

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



05-02-2026

Total pilgrims: 61,655

Tonsures: 21,003

Hundi kanukalu: 3.89 CR

Waiting Compartments: 26

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 12-18 H

TO BOOK YOUR ADS CALL

99484 80279, 73307 78889

Cong to win Nizamabad Corporation, 7 municipalities: CM Revanth

HYDERABAD / NIZAMABAD TSIT BUREAU: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday expressed confidence that the Congress party would win the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation along with seven municipalities in the district in the upcoming civic elections. Addressing a large public meeting in Nizamabad, he said voters were ready to give a decisive mandate in favour of Congress. The Chief Minister said Nizamabad has a rich political and agricultural legacy and has produced leaders with clean public records. He alleged that despite long years of BJP rule at the Centre and BRS governance in the State, major civic and infrastructure issues in the district



remained unresolved. He questioned BJP MP Dharmapuri Arvind over the absence of key projects such as Smart City status, an airport, and an outer ring road. Highlighting development initiatives, Revanth Reddy said

Rs.600 crore had been sanctioned for educational institutions and about Rs.1,045 crore was being spent on municipal works in the undivided Nizamabad district. He alleged that earlier BRS-controlled local bodies delayed execution despite fund approvals. Listing welfare measures, he said the Congress government was providing fine rice to over three crore people, free electricity up to 200 units to nearly 50 lakh families, LPG cylinder subsidies, free RTC bus travel for women, job recruitment, and bonuses for paddy farmers. He urged voters to elect Congress corporators and councillors to ensure faster development and accused BJP and BRS of working together politically.

INDIA CREATES HISTORY: India defeat England, win sixth Under-19 World Cup



Harare (TSIT): Batting prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi lit up the grand stage with a jaw-dropping 175 to power India to a record-extending sixth ICC Under-19 World Cup title with a 100-run victory over England in the final here on Friday. The triumph adds to India's previous titles in 2000, 2008, 2012, 2018 and 2022, underlining their dominance in the tournament's history. The 14-year-old Sooryavanshi blazed his way to a stunning

175 off just 80 balls, recording the fastest 150 in Under-19 cricket history, reaching the milestone in 71 deliveries, as India piled up a daunting 411 for 9 after electing to bat. In response, England kept the required run rate within sight for large parts of the chase but lost wickets at regular intervals, which steadily derailed their pursuit. They were eventually bowled out for 311 with Caleb Falconer scoring a 66-ball 115. Sooryavanshi, who shot into the lime-

light during last year's Indian Premier League, smashed 15 sixes and an equal number of boundaries, registering the highest individual score by any batter in an ICC tournament final. **Brief Scores: India 411/9 in 50 overs (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 175, Ayush Mahatre 53; James Minto 3/63, Sebastian Morgan 2/74). England 311 all out in 40.2 overs (Caleb Falconer 115, Ben Dawkins 66; RS Ambrish 3/56, Deepesh Devendran 2/64)**

RBI holds rates at 5.25%, keeps neutral stance as inflation outlook improves



Mumbai (TSIT) India's central bank on Friday kept its key policy rate unchanged and maintained a neutral policy stance, citing easing inflation pressures, strong economic fundamentals, Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra said after the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to hold the policy repo rate at 5.25% at the conclusion of its monetary policy review. All other policy rates were also left unchanged. Malhotra said, "Indian economy remains resilient; Monetary policy will be guided by new inflation data based on revised series." Malhotra added geopolitical tensions remain elevated and global trade pressures are rising, but the Indian economy continues to show resilience. The RBI projected retail inflation at 3.2 percent in the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year and 2.1% for the full year. Inflation is expected to rise to 4.0% in the first quarter of FY27 and 4.2% in the second quarter, largely due to a sharp increase in gold and silver prices, the governor said.

31 killed, 169 injured in suicide attack in Pak



Islamabad (TSIT) A suicide bomber blew himself up at a Shia mosque during Friday prayers in Pakistan's capital, killing at least 31 people and injuring 169, said officials, in one of the worst terror attacks targeting the community in recent years. The powerful explosion, which was heard from a far distance, took place at Khadijatul Kubra mosque-cum-imambargah in the Tarlai area of Islamabad, the police said in a statement. The suicide bomber was stopped at the gate of the imambargah, but he detonated himself, police and eyewitnesses said. At least 31 people were killed and 169 others injured in the explosion, a district administration spokesperson said in a post on X. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the blast.

Ghee made with bathroom cleaners used in Tirupati laddu, says CM Naidu

Amaravati (TSIT) : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday, claimed that Tirupati laddu was prepared with ghee made with chemicals used for cleaning bathrooms during the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government's tenure. He accused the YSRCP of trying to tarnish the sanctity of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple by adulterating the 'prasadam' (offering).

"For five years, they (YSRCP) had made 'prasadam' with ghee prepared from chemicals. The ghee was made with chemicals used for cleaning bathrooms," the Chief Minister said. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was addressing a public meeting at Yemmiganur in Kurnool district on the occasion of distribution of 'your land - your right' patadar passbooks among farmers. He said that YSRCP leader and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is claiming that the Central Bureau of Investigation and Special Investigation Team gave them a clean chit but his own



uncle Y.V. Subba Reddy, who served as the Chairman of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), admitted that adulteration did occur. The Chief Minister claimed that he tried to rectify the situation after YSRCP desecrated the TTD with adulterated prasadam. He said that there is a significant difference between the laddu offered in the past and the laddu offered now. He also accused the YSRCP of engaging in a show of strength for political purposes instead of fighting for public issues. A show of strength should be done during elections, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu remarked. Referring to Jagan Mohan Reddy's recent visit to Guntur, Chandrababu Naidu said he caused inconvenience to motorists. "In the past, they

ran over a person named Singayya under their convoy. In Bangarupalyam, they threw mangoes on the ground, trampled on them, and engaged in hooliganism," the Chief Minister said, adding that he knows how to deal with this kind of politics. He said the Telugu Desam Party-led coalition government in Andhra Pradesh was providing pattadar passbooks to farmers with all security features to prevent tampering of land records. He made it clear that anyone attempting to manipulate the records will be sent to jail. He criticised his predecessor Jagan Mohan Reddy for issuing passbooks with his photograph. "Who is he (Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy) to put his photos on the land inherited from our ancestors," the Chief Minister asked, and accused the YSRCP leader of spending Rs 700 crore to put his pictures on land survey stones. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu alleged that the YSRCP leaders tried to seize lands of farmers through fraudulent methods.



The Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah visits 'Gurnam' and 'Bobiya' BOPs, located on the India-Pakistan border, during the second day of his Jammu visit.

Kavitha to launch new political party in three months

Hyderabad, Feb 6 : Telangana Jagruthi President K. Kavitha on Friday announced that she will announce a new political party within three months. She told media persons here that she is waiting for a good 'mahuratam' (auspicious time) to launch the political party. Kavitha, daughter of Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) President and former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao (KCR), quit the BRS last year after she was suspended from it for anti-party activities. The former MP announced that Telangana Jagruthi will organise a meeting in Hyderabad on February 12 to pay tributes to those who laid down their lives for Telangana.

Targeting the BRS, she said it was not working sincerely on the issue of reservation for Backward Classes. She criticised the BRS for fielding B. Madhav Reddy as the candidate in municipal elections, noting that he had filed a petition in the High Court opposing 42 per cent reservation to the Backward Classes. She said that when BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) appealed to people to



vote for his party without seeing the candidates, she did not expect that the BRS would field such a person. Madhav Reddy, who was earlier with the Telangana Jagruthi, later floated the Reddy Jagruthi and claims to be fighting for the interests of the Reddy community. Meanwhile, Kavitha claimed that in Sircilla, 16 leaders of the BRS approached her Telangana Jagruthi for tickets to contest municipal elections. Sircilla is the Assembly constituency represented by her brother and BRS Working President KTR. Kavitha

also said that KTR and T. Harish Rao were campaigning only in those areas where the Telangana Jagruthi has fielded its candidates. She also targeted Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for using abusive language against KCR. She alleged that the Chief Minister was resorting to abuses as he was unable to politically face KCR. She remarked that no one can erase the name of KCR from the history of Telangana. Reiterating that the investigation into the alleged phone-tapping case is like a television serial, she said the government should tell people when this serial is going to end. She criticised Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar for dismissing petitions for the disqualification of eight BRS MLAs who switched loyalties to the Congress. "The Speaker is saying that the MLAs are still in the BRS. If this is correct, how can Congress appoint one of these MLAs (Arekapudi) Gandhi as the party in charge for municipal elections in Nizamabad district," she said.

Iran, US 'indirect' talks in Oman end on positive note with both sides agreeing to continue



New Delhi: Iran and the United States concluded their day of negotiations in Oman on Friday evening with both sides agreeing to continue the talks. The new round of indirect nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington in

Muscat ended on Friday afternoon. The talks could continue in the coming days, the Iranian TV said. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the talks were a good beginning, and the continuation depended on the capi-

itals. Iran's MEHR News Agency (MNA) quoted Araghchi as saying, "There was agreement on the continuation of the talks, the manner and date will be determined later." "It was agreed to continue the talks, but the time, place and manner will be decided in the capitals." "Several rounds of meetings were held today, our points of view and concerns were conveyed, and the issues were discussed in a very good atmosphere. Overall, it was a good start, but its continuation depends on consultations in the capitals," Araghchi said.

ECI extends SIR by a month in Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow, Feb 6 (UNI) Election Commission of India (ECI) on Friday extended the period for filing claims and objections in connection with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, currently being carried out in Uttar Pradesh, by thirty days. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Navdeep Rinwa on Friday said claims and objections can now be filed until March 6. Earlier the last date for filing claims and objections was today, this has been extended after a review, said officials. All details of the voter list will be completed by March 27, they said and the final voter list will be published on April 10, 2026.

Education should not feel like burden; don't focus only on marks but on improving life: PM to students

NEW DELHI: Listen to everyone's advice but change your lifestyle pattern only when you want to, education should not feel like a burden, focus not only on marks on improving life -- these are some of the mantras shared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with school students to de-stress themselves ahead of board exams. Modi also noted that exams are like festivals and should be celebrated. In his interaction with the students during the ninth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 with PM', he asserted that comfort zones don't shape life - your way of living does. "Education should not feel like a burden. It needs our total involvement. Education in bits and pieces does not ensure success. Instead of focusing on marks, everyone should focus on where they have made it in life. No

matter what your parents, or teachers, or peers say, have faith in and follow your pattern, keeping in mind all the suggestions that come your way....," he said. "Our goal should be such that it is within reach, but not easily attainable. Tame the mind, then connect the subjects you need to study. Then you will always find the student successful," Modi told the group of students who had come from various parts of the country at his residence here. He cautioned against the obsession with marks, asking whether anyone remembers the name of a student who scored highest marks last year in boards. When the students replied no, Modi underscored that even if such achievements are praised briefly, they are soon forgotten, showing how little importance marks



hold. A student from Gujarat asked that while parents worry for them and teachers support them, the issue arises when teachers suggest one study pattern, parents insist on another and students follow a different trend, leaving them confused about which pattern is correct.

Modi remarked that this continues throughout life, noting that even as prime minister people advise him differently. "Just as siblings at home have different eating patterns - some starting with vegetables, some with dal, some mixing everything together - everyone has their own way. Enjoyment comes

from following one's own pattern...some prefer studying at night, others early in the morning, and each has their own rhythm," he said. "Students must trust their own pattern, listen carefully to suggestions and add improvements only through personal experience, not merely because someone says so. When I began Pariksha Pe Charcha there was one pattern, but over time I improved it, even conducting sessions in different states, changing the format while retaining the core," he said. Modi urged students not to waste time dwelling on the past but to think of living what lies ahead. "I don't look back at what has passed, I always look at what is to come... There are times when teachers only teach what is important and can help you score good marks, but a good teacher

focuses on all-around development and teaches everything. Life is not just about exams. Education is just a medium of our development. "I have become PM. Still, people tell me to work in different ways. But everyone has their own pattern. Some people study better in the morning, some at night. Whatever suits you, believe in that. But also take advice, and if that benefits you, then only add it to your life structure," he said. Responding to a question about pursuing a future in gaming despite societal pressure to focus only on studies, the prime minister said gaming is not just a hobby, it is a skill. It involves speed as well, so it is good for development. "Gaming is a skill requiring speed and alertness, which contributes to self-development. Focus on building

expertise in high-quality games and build studies," he said. Modi cautioned against gambling in gaming, noting that laws have been enacted to prevent such practices, and stressed that gaming should be pursued as a constructive skill. He also said a teacher's effort should be to ensure that the student's speed is such that his own speed is one step ahead of theirs. Modi asked the students to balance studies, rest, skills and hobbies, which is the key to growth. "Even there are two skills: life skills and professional skills. I say both go hand in hand. So, skill starts with knowledge," he said. "Our goal should always be within reach, but not easily achievable...there should be a balance in everything in life. If you bend more towards one side, you will

fall... Life skills and professional skills are equally important and can be imbibed only with education...", he said. At the outset, he welcomed all the students at his residence with an Assamese 'gamosa'. The 9th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha was also screened at the Bal Yogi Auditorium in Parliament premises. Launched in 2018, Pariksha Pe Charcha began as student interaction in townhall format before expanding into one of India's largest education engagement exercises. Registrations rose from about 38.8 lakh in 2023 to 2.26 crore in 2024, before touching 3.53 crore in 2025 - a milestone that earned the programme a Guinness World Record. The ninth edition broke the previous record with over 4.5 crore registrations.

