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INBRIFS

Derek O'Brien raises call for universal basic minimum wage in RS

New Delhi: Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien on Friday raised the "urgent need for a Universal Basic Minimum Wage" during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, arguing that stagnant wages and rising youth unemployment were locking millions into working poverty. Framing his intervention as both an economic and social imperative, O'Brien said, "One in three youth in India are not in employment, education, or training. And for those who have jobs, there is no meaningful minimum wage floor. This is a structural crisis that demands a national response."

Rahul slams Centre over textile tariffs



New Delhi (TSIT) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday criticised the Union government's textile trade policy, alleging that India faces a competitive disadvantage against Bangladesh due to higher tariffs. In a WhatsApp message, he claimed India would compete with 18% tariffs while Bangladesh enjoys zero tariffs. Gandhi also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of conceding to conditions set by former US President Donald Trump, calling it harmful to Indian textile interests.

CM Stalin lays stone for Tambaram commissionerate building

CHENNAI: Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday laid the foundation stone for the new Tambaram Police Commissionerate building. At an event held at the Secretariat, the Chief Minister also flagged off 360 new vehicles for the police department, including vehicles for the sniffer dog squad and other operational units. He inaugurated new buildings for the police and fire departments across the State at a total cost of Rs 122.19 crore through video conferencing.

Congress wins majority of urban local bodies in Telangana



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana's ruling Congress party has won nearly 60 per cent of urban local bodies, the results show on Friday night. The Congress party captured power in 64 out of 116 municipalities and three out of seven corporations. Main Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) bagged 13 municipalities, while Forward Block captured one urban local body. There were no clear winners in 38 municipalities. This triggered camp politics by both Congress and BRS to lure independents and others to win the posts of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons. The Congress party claimed vic-

tory in 75 per cent of the municipalities. An impressive performance by BRS denied the ruling party a clean sweep. In the previous municipal elections held in 2020, then ruling party TRS (now BRS) had captured power in over 100 urban local bodies. The ruling party also captured power in Mancherial, Ramagundam and Nalgonda corporations and was leading in Mahabubnagar. In the 60-member Kothagudem corporation, Congress and Communist Party of India (CPI) won 22 seats each. Congress leaders said there was a friendly contest between them. BJP, which failed to capture any

municipality on its own, emerged as the single largest party in the Karimnagar corporation. It secured 30 seats in a 66-member corporation. The BJP was also on its way to emerge as the single largest party in the Nizamabad corporation. It won 24 out of 45 seats, the results for which were declared till 8 p.m. Nizamabad and Karimnagar are among the eight Lok Sabha seats held by the BJP in

Telangana. Out of 2,582 wards in municipalities, the Congress party bagged 1,347 wards while BRS secured 717 wards. The BJP was distant third with 261 seats. Others, including AIMIM and independents, won 256 seats. Out of 414 divisions in seven municipal corporations, results have come so far from 378 divisions. Congress won 177, while the BRS bagged 57 divisions.

PRIYANKA CONGRATS REVANTH AFTER CONGRESS URBAN POLL WIN

Hyderabad (TSIT) Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra met Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in New Delhi and congratulated him on the Congress party's landslide victory in the state's urban municipal polls. She appreciated party leaders and workers for their coordinated campaign that secured a strong public mandate. Revanth Reddy briefed her on governance reforms, welfare schemes, investments, and development initiatives being implemented in Telangana.

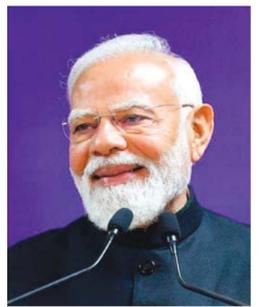


'Celebrating medium that is trusted voice for people': PM Modi on World Radio Day

New Delhi (TSIT): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday highlighted the enduring relevance and transformative power of radio on the occasion of World Radio Day, describing it as a "trusted voice" that connects people across remote villages and bustling cities alike.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister wrote, "World Radio Day is about celebrating a medium that is a trusted voice for people, be it in remote villages or bustling cities. For years, the radio has delivered timely information, amplified talent and encouraged creativity. This is a day to acknowledge the efforts of all those associated with this medium."

Highlighting his monthly radio address, 'Mann Ki Baat', the Prime Minister noted how the programme has evolved into a unique platform for direct communication with citizens. "Through #MannKiBaat, I have experienced the potential of the radio firsthand in bringing out the societal strength of our people.



This month's programme will take place on Sunday, 22nd February. Do share your inputs for the programme," he added. The Prime Minister's remarks underscore the continued importance of radio as one of the most dynamic, reactive and engaging mediums of communication.

Despite rapid technological advancements and the proliferation of digital platforms, radio has adapted seamlessly, offering new and interactive ways for audiences to participate and engage.

Concealing Tirupati laddus adulteration would have been 'sacrilege', says CM Naidu

AMARAVATI (TSIT) : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday defended his government's decision to go public with the allegations of adulteration of Tirupati laddus, saying concealing the matter would amount to "sacrilege". Addressing the Assembly, the Chief Minister said withholding the findings would be a betrayal of public trust. If future discrepancies were to arise, then the government would be held accountable.



temple and used standard ingredients and animal fats for making laddus, which are revered and sought after by crores of devotees.

The claims sparked a nationwide outcry and hurt the sentiments of people belonging to the Hindu community. "If we didn't disclose (laddu adulteration), it would be a sacrilege for us. A question would arise tomorrow: why didn't you (govt) tell?" said Naidu. The Chief Minister used the floor of the House to reassure the public that all the temples in the state have been "cleansed". "No possibility to hurt anybody's senti-

ments. The NDA government will take the onus of saving the sanctity of every temple and I am reiterating it to people," he added. Further, the TDP supremo expressed dismay over allegations from YSRCP leaders linking Heritage Foods, a dairy company owned by the CM's family, to the laddu adulteration controversy. "I don't understand. I don't know what Heritage has to do with it (laddu adulteration). Until now, Heritage did not ask money from the government. Will not ask in the future also," said Naidu. Calling Heritage Foods a "family livelihood" being managed by professionals, Naidu accused YSRCP leaders of "tarnishing" its reputation to inflict financial damage. Naidu also highlighted the achievements of the TDP government in nearly 20 months. Later, Speaker C Ayyannapatrudu adjourned the House to Saturday.

Always lived on hope: Shivakumar on K'taka leadership

Bengaluru, Feb 13 : Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, addressing the ongoing leadership row, stated on Friday that he has always lived on hope. "There will certainly be results for everyone's hard work. Where there is effort, there is reward. Where there is devotion, there is God," he said.



Shivakumar made these comments when reporters questioned him on Friday at the Indian Institute of Science and later in Tiptur. When asked if he felt more confident after his recent trip to Delhi, he repeated his earlier remarks.

In response to reports that the party high command had summoned him and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on February 17 to discuss power-sharing, Shivakumar stated, "I am not aware of this. Time will provide the answer."

When asked about Home Minister G. Parameshwara's intention to seek clarification from the high command on the power-sharing issue,

Shivakumar responded, "I wish him well." On whether he had requested a report on legislators allegedly undertaking a foreign tour, Shivakumar said, "I have not sought any report on this matter. I have not tried to gather information about it." When questioned about the possibility of the high command intervening to halt the foreign study tour, Shivakumar replied, "I have not discussed this with the high command. Those going on the foreign tour have not spoken to me." Shivakumar emphasised his commitment to party discipline, stating, "I will abide by whatever the party says. I will not interfere in any other matter. If

MLAs raise any issue, the high command leaders and the Chief Minister will address it. I will not intervene. It is my duty to remain a disciplined soldier of the party and the government."

In response to questions about the government completing 1,000 days in office and the upcoming event in Haveri, Shivakumar stated, "We have organised the Bhoomi Guarantee scheme programme in Haveri tomorrow."

Regarding his visit to Sage Ajayya's mutt, Shivakumar explained, "It is Ajayya's annual fair. I visit every year, and I will go again this year. This evening, we have organ-

ised a dinner for the conference guests and arranged for them to visit Vidhana Soudha." Shivakumar said he met with World Bank officials earlier in the day.

"They visited villages and inspected the water supply system. They also visited the KRS dam and appreciated the safety measures there. They said that if Karnataka submits proposals for water supply, stormwater drains, and other projects, they are ready to extend support. I have instructed officials to prepare proposals accordingly."

When asked about the arrest of BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj on Thursday night, he said, "Please ask the Home Minister about this matter. I read about his arrest in the newspapers. Beyond that, I have no further information." Meanwhile, Congress MLC and Shivakumar supporter Channaraj Hattiholi stated, "It is our wish that Shivakumar should become the CM. It is also the wish of the people of the state and workers of the Congress party."

BANGLADESH ELECTION RESULTS 2026

Tarique Rahman emerges as new face of Bangladesh

Dhaka (TSIT) Tarique Rahman, who lived in London in self-exile for 17 years, has emerged as the new face of Bangladesh, with the party founded by his father set to return to power after a 20-year gap. The 60-year-old leader's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami, known to be close to Pakistan, secured 68 seats. The Awami League party of Hasina was barred from contesting the elections, which recorded 59.44 per cent voter turnout.



founded by Rahman's father Ziaur Rahman, a military ruler turned politician. The party was led by his mother Khaleda Zia for nearly four decades after the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in 1981. Five days after his return to Bangladesh amid a massive welcome in December last year, Rahman was struck by a personal tragedy as Khaleda Zia died after a prolonged illness. Rahman became the chairman of the BNP in the absence of his mother at a time when the party

PM Modi congratulates BNP's Tarique Rahman, says 'India will support democratic, inclusive Bangladesh'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday warmly greeted Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Tarique Rahman on his "decisive victory" in Bangladesh's parliamentary elections and said he looked forward to working with him to advance common development goals. "I convey my warm congratulations to Mr. Tarique Rahman on lead-



ing BNP to a decisive victory in the Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh," Modi said in a post on X.

was facing a state of political wilderness ahead of the polls. The evolving scenario did not allow him to spend some private days amid personal loss, as events unfolded so quickly, he scarcely had time to reflect. Rahman is widely seen as a product of dynastic politics, but his family's

political background earned him a sort of acumen. He is credited with manoeuvring his party in a complicated scenario to ensure its key stake in the politics ahead of the general elections. A soft-spoken Rahman drew massive crowds as he spearheaded the campaign for his party.

7 killed in Bengaluru crash: Six students in XUV were on early morning joyride

Bengaluru, Feb 13 : Of the seven people who were killed in an horrific accident on Friday morning near M. Sathyavara village, six were in an early morning joyride in an XUV without informing their families, police investigation has revealed.



In a tragic incident, seven youths lost their lives in a road accident early on Friday morning near M. Sathyavara village in Hoskote taluk of Karnataka's Bengaluru Rural district. The accident occurred on the Hoskote-Dabaspet

road. The identities of six of the deceased have been confirmed as Ashwin Nayar (17), Arhaan Sharif (17), Ayaan Ali (17), Bharat (18), Ethan George (17), and the bike rider Gagan. One more person who died in the acci-

India, Israel to deepen AI cooperation at global summit next week

New Delhi, Feb 13 : India and Israel's cooperation in artificial intelligence (AI), climate innovation and digital transformation is focused on real-world challenges, from resilient agriculture and future-ready skills to responsible AI applications, an official statement said on Friday. The Embassy of Israel in New Delhi has announced the arrival of a high-level Israeli delegation to participate in the 'India AI Impact Summit 2026' next week. The delegation, led by Ilan Fluss, former Ambassador and EDT's Policy Coordinator at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mancherial Court Awards Three-Month Rigorous Imprisonment in Attempt to Murder Case.

Mancherial, Feb 13, TSIT: A local court in Mancherial has convicted a 58-year-old man in an attempt to murder case and sentenced him to three months of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of Rs.3,000. The case, registered as Crime No. 210/2018 at CCC Naspur Police Station and numbered as Sessions Case No. 38/2019, was tried under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code. Delivering the judgment, Principal Assistant Sessions Judge A. Nirmala found the accused, Pudari Chandraiah, a resident of Thigalpadah village in CCC Naspur mandal of Mancherial district, guilty of the offence and imposed the sentence accordingly. Additional Public Prosecutor N. Ravinder represented the prosecution before the court. The case was investigated by S. Pramod Reddy, Sub-Inspector of Police. Court duties were coordinated by police personnel K. Ranjith (PC-3123), N. Govind Rao (HC-273) and Ch. Venkateshwarlu (HC-2053). Prashanth is currently serving as the Station House Officer of CCC Naspur Police Station. Mancherial (Rural) Circle Inspector A. Ashok appreciated the efforts of the investigation team and prosecution in securing the conviction.

Congress Set to Claim Chairman Post in Shadnagar Municipality

RANGAREDDY In a highly intense and closely watched municipal election, the Congress party emerged victorious, clearly establishing its dominance in Shadnagar. The vote counting, held on Friday in Rangareddy district, witnessed dramatic turns at every stage. From the very beginning, Congress maintained a steady lead and ultimately secured the magic figure required to claim the chairman's post. Out of 28 wards, Congress won 15 seats, positioning itself firmly to take control of the municipal chairmanship. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) secured 11 seats but fell short of the required majority. Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), despite winning fewer seats, managed to make its presence felt in the contest. Adding to the political intrigue, BRS rebel candidate Sudheer also registered a victory. The municipal elections were treated as prestigious by all major parties, including Congress, BRS, and BJP. Leaders from every party campaigned extensively, meeting voters and making several promises to gain support. However, it was Congress that ultimately demonstrated clear supremacy. The ruling party MLA, Veerlapalli Shankar, played a crucial role in the campaign, taking the election as a matter of prestige and leading efforts ward by ward. He was joined by former MLA Pratap Reddy and former ZPTC member Shyam Sundar Reddy, who actively participated in campaigning across the municipality. Although Congress did not achieve the overwhelming number of seats it had anticipated, securing the chairman's post brought celebrations among party cadres.

