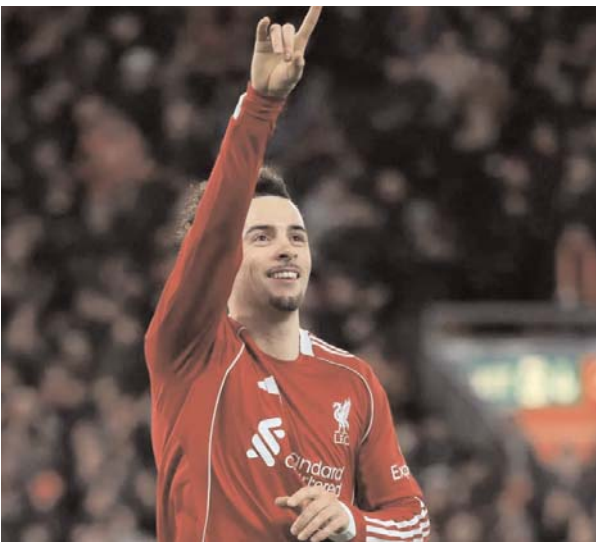


the other hand, David Catala named a young lineup in his first ISL match with foreign signings Oumar Ba and Victor Bertomeu making their debuts along with midfielders Y Ebindas and Rowlin Borges. The defending champions had the better possession in the first half with Anirudh Thapa and

Lalengmawia Ralte (Apua) controlling the midfield, allowing Robson and Liston Colaco to find space to attack through the wings. Dimi Petratos returned to his preferred No. 10 role behind Jamie Maclaren and the Australian almost gave his side an early lead. Liston Colaco found Petratos inside the box but

the forward snatched his shot which went wide of the goal. The Mariners were dominating possession, but were finding it difficult to break down the stubborn defence of Kerala Blasters. They did manage to take the lead after the water break through Jamie Maclaren. He was found inside the box by Petratos and the Australian striker turned Aiban Dohling and found the net through a composed left-footed finish for the first goal of the ISL season. Mohun Bagan ended the first half with the one goal lead, registering 10 shots on goal with six on target at the end of the half. Catala made two changes in the start of the second half bringing in Naocha Singh and Marlon Trujillo while Subhasish Bose was replaced by Amey Ranawade for Mohun Bagan.

Liverpool Outclass Brighton, Newcastle United Beat Aston Villa In FA Cup 4th Round



Liverpool advanced to the fifth round of the FA Cup by defeating Brighton & Hove Albion 3-0 at Anfield. Curtis Jones opened the scoring in the round-four tie after 42 minutes to set the hosts on their way. The Reds' spot in Monday night's draw was confirmed by a Dominik Szoboszlai hit and penalty from Mohamed Salah in the second half. Earlier, Manchester City moved into the fifth round with a 2-0 win at home to League Two rivals Salford City. Pep Guardiola's team went ahead in the sixth minute when Rayan Ait-Nouri's cross deflected in off Alfie Dorrington. City controlled the game, but it wasn't until the 81st minute when Marc Guehi tapped home with a close-range finish that made the win safe. Elsewhere, Sandro Tonali scored twice as Newcastle United produced an impressive second-half fightback to win 3-1 away to Aston

Villa. Aston Villa had taken the lead with Tammy Abraham's first goal since joining in January, but Unai Emery's side was reduced to 10 men on the stroke of halftime when goalkeeper Marco Bizot was sent off for committing a foul outside of his penalty area. Tonali turned the game around after the break and Nick Woltemade assured the win in the 88th minute of the game. Premier League struggler Burnley were the victim of a giant-killing act at home to League One's Mansfield Town, who fought back from Josh Laurent's opener for Burnley with second-half strikes from Rhys Oates and Lewis Reed. League One struggler Burton Albion took West Ham to extra time, with Crystaceno Summerville hitting a 95th-minute winner for the top-flight side, who ended with 10 men after Freddie Potts' 101st-minute red card.