'Shatak' Teaser Unveils the Untold Story of a Century-Long Journey of the RSS



MUMBAI: The teaser of Shatak: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ke 100 Varsh has been released, offering a cinematic glimpse into the untold story of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and narrating its 100-year journey, ideology, and social contributions to the nation. Directed by Aashish Mall and presented by ADA 360 Degrees LLP, the film is Produced by Vir Kapur and co-produced by Aashish Ti-

wari. Conceptualized to commemorate the historic milestone, the film explores lesser-known chapters of the organisation's evolution, including its role during the freedom movement, periods of challenge, and its continuing influence on India's social and cultural fabric. Moving beyond debates, Shatak aims to present a researched narrative that places history and perspec-

tives in context. The film recently also saw the release of its song 'Bhagwa Hai Apni Pehchan', unveiled by RSS Sarsanghachalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat, with singer Sukhwinder Singh lending his voice to the track. The teaser has garnered attention across audiences and has also received words of encouragement from personalities such as Ajay Devgn and yoga guru Baba Ramdev.

LS adjourned for the day amid unabated protests

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day on Friday following unabated protests by opposition members over various issues. Friday was the second day when the House could not take up discussion on the Union Budget presented on February 1. As the House reassembled at 12 noon after an earlier adjournment, opposition members continued with their protests by trooping into the Well of the House. Chairing the proceedings, Krishna Prasad Tenneti urged opposition to take their seats and put down placards. As opposition members refused to relent, he adjourned the House till Monday. Earlier Speaker Om



Birla lamenting that he cannot run "such a House". The speaker noted that 19 hours and 13 minutes have been wasted due to disruptions in the current session and said members are disrespecting the House. As soon as the House met for the day, many

opposition members trooped into the Well, shouting slogans and displaying placards. The speaker said he wants the House to run and people have elected members to raise their issues and not to shout slogans. Lok Sabha has been witnessing disruption

s since Monday afternoon after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi was disallowed by the chair from quoting an article based on the excerpts of former Army chief M M Naravane's 'unpublished memoir' in which he has referred to the India-China conflict of

2020. While urging protesting members to allow the House to run, Birla also said there is a question marked for Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi. As the din continued, the speaker adjourned proceedings within less than four minutes of convening. Warning opposition members against crossing over to the treasury benches, he said. "I cannot run such a House." The government and the opposition are at loggerheads over various issues. In an unprecedented development, the Lok Sabha passed the Motion of Thanks on Thursday without the prime minister's customary reply scheduled a day earlier following relentless sloganeering by opposition MPs.

Govt using tech in big way in farm sector, 8.48 cr farmers given digital IDs so far: Chouhan

NEW DELHI: Union Agriculture Minister Shriraj Singh Chouhan on Friday asserted that the government is using technology in a big way in the farm sector and said 8.48 crore farmers have been provided with digital IDs in 19 states and work is in progress in other states. Replying to supplementary questions during Question Hour in Rajya Sabha, the minister criticised the UPA government for not taking help of digital infrastructure. "We are using technology in a big way in the farm sector. The previous government worked on paper, we are using technology," Chouhan said, listing out the tech-initiatives rolled out in the farm sector. Under the AgriStack, a Dig-



ital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the minister said the government is creating Kisan Pehchan Patra (farmers ID) for each farmer recording details of land records and family members. So far, 8.48 crore farmer IDs have been generated in 19 states, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. The registration of farmers

in Goa, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir will start soon, he said. Farmers' IDs in Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman Nicobar, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Ladakh and Jharkhand could not be generated in the absence of digital record of land details, the minister said, adding that the Centre is providing support to these states to digitalise land records.

In a written reply, Chouhan said the AgriStack consists of three foundational registries or databases associated with the agriculture sector, i.e., the farmers registry, geo-referenced village maps, and crop sown registry, all created and maintained by state governments/ Union Territories. "It establishes a single source of truth for farmer identity, land, and their crops," he added. Farmer ID enables seamless integration of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM Kisan), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Minimum Support Price (MSP)-based procurement, access to credit delivery, input distri-

bution, and disaster relief. Chouhan said the digital crop survey has enabled plot-level visibility of crops and better estimation of sowing patterns across seasons, which in turn supports evidence-based planning for procurement, input supply and logistics. In Kharif 2025, the Digital Crop Survey (DCS) has been conducted in 604 Districts covering more than 28.5 crore plots across the country. Chouhan said Maharashtra has successfully leveraged AgriStack for scheme delivery, disaster relief, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based advisory, and providing credit access, including the transfer of over Rs 14,000 crore to 89 lakh farmers for Kharif 2025 crop losses.

NEW DELHI: An artificial intelligence-based intrusion-detection system to monitor the movement of lions has been sanctioned for the railway section located within Gujarat's Gir National Park and Lion Wildlife Sanctuary, the government informed Parliament on Friday. In a written reply to questions regarding plans for constructing an elevated rail corridor through the Gir forest to protect Asiatic lions, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the Rajya Sabha that besides maintaining speed restrictions and the construction of underpasses, an AI-based intrusion-detection system has also been sanctioned. "The existing railway net-

work passing through Gir forest area is Metre Gauge (MG) section. For the safety of wildlife, the trains are operated at slow speed in identified lion passing corridors. Also, 2 Nos. of lions' underpasses are existing and work of construction of 5 Nos. of lions' underpasses has been taken up," he added. "In addition, work for implementation of an Artificial Intelligence based Intrusion Detection System (IDS) for monitoring lion movement has been sanctioned covering 115 km in the Damnagar-Pipavav section of the Bhavnagar Division of Western Railway, located within the Gir National Park and Lion Wildlife Sanctuary," the minister said.

He said the system is designed to generate alerts for loco pilots, station masters and the control room about the movement of lions near railway tracks for taking timely preventive action. Regarding the coordination between the Indian Railways and the forest department, Vaishnaw said review committees -- a circle-level committee, a divisional-level committee and a range-level committee -- have been established. "The meetings of said committees are conducted quarterly, bi-monthly and monthly respectively. The issues discussed in the meetings are resolved proactively by Railways," he said.

Total shutdown affects normal life in Manipur's Churachandpur district

IMPHAL: Normal life in Manipur's Churachandpur district was affected after two tribal bodies imposed a "total shutdown" in the Kuki-Zo dominated district to protest the participation of MLAs from the community in the government formation in the state, officials said. On Friday morning, bandh supporters holding sticks stopped vehicles in parts of the district headquarters town. Markets remained shut and vehicles off the roads. Educational and government offices also witnessed poor attendance, they said. The Churachandpur unit of the Kuki Students Organisation imposed a 24-hour total shutdown from Friday midnight in the district, while another outfit -- Joint Forum of Seven (JF7) -- imposed a shutdown in Kuki-Zo areas from 6 am to 6 pm. The shutdown was more effectively visible in the Tuibong area of the district headquarters town. The situation remained tense in the district and additional security forces have been deployed in vital points of the district headquarters town, officials said. Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights (KWCHR) also announced that it will organise a mass public rally on Friday afternoon to oppose the participation of Kuki-Zo MLAs in the formation of the government.

KWOHR stated that the protest aims to express strong opposition to any move which includes the participation of Kuki-Zo MLAs in the formation of the state government under the prevailing situation. The rally is intended to convey the collective stand of the Kuki women against political developments they consider unacceptable, it said. On Thursday evening, clashes broke out between a mob and security forces near Tuibong forest gate, leading to baton charge and firing of tear gas shells by security forces to disperse the mob, which indulged in stone-pelting. The clashes went on till 3 am on Friday morning, leading to injuries to two demonstrators, officials said. Meanwhile, the Indigenous Tribes Advocacy Committee (Pherzwal and Jiribam district) has warned that any attempt to intimidate, demean, threaten or cause harm to MLA N Sanate, as well as vandalism, stealing and robbing of his properties, shall be viewed as deliberately disrespecting the collective stand of tribal people of Pherzawl and Jiribam districts. It also asserted that it supports the interests of Hmar, Kuki and Zomi tribes of Manipur and said that the recent political developments should not create animosity among the three tribes.

AAP leader shot dead in Punjab's Jalandhar; opposition slams law and order collapse under Mann

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Aam Aadmi Party leader Lucky Oberoi was shot dead by an unidentified assailant outside a gurdwara in Jalandhar's Model Town on Friday, police said. The incident took place around 7:30 am, when the 43-year-old was leaving the gurdwara in his SUV. CCTV footage showed when Oberoi came out of the gurdwara and sat in his vehicle, an assailant wearing a black-coloured hoodie approached him on foot and opened indiscriminate fire, and fled along with his accomplice, who was waiting for him at a short distance on a scooter. Oberoi was hit with multiple shots, and was rushed to a hospital in an unconscious state. He succumbed to the bullet injuries, ACP Jalandhar, Parminder Singh, said over the phone. In the firing incident, the window panes of Oberoi's SUV and another vehicle parked in the area were shattered. Satwinderpal Singh alias Lucky Oberoi was a Jaland-



har-based AAP leader, in charge of a ward in Jalandhar Cantt. The assailants may have carried out a revenge of Oberoi's movements, police sources said. Further investigations are underway, police said, adding that CCTV footage is being scanned to trace the assailants. A case has been registered in connection with the incident. Various angles in the case are being examined, including

the personal enmity angle, they said. A doctor at a private hospital where Oberoi was admitted told reporters that he was brought in around 8:10 am. "He was unconscious, and his blood pressure was unrecordable. Eight to nine rounds were fired at him, and one of the bullets pierced through his chest," the doctor said. Despite best efforts, Oberoi could not be saved, the doctor added. When contacted

over the phone, AAP's Doaba in-charge Tarandeep Singh Sunny said, "The 43-year-old is survived by his wife, who had last year contested the civic elections, two daughters, and a son." Oberoi was a very active leader, he said. Opposition parties hit out at the Bhagwant Mann-led dispensation over the incident, alleging the collapse of law and order in the state under AAP rule. Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, in a post on X, said, "The shocking daylight murder of @AAPPunjab leader Lucky Oberoi outside a gurdwara in Jalandhar, exposes the grim reality: if even ruling party leaders aren't safe, what hope remains for ordinary citizens?" "Punjab today is gripped by fear, gang violence, and administrative paralysis, while the AAP government remains busy with PR and excuses. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann must answer: who is responsible for this complete breakdown?" Bajwa said in

his post. Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal, in a post on X, alleged "Punjab is bleeding under Aam Aadmi Party's 'zero fear govt'" "Even AAP leaders are not safe in their own govt! The daylight murder of @AAPPunjab leader Lucky Oberoi outside a Gurdwara in Jalandhar today morning exemplifies this fact. Nearly 25 murders in January 2026 alone, after 9 in the first week of the year. They are happening everywhere, be it a court complex, busy bazaar, wedding venue, or even outside a Gurdwara Sahib," he said. SAD senior leader Birkam Singh Majithia and Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring also slammed the Mann government over the incident. "This has become a new norm in Punjab. Kill anyone anywhere as per whims and fancies. Shame on you. @BhagwantMann. You and your @DGPPunjabPolice have completely destroyed Punjab.

Congress workers take out padayatra to ‘save MGNREGA’, slam VB-G Ram-G scheme

Mangaluru, Feb 6: As part of the MGNREGA Bachao Sangram, Congress workers under the Mangaluru South Assembly Constituency Congress Committee took out a padayatra in the city on Thursday to protest the Central government's proposed VB-G Ram-G scheme.

The march began from the grounds near Shanthinilaya Hall at Balmatta and proceeded to the Mahatma Gandhi statue in front of the Mangaluru City Corporation office, where party leaders addressed the gathering.

MLC Ivan D'Souza alleged that the Central government had rushed the VB-G Ram-G scheme into implementation without proper discussion. "This itself is proof that the BJP has no respect for Mahatma Gandhi or the Constitution," he said, adding that the Congress would continue its protests



against the move.

Senior Congress leader Padmaraj R Poojary said that Mahatma Gandhi had dreamt of Rama Rajya and that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), implemented during former prime minister Manmohan Singh's tenure, had played a vital role in India's development. "It was even praised by the United Nations. By pro-

viding 100 days of employment, it became a lifeline for the people. Now, through the VB-G Ram-G scheme, the Central government has centralised power," he alleged.

Congress city district president said that MGNREGA had enabled the development of entire villages — including roads, lakes, wells and toilets. "By merely changing the scheme's name, the Central government has

done injustice to the poor, farmers and women," Poojary said.

The padayatra saw the participation of several senior leaders and party workers, including Dakshina Kannada district Congress president Harish Kumar; heads of corporations and boards Shalet Pinto and Vishwas Das; former MLA J R Lobo; former mayors Shashidhar Hegde and Bhaskar K; and block leaders Suresh Ballal, Abdul Saleem, Prakash Salyan, Dennis D'Silva, Suhan Alva, Lesh Mulur, Abdul Ravooof, Vinay Raj, Praveen Chandra Alva, Ashraf Bajal, T K Sudheer, Manoraj, Chethan Bengre, Chandrakala Jogi, Roopa Chethan, Asif Bengre, Samsuddin Kudroli, Prithviraj, Honnaiah, Melvin Castellino, Nazir Bajal, Shanthala Gatti and others.

Udupi: MAHE to host Global Health Summit 2026 across Dubai, Manipal

Udupi, Feb 6: Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), an Institution of Eminence Deemed to be University, is set to host high-level MAHE Global Health Summit 2026 as a side event of the World Health Summit (WHS) Academic Alliance and the Lancet Commission on Academic Responsibility. The WHS Academic Alliance unites 30 leading academic institutions to strengthen evidence-based global health policy and international cooperation. "The Lancet" group of journals address urgent topics in the society, initiate debate, put science into context, and influence decision-makers around the world. The global gathering will commence at the MAHE Dubai campus February 5-7 before extending to MAHE's Manipal campus in India on February 9, showcasing MAHE's commitment to reshaping global health conversation across geographies. The Dubai leg of the summit will mark the formal launch of the WHS Academic Alliance Lancet Commission on Academic Responsibility through a high-level symposium titled "Academic Responsibility in a Fragmenting World on the February 5." The Dubai convening also aligns with MAHE's broader vision of strengthening global public health capacity, alongside the announcement of launch of the Bachelor of Public Health programme at the MAHE Dubai campus. MAHE will also host the kick-off meeting of the WHS Academic Alliance Lancet Commission on the February 6-7. Dr Cherian Varghese, director of Prasanna School of Public Health is one of the Commissioners and will repre-

sent MAHE.