Two Names in the Race for Chairman
With Congress securing a clear majority in the Shadnagar municipality, attention has now shifted to who will be chosen as the chairman. Speculation is rife within party circles. Youth Congress leader Ande Mohan, known to be a close associate of MLA Veerlapalli Shankar and an active participant in party programs, is one of the prominent names being discussed. Another strong contender is Agranuru Baswam. Both leaders are reportedly aspiring for the chairman's post. However, the party leadership is expected to take a final decision within the next three days.

Centenarian Bandari Mallamma, Grandmother of MEPA State President Puli Devender Mudhiraj Passes Away



Warangal: Bandari Mallamma (101), a centenarian and grandmother of Puli Devender Mudhiraj, State President and Founder of Mudhiraj Employees and Professionals Association Telangana (MEPA), passed away on Friday at Deekshakunta village in Nekkonda mandal of Warangal district. Family members, community elders, and Mudhiraj leaders paid floral tributes and conveyed their condolences to the bereaved family. Speakers recalled her long life, values, and support to the family and community. On the occasion, MEPA State Vice President Ponnamp Raju Mudhiraj expressed deep sorrow over her demise and said her passing is an irreparable loss to the family. He remembered her as a respected elder whose life stood as an example of simplicity and strength. Relatives including Bandari Pawan, Manjula, Madhavulu, Nithin, Venkatamma, and Sujatha were consoled by visiting leaders and well-wishers. Local Mudhiraj community representatives and leaders from Deekshakunta village including Eduraboyina Ekambaram, Bandari Malliah, Chiraboina Kommallu, Chiraboina Sambaiah, along with several directors, relatives, and community members participated in the condolence gathering and paid their respects.

Congress Emerges on Top in Final Rangareddy Municipal Results

RANGAREDDY: The final results of the municipal elections in Rangareddy district have confirmed the ruling Congress party's lead across six municipalities, marking a significant political development in the district. The results were officially concluded after the completion of counting in all 126 wards. Across Amangal, Ibrahimpatnam, Shadnagar, Shankarapally, Moinabad, and Chevella municipalities, Congress secured a total of 54 wards out of 126. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi followed with 46 seats, while the Bharatiya Janata Party won 16 wards. Independent candidates claimed nine seats.



Manukota Chairman Election Hangs in Balance: Congress Woos Independents After Candidate's Shock Defeat

MAHABUBABAD: In a dramatic turn of events, the race for the Manukota Municipal Chairman post has been thrown into a vortex of intense political maneuvering after the ruling Congress party's official candidate suffered a defeat. With no party securing a clear majority, independents have emerged as the kingmakers, leading to a high-stakes game of negotiation. The 36-seat council is finely poised. Congress, which won 13 seats and has the support of 3 CPM members, has a combined



strength of 16. The BRS, with 11 seats and backing from 3 CPI members, stands at 14. The magic number required for victory is 19, making the 5 independent winners the center of attention. Sources indicate that Congress, after the loss of

its candidate Balu Chauhan, has made a "bumper offer" of the chairmanship to one of the independents to bridge the gap. Simultaneously, the BRS is aggressively courting the same group to secure power. Adding to the intrigue is former MLA Shankar Nayak, who is determined to secure the chairman's post for his daughter and newly elected councillor, Tejaswini. Known for his stubborn resolve, Nayak is reportedly leaving no stone unturned in the negotiations.

Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy Leads Congress to Historic Win in Nalgonda Municipal Corporation

Hyderabad: Komatireddy Venkat Reddy led the Congress party to a landmark victory in the first-ever elections of the Nalgonda Municipal Corporation, with party candidates winning a clear majority of seats and securing control of the civic body. The elections, held after Nalgonda was upgraded from a municipality to a municipal corporation, were treated as highly prestigious by all major political parties. Taking personal responsibility for the campaign, Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy



conducted extensive ward-level tours, held corner meetings, and directly interacted with residents to understand and address local issues. The Congress campaign focused on development, urban infrastructure, drink-

ing water supply, road works, and resolution of long-pending civic problems. The minister's promise to develop Nalgonda as a model corporation and transform it into a super smart city drew strong voter support. Party leaders credited the coordinated efforts of cadre, local leadership, and grassroots workers for the decisive mandate. With this victory, Congress has reinforced its political strength in the Nalgonda region and signaled continued focus on urban development and public welfare.

Singareni CMD Jyothi Budda Prakash Meets Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu



Hyderabad: Newly appointed Singareni CMD Jyothi Budda Prakash met Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu at Praja Bhavan on Friday and paid a courtesy visit after assuming charge. During the meeting, the Singareni chief briefed the Deputy Chief Minister on the current status of operations and key priorities of the Singareni Collieries Company. They also discussed issues related to coal production, employee

welfare, and future expansion and modernization plans. The Deputy Chief Minister conveyed his best wishes to the new CMD and expressed hope that Singareni would continue to strengthen its performance and contribute significantly to the state's energy and industrial sectors. Officials said the interaction focused on improving efficiency, sustainability, and worker-focused measures in the organization.

BJP Blooming in Karimnagar Corporation

Karimnagar TSIT: Union Minister Bandi Sanjay's strategies were successful as Bharatiya Janata Party won the most seats in the Municipal Corporation elections in Karimnagar. Out of 66 seats, BJP won 30 seats, Congress Party 14, BRS 9, MIM 3, AIFB 2, Independents won 8 divisions.

Congress Municipal Poll Victory Attributed to CM Revanth Reddy's Leadership

Hyderabad, Feb 13: Celebrations erupted across Telangana as the Congress Party registered a strong victory in the municipal elections across several urban local bodies in the State. Party leaders and cadres described the results as a clear reflection of public confidence in the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the governance initiatives undertaken by the State government. Congress functionaries said the mandate demonstrates growing public support for welfare delivery, development-focused administration, and grassroots outreach carried out over the past two years. Party ranks also credited the organizational drive led by TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, stating that his continuous engagement with district and mandal-level cadres helped energize the campaign machinery and unify leaders at all levels.



Public victory, says Ponnamp Prabhakar

Hyderabad, February 13, TSIT: Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar expressed happiness over Congress party's resounding victory in municipal elections held across the state. He said that this victory is not only a political party's victory, but also a victory for the people and the Telangana government's schemes. He said that these results are proof of the trust placed by the people of the town on the Congress party and the welfare and development programs undertaken by the government. Minister said that the people in the urban areas have given a clear verdict and supported the Congress party by show-



ing their unwavering support to the people's rule. He explained that the main reasons for this success are urban development, expansion of infrastructure, transparent governance, corruption-free system and accessible administration. The minister congratulated all the councilors

Advisor Harkara Venugopal Rao Welcomes CM Revanth at Airport After Municipal Poll Victory

Hyderabad: Following the party's sweeping victory in the municipal elections, Telangana Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy received a warm welcome at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport upon his arrival in the city. Telangana State Government Advisor Harkara Venugopal Rao personally welcomed the Chief Minister at the airport and conveyed his heartfelt congratulations on the resounding electoral mandate. Senior leaders and party supporters also greeted the Chief Minister and expressed happiness over the municipal poll results.



Speaking on the occasion, Harkara Venugopal Rao said the landslide victory reflects strong public endorsement of the government's governance model, welfare measures, and development initiatives. He noted that the

mandate would further strengthen the government's resolve to accelerate urban development

and improve civic services. Party cadres celebrated the occasion at the airport premises, describing the

victory as a reflection of people's trust in the Chief Minister's leadership and reform agenda.

Congress Dominates Combined Karimnagar, But BJP Takes Karimnagar City; BRS Holds Sircilla Stronghold

KARIMNAGAR (TSIT): The Congress party has maintained its strong momentum in the municipal elections across the combined Karimnagar district, securing a majority in most municipalities and registering a clean sweep in Dharmapuri. However, the results presented a mixed picture, with the BJP capturing the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation and the BRS asserting its dominance in the Sircilla Municipality. In the high-stakes Karimnagar Corporation, the BJP emerged as the single largest party, winning 30 of the 66 divisions, while Congress trailed with 12. The BRS made its presence felt in Sircilla, winning 27 out of 39 wards in a commanding performance. Congress performed strongly elsewhere, securing 38 out of 60 seats in Ramagundam Corporation and a clean sweep of all 15 seats in Dharmapuri. The party also registered comfortable wins in Jagityala (23/50), Huzurabad (16/30), Peddapalli (28/36), and Manthani (11/13).
Key Municipal Results at a Glance:
Karimnagar Corporation (66 Divisions): BJP 30, Congress 12, BRS 9, Others 15.
Ramagundam Corporation (60): Congress 38, BRS 13, Others 9.
Sircilla Municipality (39): BRS 27, Congress 6, BJP 5.
Dharmapuri Municipality (15): Congress 15 (Clean Sweep).
Jagityala Municipality (50): Congress 23, BJP 6, BRS 4, Others 17.
Peddapalli Municipality (36): Congress 28, BRS 6, Others 2.
Huzurabad Municipality (30): Congress 16, BRS 8, BJP 5.
Vemulawada Municipality (28): Congress 13, BJP 8, BRS 5.

Take preventive measures to prevent fire accidents in the city



- CITY MAYOR GUNDU SUDHARAMI
- NOTICES TO INSTALL FIRE PROTECTION DEVICES IN BIG CITY BUILDINGS...
- MAYOR WHO PARTICIPATED AND REVIEWED WITH THE COMMISSIONER...

fire accidents in the city of Hyderabad, there is a need to take early measures to prevent any fire accidents from happening in the city. Commercial shopping complexes, cellars, hospitals, colleges, DRF officials should carry out inspections in lodges, function halls, etc., especially to ensure that cellars in big buildings are used only for parking. For this purpose special inspections are conducted and notices are given to the concerned owners to install fire safety protection devices in such areas. On this occasion, the Mayor said to encourage the installation of protective equipment and prevent any fire incidents in the city. DFO Shankar Lingam, EE Madhavi Latha, SFO Rajeshwar Rao, IT Manager Ramesh, Senior Assistant Vijay Kumar and others participated in this programme.

WARANGAL: Mayor Gundu Sudharani said that there is a need to take early steps to prevent fire accidents in the city. Commissioner Chahat Bajpai participated in a meeting organized with DRF and engineering officials in the Mayor's chamber at Baldia headquarters on Friday and made appropriate suggestions for effective implementation. On this occasion, the Mayor said that there is a need to take early fire protection measures in the city. Keeping in mind the upcoming summer season, it is necessary to take protective measures to prevent the spread of fire. She said that in view of recent

Will Implement Mekedatu, Upper Krishna Projects if Centre Approves: DCM Shivakumar

BENGALURU (TSIT) : Deputy Chief Minister and Irrigation Minister D.K. Shivakumar on [Day of the week, e.g., Friday] reiterated the state government's commitment to two major irrigation projects, stating that the Mekedatu balancing reservoir and the Upper Krishna project will be executed immediately upon receiving approval from the Central government. Speaking at the inauguration of the International Conference on Dam Safety at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Shivakumar emphasized the pressing need for these projects, particularly to secure the future water supply of Bengaluru.

"We will execute Mekedatu and Upper Krishna projects if the Centre gives approvals. We are confident that the Centre

would give the necessary approvals," the DCM said.

Highlighting the rapid growth of the state capital, Shivakumar noted that Bengaluru's population has already reached 1.5 crore and continues to swell, attracting industrialists from around the world. "We have the responsibility of providing water to the growing population of the city. As a result, we are planning to build a balancing reservoir at Mekedatu," he stated. He pointed out that while the Supreme Court has delivered a favorable judgment, the project is currently awaiting the Centre's nod. "This project will take care of future water needs of Bengaluru city and also produce 400 MW of electricity," he added. Regarding the Upper Krishna project, he assured that the government has



brought out a transparent policy for compensating land owners as per the 2013 Act.

Calls for Relaxing Buffer Zones to Boost Tourism

In a separate appeal, the Deputy Chief Minister called upon the central authorities to

relax the current 500-meter restriction on commercial activities near dams. He argued that easing these norms could unlock significant tourism potential and boost local economies.

"The dams currently have a 500-meter restriction for commercial activities, but it needs to be relaxed to promote tourism. It would help the local economy," he said.

Dams as National Assets and the Need for Safety

Addressing the core theme of the conference, Shivakumar described dams as symbols of the nation's strength and progress, empowering farmers and providing clean energy. However, he issued a stark warning about the challenges posed by aging infrastructure and climate change.

"Most of our dams are 60-70

years old and they need proper maintenance. Climate change is posing a serious challenge for dam safety. Unpredictable rains and floods are wreaking havoc around the world," he explained. He stressed that preventive measures are no longer a choice but a necessity.

Shivakumar noted that India has 6,500 dams—the third highest in the world—with Karnataka housing 232 of them. With two-thirds of the nation's dams being over 25 years old, he emphasized the need for increased focus on safety initiatives like the World Bank-supported Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP). He disclosed that the state government is currently spending Rs 1,500 crore on the repair and maintenance of 58 dams.