“Hey Balwanth” will fully entertain the audience: Heroine Shivani Nagaram

The successful duo Bunny Vas and Vamsi Nandipati, who recently delivered blockbuster films like Little Hearts, Raju Weds Rambhai, and Eesha, are now coming before the audience with a full-length out-and-out entertainer titled “Hey Balwanth” (title changed from Hey Bhagavan). The film is being produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the Trishul Visionary Studios banner, directed by Gopi Achara, and presented by Nandipati Entertainments and Bunny Vas Works. The movie stars Suhas, Shivani Nagaram, senior actor Naresh, and anchor Sravanti in key roles. The film is set to release on February 20.



On this occasion, heroine Shivani Nagaram interacted with the media on Monday. Here are the highlights:

■ WHAT KIND OF MOVIE IS “HEY BALWANTH”?
This is my second film with Suhas and the third film in my career. In the previous movie with him, my character was very intense and the story was intense too. But in this film, it is much lighter and more entertaining. I really enjoyed doing this role. The entire movie will entertain the audience fully. At the end, the father-son emotion will also touch everyone. My character has innocence along

with comedy.

■ WILL THIS FILM COMPLETE YOUR HAT-TRICK OF HITS?
The movie is very good. I strongly believe it will definitely be a hit. The characters of Sudarshan, Suhas, and mine will make you laugh a lot. Naresh and Vennela Kishore's characters are hilarious. The interval bang will be a surprise and very enjoyable.

■ WHAT MADE YOU

ACCEPT THIS FILM?
I always pick the best story among what comes to me. My first film didn't have comedy, the second was full comedy, and this film also has comedy. I liked both the story and my character as soon as I heard it.

■ WHAT IS THE BUSINESS SHOWN IN THIS FILM? ARE YOU CONNECTED TO IT?
No, that is Naresh sir's family business in the film. I'm not connected to it. You

should watch it in theatres and enjoy. You will laugh a lot.

■ HOW IS THE MOVIE GOING TO BE OVERALL?
It is a full entertainment film with colorful visuals and good music. Naresh and Vennela Kishore's comedy will entertain. Every character will make you laugh.

■ WE HEARD YOU ARE ALSO A SINGER?
I learned Kuchipudi and music. I am a singer turned actor. I did a small humming bit in Little Hearts and sang a song in Aarambham. I'm open to singing if opportunities come.

■ HOW WAS WORKING WITH SUHAS AGAIN?
He is very friendly and supportive, and a very good actor. Our combination will entertain in this film. Audiences will enjoy our scenes together.

■ DID YOUR FAMILY SUPPORT YOUR DECISION TO ENTER FILMS?
My family is very supportive. I proved myself with good films using the opportunity they gave me. They are very happy.

■ HOW ARE YOU MANAGING OFFERS AFTER THE SUCCESS OF LITTLE HEARTS?
I take success as an advantage and move to the next film, but I accept a film only if I like the story, irrespec-

tive of the combination. I see if I connect with the story and how important my role is. That is important to me.

■ WHAT KIND OF FILMS DO YOU WANT TO DO?
I didn't initially plan to become an actor seriously, but now I have recognition. I got lucky with good films, good teams, and good co-actors. I choose the best among what comes to me. I don't want to do 100 films; even if I do five, they should be good stories.

■ IF YOU GET OFFERS WITH STAR HEROES, WILL YOU ACCEPT WITHOUT CARING ABOUT THE STORY?
For me, cinema is cinema. If I like the story and my role, I will accept it. I came without any background. Maintaining the value given by the audience is important.

■ HOW ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU AS A TELUGU HEROINE?
Very happy. Now there are more writers and directors along with actors. Telugu girls are getting more opportunities. There is no big or small film difference now. Small films are also becoming big hits. Many people said if you don't do films continuously, you will disappear, but I want people to say that I always choose good films. I want to be selective like many other heroines.