Building on the outcomes of the Dubai discussions, the summit will culminate on February 9 at its Manipal campus. The summit will feature global commissioners from the Dubai meeting, along with prominent national public health leaders, academicians, and practitioners from across India, to review the global insights with in local and regional health priorities.

A key highlight of the Manipal summit will be four thematic panel discussions exploring the convergence of academia, society, and public health practice. These panels will focus and highlight the changing societal norms with a specific lens on mental health; participatory research for societal benefit through a One Health approach; translating evidence into social policy with an emphasis on diet and nutrition in local contexts; and building trustworthy communication that meets societal needs, particularly in relation to vaccine safety and uptake. Highlighting the importance of the Global Health Summit 2026 Lt Gen (Dr) MD Venkatesh VSM (Retd) said:

"Through the WHS Academic Alliance and the Lancet Commission and the Global Health Summit 2026, MAHE aims to reinforce the critical role of academic institutions as catalysts for social empowerment, policy influence, and sustainable health systems. By doing such global events, MAHE continues to position itself as a global convener committed to advancing evidence-based solutions for pressing public health challenges while fostering collaboration across borders and disciplines."

Congress corruption exposed, will fight harder: R. Ashoka

Bengaluru: Opposition Leader R. Ashoka on Friday said the BJP had exposed massive corruption under the Congress government during the special Assembly session and vowed to intensify the fight to recover public money. Addressing a press conference, Ashoka alleged a Rs.6,000-crore scam in the Excise Department and said he had submitted five documents and audio evidence. Despite this, the government was demanding more proof, he said. Referring to earlier allegations of 40 per cent corruption during the BJP regime, Ashoka claimed liquor traders were now alleging 80 per cent corruption under Congress. He questioned why Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Excise Minister Thimmappur had not resigned, alleging the CM himself was involved. Ashoka accused the

Congress of misusing Mahatma Gandhi's name while acting against his ideals. He alleged that liquor shops were promoted, cow protection was opposed, and government schemes were named after the Nehru-Gandhi family instead of national icons like Mahatma Gandhi and Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

He also claimed an internal power struggle had resurfaced between CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, saying governance had taken a back seat to leadership battles. On upcoming local body elections, Ashoka said the BJP would strategise to win major corporations, citing public anger over increased taxes. He further criticised Congress for questioning EVMs, mismanaging finances, and failing to prioritise development, concluding that the party had lost public trust.

BDA RECOVERS PROPERTY AT J.P. NAGAR 9TH PHASE LAYOUT

Bangalore Development Authority has continued its drive to clear unauthorized constructions, recovered property valued of Rs. 130 crore during an operation held today in J.P. Nagar 9th Phase. BDA demolished unauthorized structures built across 3 acres of land in Survey No. 20 of Alahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, and land is recovered, which is estimated to be worth approximately Rs. 130 crore. The demolition operation was car-



ried out by the BDA Task Force, led by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Zonal Commissioner (South Zone), Engineering Officers, Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineer, South Division, with the active cooperation of the local police department.

Physicswalla launches free exam support for Class 10 CBSE students

Delhi: Leading education company Physicswalla has announced a nationwide free student support initiative for Class 10 CBSE students appearing for the 2026 board examinations. The initiative aims to reduce exam-related stress and strengthen students' preparation through free doubt-clearing sessions and offline mock pre-board exams. The programme is open to all Class 10 students across

India, regardless of whether they are enrolled with Physicswalla. As part of the initiative, students can visit their nearest Vidyapeeth, Pathshala, or Tuition Centre and obtain a "Doubt Buster Pass," valid until the board exams. Experienced faculty will provide guidance in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology, explain complex topics in a simplified manner, and offer tips on effective

answer writing. Students will also receive revision cards aligned with the CBSE Class 10 syllabus.

To further enhance exam readiness, Physicswalla will conduct offline mock pre-board examinations in Science on February 1, 2026, and Mathematics on February 8, 2026. These exams will be held at the institute's physical centres, offering students a real board exam-like experience and

helping them improve time management skills.

Ankit Gupta, CEO of Vidyapeeth, said the initiative reflects Physicswalla's commitment to accessible education and quality academic support during crucial exam phases.

The programme will be implemented across Physicswalla's network of 192 technology-enabled centres operating in 132 cities nationwide.

February 30.. Trailer Release

Bengaluru: The trailer of the movie February 30 starring Bigg Boss fame Abhishek Srikanth has been released. The movie is a psychological thriller with a storyline. Directed by Mysore-based Prashanth M.L., Joseph Baby has invested in this movie through Shankara Movies International. Abhishek, Sahitya Shetty, Akshay, Manoj, Shivakumar have played the lead roles in the movie. P.M. Unnikrishnan has handled the cinematography and Lijin Pambo has composed the music for this movie.

Speaking, director M.L. Prashanth said, I am an IT



employee. I was making a small short movie. I thought I would make this movie short. But the movie Barita Barita came out well. The producer liked the story and said let's make the movie. This is a

psychological thriller movie. February 30 is an unexpected date. The movie has done well. He said that he will definitely like it when he sees it on screen.

Actor Abhishek

Srikanth said that February 30 is my first horror movie. I had not done it till now. When Prashant sir told me the story, I thought it was unique. Prashant sir was also confused during the

Misuse of Mahatma Gandhi's portrait in advertisements to promote violence: Ramesh Babu

Bengaluru: Council member Ramesh Babu has filed a complaint against those who have committed an offence under the Indian Penal Code, 2023 (BNS) by misusing Mahatma Gandhi's portrait in advertisements to promote violence.

In this regard, he has written to the Principal Secretary of the Home Department and the Director General of Police and the Inspector General, requesting immediate legal action against the individuals who have used Mahatma Gandhi's portrait in advertisements to promote violence/incite violence. He said that such acts are illegal and punishable under the Indian Penal Code, 2023 (BNS). In an advertisement published in several dailies (Deccan Herald, Prajavani, The New Indian Express, The Hindu, Vijayavani, Kannada Prabha, Samyukta Karnataka, Udayavani etc.) published on Friday, the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation and internationally respected, who is a symbol of non-violence, has been wrongly and carelessly used with violent acts / violent messages / incitement to violence.



Such misuse, apart from hurting the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, is likely to hurt public sentiments and disturb public peace and harmony. This advertisement has been published in several newspapers by the Bharatiya Janata Party, Karnataka Unit, Bangalore.

This act is punishable under the following offences under the Indian Penal Code, 2023, Section 196 BNS – Acts prejudicial to the promotion of enmity and maintenance of harmony, Section 197 BNS – Allegations, state-

ments or representations prejudicial to national unity, Section 299 BNS – Intentional and malicious acts intended to outrage religious or public sentiments, Section 353 BNS – Statements likely to cause public unrest, Section 356 BNS – Defamation of a respected national figure (where applicable). Further, since this material has also been disseminated through electronic and digital platforms, the provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000 also apply. Unauthorised use of the por-

trait of Mahatma Gandhi is also a violation of the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950. Mahatma Gandhiji represents the constitutional values of peace, non-violence and unity. Any attempt to associate his portrait with violence is dangerous, illegal and against the spirit of the Constitution of India and is likely to lead to public unrest.

Therefore, an FIR should be registered against the Bharatiya Janata Party of Karnataka under the Indian Penal Code, 2023, the relevant advertisement material should be seized immediately, a thorough investigation should be conducted and strict legal action should be taken against the guilty.

It has been requested that steps should be taken to ensure that the portrait of national greats including Mahatma Gandhiji is not misused in the coming days. In connection with the investigation of this case, it has been requested that the above published dailies, social media, digital platforms, screenshots, links and other relevant documents should be considered by the investigat-

KPCC General Secretary S Manohar demands resignation of Defence Minister, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister

Bengaluru: KPCC General Secretary S Manohar has demanded the resignation of the Defence Minister, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister. Speaking at a protest organized by the Congress party, he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi taking moral responsibility should resign immediately has his name is mentioned in the files of Jeffrey Epstein, who sexually abused and murdered innocent girls, and demanded that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah resign over Chinese aggression. This is a betrayal by the central BJP government to the country's soldiers and citizens, and the BJP is expressing its opposition to the attempt to reveal the truth about the illegal information coming from China to India through a book. The entire India is watching the information about Manoj Mukund Naravane with great curiosity. In Parliament, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi said that former Army Chief Manoj Mukund Naravane's book mentions the encroachment of Chinese troops on the Indian border and the killing of Indian soldiers. On

the other hand, this information has come to light at a time when the Prime Minister of the country is being investigated in a US court about the relationship of the country's Prime Minister with Epstein.

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED		FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD		
Regd Office: 8/56 A, Padmanabha Building, Near Sreenarayana Swami Temple, Cherpuru - Thrissur Road, Thrissur, Kerala 680057 Phone No: 0487-3520504, Website: www.manappuramhomefin.com				
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)				
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN") under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest ("SARFESI") Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(1)(f) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Actual possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said "Act" read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:				
Sr. No.	Name of Borrower and Co-Borrowers/ Loan Account No./ Branch	Description of Secured Asset in Respect of Which Interest Has Been Created	Date of Demand Notice sent to Borrower	Date of Actual Possession
1	Rajitha Mol, Abhishek D, (MHL0140005285/ Kottayam	To an Extent 2.42 Ares, Sy. No 16/3, Re. Sy. No 99/10-3-2 & 99/10-3-3 in Ambalapuzha South Anchayath, Ambalapuzha Village, Ambalapuzha Taluk, Iritikulam, Kottayam, District-Idappuzha, PO Ambalapuzha, Alappu, Kerala, Pin: 688561	13-10-2024 & 31-01-2026	31-01-2026
Date: 7 th February 2026		Place: KOTTAYAM	Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd	

ICICI Home Finance

Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office : 1st Floor, Prasad Arcade, Building No. 28/12/7, 5, Pattarakkal Junction, Shornur Road, Thrissur- 680022

Notice for sale of immovable assets through Private Treaty
Sole Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets through Private Treaty under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8(B)/r/w Rule 9 (1)(f) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
ICICI Home Finance Company Limited (ICICI HFC) conducted several Auctions for the sale of the mortgaged property mentioned below, however, all such e-Auctions failed. Now, an interested buyer has approached ICICI HFC with an offer to purchase the said property for an amount of Rs. 45,00,000/-. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below-described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", by way of Private Treaty as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs. Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	Sarfaesi Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Pradeep Francis (Borrower) Varna K Joseph (Co-Borrowers) Loan No. LHTHR000013171119 & LHTHR00001356557	Sy. No. 181/2, Village Kallur, Taluk Mukundapuram, Sub- District Nelloy, District- Thrissur, Kerala	Rs. 1,24,38,871/- February 02, 2026	Rs. 45,00,000/- 04, 2026	February 16, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	February 23, 2026 02:00 PM To 04:00 PM	Physical Possession	

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- <https://BidDeal.in/>) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before February 21, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit a signed copy of the Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions Form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before February 21, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.
The general public is requested to submit their bids higher than the amount being offered by the interested buyer mentioned above. It is hereby informed that in case no bids higher than the amount being offered by the aforementioned interested buyer is received by ICICI HFC, the mortgaged property shall be sold to the said interested buyer as per Rule 8(B) r/w Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the sale or submission of bids, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300.
The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icicifin.com/>
Date : February 07, 2026
Place : Thrissur
Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited"
CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

THE DESCENT OF MAN (AND MP) - BY SHASHI THAROOR

One often hears of an MP's "precipitous drop" in political fortunes, but I hadn't expected to illustrate the metaphor so physically on the steps of Parliament on Wednesday. Having spent decades navigating the slippery slopes of policy and the treacherous inclines of debate, it was, quite ironically, a simple marble step that proved to be my undoing. One has often been warned about the dangers of "shooting oneself in the foot" in the political arena, but I have managed the far more literal, if slightly less dignified, feat of tripping over it. It was a singular, unassuming step outside the House that finally brought me low - in full view, mortifyingly, of the television cameras.

One often hears of an MP's "precipitous drop" in political fortunes, but I hadn't expected to illustrate the metaphor so physically on the steps of Parliament on Wednesday. Having spent decades navigating the slippery slopes of policy and the treacherous inclines of debate, it was, quite ironically, a simple marble step that proved to be my undoing. One has often been warned about the dangers of "shooting oneself in the foot" in the political arena, but I have managed the far more literal, if slightly less dignified, feat of tripping over it. It was a singular, unassuming step outside the House that finally brought me low - in full view, mortifyingly, of the television cameras.

Advertisement - Scroll to continue

My initial reaction was to make light of it, quote-tweeting a video-post of the incident with a Hindi couplet: "Jis diye ko toofaan me jalna hoga, usey sambhal sambhal ke chalna hoga" ("a lamp that must stay lit in a storm must watch its step"), and adding, "I am okay." Except that, as I found out when I got an X-ray done the next morning, I wasn't.