Ramesh Babu demands criminal action against MLA Sunil Kumar and MLC Ravikumar

Bengaluru: Ramesh Babu, member of the Legislative Council demands criminal action against BJP MLA Sunil Kumar and MLC Ravikumar and others who created a fake transfer letter of Chief Minister and shared it on social media and made false allegations of corruption.

He has filed a complaint with the Police Commissioner and demanded legal action against MLA Sunil Kumar and MLC Ravikumar who created a fake/forged transfer letter in the name of the Chief Minister and circulated it on social media.

He said that this letter is completely artificial and malicious, and that they have created a letter without a number of 2024 and have worked to tarnish his personality and destroy his character through propaganda.

Misleading the public, damaging the constitutional office of the Chief Minister, creating suspicion and unrest among the people against the government, and spreading false propaganda for political gain are criminal offenses. This act is a serious crime, especially forgery of government documents, use of false documents as authentic, defamation, dissemination of false information that threatens public peace, and criminal conspiracy. These are punishable offenses under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. Such an act by elected representatives is a very serious matter, he said, adding that it threatens the values of democracy.

Therefore, he has requested that an FIR be immediately registered against the concerned MLA and Legislative Council member; to apply the relevant BNS sections, conduct forensic examination of the fake letter, trace the original source on social media, and take immediate action to prevent further dissemination.

Adani Foundation inaugurates newly furnished Palimar GP office worth Rs 20 lac

Udupi, Feb 13: Adani Power Limited – Udupi Thermal Power Plant, through its CSR wing, Adani Foundation, inaugurated the newly furnished office of Palimar gram panchayat (GP), executed under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme at a total project cost of Rs 20 lac. The inauguration of the upgraded office infrastructure and newly installed furniture and fixtures was jointly carried out by Kishore Alva, executive director & president, Adani Group, and Soumyalatha Shetty, president, Palimar gram panchayat, in the presence of elected representatives, officials and members of the local community. Speaking on the occasion, Kishore Alva informed that the project was implemented by Adani Foundation in line with the Annual Action Plan for the year 2025-26 submitted by Palimar gram panchayat. He stated that Adani Power Limited – Udupi Thermal Power Plant is continuously supporting infrastructure development works in the surrounding seven gram pan-

chayats, based on the priorities identified by the respective panchayats, in addition to implementing several community development initiatives in the fields of education, health and promotion of rural sports. Highlighting the long-term engagement of Adani Power Limited with the Palimar village, Alva further informed that the company has spent nearly Rs 1.80 cr exclusively for Palimar gram panchayat towards community infrastructure development works over the years. Welcoming the decision of the panchayat to utilise CSR grants for the upgradation of its office infrastructure, he said that strengthening grassroots governance institutions is critical for improving service delivery and citizen satisfaction. He added that the modernised panchayat office will facilitate quicker processing of applications, better coordination among staff and more effective handling of public grievances, thereby enabling timely and transparent delivery of services to the villagers.

Karnataka BJP MLA arrested in Bikla Shiva murder case

Bengaluru, Feb 13 (UNI) Karnataka BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj was arrested on Thursday at Bengaluru International Airport, nearly eight months after being named an accused in the sensational murder of real estate operator VG Shivaprakash, popularly known as Bikla Shiva. The KR Pura legislator was taken into custody by the CID shortly after arriving from Ahmedabad, ending months of legal maneuvering.

The arrest followed Basavaraj's withdrawal of his bail petition from the Supreme Court on Wednesday, after the CID filed a caveat seeking to be

heard before any relief could be granted. Earlier, the Karnataka High Court had rejected the MLA's anticipatory bail plea on February 10 and cancelled the interim protection granted to him on December 26, 2025.

Bikla Shiva, known for intervening in property disputes, was brutally attacked outside his residence near Halasuru Lake in Bengaluru on July 15, 2025.

Police said a group of eight to nine men, armed with iron rods and machetes, carried out a swift assault around 8.10 pm, fleeing immediately in a white SUV accompanied by two-wheelers. Basavaraj is listed as accused number five in the

case and is scheduled to be produced before the Special Court for Elected Representatives on Friday.

The Supreme Court bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi allowed the MLA to withdraw his plea, granting him liberty to apply for regular bail after surrendering.

The court clarified it had not expressed any opinion on the merits of the case and asked the trial court to decide the bail application expeditiously.

Following the High Court's rejection of anticipatory bail, the CID issued a lookout notice for Basavaraj, citing the need for custodial interrogation.

Seven dead in Bengaluru highway crash

Bengaluru: Seven people were killed on Friday morning in a road accident near M Satyavara village in Hoskote taluk of Bengaluru Rural district, following a series of collisions involving a car, a motorcycle, and a canter vehicle. Preliminary investigations by the police suggest that overspeeding may have played a key role in the accident. The accident occurred on the Hoskote-Dabaspete National Highway when a car rammed into a motorcycle moving ahead of it. The impact reportedly caused the car to lose control and crash into a canter vehicle traveling on the same stretch, resulting in a serial collision. Six occupants of the car and the rider of the motorcycle died on the spot, police said. The sudden sequence of collisions has raised concerns over high-speed driving on the highway, a police official noted. Authorities said the car was allegedly moving at high speed when it hit the bike from behind, destabilising the vehicle and causing it to veer off course before hitting the canter.

"1,000 Days of Darkness": Karnataka LoP R. Ashok Slams Congress Govt on Eve of Convention

CHITRADURGA: Launching a scathing attack on the ruling Congress government in Karnataka, Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok on Friday termed the last thousand days of its administration as "dark days," questioning the very basis of the government's plan to hold a convention to mark the milestone. Speaking to reporters here, Ashok alleged that the state was plagued by corruption, administrative failure, and a crisis of leadership. "The past thousand days have been the dark days of the Congress government's administration. So, for what achievement are they holding a convention?" he asked.

Ashok claimed there was widespread confusion over who was actually running the state. "No one knows who the Chief Minister is in the state. If media persons ask about this, CM Siddaramaiah asks whose agents you are," he said, adding that the government had no right to celebrate given the prevailing situation.

The Opposition leader listed a series of grievances, including



the cancellation of ration cards, inaction on granting Bagar Hukum land titles, and alleged corruption driving contractors to suicide. He leveled serious allegations of financial impropriety, stating, "A scam of Rs 6,000 crore has taken place in the Excise Department, and it is not known whether this money is with Rahul Gandhi or has been paid to CM Siddaramaiah. Or perhaps the convention has been organized with this very money." Highlighting the human cost of the government's failures, Ashok pointed to the suicides of farmers and officials and a critical shortage of life-saving medicines in government hospitals.

He reiterated his demand for the resignation of the Excise Minister in light of the alleged scams and noted that one minister had already been forced to resign due to corruption charges. Turning his fire on the Deputy Chief Minister, Ashok remarked, "DCM D.K. Shivakumar and his brother D.K. Suresh have taken to the streets holding political guns. We have to see who will shoot," in an apparent reference to the escalating political rhetoric.

He also criticized the government's popular 'Shakti' scheme, which provides free bus travel for women. Ashok alleged that the introduction

of smart cards was a tactic to reduce the number of beneficiaries. "Initially, they said it was free for all women, now they are talking about smart cards. Not everyone will get the smart card. Since the government has become poor, this tactic has been adopted," he said, adding that a shortage of government buses had even led to school children being transported in lorries. Commenting on the arrest of BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj in an alleged assault case, Ashok termed it a "political conspiracy." He claimed the MLA had surrendered to the police and that the Congress government was targeting BJP leaders, warning that they would "face the consequences of this in the future." On the Bhadra Upper Bank Irrigation Project, Ashok said the BJP was willing to cooperate if the government called a meeting, but accused the ruling party of neglecting key issues like inter-state river disputes and language.

Karnataka to Expand Apprenticeship-Embedded Degree to Science, Arts Streams

BENGALURU: In a major push to enhance employability, the Karnataka government will extend its pioneering Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programme (AEDP) to students in Science (B.Sc.) and Arts (B.A.) streams. The announcement was made by Higher Education Minister Dr. M. C. Sudhakar on [Day of the week, e.g., Friday] while inaugurating a workshop for B.Com students entering the industry-training phase of the programme.

The AEDP, launched in the 2024-25 academic year, integrates classroom learning with hands-on industry apprenticeship. Addressing students at the Jnanajyoti Auditorium, the Minister stated that the programme has now reached a decisive stage in shaping students into job-ready professionals. Students who have com-



pleted two years of study in fields like Finance, Banking, Logistics, E-Commerce, and Retail will now complete their 4th and 5th semesters through direct training in industry settings.

"This practical training will significantly strengthen your career prospects," Dr. Sudhakar told the students. He urged them to approach this crucial phase with confidence and determination, emphasizing that overcoming hesitation and building self-belief are keys to success.

Highlighting an encouraging trend, the Minister noted that women students

form the majority among those proceeding for the first phase of apprenticeship training. He advised all students to embrace this transition from the academic to the professional world with commitment. Dr. Sudhakar revealed that Karnataka's innovative model has gained national recognition, with the University Grants Commission (UGC) adopting it for nationwide implementation. He recalled presenting the concept on a national platform, where it drew the attention of the UGC leadership and inspired broader adoption. Emphasizing the pro-

gramme's global relevance, the Minister reiterated that it is aligned with current industry requirements and evolving economic demands. "Similar employment-oriented curriculum models will soon be introduced for B.Sc. and B.A. students to meet sectoral skill needs," he stated.

The Minister also acknowledged the significant contribution of Sector Skill Organizations in advancing this initiative and expressed confidence that more employment-focused educational programmes will emerge in the future. The event was attended by Sector Skill Chairman and retired IAS officer Srinivas, industry representatives, Higher Education Department Secretary Khushboo Goyal, and Commissioner for Collegiate and Technical Education Manjushree, among others.

ORDI Hosts Racefor7 Press Conference in Bengaluru, Calls for Urgent Action on Rare Diseases

Bengaluru : Organization for Rare Diseases India (ORDI) hosted a press conference in Bengaluru ahead of the upcoming Racefor7 awareness run scheduled on 22nd February 2026. In a strong call for awareness, equity in healthcare, and urgent policy attention for rare diseases.

The conference brought together medical experts, rare disease patients and caregivers, and advocacy leaders to highlight the growing challenges faced by India's rare disease community and the need for collective action.

Mr. Prasanna Shirol, Co-founder and Executive Director, ORDI, emphasised the role of community-led movements such as Racefor7 in bringing rare diseases into mainstream public discourse. "India has made progress in the rare disease space through greater awareness and



evolving policies, but the focus must now shift to structured, sustained action. Patients need timely diagnosis, comprehensive supportive care, and equitable access to all available therapies, regard-

less of geography or affordability, supported by sustainable national funding. Platforms like Racefor7 help turn awareness into action by uniting stakeholders to drive advocacy and solutions, while

stronger investment in research and innovation remains essential for long-term progress. Equitable access to treatment must be the standard of care, not a privilege."

Dr. Meenakshi Bhat, Head – Director, CHG, Karnataka, added, "For many years, the management of rare genetic disorders focused on early diagnosis and prevention. After the announcement of the National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021, the emphasis is now on treatment of rare genetic diseases. Therapies are available for only 5% of 7000 known rare disorders, but many are very expensive and imported. Going forwards, it will be important to make indigenous, affordable treatments for genetic disorders in India. Where no treatment is available, doctors and scientists need to work together to develop new therapies.

Punjarjanna Charitable Trust President Parameshwara. R has been awarded the "Swami Vivekananda Community Service Excellence Award 2026"

Bengaluru: For his work in the educational development of backward communities and children, shaping the future of deprived and distressed children, Parameshwara. R of



Punjarjanna Trust has been awarded the "Swami Vivekananda Community Service Excellence Award 2026". As part of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary celebrations, Parameshwara. R has received the National Inspirational Award presented by the Indian Social and Achievers Forum, Chennai, and The Indian Forum for Social Leaders and Achievers.

Bhago Mobility Joins Forces with Honda to Deploy Electric Two-Wheelers Pan India, Starting with Delhi and Bengaluru

BENGALURU: In a significant push for sustainable urban logistics, Bhago Mobility on [Day of the week, e.g., Friday] announced the launch of a comprehensive electric mobility platform aimed at transforming last-mile connectivity across India. In a strategic partnership with Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) and supported by Honda Power Pack Energy India (HEID), the company will begin deploying electric two-wheelers in Delhi and Bengaluru, with a target for Pan India expansion over the next three years. The platform is specifically designed for delivery partners, ride-hailing drivers, and last-mile logistics work-



ers. It offers a bundled, subscription-based model that provides access to electric vehicles, a battery-swapping network, regulatory compliance support, and technology tools, effectively removing the traditional barriers to EV adoption in the commercial sector. The initiative tackles core challenges faced by urban mobility workers, including high upfront vehicle costs, charging downtime, and maintenance complexities.