Raashii Khanna Offers a Soulful Prayer to Mahadev This Maha Shivratri with ‘Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi’

A Dream Close to My Heart, I Share it With You as an Offering”:
Raashii Khanna's Soulful Vocals in ‘Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi’ Leave Fans Surprised
Raashii Khanna's Prayer in Melody Surprises Fans This Maha Shivratri: “I Offer Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi as My Prayer to Mahadev” As the sacred chants of echo across the country this Maha Shivratri, Raashii Khanna offers a deeply personal tribute with her vocals to Lord Shiva and surprises fans and audience, with her soulful rendition of “Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi.” Known for her luminous beauty and commanding cinematic presence, the celebrated and versatile actress, who has built an impressive body of work across Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema, steps into a space of pure devotion. Replacing spectacle with stillness and glamour with grace, Raashii embraces a quieter, more introspective expression of her artistry. She shared the devotional bhajan with a heartfelt note, captioning, “On this divine day, I offer Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi as my prayer to Mahadev, sung from a place of faith, surrender, and gratitude. A dream close to my heart, I share it with you as an offering, with the hope that it brings calm, strength, and blessings. Har Har Mahadev.” Check out the post: “Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi” is a reverent invocation of Mahadev, the cosmic force who resides in the serenity of Mount



Kailash, symbolising destruction of ego, inner awakening, and transcendence. On the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri, a night believed to mark divine union and spiritual elevation, the bhajan carries even deeper meaning. Raashii approaches the composition with humility and emotional restraint, her voice gentle yet steady, creating a meditative experience that mirrors the essence of the festival. There is a quiet radiance in her rendition, a devotional sincerity that feels less like performance and more like prayer. Even as she marks Maha Shivratri with this spiritual expression,

Raashii Khanna's professional journey continues to soar. With an upcoming untitled project alongside Akshay Kumar, Ustaad Bhagat Singh opposite Pawan Kalyan, Farzi 2 with Shahid Kapoor and Vijay Sethupathi, Talakhon Mein Ek alongside Vikrant Massey, and the thriller Bridge co-starring R. Madhavan, she remains one of the most dynamic performers in the industry. Yet, through “Shiv Kailashon Ke Waasi,” Raashii reminds audiences that beyond the arc lights and accolades lies a core rooted in faith, a glow that shines brightest in devotion.

Mani Ratnam Praises Bejoy Nambiar’s Tu Yaa Main, Calls It a ‘Big-Screen Experience’

With Shanaya Kapoor and Adarsh Gourav's survival thriller, Tu Yaa Main hitting the big screens recently, the film has been drawing strong reactions from both audiences and critics for its gripping storyline and compelling suspense. The excitement reached a new high at a special screening held in the South, attended by master filmmaker Mani Ratnam, who also shared his words of appreciation for the film. The audience reaction video captures the excitement that followed the special screening of Tu Yaa Main, as they stepped out brimming with praise. While some called it a fantastic film, others



described it as a breath of fresh air, applauding its energy, nail biting moments, and gripping storytelling. Adding to the buzz, legendary filmmaker Mani Ratnam shared his appreciation, saying, “Bejoy Nambiar has brought a kinetic energy

to the film that is best seen on the big screen with an audience.” Packed with pulse pounding moments and an ever-present sense of danger, Tu Yaa Main is clearly striking a chord and reaffirming its place as a gripping theatrical watch. Directed by Bejoy Nambiar, < Tu Yaa Main is produced by Aanand L Rai and Himanshu Sharma under the banner of Colour Yellow, along with Vinod Bhanushali and Kamlesh Bhanushali of Bhanushali Studios Limited. The film speaks directly to today's youth, blending raw emotion with edge-of-the-seat storytelling, and is currently running in cinemas near you.

Delhi HC grants interim bail to Rajpal Yadav in cheque bounce cases

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday granted an interim suspension of sentence to Bollywood actor Rajpal Yadav in connection with multiple cheque bounce cases. Paving the way for his release from jail until March 18, a single-judge Bench of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma passed the order after being informed that a sum of Rs 1.5 crore had been deposited in the complainant company's bank account. Taking note of the payment made by the actor, the Delhi High Court suspended the sen-

tence on the condition that Yadav furnish a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh along with one surety of the same amount. It also directed him to surrender his passport. It was further submitted that Yadav's niece is



scheduled to be married on February 19 in Shahjahanpur, for which interim relief was sought. “Interim suspension of sentence till the next date of hearing. You should be present in the court or remain present through video conferencing. We do not want any discrepancy,” Justice Sharma observed. The matter is now slated for further hearing on March 18, and Yadav will remain out of custody till then. The relief comes days after the Delhi High Court had taken a stern view of the actor's conduct.