A "Bottom-Up" View

I had initially hoped my tweet - invoking that resilient lamp braving the storm - would be the final word on the matter. Alas, the medical profession has a way of grounding one's poetic flights of fancy. An X-ray, that most uncompromising of critics, has revealed a hair-line fracture. Consequently, I have been "sentenced" to a month of immobilisation, a regimen of anti-inflammatories that should ideally temper the rhetoric of some other politicians, and an Air Cast on my right foot that is significantly less aerodynamic than its name suggests. This bulky contraption, coupled with a stern medical admonition against perambulation, has effectively "grounded" me in a way my political opponents never quite managed. I now find myself navigating the corridors of power from the vantage point of a wheelchair, a transition that brings with it a certain rueful perspective. There is, I've discovered, a profound humility in being eye-level with the waistbands of one's colleagues; it gives one a literal "bottom-up" view of Indian democracy that is as enlightening as it is humbling. I have become, quite overnight, a man of "wheel-power" rather than willpower, though I suspect the pace of my progress through the Makar Dwar and into the Lok Sabha chamber will now be measured in rotations rather than strides. While I have long advocated for "moving the needle" in Parliament, I didn't anticipate doing so on four wheels. Of course, it is salutary for anyone with delusions of grandeur to be confined to the View from Below. One notices quickly that the world looks quite different when you are eye-level with the gun holsters of the security guards.

"If The Lamp Must Watch Its Step..."

Despite this involuntary shift to a more sedentary existence, I have no intention of letting a mere headline fracture impede the business of the people. While my gait has been forcibly slowed, my resolve remains unfractured. I fully intend to chair my Committee meetings with the same commitment (though perhaps less pacing), deliver my speeches from a seated position - a posture that, I am told, lent the legendary FDR a certain gravitas - and be steered through Parliament with the navigational precision of a slow-moving tugboat. There is a certain rueful irony in being silenced by a stair after surviving so many scuffles at the dispatch box. However, I am embracing this temporary "static" phase of my career. If the lamp must watch its step, it might as well do so while enjoying the comfort of a padded footrest. I shall simply have to ensure that my rhetoric remains more balanced than my gait.

Why Foreign Investors Are Growing Worried About Their 'Minerals' Bets In Pakistan

Pakistan's geoeconomic ambitions find themselves in an anticipated predicament amid the resurgence of violence in the restive province of Balochistan. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) on January 31 launched the second phase of its 'Operation Herof', targeting over ten districts across the province. While conflicting casualty reports have emerged, local reports state the involvement of suicide bombers, including female fighters in the operation. In retaliation, the Pakistani security forces launched a counter-militancy operation and reported the killing of over 150 BLA-linked militants in the aftermath of the violence. During the operation, the authorities reportedly suspended mobile services in several districts, including the provincial capital of Quetta, and Mastung, Kalat, Khuzdar, Nushki, Dalbandin, and Kharan. Military measures have often accompanied communication blackouts as part of the state's response to security challenges in Balochistan. However, the Pakistani state framed the insurgency as externally driven, designating BLA militants as 'Pitna-al-Hindustan' to allege Indian involvement. Within hours of the incident, Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a statement said, "These were not normal terrorists. India is behind these attacks. I can tell you for sure that India planned these attacks along with these terrorists." The Pakistani authorities have previously also accused Afghanistan and Iran's role in the Baloch militancy theater. While Baloch militants are known to operate out of southern Afghanistan and south-eastern Iran, Pakistan's accusations of state involvement continue to lack credibility or independently verifiable evidence. The Nushki Gateway During the operation, the BLA held control over Nushki, therefore highlighting the district as a critical flashpoint between the militants and Pakistani security forces. Strategic control over the territory of Nushki enables militants to sever the land link between the provincial capital, Quetta, and the western part of the province. More significantly, Nushki serves as the entry point to Chagai district, known to be the heart of Pakistan's mineral capital. Home to the Reko Di



gold and copper mines as well as the Saindak copper-gold project, Nushki holds considerable significance for Pakistan's currently expanding geoeconomic calculus. By maintaining a presence in the region, BLA has gestured with intention and capacity to disrupt the logistics of upcoming mining projects, which they have historically portrayed as 'colonial extraction' by the federal government. The focus on Nushki reflects the insurgents' strategy to exploit geographic bottlenecks and paralyse state-led economic corridors and extractive projects. Foreign investors must be closely monitoring the existing security faultlines in Pakistan's restive provinces. Weeks after Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, showcased a briefcase of mineral samples in the presence of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the White House in September 2025, Washington signalled interest in Pakistan's purportedly untapped mineral resources. Billions Invested In December 2025, the US Export-Import Bank approved USD 1.25 billion in financing for the Reko Diq copper-gold mining project, with US President Donald Trump publicly expressing business interest in Pakistan. In the following days, the 7th China-Pakistan foreign ministers' Strategic Dialogue's joint statement

announced the prioritisation of the mining sector on January 4. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting on January 28 with the Australian High Commissioner to discuss bilateral cooperation in the mining and rare earth sectors. While analysts have been tempted to frame the narrative around Pakistan's mineral wealth as a US-China competition, the domestic security challenges warrant foremost attention. For foreign investors, it is expected to remain an irritant, also considering that Pakistan's internal security resources already remain stretched thin. Alongside separatist violence in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains a conflict zone with the continued operations of Islamist factions, most prominently the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In the Balochistan insurgency, the reported involvement of female fighters in active combat operations underscores the current character of the insurgency. This marks a big shift from the auxiliary roles Baloch women have historically played in the insurgency, thereby suggesting an expansion of the recruitment pool and psychological impact of the conflict. Ambition vs Capacity The sustenance of this conflict presents a challenge for large-scale extractive and connectivity projects for all foreign investors.

Edit

Trust Tested: What The India-US Trade Deal Really Signals

The India-US trade deal comes at a critical moment not only for bilateral relations, but amid a broader churn in the global political economy. While the fine print of the agreement is yet to emerge, the initial impression suggests that India may not have conceded significant ground. Crucially, the deal arrives at a time when preventing disruption to sectors asymmetrically dependent on the US market was essential, thereby averting a potential hard landing for the Indian economy. At one level, the agreement in principle is symbolic of the underlying trust that managed to endure a period of pronounced political turbulence in the relationship. At another, it reflects a calculated jostling between two large economies seeking to safeguard their respective domestic interests and geoeconomic positioning. The deal marks the end of a phase in which two decades of steady investment in trust-building gave way to a period of strain. More critically, this phase had pushed questions of geopolitics, regional balancing in the Indo-Pacific, and perhaps most importantly, strategic trust to the back burner. In that sense, the agreement was much needed to restore momentum at a time when global conflicts are intensifying, and protectionism is once again on the rise. Nothing Is To Be Taken For Granted One of the most important lessons from the past six months of intense negotiations and strain with the United States is that, for India, nothing in geopolitics can be taken for granted. Every nation must continuously curate and defend its own interests. It is, however, unfortunate that a protectionist America seems to be closing the gate on long-standing conversations around open economies and free trade. When the world's largest economy adopts the kind of tariff-centric behaviour that the United States has recently displayed, the effects ripple across the global system, impacting emerging and consequential economies most acutely. Donald Trump's approach to negotiations, his transactional tactics, and his disregard for normative and institutional frameworks offer a stark lesson for the world. For India, the experience of the last six months



should be particularly instructive in hindsight. The India-US relationship had, until recently, been anchored in strong political ties between two democracies, a deep diaspora connection, technology transfer, a robust defence partnership, and a growing great-power resonance - an alignment that took clearer shape since the George W. Bush administration, if not earlier. Subsequent administrations of Clinton, Obama, Trump in his first term, and Biden expended considerable political capital in nurturing the relationship. Business and investment flows followed, further consolidating the partnership. Trump's first presidency, while widely viewed as an aberration from textbook governance, nevertheless offered early signals of disruption for India, most notably its removal from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). His policy reversals on climate and global governance now appear less anomalous and more symptomatic of a deeper rupture that fully unfolded in his second term. Yet, despite these disruptions, Trump's first term was not overtly antagonistic toward India and largely aligned with Indian interests globally and in the Indo-Pacific. His second term,

however, proved to be the proverbial eye of the storm. New Realities For India, the recent economic jostling with the United States has come at a glass-half-full moment. While global conflicts such as in Ukraine and Gaza provide some context for Trump's assertive behaviour, India's own rapid economic ascent has also altered power dynamics, not only with the United States but with other major powers as well. India's economic and geopolitical categorisation is shifting rapidly, driven by robust growth projections that place it among the fastest-growing large economies. As India climbs the power ladder, friction with established powers is inevitable, bringing new realities into a relationship that previously operated on different assumptions. The past six months have thus served as a meaningful stress test for the India-US relationship. They reveal not only that India is now viewed differently by major powers, but also that tactical geoeconomics, which is a Trumpian forte, cannot rest on trust alone. It requires the scaffolding of contingencies forged through moments of tension. Going forward, the India-US relationship is likely to be viewed through two distinct lenses: pre-Trump and post-

Trump. Not everything about this transition is necessarily negative. While the new realities may be uncomfortable for some in India, a pragmatic assessment suggests that the ground has shifted. One such reality is the imposition of an 18% tariff on Indian exports to the United States. Although these tariffs are not India-specific and in fact leave India among the least-tariffed economies in the Indo-Pacific, they nonetheless represent a structural change in the bilateral relationship. It is difficult to imagine a future US president with the political will or domestic support to fully reverse this new baseline. India and the United States will now have to move forward within this altered framework. The political agreement on the trade deal provides the necessary comfort on either side that was needed to assuage the domestic tensions in both countries, which are connected by a strong diaspora. The agreement could also help guide the domestic narrative, particularly in the United States, where nativist churn in the political discourse targeted at Indians from the American hard right may be chipping away at the foundations of the India-US relationship. The actual challenge now lies in implementing the promise of the trade deal.

There Are Two Big Problems Trump May Run Into If He Actually Attacks Iran

The growing US military presence in the Gulf signals a potential military operation targeting Iran. While the objectives remain unclear, any use of military force would come with distinct constraints for the Trump administration. The Trump administration faces two broad military options with differing objectives and limitations. The first is a limited air operation aimed at the destruction of the Iranian leadership and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and/or destroying the country's nuclear-enriched stockpiles. The second option involves a sustained campaign aimed at ensuring that the current Iranian regime and its nuclear programme are eradicated from their roots and are replaced by a system that is acceptable to the United States and its regional allies. For the administration, the first option has several external, long-term constraints despite being a comfortable immediate one. The second option might have greater domestic, immediate constraints, but might be safer for attaining the desired outcome in the long term. Limited Strike This option carries the fewest immediate constraints. It also appears the most likely outcome given the current US military posture, which has limited ground offensive capability but strong air and maritime capability. Without a sustained on-ground troop deployment, such an operation would not require prior Congressional backing. It would also limit risks to US



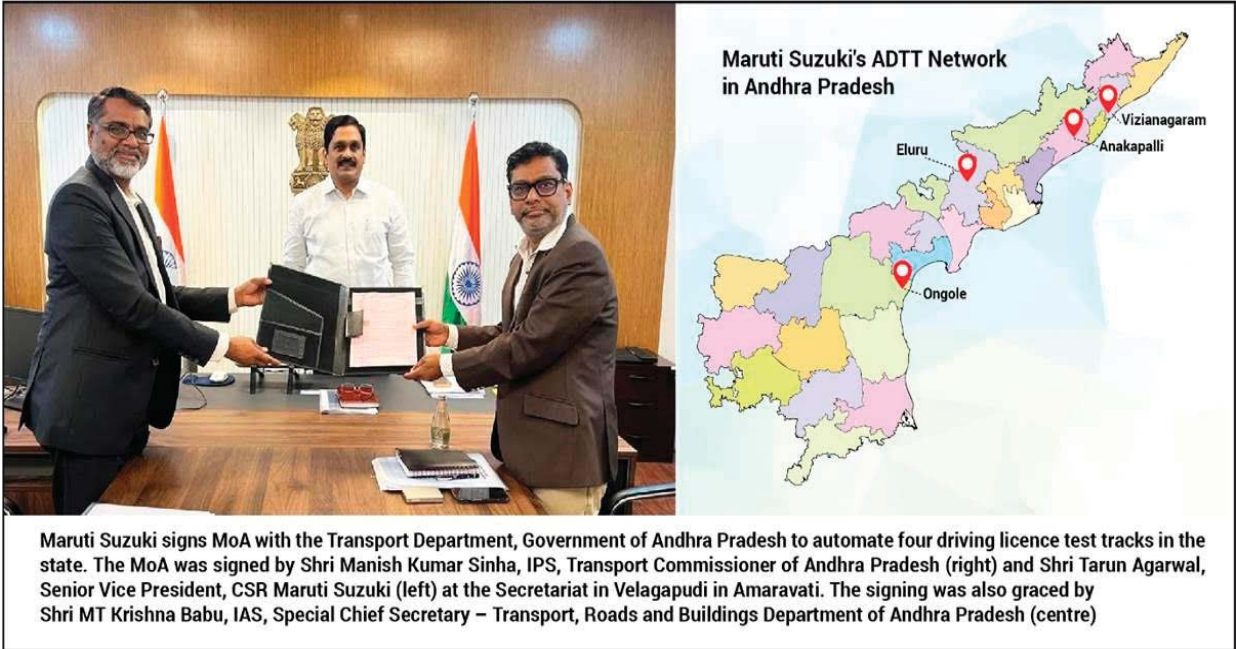
personnel and assets. A limited strike would receive support from partners such as Israel, as was seen during the June 2025 strikes. The United Kingdom is also likely to play a defensive role focused on asset protection. The primary constraints under this option emerge in the post-conflict phase. Israel, the central US partner in this scenario, seeks a permanent end to the Iranian threat. This would require the removal of the current regime, its replacement with a pro-Western system, and the destruction of Iran's nuclear stockpile. As demonstrated during the June 2025 confrontation, limited strikes alone do not guarantee the desired outcomes. The destruction of nuclear stockpiles without a regime change is likely to provoke strong Iranian retaliation in the short

term. Over the longer term, Iran would attempt to re-establish its nuclear programme. This, in turn, would stall negotiations between Iran and the West for the foreseeable future, while sanctions remain in place. Iran would be left more distrustful of the West, allowing greater leverage for China and Russia. If regime change were to follow the destruction of the IRGC, the administration would face the challenge of managing the resulting power vacuum. Wider instability within Iran and the surrounding region would become likely. On-ground troop deployment remains the only effective means of ensuring post-regime change stability and the establishment of civilian governance. However, this option is constrained by political and coalition limits. Limits To A Sustained

Campaign If Trump were to launch a sustained ground campaign in Iran, he would face significant resistance from Congress and from allied partners. These constraints would narrow operational flexibility and increase pressure to bring the campaign to a rapid conclusion. There is bipartisan consensus within Congress against sustained military intervention in Iran. This opposition is driven by fears of prolonged foreign entanglement and the risk of regional escalation. At the same time, Congress has expressed concern over deteriorating human rights conditions within Iran. The members have repeatedly expressed growing concerns about the misuse of presidential authority to deploy force that is largely derived from Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) provisions.