EDITORIAL

Goodbye, South Block: From Child Visitor To Secretary, The Corridors That Made Me

It was 1951. I was seven years old when I first climbed the sandstone steps of the North Block. My mother had just joined the Government of India as a mid-level officer, directly recruited three years after independence and posted in the Ministry of Home Affairs. I had joined my mother coming from a middle-class locality in Mumbai, and a Marathi education. That ascent, my small hand trailing against the cool pink, stone, head craned upward - was my first encounter with the architecture of authority. And to see her name, Lilla Wagle Dhume, in brass lettering outside her room on the first floor. Did my 'Ai' really work here? Even at that age, I was struck by how regal it all looked - imposing without being ostentatious - solid, symmetrical, so certain of its place. Occasionally, I would visit my mother's room overlooking the then Rajpath and sit as quietly as possible, absorbing the movement of the turbaned peon carrying files, the low-hanging ceiling fan, and the murmur of officialdom. It was 1951. I was seven years old when I first climbed the sandstone steps of the North Block. My mother had just joined the Government of India as a mid-level officer, directly recruited three years after independence and posted in the Ministry of Home Affairs. I had joined my mother coming from a middle-class locality in Mumbai, and a Marathi education. That ascent, my small hand trailing against the cool pink, stone, head craned upward - was my first encounter with the architecture of authority. And to see her name, Lilla Wagle Dhume, in brass lettering outside her room on the first floor. Did my 'Ai' really work here? Even at that age, I was struck by how regal it all looked - imposing without being ostentatious - solid, symmetrical, so certain of its place. Occasionally, I would visit my mother's room overlooking the then Rajpath and sit as quietly as possible, absorbing the movement of the turbaned peon carrying files, the low-hanging ceiling fan, and the murmur of officialdom.

Advertisement - Scroll to continue

A Story About My Mother, Too

This is not only a story about buildings; it is about my mother. I remember her Kanjivaram sarees, her flared woollen coat, and her high-heeled brown shoes - elegant, dignified and purposeful. For sixteen years, she worked in North Block. As I grew older, I began to understand that she had issued letters of appointment on behalf of the Government of India to the earliest batches of the Indian Administrative Service - a new steel frame for a new republic. In those years, the corridors still carried the cadence of the ICS era, but the files bore the urgency of a nation finding its administrative voice. North Block and South Block had been built as part of the great imperial capital of New Delhi in the early decades of the twentieth century. But after Independence, their meanings quietly shifted. What had once symbolised imperial command had become the nerve centre of a democratic state. The same domes and colonnades now framed decisions taken in the name of "We, the People". Years later, history completed its circle. I joined the Ministry of Defence as a Director. My room was in South Block, on the side facing the Ministry of External Affairs. Beyond lay the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet Secretariat. If North Block had impressed me as a child, South Block took my breath away as an officer. The corridors were lined with red coir matting stretching endlessly from one end to the other. It took ten minutes to walk from my room at one end to that of the Defence Secretary - distance measured not only in steps but in hierarchy.

Those Power Corridors

I remember the wood-paneled walls of the Defence Secretary's office, where I was called in with fellow officers. I remember the inside of the offices of SM Ghosh and PK Kaul. I also remember the office of the Raksha Mantri, R Venkataraman, especially during Parliament sessions. We were expected to have every fact at our fingertips - not to brief the Minister directly, but through the Joint Secretary. My boss was Bhaskar Ghose, who never lost a moment puncturing pomposity by imitating the most powerful - behind their backs!

Fashion, Identity, and Delusion: The Real Challenge Facing Today's Youth

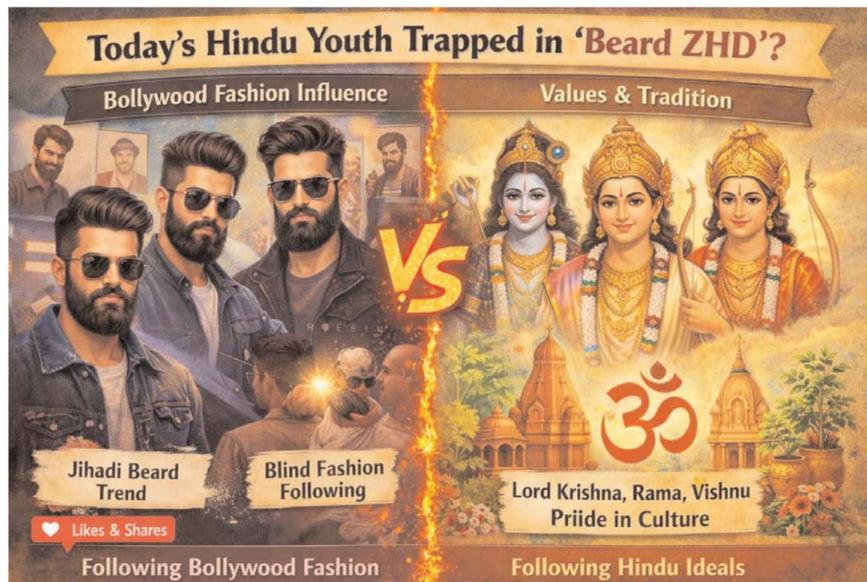


Every era has its own identity. This identity isn't simply defined by clothing, hairstyles, or facial hair, but by the mindset that guides both the individual and society. The biggest challenge facing young people today is that how they look has become less important, and what they think and who they emulate has become more important. External attraction, the glamour of social media, and instant popularity have made the definition of identity superficial.

Over the past few years, a heated debate has emerged regarding beards. Some consider them a symbol of modern fashion, while others see them as an example of cultural confusion and blind imitation. This debate becomes even more complex when it is linked to religion, politics, or conspiracy. Therefore, it is crucial that we rise above emotions, away from the noise, and approach this topic with a rational and factual perspective. Because when issues become a battle of identity rather than ideas, it creates division, not solutions.

History bears witness that both beards and clean shaves have been integral to Indian society. Vedic sages and saints sported matted hair, while royal courts also featured well-groomed, clean-shaven figures. Whether it's medieval or modern, both styles coexisted in every era. During the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, and Pandit Nehru all had distinct looks, but shared a common purpose. Clearly, a beard is not something new or foreign, nor is a clean shave a foreign concept. Both have evolved according to time, circumstances, and personal preferences.

Today, the beard trend isn't limited to India. It's become a global fashion trend. Hollywood, European fashion,



sports, the music industry, and digital influencers—beards are seen everywhere in varying styles. Social media has further accelerated these trends. With a single photo, video, or reel, trends spread across the world in an instant. Therefore, to assume that a single industry, group, or ideology is "spreading" a particular fashion would be an oversimplification of reality.

But it's equally true that blind imitation has become a serious problem. When young people blindly adopt a trend simply because it's popular or considered "cool," their personality becomes borrowed. Fashion becomes a problem when it overshadows thinking and reduces identity to mere external symbols. The question isn't whether to have a beard or not; the question is whether we understand the reasons behind our choices, or are we simply following the crowd?

In this context, it's important to discuss the role of cinema and digital media. The entertainment industry not only tells stories but also sets lifestyle standards. Repeatedly portraying the same "look," "style," and "heroism" as ideals limits the choices available to young people. This reduces diversity and increases uniformity. Responsible media is one that reflects the diversity of society—

where simplicity is attractive, and diverse personalities are acceptable. But as viewers, it's also our responsibility to learn to distinguish between appearance and value. Balance is essential even in discussions of God, culture, and beauty. Our traditions have been extremely diverse. Some have ascetics with matted hair, others decorated idols; some have renunciation, others adornment. Beauty isn't just about outward appearance, but also about conduct, compassion, restraint, and prudence. If we limit beauty to just the face, beard, or fashion, we diminish our own cultural depth.

The real threat facing today's youth isn't a single fashion, but a lack of self-awareness. When young people understand their history, values, and cultural diversity, adopting—or not adopting—a trend is their conscious and independent decision. But when identity rests solely on external symbols, confusion arises and individuals become easily influenced.

The solution doesn't lie in the language of fear, blame, or conspiracy. The solution lies in education, dialogue, and self-confidence. It's important to teach young people that fashion is fleeting, but character is enduring. Trends today may change tomorrow, but the values you embrace

will last a lifetime. Therefore, choices must be made thoughtfully—not under pressure, fear, or blind imitation. Society must also be wary of the language of division. When we view trends through the lens of fear or conspiracy, dialogue is stifled and polarization grows. Conversely, when we ask questions—"Why?"; "How?"; and "To what extent?"—understanding develops. A healthy society is one that allows for disagreement, but with respect and facts. Today, we need to teach young people critical thinking—so that they don't blindly follow every trend. They should have a sense of ownership over their bodies, time, and identity. It's not wrong to follow fashion; what's wrong is to lose oneself in it. The true beauty of a person lies not in external adornment, but in self-confidence and discernment. Ultimately, this debate isn't about beards, it's about direction. What are we building our identities on—appearance or ideas? If we give young people education, opportunity, and self-respect, they will be secure in any fashion—because their roots will be strong. The future of society is determined not by outward appearances, but by the strength of thought. And that same thought teaches us that trends come and go, but values are what endure the test of time.

Coaching culture and child deaths: A failing society in the name of success



PRIYANKA SAURABH

The suicide of another student in Kota—this is not ordinary news, nor merely the personal tragedy of a single family. It raises serious questions about the education system, social mindset, and the so-called "success model" that we have unquestioningly accepted over the past two decades. The suicide note of student Kriti, who committed suicide, is not merely a document of personal anguish, but an indictment of our entire society—parents, coaching institutes, schools, and policymakers all fall under its purview. In her suicide note, Kriti appealed to the Indian government and the Ministry of Human Resources, stating that if they truly wanted to ensure no children died, coaching institutes should be shut down as soon as possible, as these institutions leave students hollow from within. This statement wasn't the result of a momentary impulse, but rather an expression of the long-standing mental torture that millions of students endure daily. The real question isn't why Kriti wrote this, but whether she was wrong. Today, coaching in India is no longer a means of education, but has become a massive, profit-driven industry. Cities like Kota, Sikar, Hyderabad, Delhi, and Patna are called "education hubs," where millions of teenagers arrive each year carrying the burden of their parents' dreams. At the center of these dreams are a few narrow words—IIT, AIMS, NEET, rank, and selection. Coaching institutes convince students that if they don't get selected, they are failures. This definition of success is so narrow that it leaves no room



for the average student, and there's no human process for recovery from failure. Kriti's statement that "even a girl who scores 90+ can commit suicide" shatters our myth that mental distress is limited to weak or unsuccessful students. This thinking is not only wrong but also dangerous. Today, the pressure is no longer just about passing exams or getting good marks, but about meeting the expectations of parents, teachers, and society. Every child carries within themselves an imaginary image of the "perfect student," which they constantly lose. Even high marks and excellent performance no longer guarantee mental peace, because the problem isn't the studies themselves, but the environment in which they are taught. The lines Kriti writes for her mother reveal the root of this entire crisis. She explains that she was forced to choose science, even though her true interests lay in English literature and history. This story isn't limited to one household. It's the reality of thousands, if not millions, of homes across the country, where societal expectations matter more than a child's interests. Parents often forget that a child is not an extension of their unfulfilled ambitions, but an independent individual. Social comparison—that so-and-so's son became a

doctor or that so-and-so's daughter made it to IIT—blinds us so much that we overlook our children's desires, abilities, and limitations. Kriti's warning to her younger sister makes this suicide note even more poignant. She wants her sister to be allowed to study what she wants to study and become what she wants to be. Ironically, even as she dies, she's trying to save someone else's life. This warning isn't just for a mother, but for society as a whole, which imposes its dreams on children instead of listening to them. Today's schools and coaching institutes teach children mathematical formulas, chemical equations, and competitive exam strategies, but they are completely failing to impart life's most important lessons. They fail to teach children how to deal with failure, how to understand mental stress, and that asking for help is not a weakness. Competition has been transformed into a tool of fear rather than inspiration. Rank lists, mock tests, and constant comparisons instill a lasting inferiority complex in children, causing them to view themselves only through the lens of marks and selection. Each such death is followed by a formal government statement, an investigation ordered, and a few days of debate. After that, everything returns to normal.

Bangladesh Polls: What Are Jamaat And Yunus Planning Next?

There's a tectonic shift in Bangladesh - not quite unexpected - in its entirety, but also in its less obvious facets. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has managed to win a two-thirds majority, getting 212 of 299 seats as of today. At first sight, the win seems to portend a period of stability for Bangladesh to mend its bruises and get its act together. But not so fast. The Jamaat-e-Islami, long accustomed to winning a maximum of 18 seats earlier, has now got an unprecedented 68 seats - 71 in total with its 11-party alliance.

While the BNP's win is logical given the complete absence of the Awami League, the shift in Jamaat's performance is not so easily explained. There are other factors at play here. There is also the affirming of the referendum, which means Bangladesh's political set-up will change in ways that are difficult to predict, even for its new leaders.

How 'Gen Z' Went West

Important aspects that need to be noted are as follows. First, the so-called 'Gen Z' revolutionary party leaders were remarkable in their near absence. It won just five seats and contested only 30. That slide has been apparent as some five universities voted for the Jamaat's student wing, rather than the aspiring 'student' leaders themselves. Put plainly, they were routed. Clearly, the glowing references that Chief Advisor Mohammed Yunus once gave to them as being the planners behind the revolution, fell flat. Somewhere, somebody erred. Certainly not the Jamaat. But taking them onboard ruined whatever prospects the students may have had. The Jamaat itself wound up gaining a certain 'secular' image, with rumours - which cost nothing - of Nahid-ul-Islam, all of 27 years old, being their Prime Ministerial face. In the event, he won his Dhaka-11 seat, against formidable odds. But that's about all. There's a 'use-and-throw' sense to this whole exercise, which merits a lot more scrutiny.

The Forgotten Awami League



Second, the impact of the total absence of the Awami League was apparent in the low turnout, which, again, was expected. Also, not quite unexpectedly, the Gopalganj seat, long an Awami League (AL) stronghold, saw a total BNP victory. Clearly, there is an 'understanding' among the two that a win for a mainstream party is better than the Jamaat taking over. Along with this, however, come worrying reports of threats against Awami voters. Moreover, the AL has been unable to garner international support against its complete ban.