Rs 12,490 crore net worth today: When SRK lost everything!



Shahrukh Khan, European Fans Page

Mumbai: Bollywood's Badshah Shah Rukh Khan's journey reads like a modern-day fairytale written in sweat, struggle, and unshakable belief. From a modest Delhi home and the heartbreak of losing his parents at a young age, to standing today as India's richest actor with an estimated net worth of Rs 12,000 crore, his rise is nothing short of extraordinary. There were no film families, no shortcuts, only a young boy with dreams bigger than his circumstances and the courage to leave everything familiar behind. Each rejection, each failure, and each lonely night in Mumbai became a brick in the road that led him to the throne he occupies today.

■ WHAT MANOJ BAJPAYEE REVEALED

His close friend and fellow Bollywood actor Manoj Bajpayee has often spoken with deep respect about SRK's early struggles, recalling how SRK's rise was anything but easy and how his confidence was built from hardship, not privilege. In a recent interview with Faridoon Shehryar, Manoj said, “I have known Shah Rukh since my Delhi days. I have huge appreciation for his achievements. I take great pride whenever I see his house and his family. I know how he lost everything and how he gained everything.” As per the Hurun Rich List that was released on October 2025, Shah Rukh Khan officially entered the billionaire club for the first time, marking a historic moment not only for him but also for Indian cinema.

KATTALAN’ FIRST SONG RELEASED; SUNIL SHINES IN HIGH-ENERGY ITEM NUMBER

The first song from Kattalan, the grand action thriller produced by Shareef Muhammed under the banner of Cubes Entertainments, has been released. Telugu star Sunil, already familiar to Malayali audiences through major films like Pushpa and Jailer, is the main attraction of the track. Presented as an item number, the song highlights Sunil's energetic and powerful dance performance. Composed by B. Ajaneesh Loknath, the track titled “Majako Mallika” is written by Vinayak Shashikumar and sung by Anand Sriraj and Bhadra. It has been released in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi. Kattalan is gearing up for a massive pan-India

release on May 14, and is expected to be one of the biggest theatrical launches in Malayalam cinema. The film is directed by newcomer Paul George, following the producer's earlier success with the blockbuster Marco. The teaser released earlier received tremendous response, showcasing thrilling action sequences and hinting at stunt scenes never before seen in Malayalam cinema. Antony Varghese plays the lead role, supported by a large ensemble cast including Dushara Vijayan, Kabir Duhan Singh, Raj Tharandasu of Pushpa fame, Bollywood actor Parth Tiwari (noted for his role in Kill), and Malayalam actors Jagadish, Siddique, vlogger-singer Hanan Shah, rapper Baby Jean, and Hipster.



Internationally renowned action director Kecha Khamphakdee, famous for

the Ong-Bak series, has choreographed the action sequences in Thailand along

with his team. The well-known elephant “Pong”, who gained popularity through the Ong-Bak films, is also part of the movie. Music director B. Ajaneesh Loknath, who rose to pan-Indian fame with blockbusters like Kantara and Maharaja, is composing the film's music. Even before completing production, the film has reportedly broken multiple pre-release records and has secured one of the biggest overseas deals in Malayalam cinema. T-Series has acquired the music rights, while Shemaroo will handle the digital and satellite distribution. Kattalan is made on a massive scale as a pan-India project. The script is written by Joby Varghese, Paul George, and Jero Jacob, with dialogues by Unni R.

The film will release in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi. Crew members include Executive Producer Jumana Shareef, Cinematographer Renadive, Additional Cinematographer Chandru Selvaraj, Editor Shameer Muhammed, Stunt Directors Kecha Khamphakdee and Action Santhosh, Production Designer Sunil Dass, Creative Producer Dipil Dev, Production Controller Deepak Parameswaran, Audiographer Rajakrishnan M R, Sound Designers Kishen and Saptha Records, Costume Designer Dhanya Balakrishnan, Makeup Artist Ronax Xavier, Lyricist Suhail Koya, Still Photographer Amal C Sadar, Choreographer Shareef, and VFX studio 3 Doors.