Maruti Suzuki signs Memorandum of Agreement with Transport Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, to automate 4 driving license test tracks, under its CSR initiative

New Delhi, 06 February 2026: Maruti Suzuki India Limited (“Maruti Suzuki”) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (“MoA”) with the Transport Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, for set up and maintenance of 4 Automated Driving Test Tracks (“ADTTs”) across the state under the Company’s CSR initiative. The ADTTs will be set up at four Regional Transport Office (RTO) locations in the state, namely Eluru, Ongole, Vizianagaram, and Anakapalli. Under the MoA, Maruti Suzuki will automate and maintain these driving test tracks for a period of 3 years from the date of commissioning. The ADTTs will be equipped with high-definition cameras, RFID sensors, real-time analytics, and an integrated IT system to enable a technology-enabled, standardized, and objective driving license testing process. With zero human intervention, the ADTTs are aimed to make license testing more comprehensive, efficient, and transparent. The rigorous and standardized evaluation process is designed to assess candidates according to the Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR). Test results are also automatically generated. Speaking on the initiative,



Mr. Hisashi Takeuchi, MD & CEO, Maruti Suzuki India Limited said, “During my meeting with Hon’ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Chandrababu Naidu, I was impressed by his love for technology. Aligned with his vision for technology-led solutions, we are honoured to bring 4 Automated Driving Test Tracks (ADTTs) to the state of Andhra Pradesh. ADTTs use advanced technology that ensure a comprehensive, efficient, and transparent process with zero human

intervention. This guarantees that only skilled drivers are awarded a driving license, thereby improving overall road safety.” Speaking at the MoA signing, Shri. Manish Kumar Sinha, IPS, Transport Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh said, “I commend Maruti Suzuki, India’s leading passenger vehicle manufacturer, for its significant contribution to road safety through the launch of Automated Driving Test Tracks (ADTTs) across the state. In this project, Maruti

Suzuki will extend support by providing technology in the areas of integration with the SARATHI** system, training of personnel and routine maintenance for a period of 3 years. The Transport Department, on its part, will provide the required infrastructure at the existing driving tracks, undertake civil works, ensure security and electricity supply and conduct driving tests and issuance of driving licenses using the automated system.” He added, “The automation of driving

test tracks is expected to bring greater uniformity and objectivity in the testing process and ensure that driving licenses are issued only to candidates with the requisite driving skills, thereby strengthening road safety in the state.” The ADTTs in Eluru, Vizianagaram, Ongole and Anakapalli will serve Light Motor Vehicles (LMV) and Two-Wheelers (TW) driving license applicants. The ADTT in Ongole will additionally serve Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMV) driving license applicants.

Samantha Ruth Pabhu joins Rishabh Pant as Good Game’s global ambassador, hunt for India’s First Global Gaming Superstar begins with One Crore prize money at stake

Hyderabad 2026: Good Game, the world’s first as-live global gaming reality show on a quest to find India’s First Global Gaming Superstar, has announced its launch in India. Samantha Ruth Prabhu, leading actor, entrepreneur and youth icon, has been named as a global brand ambassador along with Rishabh Pant, India’s most dynamic cricket icon, and Ujjwal Chaurasia (Techno Gamerz), one of India’s most influential gaming creators. Good Game also announced a whopping INR One Crore (USD 100,000) prize money, which is amongst the highest for any reality show winner in India, along with the opportunity to represent India at a global level. Good Game plans to invest up to INR 100 crore annually in the show, and is currently inviting brand partners and sponsors to associate with this unique proposition that promises a minimum reach of 500 million amongst the core youth audience of India. Designed as a first-of-its-kind competitive reality format, Good Game marks a new chapter for competitive gaming in the country, converging esports, mainstream entertainment, and real-world performance on a single platform. Contestants will be tested not only on their



gaming skills, but also on creativity, on-screen presence, and performance under pressure - reflecting the evolving nature of gaming as both a profession and a form of popular culture. Registrations for the auditions, inviting amateur and professional gamers, content creators, and performers, are currently open at <https://www.goodgameshow.tv/india-audition-application>. Commenting on the

launch, Rai Cockfield, Founder of Good Game, said, “India is home to one of the world’s largest entertainment and gaming communities, and we are delighted to finally bridge the gap between these two genres for the first time in India. < Good Game will empower talent from across India to pave their way to global recognition and lifelong opportunities, changing lives and careers.

Fear of AI Replacing Jobs, Online Scams and Mental Health Concerns Top Vijayawada’s Worry List: Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance’s -Nishchit Index 2.0

Hyderabad: Key Findings: · Vijayawada’s ?-Nishchit Index stands at 63, lower than India (79) and South Zone (71) · Top concerns: Fear of AI-driven job loss, online scams, and rising mental health issues · Additional worries: Religious conflicts, natural disasters, rising cost of living · Uncertainty highest among SEC C (66); lowest in SEC A (59) · Research Overview: ?-Nishchit Index 2.0 is a nationwide study commissioned by Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance and is based on a quantitative survey of 3,583 respondents and 21 qualitative interviews, capturing how Indians across cities and life stages perceive uncertainty. It maps 49 statements across 11 parameters covering financial security, health, mental and social well-being, career, safety, environmental, and societal concerns to provide a deeper, more comprehensive view of the country’s evolving anxieties. Uncertainty lowest among residents with two insurance policies

(Index 49) Vijayawada 2026: India continues to experience elevated uncertainty due to financial pressures, healthcare concerns, work-life imbalance, and broader societal risks. With the national Index at 79, anxieties around financial preparedness, healthcare affordability, mental well-being, and long-term stability remain widespread. Vijayawada, however, reports an Index of 63—significantly lower than national and regional benchmarks—indicating relatively higher perceived certainty among its residents. Yet several emerging risks and societal shifts continue to shape the city’s underlying anxieties. Leading concerns include fear of being replaced by artificial intelligence at work, vulnerability to online scams, and the growing prevalence of mental health challenges. Other prominent worries include religious conflicts affecting social cohesion, natural disasters disrupting daily life,

inflation eroding savings, climate-related disruptions, and hesitation in seeking therapy due to personal or social barriers. Balancing personal interests with family time also emerges as a notable concern for residents. A blend of uncontrollable and controllable factors drives Vijayawada’s uncertainty. Uncontrollable risks include online fraud, data-security threats, environmental disruptions, and broader social tensions. Meanwhile, controllable stressors such as AI-related job insecurity, mental health management, rising living costs, and work-life balance highlight areas where awareness, planning, and appropriate support mechanisms can meaningfully reduce anxiety. City-level data shows that financial depth strongly influences perceived certainty. Uncertainty rises from 59 in SEC A to 66 in SEC C. Insurance ownership displays a non-linear pattern—uncertainty is lowest among residents

with two policies (49), but spikes among those with three (94). A similar trend occurs across investment instruments, where uncertainty rises with greater diversification. Across demographics, uncertainty levels remain similar between men and women. Gen X emerges as the most uncertain age group (69), compared to Baby Boomers (60), Millennials (61), and Gen Z (63). Profession-wise and across life stages, uncertainty remains broadly uniform, suggesting that concern patterns are shared widely across the population. Overall, Vijayawada’s findings reflect a national pattern where technological disruption, financial pressures, social risks, and health-related challenges increasingly shape public sentiment. As lifestyle pressures and external risks intersect across life stages, planning ahead and securing appropriate protection remain critical to strengthening confidence and reducing uncertainty.

Generali Central Life Insurance expands ‘Here Now’ to support long-term planning across key life stages, from children’s goals to retirement with life insurance

Hyderabad: While ‘Here Now’ Phase 1 focused on New Beginnings, the Phase 2 sharpens the narrative towards life-stage planning, offering solutions centered on two pivotal needs — children’s future aspirations and retirement preparedness. Building on the belief that the future is built in the present, the campaign showcases how life insurance empowers people to dream fearlessly, think audaciously and embrace “Bada Socho for your bindass” dreams. Mumbai, 6th February 2026: Generali Central Life Insurance (GCLI) has rolled out the next phase of its national brand campaign, ‘Here Now’, with a sharper focus on life insurance solutions across two pivotal life stages — children’s future aspirations and retirement security. Building on the Company’s refreshed identity following Central Bank of India’s entry as a joint-venture partner in 2025, the campaign reinforces the brand’s commitment to empowering individuals and families to make informed financial decisions today for a



stronger, more secure tomorrow. As a true Lifetime Partner, the life insurer stands by customers through every stage of life, whether they are planning for their children’s dreams or preparing for a carefree, fulfilling retirement, strengthening its promise of care and consistent support throughout their financial journeys. The campaign urges customers to view life insurance as more than protection, positioning it as an enabler of real ambitions and longterm financial goals for themselves and their children. The narrative

brings these themes to life by capturing relatable, aspirational moments from the campaign films — kids imagining bold futures or couples rediscovering passion and adventure in retirement. These visuals reinforce the campaign’s core belief: that thoughtful planning today enables people to dream fearlessly, think audaciously and live out “Bada Socho for your bindass dreams” across every life stage. The campaign reframes life insurance solutions for children as a foundation for future possibilities and retirement as a

phase of renewed independence and purpose. For customers looking to secure their children’s future, Generali Central Long Term Income Plan, Generali Central Money Back Super Plan and the Generali Central Assured Education Plan form some of the key solutions. To meet retirement-related needs, options like the Generali Central Long Term Income Plan, the Generali Lifetime Partner Plan and the Generali Central Money Back Super Plan offer structured planning.

EXPECTEDLY, RBI KEEPS INTEREST RATES UNCHANGED

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged on Friday, February 6, as expected, as inflation remained at manageable levels, and growth concerns eased following trade agreements with the US and the European Union. The central bank’s six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to keep the repurchase, or repo rate, at 5.25 per cent. The RBI retained its neutral policy stance, signalling rates will stay low for some time. US President Donald Trump earlier this week announced a cut in tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent, easing a key pressure point on India’s economy and markets. The first tranche of the pact is likely to be finalised by next month, which includes a reduction in US tariffs. Announcing the decisions of the MPC, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said external headwinds



have intensified, but the successful completion of the trade deal with the United States bodes well for the economy. The RBI has cut rates by a total of 125 basis points since February 2025, marking its most aggressive easing cycle since 2019. It reduced rates by 25 basis points at its previous meeting in December. While the inflation remains benign, economic activity remains resilient. “Amidst heightened geopolitical tensions and elevated uncertainty, the Indian economy is in a good spot with strong growth and low inflation. Inflation remains below the

tolerance band, and its outlook continues to be benign,” Malhotra said. “With the signing of a landmark trade deal with the European Union and the US trade agreement in sight, growth momentum is likely to be sustained for a longer period.” The current policy rate is appropriate, the governor said, adding that inflation was benign and future rate moves will depend on growth outlook and inflation. “Inflation, especially underlying inflation, is low. It’s much lower than even our forecast...underlying inflation is very, very benign.

FACING HIGH TRUMP TARIFFS, SOUTH AFRICA CLOSE TO NEW TRADE DEAL WITH CHINA



Cape Town: China and South Africa signed a framework agreement for a new trade deal on Friday, February 6, as Africa’s leading economy looks to other options following the high import tariffs imposed on it by the US and its diplomatic fallout with the Trump administration. South Africa’s Ministry of Trade and Industry said the agreement would start negotiations over a deal that would give some South African goods, such as fruit, duty-free access to the Chinese market. The ministry said it expected the trade deal to be finalised by the end of March. In return, the trade ministry said China will get enhanced investment opportunities in South Africa, where its car sales have seen rapid growth. The US slapped 30 per cent duties on some South African goods under President Donald Trump’s reciprocal tariffs policy — one of the higher rates applied across the world. South Africa has said it is still

negotiating with the US for a better deal. The China-South Africa deal follows others looking for alternatives to US partnership in the face of Trump’s aggressive trade policies. China is already South Africa’s largest trade partner for both imports and exports, while Chinese economic influence across the African continent continues to grow and it dominates in the extraction of Africa’s critical minerals that are key components for new high-tech products. “South Africa looks forward to working with China in a friendly, pragmatic, and flexible manner,” the trade ministry said. Trade and Industry Minister Parks Tau, who travelled to China to sign the agreement, said the deal would benefit South Africa’s mining, agriculture, renewable energy and technology sectors. US-South Africa diplomatic ties have plunged to their worst point in decades after the Trump

administration accused South Africa of pursuing an anti-American foreign policy and allowing the violent persecution of a white minority group at home. South Africa’s government has denied allegations that white Afrikaner farmers are being killed in a widespread effort to seize their land as baseless. Trump has also barred South Africa from taking part in meetings of the Group of 20 rich and developing nations this year in the US. South Africa’s biggest exports to China are gold, iron ore and platinum-group metals, while Chinese cars have quickly grown their market share in South Africa. Industry groups estimate Chinese brands have grown from around 2.8 per cent of the South African market in 2020 to between 11 per cent and 15 per cent last year. China’s BYD overtook Elon Musk’s Tesla in 2025 as the world’s biggest electric vehicle maker.