No one among the 300-plus foreign observers seems to have pointed this out, and major international newspapers barely mentioned the AL. Those were also the news outlets that continuously hammered home the story of rigged elections earlier. Much of this was true, but hardly unique, if you consider Bangladesh's election history. In short, the AL needs to desperately burnish its image as a party and reinvigorate its leaders on the ground.

It's The Jamaat's Quiet Victory

Third, and most important, is the Jamaat win. It's not just its largest win in its history. Even in the Dhaka-17 constituency, where Tarique Rehman is said to have won by a 'landslide', the actual vote difference with the Jamaat rival was a mere 4,399 votes, though he did win big in Bogura-6. Jamaat is also

only marginally behind the BNP in vital seats along the Indian border, such as Lalmonirhat (where the Chinese have a strong presence in multiple capacities) and Nilphamari, winning entirely in Rangpur and other border areas. All of this is concerning for Delhi, given Jamaat's past hostility and its continuing proximity to Pakistan despite recent assurances of friendship with all neighbours (that list of neighbours even included the smallest nation - Bhutan - alongside India, sending a firm signal to Delhi). Among major parties, it is the Jamaat that has been the most vociferous against India during election rallies. The Daily Star also reports that it was the most notable in weaponising social media to spread disinformation. There is another critical issue. The Jamaat Chief declared total support for the referendum when others had strong reservations. That piece of complex legislation is what matters, since it will change the way Bangladesh is run for the foreseeable future. It aims to reduce the powers of the Prime Minister and give more to the opposition. And the Jamaat intends to see the step through. What one must watch out for is how it will again use its domination in universities to create disaffection against the ruling party down the line. For the immediate future, it will bat for peace and tranquillity for a population that has had enough chaos.

Dubai's tourism industry achieves third successive record-breaking year with 19.59 million international visitors in 2025, up 5% YoY

13th February 2026: Strategic partnerships, global marketing campaigns and major events contributed to Dubai welcoming 19.59 million international overnight visitors in 2025, marking a 5% increase compared to 18.72 million arrivals in 2024, according to data published by the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), and the third successive year of record-setting figures. The city ended the year by welcoming more than 2 million visitors in a single calendar month for the first time in December, building strong momentum heading into 2026. DET's diversified year-round market strategy, delivered in collaboration with domestic stakeholders and more than 3,000 international partners, showcased Dubai to new and returning visitors from both traditional and emerging markets. This led to an increase in arrivals from key regions, while also attracting new permanent residents, investors and businesses. In December, the city welcomed 2.04 million international overnight visitors, marking +6% year-on-year growth. The previous record month for the city was January 2025, with 1.94 million visitors. His Excellency



Issam Kazim, CEO of the Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Visit Dubai), part of DET, said: "Guided by visionary leadership, Dubai's record international visitation is a testament to global confidence in the destination and the effectiveness of policies aligned with the Dubai Economic Agenda, D33, as well as the collective strength of partnerships across sectors and communities that defines our city. As we look forward,

our priorities will be to continue enhancing Dubai's global competitiveness through digital innovation and providing exceptional guest experiences at every touchpoint, with powerful momentum after surpassing the 2 million figure for a single month in December for the first time. In partnership with stakeholders across the public and sectors, we remain dedicated to sustained investment in capacity, infrastructure development, and initiatives to

make Dubai the world's best city to visit, live and work in." According to DET's full year data, the GCC and MENA proximity markets had a combined 26% share of overall visitors to Dubai in 2025, with 2.99 million (15%) and 2.17 million (11%) arrivals respectively. Western Europe was again the largest source market to Dubai, with 4.10 million visitors (21%), up from 3.74 million in 2024, followed by CIS and Eastern Europe (2.89 million; 15%), South Asia (2.89

million; 15%), North East and South East Asia (1.85 million; 9%), the Americas (1.40 million; 7%), Africa (897,000; 5%) and Australasia (401,000; 2%).

Hotel sector performance

Adding to its appeal for international audiences, new openings and the launch of strategic initiatives saw Dubai's hotel and hospitality sectors record impressive results in 2025. By the end of December, the city's hotel inventory reached 154,264 rooms across 827 establishments, which puts it well ahead of global peer cities such as Bangkok, New York, Paris and Singapore, and almost on par with London in terms of total room inventory, openings properties across all segments and in various locations. In 2025, a number of new initiatives were introduced to drive the growth in Dubai's hospitality sector. Launched by DET in October, the Hotel Incentive Programme for investors is designed to stimulate development in future high-growth areas, and applies to new hotels, resorts, hotel apartments and other facilities located within Dubai South, Palm Jebel Ali, Dubai Parks, and the Dubai Islands.

India's Spam Shield: The Truecaller Community Blocked Nearly 1,200 Crore Unwanted Calls in 2025



New Delhi, 13 February 2026:

Indians received more than 4,000 crore spam calls in 2025, reflecting the growing scale of fraud, disruption, and digital risk in everyday communication. In India, every phone call carries meaning - it can open doors to opportunity, deliver vital information, or even expose individuals to serious risk. As the country accelerates towards becoming a digitally empowered and globally competitive economy under the vision of Viksit Bharat, trust in communication has become a defining pillar of progress. Truecaller's latest report shows that 1,189 crore of these unwanted calls were blocked before reaching users, helping millions avoid scams, wasted time, and unnecessary stress in an increasingly connected economy. With over 100 crore active phone connections in the country powering com-

merce, governance, and personal relationships, Truecaller today released its 2025 India Insights Report, offering a data-driven view of how spam and fraud are reshaping the nation's communication landscape and how technology is helping protect crores of people every day. The report captures how these decisions played out across 2025, revealing both the scale of digital risk and the growing importance of protection. "In a country where connectivity is powering opportunity at every level, trust has become our most valuable digital asset," said Rishit Jhunjhunwala, CEO, Truecaller. "Fraud today is not just a technical problem, it is a human one. It exploits fear, urgency, and uncertainty in moments that matter most. Our responsibility is to make sure that no Indian has to choose between staying

connected and staying safe. Our focus at Truecaller is simple: help people stay connected without compromising their safety and stopping risk before it turns into loss."

The Scale of Communication Risk in 2025

According to the report, Truecaller identified more than 4,168 crore spam calls across India in 2025, reflecting the full extent of disruptive and potentially harmful communication. Of these, 1,189 crore unwanted calls were blocked by Truecaller users. In addition, 770 crore fraudulent calls were detected, many of them impersonating banks, government authorities, payment platforms, and well-known brands. Spam messaging also remained a major concern. During the year, over 12,903 crore spam SMS were identified, with volumes increasing significantly in the second half of 2025.

Motovolt Mobility earns 2026 Great Place to Work Certification™

Kolkata February 2026 - Motovolt Mobility, an advanced and reliable electric two-wheeler solutions provider, has been certified as a Great Place to Work® by Great Place to Work Institute India. 95% of employees said Motovolt is a great place to work. This prestigious certification, based on comprehensive employee feedback, underscores Motovolt's dedication to creating a workplace built on trust, pride, and camaraderie. The certification follows a rigorous evaluation process conducted by Great Place to Work®, the global authority on workplace culture. Through a proprietary employee experience survey, the assessment measured the quality of relationships between employees and leadership, employees and their work, and among team members themselves. Commenting on the recognition, Mr. Tushar Choudhary, Founder & CEO of Motovolt Mobility, said, "We are delighted to be certified as a Great Place To



Work®. At Motovolt, we believe and work together as one big family. Since our inception, we have considered employee experience a top priority every day. This certification is a testament to the culture we have incul-

cated among our employees. Their discipline and dedication have helped us earn this incredible recognition." The results paint a compelling picture of Motovolt's organisational health: 97% of respondents find

Motovolt a safe place to work 97% feel good about how they contribute to the community 95% are proud to tell others that they work at Motovolt 95% feel people here are treated fairly, regardless of their gender 95% consider Motovolt a great place to work overall Founded in 2019, Motovolt has grown rapidly while maintaining its focus on employee well-being and organisational culture. The Great Place to Work® certification comes at a pivotal moment as the company expands its operations, launches new products, including the flagship M7 range of e-scooters, and scales its distribution network across India. This recognition reinforces Motovolt's position not only as a leader in sustainable transportation but also as an employer of choice in India's burgeoning EV industry. The certification validates the company's belief that creating great products begins with empowering great people.

Reliance receives US licence to import Venezuelan crude oil

New Delhi: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited has received a US general licence to purchase Venezuelan crude oil directly, enabling India's largest private refiner to resume imports of discounted heavy feedstock that aligns with its Jamnagar refinery configuration and optimises refining margins. Reliance, which operates the world's largest single-site refining complex at Gujarat's Jamnagar, was among international companies which in late January got a general licence from the US for buying Venezuelan oil directly without violating sanctions, sources aware of the matter said. Since capturing Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro last month, the US has eased sanctions on the South American nation's energy industry to resume the flow of oil from the country that holds the world's largest reserves. Reliance did not respond to requests for comments. So far, the US has permitted the



sale of Venezuelan oil through traders, but now a general licence will give authorisation to purchase oil directly from an entity that has already extracted it from below ground or is in possession of it. Reliance was a regular buyer of Venezuelan crude before the US slapped sanctions on Nicolas Maduro's regime in 2019-20. It bought oil when the US introduced a temporary sanctions relief in 2024. And when Venezuelan oil started flowing again through traders this year, it bought 2 million barrels from Vitol. The window was also utilised by state-owned Indian Oil Corporation

(IOC) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), who have jointly bought 2 million barrels (1.5 million barrels for IOC's Paradip refinery in Odisha and rest 500,000 barrels for HPCL's Visakhapatnam unit in Andhra Pradesh). Prior to sanctions, IOC too was a regular buyer of Venezuelan crude. US President Donald Trump last week said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had agreed to stop buying Russian oil and purchase more oil from the US, and possibly Venezuela, following a key US trade deal with India. That agreement has led to the US dropping puni-

tive 25 per cent tariffs imposed on Indian goods for the import of Russian oil. Sources said tapping Venezuela is also part of India's efforts to diversify its crude sources. This comes at a time when imports from Russia are set to fall. Venezuela's crude grades, especially from the Orinoco Belt, are predominantly heavy and extra-heavy. Reliance's Jamnagar refineries are among the world's most complex and geared toward efficiently processing heavy, sour crudes, which trade at a deep discount to international benchmarks due to production challenges and logistical constraints. Buying Venezuelan oil will allow Reliance to optimise its refining margins because these barrels can be upgraded into higher-value products like diesel, kerosene and LPG that fetch strong demand in India and export markets. Also, Reliance's business model is built on integrated refining-petrochemical operations.

US adds 1.3 lakh jobs; past payroll figures cut sharply

Washington: US employers added a surprisingly strong 1,30,000 jobs last month, but government revisions cut 2024-2025 US payrolls by hundreds of thousands. The unemployment rate fell to 4.3 per cent, the Labour Department said Wednesday, February 11. The report included major revisions that reduced the number of jobs created last year to just 1,81,000, weakest since the pandemic year of 2020, and less than half the previously reported 5,84,000. The job market has been sluggish for months even though the economy is registering solid growth. But the January numbers came in stronger than the 75,000 economists had expected. Healthcare accounted for nearly 82,000, or more than 60 per cent, of last month's new jobs. Factories added 5,000, snapping a streak of 13 straight months of job losses. The federal government shed 34,000 jobs.



Average hourly wages rose a solid 0.4 per cent from December to January. The unemployment rate fell from 4.4 per cent in December as the number of employed Americans rose and the number of unemployed fell. Weak hiring over the past year reflects the lingering impact of high interest rates, billionaire Elon Musk's purge last year of the federal workforce and uncertainty arising from President Donald Trump's erratic trade policies, which have left businesses unsure about hiring. Dreary numbers have been coming in ahead of

Wednesday's report. Employers posted just 6.5 million job openings in December, fewest in more than five years. Payroll processor ADP reported last week that private employers added 22,000 jobs in January, far fewer than economists had forecast. And the outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas reported that companies slashed more than 1,08,000 jobs last month, the most since October and the worst January for job cuts since 2009. Several well-known companies announced layoffs last month.