MORE THAN 30 KILLED IN BLAST AT PAKISTAN MOSQUE, OFFICIALS SAY

At least 31 people have been killed and 169 injured in an explosion at a mosque during Friday prayers in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, according to a city official. Police officials say a suicide bomber detonated a device after approaching the gates of the Shia mosque in the Tarlai area of the city, while eyewitnesses have told the BBC the blast was preceded by the sound of gunfire. An emergency was declared as hospitals began to receive the wounded, with an appeal sent out for blood donations. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has condemned the incident, expressing "deep grief". In a statement released on social media, he called for a thorough investigation and the immediate identification of those behind the attack. Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari said in his own statement that "targeting



innocent civilians is a crime against humanity". Zaheer Abbas was inside the Khadijatul Kubra Mosque praying when he first heard the sound of bullets. "After that, we bowed and then prostrated, and then there was an explosion," he told BBC Urdu. "After which there were injured people lying everywhere." Pictures from the mosque in the aftermath show footwear scattered across the floor, shattered glass, and people sat among the wreckage.

Abbas, who said he "lost his senses" in the moments after the explosion, was eventually pulled out by emergency services and taken to hospital, where he was quickly released. "Fortunately, I did not suffer much injury," he said. The mosque's caretaker Syed Ashfaq - who lives next door - also heard gunfire, and began running towards the mosque to help. "By the time I reached it there had already been an explosion," he told the BBC. "Bodies



were lying everywhere, some were missing arms, some missing legs. We took the most injured in our own vehicle [to hospital]." Islamabad's deputy commissioner Irfan Memon said on X that the death toll stood at 31, with the injured numbering 169. Pictures from local hospitals show the injured being brought by private vehicles and ambulances, with one photographer for news agency AFP saying they saw dozens of people arriving at hospital.

Attacks are relatively rare in the capital, although one in November left 12 dead. Another 27 were injured in the blast, outside a courthouse. The blast on Friday comes after a week of violence which saw 58 civilians killed in coordinated attacks in the province of Balochistan. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) rebel group said it was behind the attacks. The military - which has been fighting an insurgency in the region for

decades - said it had killed more than 200 militants in response. Last year was also Pakistan's deadliest in over a decade as combat-related deaths surged 74%, with militants accounting for more than half the death toll, according to a new report released by an independent think tank. The Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) said violence in Pakistan left 3,413 people dead - up from 1,950 in 2024 - with 2,138 militants killed.

RUSSIAN GENERAL SHOT SEVERAL TIMES IN MOSCOW

A high-profile general in Russia's military has been shot several times and wounded in Moscow. Lt Gen Vladimir Alexeyev was immediately taken to hospital after the attack in a residential block of flats on the north-western outskirts of the Russian capital and his condition is unknown. Alexeyev is number two in the main directorate of Russia's GRU military intelligence and the latest high-ranking military figure to have been targeted in the capital since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began almost four years ago. He was placed under European Union and UK sanctions after the GRU was accused of being behind the 2018 nerve agent attack in Salisbury in the UK. "The victim has been hospitalised at one of the city's hospitals," said Svetlana Petrenko of Russia's Investigations Committee, which said it opened a criminal case for attempted murder. The gunman fled and investigators searched CCTV footage for clues and



began interviewing witnesses. A neighbour of Alexeyev told the Reuters news agency she had been woken up by the sound of "several" shots and had then heard another neighbour screaming for help. "This is all I heard. Other neighbours rushed out, too. They asked how they could help, should they call ambulance and police, but she had already called them." Alexeyev has played a significant role during the war in Ukraine, taking part in talks with Ukraine during the Russian siege of the city of Mariupol in 2022. He was also sent to negotiate with the head of the Wagner mercenary group.

Canada and France to open Greenland consulates after Trump demands



Canada is set to open its first diplomatic outpost in Greenland in a significant show of solidarity following US President Donald Trump's threats to take control of the territory. A delegation of senior Canadian officials, including Governor General Mary Simon, and foreign minister Anita Anand, are travelling to Nuuk on Friday to formally open Canada's consulate, accompanied by a Canadian Coast Guard ship. Ahead of the trip, Simon said in a speech that Canada "stands firmly in support of the people of Greenland who will determine their own future". Their visit comes amid a similar trip made by French officials, who are due to open their own consulate in the territory the same day. The Canadian and French missions are a historic expansion of foreign engagement in Greenland. Until this week, only Iceland and the US offered formal consular services in Nuuk. It is also a signal of the continued support offered by

Nato allies to Greenland, after Trump repeatedly stated that the US needs to "own" it for national security reasons. The president has since walked his comments back, saying he is now exploring a potential deal after talks with Denmark, European allies and Canada. Greenland has been on Canada's radar for some time. The consulate was first announced in early 2024, when Ottawa reviewed its Arctic foreign policy. The opening had been slated for late 2025, but that was delayed due to bad weather. Now, the consulate carries even more weight, said Michael Byers, a professor at the University of British Columbia who has authored several books on the Arctic. "I'm only surprised it hasn't occurred sooner, given the important connections between Greenland and Arctic Canada," he added. He noted that Iqaluit, the capital of Canada's northern territory of Nunavut, is only an hour flight away from Nuuk.

COIN PORTRAIT OF LATE QUEEN DRAWS CRITICISM IN AUSTRALIA



Two commemorative coins, released by the Royal Australian Mint and bearing a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, have been criticised for their lack of resemblance to the late monarch. The \$5 (£2.56) and 50-cent silver coins, created to commemorate the centenary of the Queen's birth, were released in an online ballot that closed on Wednesday. "That's got to be the most unpleasant portrait on a coin," said one of several

people who reacted negatively online. The Royal Australian Mint defended the portrait, saying: "Our coin images don't always capture the full beauty of a design once it's etched in metal." Queen Elizabeth II died in 2022 at the age of 96 and was the UK's longest serving monarch. "There's a reason most portraits are from the side. Looks like she just ran into a wall," one person commented underneath a Facebook post from the mint. "If I saw that face without the hairdo and pearls, would never guess who it was meant to be," another said. Comparisons have been made with various TV characters, including Mrs Doubtfire - the beloved fictional housekeeper in the comedy film of the same name, played by the late Robin Williams.

IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS US TALKS IN OMAN A 'GOOD BEGINNING'

Senior US and Iranian officials have held talks in Oman amid a crisis that has raised fears of a military confrontation between the two countries. The indirect discussions in the capital Muscat happened as the US military builds up its presence in the Middle East in response to Iran's violent repression of nationwide anti-government protests last month, which human rights groups say killed many thousands of people. Speaking on state television after the talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi said negotiators would return to their capitals for consultations, but described the meeting as a "good beginning". Iran had previously said the talks would be limited to its



nuclear programme. The US, which is demanding Iran freezes its nuclear programme and discards its stockpile of enriched uranium, had said they should also involve Iran's ballistic missiles and the country's support for regional armed groups. Earlier, Oman said its foreign minister had held separate talks with Araghchi, and US special



envoy Steve Witkoff and President Trump's son-in-law and emissary Jared Kushner. It said the "consultations focused on preparing the appropriate conditions for resuming diplomatic and technical negotiations". The last round of talks between the US and Iran over the Iranian nuclear programme had been scheduled for last June but col-

lapsed after Israel's surprise attack on Iran. In recent weeks, Trump has threatened to bomb Iran if it does not reach a deal. The US has sent thousands of troops and what Trump has described as an "armada" to the region, including an aircraft carrier along with other warships as well as fighter jets. Iran has vowed to respond to an attack with force, threatening to strike American military assets in the Middle East and Israel. For Iran's embattled leaders, the talks could be the last chance to avert US military action that could further destabilise the regime, which analysts say is in its weakest position since it came to power following the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Savannah Guthrie's brother renews plea for proof mother is alive

The brother of US news presenter Savannah Guthrie has renewed his family's plea for proof that their mother is still alive after she disappeared last weekend. As the first deadline from an alleged ransom letter passed, Camron Guthrie said in a video posted to Instagram that the family had not heard anything about their missing mother, Nancy Guthrie. The 84-year-old is believed to have been abducted from her home in Tucson, Arizona in the middle of the night. Police launched a massive hunt, with officials offering a reward of \$50,000 (£36,000)



for information that leads to an arrest. "We have to know that you have our mum," Camron said in the latest video message. "We want to talk to you." "We haven't heard anything directly," he said in the video, posted on Thursday just after 17:00 local time in Arizona

(00:00 GMT). "We need you to reach out, and we need a way to communicate with you so we can move forward." It came as the first supposed deadline for the Guthrie family to hand over money passed. At a briefing on Thursday, FBI Special Agent Heith

Janke said his agency was reviewing an alleged ransom note. It gave a deadline for payment of 17:00 on Thursday, he said, without specifying which time zone, and had a second deadline for Monday. No further information was shared about what was threatened if the deadline was not met. "We're not going to go into specifics," Janke said. It was announced the same day that authorities had made an arrest over a fake ransom note. Earlier in the week, Savannah Guthrie shared an emotional video message, along with her siblings.

TikTok told to change 'addictive design' by EU or face massive fines



The EU has told TikTok it must change its "addictive design" or face heavy fines, after it found the video sharing platform had breached its online safety rules. It follows an investigation which began in February 2024 into the Chinese-owned app by the European Commission. In its preliminary findings, the Commission said TikTok did not "adequately assess" how features like autoplay could harm the wellbeing of its users, including children, and said it failed to implement measures to mitigate the risks. A TikTok spokesperson told the BBC the findings presented a "categorically false and entirely meritless depiction of our platform" and it planned to challenge them. The platform has been invited to respond to the EU's findings. Depending on the outcome of this step, the Commission could fine TikTok up to 6% of its total global annual turnover - estimated to be in the tens of billions. EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen told reporters if TikTok wanted to avoid being fined, it would have to "change the design of their service in Europe". The Commission gave several suggestions for actions the

platform could take, including implementing "screen time breaks" when people are using it at night and changing its algorithms, which feed users personalised content. It also suggested TikTok disable so-called "infinite scroll", which allows people to quickly cycle through millions of videos on the platform. "The Digital Services Act makes platforms responsible for the effects they can have on their users," Virkkunen said. "In Europe, we enforce our legislation to protect our children and our citizens online." Professor Sonia Livingstone at the London School of Economics said while TikTok had introduced some tools to improve the online safety of its users, it was not enough to comply with the guidelines set down by the EU. "Young people are calling for such changes," she said. "They are frustrated that the platform does not prioritise their wellbeing over profit." And social media expert Matt Navarra said while the use of the word addictive was "often abused" in these debates, the Commission's findings seemed to be rooted in "true behavioural science".

Trump endorses Japan's Takaichi ahead of snap election

Donald Trump has endorsed Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi ahead of a snap election in her country on Sunday. Takaichi has "already proven to be a strong, powerful, and wise leader... one that truly loves her country," the US president wrote in a Truth Social post on Thursday, adding: "She will not let the people of Japan down!" While it is rare for US presidents to publicly back candidates in foreign elections, Trump has done so before, endorsing Argentina's Javier Milei and Hungary's Viktor Orban most recently. Takaichi has courted the US president as Tokyo seeks more stability in its relationship with Washington, its closest ally, in the wake of Trump's tariffs. Trump had threatened

a 25% tariff initially, but Japan then struck a deal in July to invest \$550bn (£407bn) in the US. In exchange, Washington lowered import levies to 15%. Takaichi, 64, became PM in October after she won the leadership race in her party and secured enough support in parliament. But she has called an election to seek a public mandate. Just one week after she took office, Tokyo rolled out the red carpet for Trump, deploying a full military guard of honour and band to welcome him at the Akasaka Palace, the government's state guesthouse. It was her diplomatic debut, and the optics were striking: Takaichi aboard the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, fists pumping as the US president praised her in front of thousands of



US soldiers, the images then broadcast around the world. She sought to portray herself as a leader Trump can and wants to do business with and, perhaps more importantly for the president, someone he gets along with personally. The two leaders also see eye-to-eye on defence. Trump wants Tokyo to spend more on its own security and so does Takaichi, as sentiment grows in Japan that it must

invest more in defence. They heaped compliments on each other during the visit and signed a deal on rare earths, as well as a document heralding a new "golden age" of US-Japan relations. Takaichi described Trump as a "partner in a new golden era", and praised his role in bringing peace to the Middle East. "In my visit to Japan, I and all of my representatives, were extremely

impressed with her," Trump wrote in his Truth Social post on Thursday, noting that the two countries have made progress in national security cooperation and on the economic front. Trump also said he would welcome Takaichi to the White House on 19 March. Trump had threatened a 25% tariff initially, but Japan then struck a deal in July to invest \$550bn (£407bn) in the US. In exchange, Washington lowered import levies to 15%. Takaichi, 64, became PM in October after she won the leadership race in her party and secured enough support in parliament. But she has called an election to seek a public mandate. Just one week after she took office, Tokyo rolled out the red carpet for Trump,

deploying a full military guard of honour and band to welcome him at the Akasaka Palace, the government's state guesthouse. It was her diplomatic debut, and the optics were striking: Takaichi aboard the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, fists pumping as the US president praised her in front of thousands of US soldiers, the images then broadcast around the world. She sought to portray herself as a leader Trump can and wants to do business with and, perhaps more importantly for the president, someone he gets along with personally. The two leaders also see eye-to-eye on defence. Trump wants Tokyo to spend more on its own security and so does Takaichi, as sentiment grows in Japan that it must invest more in defence.