ICAR-IIMR and Gourmet Popcornica Collaboration Paves the Way for an Aatmanirbhar Popcorn Maize Ecosystem

February 12, 2026: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) - Indian Institute of Maize Research (IIMR), in collaboration with Gourmet Popcornica Private Limited, India's largest popcorn company, is witnessing the successful outcomes of a strategic partnership aimed at strengthening India's popcorn maize value chain, enhancing farmer incomes, and advancing India's ambition to become a global hub for high-quality popcorn maize production. ICAR-IIMR Recognises Gourmet Popcornica for Stellar Contribution Towards Making India aatmanirbhar in Popcorn Maize On ICAR-IIMR's Founder's Day on 9th February, 2026, Gourmet Popcornica received an award for its ongoing work with in the popcorn maize ecosystem. The Award recognises staff, progressive farmers and India companies for contribution in the extension and expansion of Maize in India. The award was presented by



Dr Hanuman Sahay Jat - Director of Maize, ICAR-IIMR to Mr. Y Yugandhar - CEO Crop integration, Gourmet Popcornica and Mr. K Mahiadhar Reddy - Director, Gourmet Popcornica. Luminaries present at the Award Ceremony included the Chief Guest for the event, Vice Chancellor of PAU, Dr. Satbir Singh Gosal, Dr Sian Das (former Director of IIMR), Dr Nachiket Kotwaliwale (Director -

ICAR -CIPHET), Dr Ashok Mehta (former Director of ICAR), Dr Sarabjeet Singh (progressive agri machinery entrepreneur) and Mr. O P Choudhary (Senior Soil Scientist, PAU), and other senior scientists from PAU and IIMR. Over the last decade, India's popcorn maize market has expanded from 50,000 tonnes to over 130,000 tonnes. This growth has been largely driven by the successful development

and domestication of high-expansion popcorn maize cultivation. Earlier, nearly 100 per cent of the popcorn consumed in India was imported. Today, domestic production accounts for nearly 65 per cent of the market, significantly reducing reliance on imports and creating a new and sustainable income stream for Indian farmers. Over the past five years, ICAR-IIMR's scientific and agronomic expertise,

combined with Gourmet Popcornica's decade-long experience in large-scale high-expansion popcorn maize cultivation, has strengthened specialised value chains such as popcorn maize. This collaboration demonstrates the importance of science-led partnerships in diversifying farmer incomes and reducing import dependence. The partnership formally began in February 2021 with the signing of agreements for IIMR-bred popcorn hybrid's, reflecting ICAR-IIMR's commitment to translating agricultural science into tangible economic outcomes for farmers. Over the last four years, with the guidance of ICAR-IIMR scientists and its own breeding team, Gourmet Popcornica has developed new hybrids with high yield, high popping and resistance to diseases/pests. The partnership aligns with national priorities under Aatmanirbhar Bharat, promoting rural livelihoods, value-added agriculture, and export readiness.

Trump revokes landmark ruling that greenhouse gases endanger public health

US President Donald Trump has reversed a key Obama-era scientific ruling that underpins all federal actions on curbing planet-warming gases. The so-called 2009 "endangerment finding" concluded that a range of greenhouse gases were a threat to public health. It's become the legal bedrock of federal efforts to rein in emissions, especially in vehicles. The White House called the reversal the "largest deregulation in American history", saying it would make cars cheaper, bringing down costs for automakers by \$2,400 per vehicle. Environmental groups say the move is by far the most significant rollback on climate change yet attempted and are set to challenge it in the courts. Speaking in the Oval Office on Thursday, Trump said the 2009 ruling was "a disastrous Obama era policy that severely damaged the American auto industry

and massively drove up prices for American consumers". "This radical rule became the legal foundation for the Green New Deal, one of the greatest scams in history," added the Republican president, about the Democrats' climate agenda. Former President Barack Obama, who infrequently comments on the policies of sitting presidents, said that repealing the finding would make Americans more vulnerable. "Without it, we'll be less safe, less healthy and less able to fight climate change — all so the fossil fuel industry can make even more money," he wrote on X. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) first took a stance on the impacts of greenhouse gases in 2009, in the first year of Obama's first term. The agency decided that six key planet-warming greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane,



were a danger to human health. With a divided Congress unable to agree on legislation to tackle rising global temperatures, the EPA finding became central to federal efforts to rein in emissions in the years that followed. "The endangerment finding has really served as the lynchpin of US

regulation of greenhouse gases," said Meghan Greenfield, a former EPA and Department of Justice attorney. "So that includes motor vehicles, but it also includes power plants, the oil and gas sector, methane from landfills, even aircraft. So it really runs the gamut, all of the standards for each of the sectors is premised on this one thing." Trump administration officials are stressing that overturning the regulation will save more than \$1tn and will help cut the price of energy and transport. Reversing the finding will reduce automobile manufacturers' costs by \$2,400 per vehicle, the White House claimed. These regulations have been an economic strain, said Diana Furchtrott-Roth, who served in the US Department of Transportation during the first Trump term. "The burden on the economy results in higher prices and manufacturing has left. It's gone to China, where it's made in a dirtier way," she told the BBC. "So to say that we're reducing global emissions by ending energy intensive manufacturing in some countries, then having it go to China and India, where it's made in a dirtier way, does not reduce global emissions."

Many environmentalists are sceptical of the potential cost savings being touted by the Trump team. "It's going to force Americans to spend more money, around \$1.4tn in additional fuel costs to power these less efficient and higher polluting vehicles," said Peter Zalzal from the Environmental Defense Fund. "We've also analysed the health impacts and found that the action would result in up to 58,000 additional premature deaths, 37 million more asthma attacks," he said. For some in the US car industry there will be uncertainty about the rollback as manufacturing less fuel-efficient vehicles might limit their sales overseas. "This rollback is sort of cementing things that have already been done, such as the relaxation of the fuel economy standards," said Michael Gerrard, a climate law expert from Columbia University.

FBI RELEASES DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECT IN NANCY GUTHRIE KIDNAPPING



The FBI has released the first physical description of the man believed to have kidnapped Nancy Guthrie, the mother of US news anchor Savannah Guthrie. Nancy Guthrie, 84, disappeared in the middle of night from her Tucson, Arizona, home and was last seen two weeks ago. The authorities believe she was taken against her will. The FBI has analysed footage from a doorbell camera outside her home and believes she was kidnapped by a male who is between 5ft 9in (175cm) and 5ft 10in tall, with an average build. It is first time the man in the video has been officially identified as a suspect in the case, which has drawn a huge amount of attention both in the US and abroad. In its latest statement, the FBI said it had been able to establish identifying details after carrying out a forensic analysis. It highlighted the backpack being worn by the suspect in the video, which was released earlier this week, and identified it as a 25-litre Ozark Trail Hiker Pack. A pair of black gloves has also been found during the search for Guthrie, the BBC's US broadcast partner. CBS reported on Thursday, Nancy Guthrie was last seen on the evening of Saturday 31 January when family members dropped her home. Members of her church noticed her absence at Sunday's service and notified her family.

AUSTRALIA'S LIBERAL PARTY OUSTS FIRST WOMAN LEADER

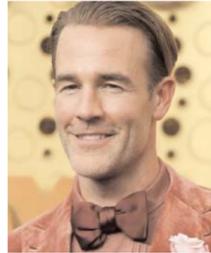


The first female leader of Australia's Liberal Party, Sussan Ley, has been ousted after just nine months in the job, losing a leadership ballot to her former shadow defence minister Angus Taylor. Ley was elevated to the role after the party suffered a resounding defeat in last year's election, but since then has been plagued by poor poll numbers and infighting among the conservative Liberal-National Coalition. Taylor had announced he would challenge her for leadership of the opposition on Wednesday, ending months of speculation. In a social media post he said his election on Friday was "an immense honour" and that he looked forward to working with new deputy leader Jane Hume. Taylor, from the party's conservative faction, won the secret ballot, 34 votes to 17. Shortly after the results were announced, Ley said that she would resign as an MP and step away "completely and comprehensively from public life". She told waiting reporters she harboured "no hard feelings" towards the new leader although, in an

apparent job at the infighting she has endured, she added that it was important to get "clear air, something that is not always afforded to leaders". Taylor, who narrowly lost the 2025 leadership contest to Ley, is a former management consultant who first entered parliament in 2013. He served as a minister under Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison. Ley's position had never seemed secure. The Liberal-National coalition, a partnership dating back to the 1940s, twice split under her leadership, the first time immediately after the May election and the second time just weeks ago. A series of recent polls have also shown the populist One Nation Party - which only got 6% of the national vote last year - overtaking the Coalition to take second place behind Labor. Ley's personal ratings have also been poor. The coalition has largely failed to agree on what caused its crushing election defeat to Labor, which saw the Liberals all but wiped out in the major cities, with disagreements on energy and climate policy in a particular.

Steven Spielberg donates \$25,000 to James Van Der Beek's \$2m GoFundMe

Oscar-winning film director Steven Spielberg and his wife, Kate Capshaw, have donated \$25,000 (£21,000) to the \$2m (£1.6m) GoFundMe pot collected for the late Dawson's Creek actor James Van Der Beek. The star died this week aged 48, leaving behind his wife Kimberly and their six children, and the crowd-funder for his family has now surpassed its \$2m target. Another Oscar winner, actress Zoe Saldana-Perego donated \$2,500 (£2,108) monthly, according to the Hollywood Reporter; while Jon M Chu also gave \$10,000 (£8,432). A statement released by Friends of the Van Der Beek family, who arranged the collection, thanked contributors



"from the bottom of our hearts for showing up for James and his beautiful family". It read: "Your kindness has meant more than we can put into words. In the middle of deep grief, your support has been a light. It reminds us that love is real, that community is strong, and that James's spirit continues to bring people together."

Bangladesh Nationalist Party sweeps to victory in first election since Gen Z uprising

The centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has secured a landslide majority in parliament, 18 months after mass protests ousted the country's longest serving prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The party took more than two-thirds of seats in the historic general election, with Jamaat, the country's main Islamist party, coming second. Hasina's Awami League was banned from taking part. BNP leader Tarique Rahman is set to be the next prime minister and faces huge challenges in getting the economy back on its feet and restoring democracy after 15 years of authoritarian rule under Hasina. Voters also backed sweeping democratic reforms in a referendum held alongside

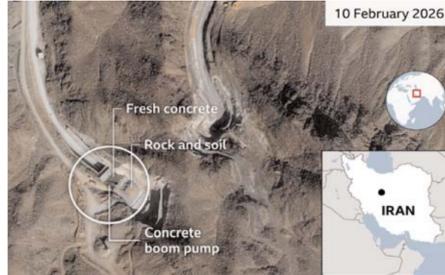


the election. "I am grateful for the love you have shown me," Tarique Rahman told well-wishers in Dhaka as he attended Friday prayers. His party has said there would be no victory procession. He was elected to parliament for the first time as one of 212 successful BNP candidates. The Election Commission put voter turnout at 59.44%. It is a huge change of fortunes for

young population are the big challenges facing the new government. Repairing strained ties with giant neighbour India is also high up the list of priorities. Within hours of his win, Rahman had received a call from India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi who congratulated him on a "remarkable victory". "As two close neighbours with deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, I reaffirmed India's continued commitment to the peace, progress, and prosperity of both our peoples," Modi wrote on X. Although the BNP are promising to lead change in the country, the party was criticised for corruption and accused of human rights violations when it was last in government in the early 2000s.

Iran fortifies underground complex near nuclear site, satellite images show

Iran has been fortifying an underground complex near one of its nuclear facilities, according to analysis of new satellite images. This activity comes at a time of heightened tensions as talks between Iranian and US officials continue, with President Donald Trump threatening fresh military action against Iran if it does not agree a new deal on its nuclear programme. The photos, first analysed by the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), a US-based think tank, show tunnel entrances being strengthened at Mount Kolang Gaz La - also known as Pickaxe Mountain. Experts say this



facility may be designed to protect Iran's uranium enrichment activities or key equipment, but its exact purpose - and whether it is operational - remains unclear. Iran insists its nuclear programme is entirely peace-

ful and denies it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons. However, Trump said Iran was as little as a month away from having a nuclear weapon in June 2025, when he ordered strikes on three underground nuclear sites where

centrifuges were being used to produce highly enriched uranium during a 12-day war between Israel and Iran last year. Trump said the strikes had "obliterated" Iran's enrichment capacity, but that Iranian officials "were thinking about starting a new site". Pickaxe Mountain was not one of the locations attacked in US and Israeli air strikes in June 2025, but the Natanz nuclear facility, located about 2km (1.24 miles) north, was hit. A satellite image from 10 February shows what appears to be fresh concrete laid on top of one of the Pickaxe Mountain entrance areas.

Japan says it seized Chinese vessel amid tensions with Beijing



Japanese authorities say they have seized a Chinese fishing vessel that tried to flee when ordered to stop for an inspection, in a move that may further fuel tensions with Beijing. The boat was in Japan's exclusive economic zone off Nagasaki Prefecture in the south-west when it was intercepted and its captain arrested on Thursday, according to the country's fisheries agency. "The vessel's captain was ordered to stop for an inspection by a fisheries inspector, but the vessel failed to comply and fled," the fisheries agency said. The seizure is the first time since 2022 that the agency has seized a Chinese fishing boat. China has yet to react to Japan's statement. There were 11 people aboard, including the captain who is a 47-year-old Chinese national, the fisheries agency said. Authorities and Japanese media have described the seized vessel as a "tiger net fishing boat" with a high capacity. "We will continue to take resolute action in our enforcement activities to prevent and deter illegal fishing operations by foreign vessels," Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru

Kihara said on Friday. Thursday's incident comes amid strained relations after Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi enraged China in November by suggesting Tokyo would intervene militarily if Beijing sought to take Taiwan by force. China has long insisted that Taiwan, occupied for decades by Japan until 1945, is its territory. It has not ruled out using force to achieve what it calls "reunification". In response to Takaichi's remarks, which China's foreign ministry described as "egregious", Beijing summoned Tokyo's ambassador and warned its citizens to reconsider travel and study in Japan. That led to a sharp drop in visits to Japan by Chinese tourists, and a subsequent hit to Japanese stocks related to tourism and retail. As the diplomatic spat deepened during the end of 2025, Beijing repeatedly demanded that Takaichi retract her comments, and its foreign ministry warned Japan to "stop playing with fire". Japanese artists touring China have also had shows cancelled and releases of popular Japanese movies have been postponed.