"Nahi Khilayenge": Pakistan Captain Salman Ali Agha Ready To Drop Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman If Needed At T20 World Cup

For Pakistan, if they indeed go ahead with their boycott of the Group A game against India, their remaining group-stage matches against the Netherlands, Namibia and the USA will become crucial. In fact, the Salman Ali Agha-led team will need to win those matches to advance to the next stage. Ahead of their first match against the Netherlands on Saturday, Salman said they are ready to drop big names like Babar Azam and Fakhar Zaman if they don't fit the combination. "Jo best combination hain, hum wohi khilane ki koshish karenge (We will try to play the best combination)," Agha said. "Usme agar koi senior players, Fakhar or Babar fit nahi hote toh hum unko nahi khilayenge (If senior players like Fakhar or Babar don't fit into that combination, we won't play them). Hum wohi khi-



layenge jo team ke liye best hain (We will play only those who are best for the team)." He went on to highlight that he took Babar and Fakhar's names only as examples. "Fakhar ne, I think, peechhle 10 saal mein Pakistan ke liye bohot per-

formance ki hain (I think Fakhar has performed a lot for Pakistan over the last 10 years)," he said. "Waise hi Babar ne bhi bohot performance ki hain (Similarly, Babar has also delivered many performances). Meri full support un logon ke liye

Highlights

■ For Pakistan, if they indeed go ahead with their boycott of the Group A game against India, their remaining group-stage matches against the Netherlands, Namibia and the USA will become crucial. In fact, the Salman Ali Agha-led team will need to win those matches to advance to the next stage. Ahead of their first match against the Netherlands on Saturday, Salman said they are ready to drop big names like Babar Azam and Fakhar Zaman if they don't fit the combination. "Jo best combination hain, hum wohi khilane ki koshish karenge (We will try to play the best combination)," Agha said.

hain (They have my full support). Lekin jo team ke liye behtar hain, hum playing XI wohi banayenge (But we will pick the playing XI that is best for the team)." Ali Agha later confirmed he would remain at No. 3 for the rest of the series against Australia and the start of the T20 World Cup, as he

believes it suits his style of targeting quick runs against opposition spinners. "Yes, I'll be batting at No. 3 (in the future)," Ali Agha said. "We expect to face a lot of spin, and I believe I can dominate spin during the Powerplay. That's why I moved up, and that is where I'll stay," he added.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi Achieves Huge Record In U19 World Cup Final. No Other Player Has Ever Done It

Vaibhav Suryavanshi captivated the crowd with yet another explosive innings in the U19 World Cup 2026 final against England on Friday in Harare. The young prodigy brought up his century in just 55 balls, giving India a commanding position in the match. His knock included six fours and six sixes, making it the fastest century by an Indian in U19 World Cup history. The 14-year-old from Bihar broke the previous record held by Raj Angad Bawa, who had reached a hundred in 69 balls against Uganda in 2022. Suryavanshi became the first India batter ever to score a century under sixty balls in an U19 World Cup match. In the overall tournament records, Suryavanshi became the second fastest centurion in U19 World Cup history, beating Qasim Akram of Pakistan, who brought up his ton in 63 balls against Sri Lanka in 2022. Australia's Will Malajczuk



holds the mark for the fastest century in the U19 World Cup, achieving the milestone in 51 balls against Japan in the 2026 edition. Fastest U19 WC hundreds (by balls faced) 51 - Will Malajczuk (AUS) vs Japan, Windhoek, 2026 55 - Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (IND) vs ENG, Harare, 2026 63 - Qasim Akram (PAK) vs SL, North Sound, 2022 65 - Ben Mayes (ENG) vs SCOT, Harare, 2026 69 - Raj Bawa (IND) vs Uganda, Tarouba, 2022 Suryavanshi ended his knock at 175 off 80, consisting of 15 boundaries and 15

sixes. He became the first player in the world to score 150 in an U19 World Cup final match. Along with surpassing Bawa's record, Suryavanshi also overtook South Africa's Dewald Brevis for the most sixes hit in a single U19 World Cup edition. Suryavanshi smashed 30 sixes in this tournament, eclipsing Brevis' tally of 18 from 2022. Earlier in the day, India Under-19 captain Ayush Mhatre won the toss and elected to bat first against England in the ICC U19 World Cup 2026 final at the Harare Sports Club.

Smriti Mandhana Was Down With 103 Degree Fever Before WPL 2026 Final, Nobody In RCB Knew About Illness

Smriti Mandhana was at her aggressive best in the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026 final. The Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper smashed a 41-ball 87 as her team chased down a 204-run target against the Delhi Capitals in 19.4 overs. Mandhana finished as the highest run-scorer of the WPL 2026 after leading her side to their second title at the BCA Stadium in Vadodara on Thursday. The 29-year-old ended the season with 377 runs in nine innings and claimed the Orange Cap for the first time. Mandhana scored her runs at an average of 53.86 and a strike rate of 150. Her highest individual score of the season (96 off 61 balls) came against the Delhi Capitals during the league



stage. She also played a match-winning knock of 87 in the final, helping RCB lift the trophy for the second time after their maiden title in the 2024 season. After the match, the RCB coach revealed that Smriti had been running a fever a day

before the final. "Smriti, thank you so much for being such a wonderful captain and for turning up for this game without any complaints. I know how ill you were last night. The effort you put in... For people who didn't know, she had a fever

of 103 degree F last evening," said RCB coach Malolan Rangarajan in his dressing-room speech. He went on to say that Mandhana saved her best innings for the final. "Massive, massive flu. She was seriously unwell with a high fever. But she turned up and didn't show it - nobody in the team knew. Not for a second did she show it. That's the person Smriti is. When I spoke to her this afternoon, she said, 'Nahi, Malo, koi problem nahi (No, Malo, there's no problem), I'll be there.' That's her work ethic," Rangarajan said after the six-wicket win. "I think she saved one of her best innings for the final," he added. "The way she battled was... inhuman? I don't even know the right word. So classy, so elegant.

T20 World Cup Opening Ceremony Details: From Nora Fatehi To Badshah - Full List Of Performers And Timing

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 will burst into life on Saturday evening with a high-energy opening ceremony at Mumbai's iconic Wankhede Stadium, setting the tone for an action-packed tournament before co-hosts India face the USA. Starting at 6 pm IST, the ceremony will transform the stadium into a single, immersive stage, combining live music and large-scale choreography, followed by the arrival of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Trophy. The show opens with a powerful musical medley from Rishabh Sharma and Shivamani, before the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Trophy makes a spectacular arrival, carried into the stadium by a jet-pack performer in a

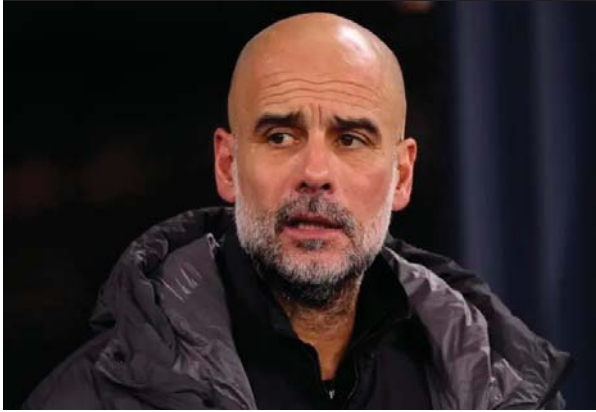


moment designed to captivate fans inside the Wankhede Stadium. The tournament trophy will be greeted by ICC Chairman Jay Shah and former India captain Rohit Sharma - who led the defending champions to glory at the previous edition in 2024 - who, accompanied by 20 children representing every partici-

pating country, will formally declare the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 open. Star performers Following the trophy's arrival, fans will be treated to headline singing and dance showcases, with chart-topping star Badshah delivering a high-energy live performance before Nora Fatehi takes centre stage for a dynamic

dance spectacular, supported by a large cast of dancers. The ceremony culminates with both artists coming together for a grand finale. The ceremony has been designed to reflect the pace and energy of T20 cricket, with the field of play acting as a unified visual canvas and the official tournament logo forming the main performance stage. The show will close with a stunning pyrotechnic display before the fireworks begin on the pitch with India vs USA starting at 7 pm IST. Only ticket holders for the match will be able to attend the Opening Ceremony, with those fans strongly encouraged to arrive early to ensure they do not miss any part of the show.

WHY SHOULD I NOT EXPRESS HOW I FEEL? - GUARDIOLA



Pep Guardiola defended his stance of speaking up about global conflicts by asking, "why should I not express what I feel, just because I am a manager?" On Tuesday, the Manchester City boss said he wants to use his position to "speak up to be a better society" as he talked at a football news conference about the "hurt" he feels for victims of global conflict. Guardiola received both praise and criticism for his passionate words, with Jewish community leaders advising the Spaniard to "focus on football" and "be more careful in his future language". But the 55-year-old did not back down when asked to respond to those comments by BBC Sport, saying: "To be honest, I didn't say anything special. I don't feel that." Last week, Guardiola gave a speech in support of Palestinian children at a charity event in his home city of Barcelona. He used the news conference before Manchester

City's Carabao Cup semi-final second leg against Newcastle to speak about children being killed and injured in conflict zones across the world, saying the footage he sees "hurts me". He referenced conflicts in Palestine, Ukraine, Sudan and even recent shootings by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in the United States. The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester & Region said Manchester City have been "let down" by Guardiola "repeatedly straying into commentary on international affairs". Speaking in his news conference before Sunday's Premier League game at Liverpool, Guardiola said: "Why should I not express what I feel, just because I am a manager? I don't agree but I respect absolutely all opinions. "What I said basically is how many conflicts are there right now all around the world? How many? A lot - I condemn all of them.

Despite Questioning ICC And India, Ex-England Captain Included In Commentary Panel For T20 World Cup

ICC TV is set to deliver another world-class immersive viewing experience for cricket fans around the globe at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India and Sri Lanka. Alongside live coverage of every match, ICC TV will provide a comprehensive world feed service to licensees, ensuring consistent, high-quality coverage across all markets. Viewers will have access to every match of the tournament through an extensive broadcast offering that includes a pre-match show, innings interval programme, post-match wrap-up and daily highlights shows capturing the full story of the competition, right from the opening fixture through to the final. The tournament will be



delivered by six dedicated production crews operating across the eight venues in India and Sri Lanka, supported by eight broadcast kits deploying up to 45 cameras to capture the action with depth, precision and editorial flexibility. ICC TV

will collaborate closely with production services partner JioStar and equipment services partner NEP to bring the event to life. In total, approximately 720 broadcast professionals will be involved in delivering the event, spanning pro-

duction, technical operations, editorial, graphics, data and broadcast management roles. The broadcast workforce reflects the international nature of the tournament, bringing together expertise from more than 20 nationalities. The Voices of the Game An illustrious commentary panel featuring some of the game's most celebrated voices will deliver expert insight and analysis, ensuring fans experience every moment of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in all its colour and intensity. Renowned broadcasters Ravi Shastri, Nasser Hussain, Ian Smith and Ian Bishop will headline the dynamic commentary team for this year's tournament.

ZFA Unbeaten In Ten Matches, Top Of Group B In AIFF Elite League 2025-26

Zinc Football Academy (ZFA) continued its impressive run in the AIFF Under-18 Elite League 2025-26, remaining unbeaten after ten matches and sitting at the top of Group B with just four matches remaining in the Zonal Round. The AIFF Under-18 Elite League Zonal Round began in November 2025 and will run until March 2026, with each team playing 14 matches in a home-and-away format across various zonal venues. Zinc Football Academy hosts its home matches across two venues - Hindustan Zinc Stadium, Debari, and MKM Stadium, Zavar, while travelling across cities for the away fixtures. ZFA's strong position in Group B has been built on

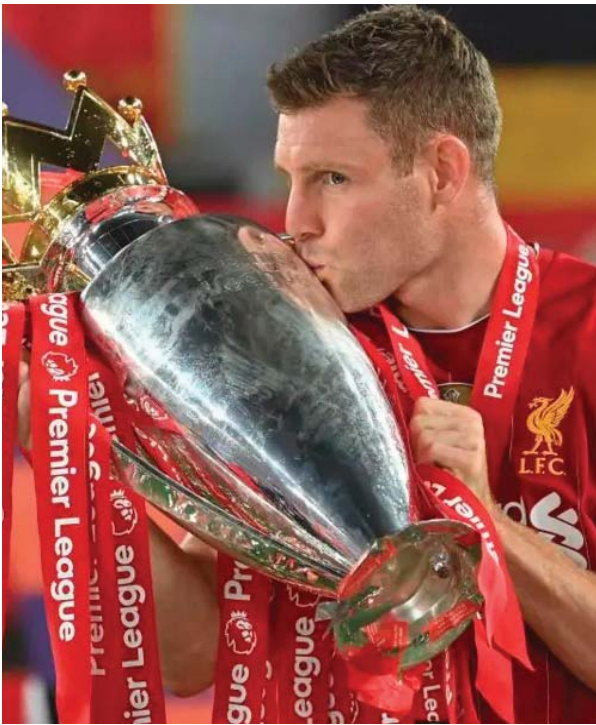


consistency across both home and away matches. So far, the Academy have defeated Rajasthan United 7-0 and 2-0, Delhi FC 11-0 and 5-1, Sudeva Delhi FC 5-0, Juba Sangha FC 3-0, Lake City FC 3-0, and Lucknow Falcons FC 5-0, while playing evenly contested draws against Techtro Lucknow FC (0-0), and Juba

Sangha FC (2-2). With 8 wins and 2 draws, ZFA sit top of the table with 26 points from 10 matches, closely followed by Sudeva Delhi FC with 22 points from 9 matches. ZFA have showcased a free-flowing attack, scoring an impressive 43 goals so far. Striker Ashish Chetry has led from the front with 19 goals in ten

matches, including three hat-tricks. Currently, he stands third in the overall top scorers' chart. Zavar's local talents Himesh Meena, considered the heart of the team by his coach, and Ritik Meena, known for delivering in big moments, have been equally influential, scoring goals consistently. ZFA have also been rock solid in defence, conceding just three goals in ten matches, including an impressive eight cleansheets. With just four matches remaining in the zonal round - three at home and one away in Delhi, ZFA will aim to maintain their momentum as they push towards qualification for the Final Round of the AIFF Under-18 Elite League 2025-26.