RUBIO WARNS EUROPE OF NEW ERA IN GEOPOLITICS BEFORE BIG MUNICH SPEECH

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has spoken of a defining moment and a "new era" as he travels to Europe for a major speech to the Munich Security Conference. Rubio will lead the US delegation at the first major global event since President Donald Trump threatened Danish sovereignty with a pledge to annex Greenland. French President Emmanuel Macron has insisted Europe must prepare for independence from the US, while Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte has stressed that transatlantic bonds are as close and important as ever. The war in Ukraine, tensions with China and a potential nuclear deal between Iran and the US are also on the agenda as the security conference gets

under way. "The world is changing very fast right in front of us," Rubio told reporters, when asked if his message to Europeans would be more conciliatory than a year ago. "We live in a new era in geopolitics, and it's going to require all of us to sort of re-examine what that looks like and what our role is going to be." At last year's conference, US Vice-President JD Vance attacked Europe, including the UK, for policies on free speech and immigration. His speech triggered a year of unprecedented transatlantic tension. Some 50 world leaders are set to attend this year's event, where European defence and the future of the transatlantic relationship will be discussed at a time when



US commitments to Nato have been called into question. Tensions have been heightened in recent months as Trump has repeatedly said that Greenland is vital to US national security, stating without evidence that it was "covered with Russian and Chinese ships all over the place". Danish Prime Minister

Mette Frederiksen told reporters on Friday she planned to meet with Rubio to discuss the US threats to seize Denmark's semi-autonomous territory from its Nato ally. The US threats have been viewed by many European leaders as a watershed moment that has eroded trust with its biggest ally. Ahead of

the conference, eight former US ambassadors to Nato and eight former American supreme commanders in Europe issued an open letter calling for Washington to maintain its support for the Western defensive alliance. "Far from being a charity," they said Nato was a "force multiplier" that allowed the US to assert its power and influence "in ways that would be impossible - or prohibitively expensive - to achieve on its own". The transatlantic relationship has come under increasing strain following the Republican president's introduction of tariffs and a suggestion in the US national security strategy that European nations may not remain "reliable allies" in the

long term. Dutch Foreign Minister David van Weel told the BBC on Friday that he recognised "the world has changed" and that he hoped the "transatlantic bond" remains "solid". Van Weel said he recognised that the Netherlands needed to "step up" when it came to its own security but that his country was making a "big sacrifice" to increase its defence spending. "It will take time before we can really take over [the security] burden from the Americans in Europe," he warned. The Netherlands was among Nato allies that last year agreed to ramp up defence spending to 5% of their countries' economic output by 2035, following months of pressure from Trump.

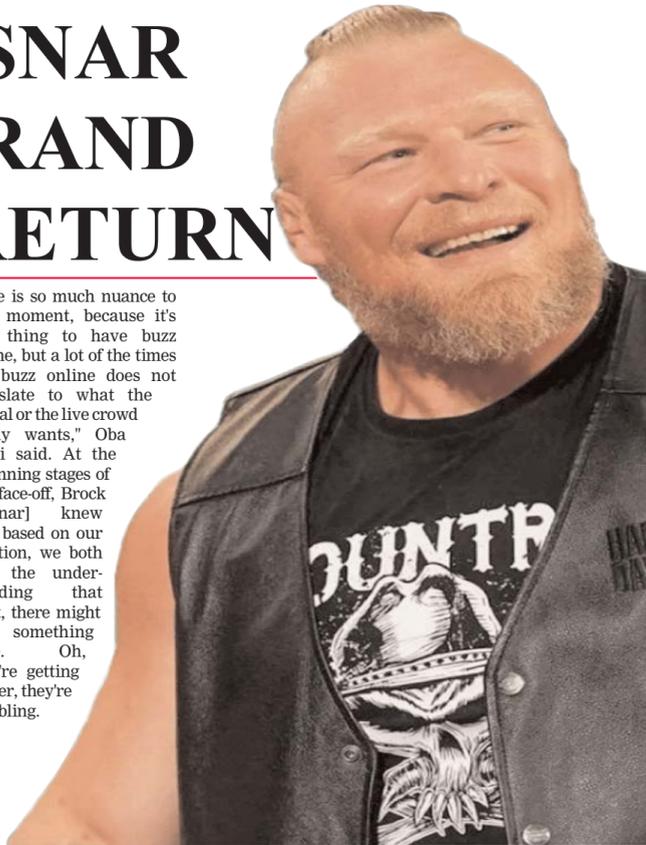


BROCK LESNAR SET FOR GRAND WWE RAW RETURN

"The Beast Incarnate" Brock Lesnar is officially off the leash. After a brief but explosive appearance at the Royal Rumble in Riyadh, WWE has confirmed that Brock Lesnar is back for the long haul as the wrestling universe moves towards WrestleMania 42 in Las Vegas. The WWE has officially announced that Lesnar will be live on Monday Night Raw at the State Farm Arena in Atlanta. After being dumped out of the Rumble by the combined force of Cody Rhodes and LA Knight, Lesnar has plenty of scores to settle, but the real intrigue lies in the storyline that is built for him. In all likelihood, Lesnar is set to take on a new face in the ring. As speculations grow, two names have emerged as potential candidates to take

on Lesnar. The first is Obafemi, who looks like the matchup fans are currently screaming for. At the Rumble, the NXT powerhouse didn't blink when he faced Lesnar, and reports suggest WWE is leaning heavily towards this showdown between the two. If WWE wants a pure, hard-hitting clinic, Gunther remains the second choice. He is coming off a massive win where he retired John Cena, and a clash with Lesnar would be the ultimate test of his status in the WWE Universe. There is also a bit of a bittersweet edge to this comeback, as whispers are growing that 2026 might be Lesnar's final year in the ring. Obafemi also spoke about the potential match against Brock Lesnar during a chat with No-Contest Wrestling. So,

there is so much nuance to that moment, because it's one thing to have buzz online, but a lot of the times the buzz online does not translate to what the casual or the live crowd really wants," Obafemi said. At the beginning stages of our face-off, Brock [Lesnar] knew that based on our reaction, we both had the understanding that 'wait, there might be something here. Oh, they're getting louder, they're rumbling.



Lights Out, Game On: RB Leipzig Unveil "Glow In The Dark" Special Edition Jersey

RB Leipzig and PUMA are continuing their creative partnership by unveiling the 'Glow in the Dark' jersey. The unique special-edition shirt takes the bond between the club, city and fans to a whole new level. The innovative jersey combines cutting-edge textile technology with an artistic portrait of the city, making Leipzig glow in the truest sense of the word. Following on from 2024's 'Jingle Jersey,' the first jersey to be made entirely from high-quality red velvet, this represents another statement design in the world of football. Debut under the floodlights RB Leipzig will don the 'Glow in the Dark' jersey for the first time at home against Borussia Dortmund on 21st February. The unique design will therefore make its debut in the stadium and in front of a big crowd, in a special moment for both the fans and the team. A jersey that comes to life in the dark Under the tagline of "Energised by Light. Activated at Night", RB Leipzig present their first



jersey featuring fluorescent logo elements on the front and back. Pre-finished details - including the PUMA logo, RBL crest, double bull emblem and lettering reading "YCDA" and "RB Leipzig" - can be charged under UV light in order to then glow in the dark. This creates a spectacular effect that makes the jersey a real eye-catcher. The glowing elements serve as visual accents along key lines of the city pattern and bring Leipzig's diversity to life in a special way. A jersey for the whole city The

pattern on the jersey is based on a stylised map of Leipzig's districts. Distinctive structures, street layouts and architectural features come together to form a dynamic, urban landscape, without explicitly highlighting any individual district. The result is a design that captures Leipzig's pulsating energy and brings it to the pitch. The 'Glow in the Dark' jersey is more than just a special-edition shirt - it's a statement. A symbol of diversity, creativity and identity.

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

Sanju Samson continues his lean patch in T20I cricket. The wicketkeeper-batter was dropped from India's playing XI in T20 World Cup 2026 at the expense of Ishan Kishan following a string of low scores. He could muster only 46 runs across five matches against New Zealand in the series that served as the final dress rehearsal for the mega event. On the other hand, Kishan has been in sensational form upon his return to India colours. Kishan's impressive performance forced the team management to bench Samson for the side's campaign opener against the USA. As fate would have it, an unwell Abhishek Sharma missed out on



India's second match, which was against Namibia, and Samson got his chance. The wicketkeeper-batter started well, dealing in boundaries, but failed to take his innings deep. He scored 22 off eight with the help of one four and three sixes. Samson got out after chipping the ball to the fielder at deep mid-

wicket. He went deep inside his crease to manufacture the shot but failed to get the placement right. Reacting to his dismissal, former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said on JioHotstar that Samson needs to fix a technical issue in his batting. Diving deep into it, the cricket legend explained, "Sanju

Samson has a technical problem. He goes too deep into the crease and plays that flick shot. You can only hope he times it into the gap or that it goes for six." "He needs to make improvements, especially when he opens against the new ball. Namibia were clever with their field placements. They set a field specifically to get Samson out. But it was good that he played some nice shots - that must have given him confidence. If he plays the next match against Pakistan, he needs to spend more time at the crease," he added. There is uncertainty about Abhishek Sharma's return to the playing XI for India's match vs Pakistan, as he is currently recovering from a stomach infection.

Kabir Bedi Cheers For Italy After 1st T20 World Cup Match Win: "So Lucky To Have Witnessed This"

Thursday will be a day etched in Italian cricket history. The debutants crushed Nepal by 10 wickets in a Group C match of the T20 World Cup in Mumbai, recording a massive achievement in only their second game of the tournament. After their spinners ruled the roost to bowl Nepal out for a paltry 123, brothers Anthony Mosca (62 not out) and Justin Mosca (60 not out) put on a ruthless unbeaten opening stand to overwhelm the Rhinos, who failed to live up to expectations. Chasing 124, Italy knocked off the runs with 7.2 overs to spare. Actor Kabir Bedi, who is a very popular figure in Italy, was ecstatic after the win. In the 1970s, Bedi played the pirate Sandokan in an eponymous



Italian miniseries. The role made him a household name in the European country. He was even awarded the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (the highest Italian civilian honour). "History was made! Italy's first win in the T20 World Cup championship is an amazing achievement for a non-cricketing country that wor-

ships football! Even their qualifying for the world championship was a historic first! So lucky to have witnessed this win," Kabir Bedi posted on X. It was only the second match in T20 World Cup history for Italy, who had lost their tournament opener to Scotland by a massive 73 runs in Kolkata. Nepal, who were

touted as favourites for this clash after their enormous effort against England at the same venue, cut a sorry figure. None of their batters could find a way to counter Italy's accurate spin bowling and sharp fielding, while they inexplicably held their best spinner, Sandeep Lamichhane, back for most of the powerplay. By the time Lamichhane who has featured in various T20 leagues including the Indian Premier League was introduced into the attack, the Italian openers had already knocked 58 runs off the modest target. Anthony smacked one over long-on in the first over to set the tone, while Justin tore into Karan KC in the third, hammering two fours and a six, as Italy made a fiery start.

T20 World Cup: USA's Shayan Jahangir Calls Out ICC Over Lack Of Support For Associate Nations



Associate nations like the USA, Nepal, the Netherlands, and most recently Italy have made the cricketing world stand up and take notice at the ongoing T20 World Cup 2026 in India and Sri Lanka. The Netherlands came close to beating Pakistan in the tournament opener, while the USA troubled India far more than expected. Nepal arguably produced the best performance by an associate nation so far, falling just 5 runs short of defeating England. Now, USA batter Shayan Jahangir has criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC) for its lack of financial support to associate nations in their bid to make cricket a truly global sport. "The exposure and the kind of funding that we get from the ICC is lacking. I think we've been given the tag of Associate nation, but we are nothing short of a great team. As you've seen in this World Cup, all the teams tagged as Associate nations have put on a show and given a very tough time to the big teams," Jahangir said during a press conference ahead of USA's Group

A clash against the Netherlands. Jahangir believes the performances of associate nations in this T20 World Cup have proven that they are already pushing the best sides in the world. He pointed out that these efforts have come despite very little financial backing from the ICC. "I would say we have not been watered properly. We haven't been nurtured properly. But again, it's our players who are putting in the hard yards. Without financial resources and infrastructure, I think if the ICC pays more attention to us and all the Associate nations, you'll see more big games and you'll see these teams changing their tag from Associate nations to big teams as well," Jahangir added. "We almost beat India, having them 75 for 6 - again, Surya (Kumar Yadav) played the way he did. But if we had seized those moments, we would have beaten the powerhouse of a World Cup team," he said, recalling how the USA came close to defeating India in their opening match.



Winter Olympics: GB's Banks falls short in snowboard medal bid

ENGLAND AND SPAIN DRAW TOGETHER IN NEXT EDITION OF UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Spain and England will face each other in the next edition of the UEFA Nations League following Thursday's draw, which also threw up a clash between France and Italy while Germany and the Netherlands will renew their rivalry. Spain, who beat England in the final of Euro 2024, won the Nations League in 2023 and lost last year's final, on penalties, to Portugal. They will come up against Thomas Tuchel's England side in Group A3, with the Czech Republic and beaten 2023 finalists Croatia completing the section. The Nations League will be the focus for European international football for the year after the 2026 World Cup, before attention switches to Euro 2028 qualifying. Group matches, with everyone playing each other home and away, will take place



between September and November this year. The top two in each of the four groups in League A will advance to the quarter-finals in March 2027, the winners of which will progress to the four-team finals in June that year - likely to be hosted by one of the participating teams. Reigning Nations League champions Portugal, who also won the inaugural edition in 2019, are in Group A4 with Denmark, Norway and

Wales. France, winners in 2021 and semi-finalists last year, will take on Italy, Belgium and Turkey in Group A1. Germany, the Netherlands, Serbia and Greece make up Group A2. Draw for the 2026/27 UEFA Nations League, held in Brussels on Thursday: Group A1: France, Italy, Belgium, Turkey Group A2: Germany, Netherlands, Serbia, Greece Group A3: Spain, Croatia, England, Czech Republic Group A4:

Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Wales Group B1: Scotland, Switzerland, Slovenia, North Macedonia Group B2: Hungary, Ukraine, Georgia, Northern Ireland Group B3: Israel, Austria, Republic of Ireland, Kosovo Group B4: Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Sweden Group C1: Albania, Finland, Belarus, San Marino Group C2: Montenegro, Armenia, Cyprus, Latvia/Gibraltar Group C3: Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Faroe Islands, Moldova Group C4: Iceland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Luxembourg/Malta Group D1: Gibraltar/Latvia, Malta/Luxembourg, Andorra Group D2: Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Liechtenstein - Latvia v Gibraltar and Luxembourg v Malta meet in two-legged play-off ties in March 2026 to decide their leagues.