From £70 a week to brink of Premier League record 24 years later



"People joke that I only did it because he didn't do his homework," says former Premier League referee Jon Moss about the time he sent off James Milner. Twenty-four years after making his debut, Milner, 40, will equal the record for most Premier League appearances if he features for Brighton against Crystal Palace on Sunday. A stellar career spanning more than two decades, six top-flight clubs, 652 Premier League appearances, 61 England caps, three Premier League titles, two FA Cups and one Champions League triumph has also delivered some unexpected moments. Like the time Milner - known as 'Millie', external by those close to

him - was sent off by Moss, his former teacher at Westbrook Lane Primary School in Horsforth, Leeds, while playing for Liverpool against Crystal Palace in 2019. "He said I couldn't wait to get my card out," laughs Moss about dismissing his former pupil after switching careers. "People say I'm the only teacher to send off one of his pupils in a Premier League game. We can both laugh about it now." Milner is set to go level with Gareth Barry, who played 653 times, at the top of the all-time Premier League appearance list some 8,491 days after making his debut for hometown club Leeds United soon after leaving school in 2002.

‘Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu’, the blockbuster

Chiranjeevi – Nayanthara entertainer, to stream from February 11th on ZEE5! ‘Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu’ film to stream in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali After setting the box office on fire this Sankranti, the Telugu blockbuster Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu is all set to make its grand digital debut on ZEE5 on February 11th. The platform has acquired the exclusive digital rights of the Chiranjeevi-Nayanthara starrer, which has emerged as one of the biggest successes of the season. As announced earlier during the Sankranti campaign, the film will stream on ZEE5 from across all languages available on the platform, ensuring massive reach among Telugu diaspora and South Asian audiences globally. Written and directed by Anil Ravipudi, Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu features Megastar Chiranjeevi in a powerful yet endearing avatar, alongside Venkatesh Daggubati, Nayanthara and Catherine Tresa. This family entertainer is deeply rooted in emotion, humour and relationships, while also delivering edge-of-the-seat drama. Blending action, comedy, emotion and fami-



ly drama, the film follows a national security officer's (Chiranjeevi) journey to protect his estranged family while rediscovering love, responsibility, and redemption. With Chiranjeevi's enduring screen legacy and Nayanthara's wide appeal across the country, the film found strong resonance with audiences during its theatrical run. Speaking

about the digital premiere, Chiranjeevi said, “Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu is a film that celebrates family, relationships and resilience, all wrapped in entertainment. The love the audience has shown us in theatres has been truly overwhelming. I'm happy that through ZEE5, the film will now reach even more viewers across languages and coun-

tries. It's always special when a story travels beyond cinemas and becomes a part of people's homes.” Nayanthara added, “This film has a beautiful emotional core along with humour and action, and that balance is what makes it special. Working with Chiranjeevi garu and the entire team was a wonderful experience. I'm excited that audi-

ences who may have missed it in theatres can now watch Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu on ZEE5 and enjoy the journey from the comfort of their homes.” Venkatesh Daggubati said, “What I love about Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu is how it blends large-scale entertainment with heartfelt relationships. Working with Chiranjeevi garu for the first time made this journey even more special. I'm glad the film is now reaching audiences worldwide through ZEE5 in multiple languages, allowing families everywhere to experience its emotion, humour and drama together.” Director Anil Ravipudi added, “This film was designed as a complete family entertainer, something rooted in emotions, laughter and thrilling moments. The theatrical response has been extremely encouraging, and I believe the story will connect even more strongly on OTT. With ZEE5 streaming it across all languages, Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu will now reach homes across markets and cultures, which is truly exciting for us as creators.” Get ready to relive the blockbuster magic as the film is streaming from February 11th, exclusively on ZEE5 in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali languages!

Thanks to the audience for supporting the movie 'Euphoria': Director Gunasekhar



The film 'Euphoria' starred Sara Arjun, Nassar, Rohit and Vignesh Gavireddy in the lead role of Bhumi. Presented by Ragini Guna and produced by Neelima Guna and Yuktha Guna, this film directed by sensational director Guna Shekhar was released on February 6. In the success celebrations organized on this occasion on Friday... Director Gunasekhar said that the movie 'Euphoria' is receiving good praise from the morning show. I thought youth will come after seeing this title. But the family audience is also coming. Bhumiagaru and Sara Arjun may be the reason for that. Very good response. Whatever we expect from the movie comes. We tried to say hard hitting, not in regular commercial style, not following any formula. It gets a

good response. Congratulations from all friends. Leaving the regular format and making a film with new actors on such a large scale is considered daring. It is said that we have made the film so that all sections of the audience can appreciate such a bold content without any problem. Appreciating that we are seeing Gunasekhar anew feels like a great compliment. I tried with euphoria to reinvent myself. That effort is appreciated by many today. It is said that he is thinking like a new director. In the promotions of this movie, we have created the topics of adolescence, parenting and social impact in a very realistic and commercial approach. We have shown the conflict between mother and son. Family audiences are saying that they are enjoying the suspense in the second half of the movie.

Viewers say that they have not seen such a standard climax lately. The movie was engaging from the first frame to the last frame. Our film was well understood and analyzed by the audience as well as the reviewers. You have to watch this movie in theaters and enjoy it. We believe in word of mouth. It should be spread more positively to everyone. "Intillipadi is a beautiful film that we have made for everyone to see," he said. Prithvi Addala said, "I am very happy to see the response to the movie 'Euphoria' since morning. Hard hitting, bold move. Gunasekhar's dare can be understood after watching the movie. The first staff is said to be very gripping. I was happy to see the emotional scenes between mother and son in the second half. Coming to you as Psycho Sahil with a movie like this is a good experience.

MADHURI DIXIT, TRIPTII DIMRI TO STAR IN NETFLIX COMEDY THRILLER ‘MAA BEHEN’



Mumbai: Actors Madhuri Dixit and Triptii Dimri will headline Netflix's upcoming comedy thriller film “Maa Behen”, which also features Ravi Kishan. The movie was announced by Netflix on Tuesday during an event unveiling its India slate for 2026. “Maa Behen” centres on Rekha and her two daughters, Jaya and Sushma, who find themselves at the centre of attention in their conservative neighbourhood after an unexpected incident leaves their neighbour's dead body in their kitchen. The film is directed by Suresh Triveni, known for “Tumhari Sulu” and “Jalsa”. The story is by Triveni and Pooja Tolani, with the screenplay and dialogues written by Tolani. The film is produced by Vikram Malhotra and Suresh Triveni under Abundantia Entertainment, in association with Opening Image Films. Dixit said it was the dark-comedy tone and the script that drew her

to the film. “When Sureshji came to me with the script, I was immediately interested because I'm a big admirer of him and his work. When he narrated the story, it felt like a story of a dysfunctional family, and I really enjoyed listening to it,” Madhuri said. “I wanted to do it because I haven't done a comedy in a long time. That was the main reason. Once we all came together on set, the camaraderie and the understanding were amazing, it was immediate,” she added. During the presentation, hosts Aparshakti Khurana and Jamie Lever urged the actor to dance to her iconic 1990s hit “Dhak Dhak Karne Laga” from the 1992 film Beta, to which Madhuri gladly obliged, recreating her signature moves much to the audience's delight. Triptii said she has been a huge fan of Madhuri. “It was like one happy family working together, the credit goes to the director, producer and writer.

‘Pithapuramlo’ is Dr. Rajendra Prasad's first film to be released after receiving the ‘Padma Shri’ award

Maresh Chandra has earned a good reputation as a director with films like “Preyasi Raave, Ayodhya Ramayya, Cheppalani Undi, Joruga Husharuga, Okkade, Hanumanthu, Aalasyam Amrutham, and Red Alert”. His latest film is ‘Pithapuramlo’, with the subtitle ‘Ala Modalaindi’. The film stars ‘Natakireeti’ Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Prudhviraj, Kedar Shankar, Manichandana, Jayavahini, and Annapuramma in lead roles. Dasari Padma, Sunny Akhil, Virat, Sai Praneth, Srilu, Prathyusha, Rehana, Jr. Pawan Kalyan, J.D.V Prasad, K.A. Paul Ramu, Jabardasth Seshu, and others will be seen in key roles. The film is being produced by Dundigalla Balakrishna, Akula Suresh Patel, and F.M. Murali (Godari Kittayya) under the Maresh



Chandra Cinema Team banner. The shooting has been completed, and the film is currently in the post-production stage. The release date will be announced soon. On this occasion, director Maresh Chandra said, “This is a story of three fathers' anguish, which might seem like a story about three girls.

This is a real story that this internet generation needs to know. While watching this film, it will feel like you are seeing the society around you, many families, and the lives of many people. But don't think of this as a purely sentimental film. It has love, romance, entertainment, good punchy dialogues, and

beautiful songs. It has all the elements to attract both the youth and family audiences. Everyone knows how much the name ‘Pithapuram’ has been in the news recently. We have crafted this story based on that background. We will announce the release date soon,” he said. Congratulations to Dr. Rajendra Prasad on receiving the Padma Shri Award. It is known that ‘Natakireeti’ Dr. Rajendra Prasad recently received the prestigious Padma Shri award. The film crew extended their heartfelt congratulations to him on this honor, which he received for his services to the Telugu film industry. Maresh Chandra expressed his happiness that ‘Pithapuram’ is Dr. Rajendra Prasad's first film to be released after receiving the Padma Shri award.

PM Narendra Modi Biopic ‘Maa Vande’ Wraps First Schedule in Hyderabad; Kashmir Schedule Next

PM Narendra Modi Biopic ‘Maa Vande’ Completes First Schedule in Hyderabad. Maa Vande’ Makers Announce Schedule Wrap with BTS Pictures from Sets. The makers of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi biopic Maa Vande, starring Unni Mukundan, have successfully wrapped the film's first schedule in Hyderabad. The announcement was made by the team through the release of behind-the-scenes pictures from the sets, offering an early glimpse into the making of the ambitious biographical drama. The Hyderabad schedule began on an auspicious note with a traditional pooja, following which several key portions of the film were filmed.

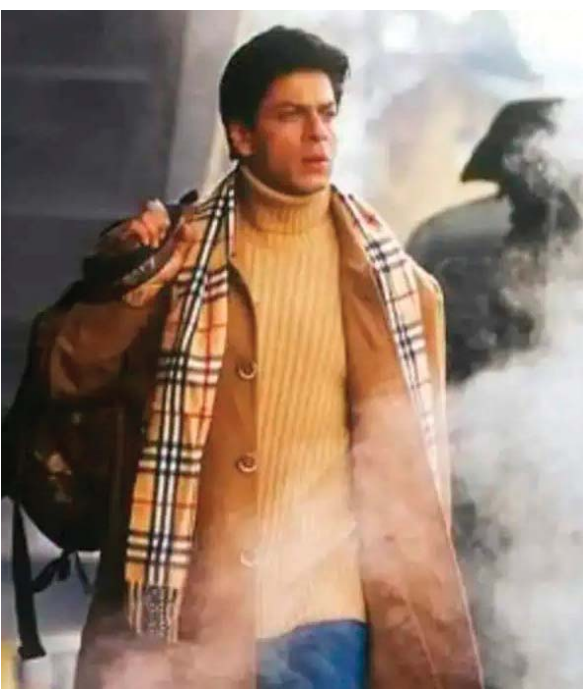


Marking the completion of this phase, the production team is now set to move into the next schedule in Kashmir. The BTS images shared by the makers also featured moments from the sets, including director Kranthi Kumar C.H. alongside

Mukundan. Titled Maa Vande, the film is a biographical drama inspired by the life journey of Narendra Modi, tracing a story rooted in values, purpose, and resilience. The project was announced on the Prime Minister's birthday in September and is

being mounted on a grand canvas with international production standards and strong technical values. The film is produced by Veer Reddy M. and written and directed by Kranthi Kumar C.H. Maa Vande brings together an acclaimed technical team comprising action director King Solomon, production designer Sabu Cyril, editor Sreekar Prasad, director of photography K.K. Senthil Kumar, and music composer Ravi Basrur. The collective body of work of the team includes landmark films such as Baahubali and Salaar, with Basrur's music having defined the soundscape of KGF. Their association underlines the makers' intent to deliver the biopic on a large-scale, cinematic platform befitting its subject.

IS MAIN HOON NA 2 FINALLY HAPPENING? SRK'S NEXT FILM UPDATE OUT



Mumbai: After the much-awaited action drama King, all eyes are on Shah Rukh Khan's next big-screen project. The wait may soon be over, as fresh reports suggest that the superstar is gearing up for a return with a sequel to one of his most popular films, Main Hoon Na. According to a latest report by Pinkvilla, Main Hoon Na 2 has emerged as the front-runner to be SRK's next film after King. The development also points to a likely reunion between SRK and filmmaker Farah Khan after nearly 12 years. Their last collaboration was the 2014 hit Happy New Year.

■ MAIN HOON NA 2 UPDATES

Sources quoted in the report reveal that Farah Khan has cracked an exciting concept for the sequel, with King Khan expected to play a double role. The idea is said to retain the soul of the original film while taking the story forward on a much

larger scale. The narrative reportedly revolves around a new threat to India and will balance patriotism, action, comedy and emotion, much like the 2004 original. Interestingly, the core story idea for Main Hoon Na 2 is said to have come from Shah Rukh Khan himself. The screenplay is currently being developed by writer Aakash Kaushik, with the writing process in full swing. The report further states that Shah Rukh Khan is expected to hear the complete narration of Main Hoon Na 2 after wrapping up the shoot of King around May 2026. A final decision on the project will be taken after the narration.

■ SRK, FARAH KHAN'S HIT FILMS

Shah Rukh Khan and Farah Khan share a successful creative history, having delivered iconic films such as Main Hoon Na (2004), Om Shanti Om (2007) and Happy New Year (2014).