Hull's 'complete nobody' out to stun Chelsea on Rosenior return



"Yet another bizarre appointment by the chairman." "I don't get it... why not go for someone with a proven track record in the Championship?" "I cannot believe we are doing this again... a complete nobody with no experience in English football." Hull City's decision to appoint Sergej Jakirovic as their new head coach in June last year was not met with much, or indeed any, enthusiasm from a number of fans. The Tigers had just avoided relegation to League One on goal difference, one season after now Chelsea boss Liam Rosenior was sacked for only managing a seventh-placed finish. Yet many were still surprised Ruben Selles was fired after keeping them up. However, Jakirovic and Hull have defied expectations to sit just five points off the top two in the Championship. As the former Bosnia international prepares to welcome Chelsea for a FA Cup fourth-round tie, how did the much-travelled 49-year-old end up leading an unexpected promotion charge

in East Yorkshire? "A steely gaze that could burn a hole through concrete" "With a towering stature and steely gaze that could burn a hole through concrete, Sergej Jakirovic walked into the media suite at Hull City's MKM Stadium last summer and immediately commanded the attention of everyone in attendance." BBC Radio Humberside's Hull City reporter Mike White said. "Based on that first impression, you'd be forgiven for thinking he was going to be a tough nut to crack for those of us in the media who'd be dealing with him all the time." "However, it didn't take long for us to realise that first impressions aren't always the best way to judge someone. "He's personable with an engaging sense of humour, intelligent, passionate and always forthright in his views." It took a while for Jakirovic to make those first impressions count on the pitch as City made a mixed start to the season, with two wins, three draws and three losses in their opening eight league matches.

“THANK YOU TO THE AUDIENCE FOR SHOWERING LOVE ON FUNKY,” SAYS THE TEAM AT THE SUCCESS PRESS MEET

All distributors are happy with Funky,” says producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi. Released today (February 13) as a Valentine’s Day treat, Funky is receiving praise from audiences across all sections while bringing waves of laughter to theatres.

On



Anudeep, and with promotional content generating strong buzz, Funky released in theatres on February 13 amid high expectations. The film, which runs as a full-on entertainer from start to finish, has kept audiences laughing for two hours straight.

As a result, it has been receiving an excellent response from the very first show. The team recently conducted a success press meet to share their happiness and thank the audience wholeheartedly.

Vishwak Sen said: “It’s natural to feel pressure before a film’s release. But before Funky, I felt very calm. This morning, I watched the film with the audience at Sriramulu Theatre. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. Anudeep

has made this film as a breezy entertainer that families can sit together and laugh at. Funky has given me great relief. The response from all sections of the audience has been wonderful. Doing a film like Funky in my career has given me immense happiness.”

Kayadu Lohar said: “We watched Funky with the audience this morning. Seeing them laugh and enjoy every joke made us very happy. Thank you to the audience for showering so much love on our film.”

Director K.V. Anudeep said: “We made Funky with the intention of creating a family entertainer that can be enjoyed together. Along with comedy, the film also has a well-developed love story and emotional

moments. I am very happy with the response we are receiving from the audience.”

Producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi said: “I believe you all liked Funky. From the beginning, we have been saying it’s a film that will make you laugh comfortably for two hours. Our belief has come true, and we are getting a very positive response from audiences. This film was made purely to make people laugh, and we have succeeded in that. Distributors are calling and saying the film is good. They say the comedy works well, and the mother sentiment in the second half is very effective. I request everyone to go to theatres and watch the film. Your ticket money will definitely be worth it. Come to the theatre to laugh you will not be disappointed.”

this occasion, the film’s team held a success press meet and expressed their gratitude to the audience. Funky marks the collaboration between Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen, who has earned a distinct identity with diverse films, and director K.V. Anudeep, known for his comedy entertainers. Presented by Sri Kara Studios, the film is produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas. The music is composed by Bheems Ceciroleo, and Kayadu Lohar plays the female lead. As the first collaboration between Vishwak Sen and

KING OF ENTERTAINMENT SRI VISHNU AND NAYANA SARIKA RELEASE BEAUTIFUL LOVE SONG MUDALE MUDALE FROM 'VISHNU VINYASAM'



King of Entertainment Sri Vishnu is going to entertain with a unique project called 'Vishnu Vinyasam'. Newcomer Yadunath Maruthi Rao is directing

this film. Produced by Sumanth Naidu G under the banner of Sri Subrahmanyeshwara Cinemas, the film is presented by Hema and Shalini, and is co-produced by

Subrahmanyam Naidu G and Ramachari M. The film’s title glimpse and first single 'Dekho Vishnu Vinyasam' have received a wonderful response. Today, the makers released the second single,

Modale Modale. Music director Radhan has composed this song as a beautiful love melody. The lyrics written by Ramajogayya Sastry beautifully present the feeling of love. Madhusree and Naresh Iyer’s vocals add more melody. The chemistry between Sri Vishnu and Nayana Sarika in this song is lovely and impressive. This song, which is a perfect gift for Valentine’s Day, is becoming an instant hit. Satya, Brahmaji, Praveen, Murali Sharma, Srikanth Iyengar, Satyam Rajesh, Srinivas Vadlamani, and Goparaju Ramana are playing key roles in this film. Sai Sriram provided the cinematography for the film, A. Ramananjanyulu was the art director, and Karthikeyan Rohini was the editor. Preparations are underway to release this film in theaters soon.

“Hey Bhagavan” will have emotion along with entertainment: Producer B. Narendra Reddy

After recently delivering blockbuster films like Little Hearts, Raju Weds Rambai, and Eesha, the successful duo Bunny Vas and Vamsi Nandipati are now bringing a full-length, out-and-out entertainer titled Hey Bhagavan under the banners of Nandipati Entertainments and Bunny Vas Works.

The film stars Suhas, Shivani Nagaram, senior actor Naresh, and anchor Sravanthi in key roles. Directed by Gopi Acharya, the film is produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the Trishul Visionary Studios banner. The movie is set to release on February 20. On this occasion, producer B. Narendra Reddy shared details about the film with the media.

What is your background? How did you develop an interest in films?

I am originally from Proddatur in Kadapa district. Currently, I am in the construction field in Bengaluru. I have loved movies since childhood. Because of that interest, I entered the Kannada film industry as a producer. Hey Bhagavan is my first film as a producer in Telugu.

How did you enter the film industry?

I used to finance films in the Kannada film industry. Later, due to my passion for films, I became a producer.

How did the Hey Bhagavan project get finalized?

I heard this story through

our company’s executive producer Ramana Reddy. Before Hey Bhagavan, I heard ten stories, but none impressed me. The moment I heard this story, I found it very entertaining and interesting. It is a film that has both entertainment and emotional depth.

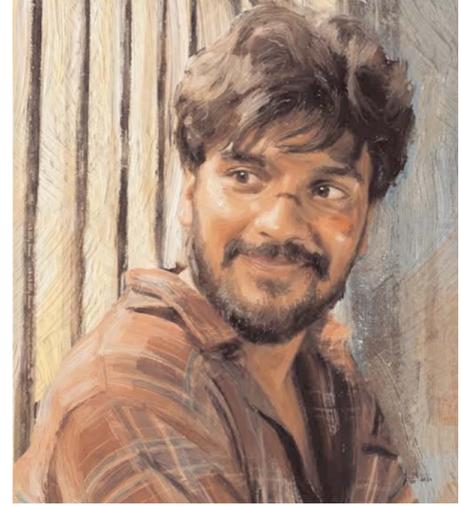
What is the main reason for doing this film? How was your first film experience?

I liked the story, so I am doing this film. The movie was completed within budget. Everything went according to planning. Every rupee spent on the film will be visible on screen. The output is very high quality. Especially, the father-son emotion in this movie will touch everyone’s hearts.



Happy to have a strong-content film like “Markandeya” as the first project under the DilRaju Dreams banner: Producer Dil Raju at the title glimpse release event

To encourage young talent, prominent producer Dil Raju has established a new banner titled “DilRaju Dreams.” As the first project under this banner, he is producing a film called “Markandeya” starring young hero Vikranth. Vikranth, who earned a good recognition among audiences with the film Santhana Prapthirasthu, is set to gain a significant advantage in his career by playing the lead in the first film produced under the DilRaju Dreams banner. The film is being directed by Sistla VMK as a mythological thriller. The title glimpse of “Markandeya” was grandly released today in Hyderabad. DOP Jagadeesh Varma Bhoopathi Raju said, “This is my first film as a DOP. I thank DilRaju garu, Vikranth, and director Sistla for giving me this opportunity. We feel our heartbeat has just begun with this glimpse.” Music director Hari SR said, “First of all, I thank my mentor Thaman garu. I believe this film’s soundtrack will gain global recognition. They trusted me and gave me this opportunity. The script has come out very well. This is a film that everyone must watch.” Director Sistla VMK said, “I thank DilRaju garu and his entire team for giving opportunities and supporting newcomers like us. A while ago, Dil Raju garu told me that we must work very hard. I can never forget those words. We will live up to the trust he has placed in us. We used AI only as a support tool in making this film; no shots generated by AI have been



included in the movie. Vikranth is my Markandeya, I call him by that name. We had many meaningful discussions for this movie. From today, Vikranth has become your Markandeya.” Hero Vikranth said, “In Hollywood, multiverse and superhero films have been widely made in recent years. But concepts like countless universes and immortals have existed in our mythology for thousands of years. Our movie is a modern interpretation of such a story inspired by epics. ‘Markandeya’ is a mystical thriller based on an epic concept. We planned this film with a young team. However, such a film needs proper guidance and support. To encourage young talent, Dil Raju garu created the DilRaju Dreams platform. We

narrated our story to him and showed him the content we had developed. He liked it and agreed to produce our film under the DilRaju Dreams banner. In every aspect, how the script should be structured, how to control the budget, and how to take the movie to the audience, Dil Raju garu is guiding us. We are working hard to meet his expectations. This film involves extensive CG work. We will bring even better content next. Since this is the first film under the DilRaju Dreams banner, we will make sure it remains memorable. This film presents a modern version of the character Markandeya. Just as Markandeya faced hardships and challenges, this modern Markandeya also encounters many obstacles. With the grace of Lord Shiva, how he finds

solutions and overcomes these challenges is what the movie portrays. More than technology, we are giving priority to human emotions in this film.” Producer Dil Raju said, “Advance Mahashivaratri wishes to everyone. Our SVC banner has completed 60 films in 23 years, and Dil Raju Dreams is another division under it. You all know about our banner. If we make 10 films with stars, at least 2 may not succeed. But with mid-range heroes and small films, we have achieved around 70 percent success. When I first entered the industry, I lost a large amount of money unknowingly. Later, the film Pellipandiri helped us stand strong. Vikranth also lost a significant amount of money with his first film as a hero. Later, he saw profits with Santhana Prapthirasthu, made in association with Madhura Sridhar Reddy. By his second film, he had learned to be cautious. Vikranth approached me for ‘Markandeya.’ He has successful businesses and is doing well, but I saw in him a strong desire to succeed as a hero. I liked the content of ‘Markandeya’ and decided to take it up as the first film under the Dil Raju Dreams banner.

John Abraham’s rise: Rs 6 lunch to big investments

Hyderabad: John Abraham is one of Bollywood’s most popular action stars. Known for his fit body, intense screen presence, and stylish roles, he has built a loyal fan base over the years. From being called one of India’s most desirable men to becoming a dependable action hero, John has enjoyed strong stardom in Hindi cinema. His blockbuster films include Dhoom, Race 2, Satyameva Jayate, Batla House, and the massive hit Pathaan in 2023. According to Box Office India, Pathaan earned over Rs. 600 crore in India and crossed Rs. 1,000 crore worldwide. Even earlier, his debut film Jism in 2003 was a hit and turned him into a national sensation.

saving and investing stayed with him even after fame arrived.

FOOTBALL AND SPORTS OWNERSHIP
In 2015, John became the principal pro-

But like many successful stars, John’s story is not only about movies. It is also about smart investments and financial discipline.

FROM A CORPORATE JOB TO THE CINEMA

Before entering films, John studied at Bombay Scottish School, graduated from Jai Hind College, and completed his MBA from NMIMS. In 1999, he worked as a media planner with a salary of about Rs. 6,500 per month. He once shared that his lunch cost Rs. 6, he travelled by train, had no mobile phone, and saved most of his income. He invested early in equity mutual funds. That habit of

owner of NorthEast United FC in the Indian Super League. The club has reached the playoffs and won the Durand Cup in 2024 and 2025. He has also committed to building a 15-acre football academy in Shillong to support young talent. He also owns Goa Aces JA Racing in the Indian Racing Festival.

