



14-02-2026
Total pilgrims: 82,337
Tonsures: 30,825
Hundi kanukaku: 3,58 CR
Waiting Compartments:
Out side line at ATGH.

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



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MAHA SHIVARATRI

RELIGIOUS FERVOUR MARKS MAHA SHIVARATRI CELEBRATIONS ACROSS TELANGANA

Hyderabad: Maha Shivaratri was celebrated across Telangana with deep religious fervour and traditional enthusiasm on Sunday. From the early hours of the day, devotees, after taking holy baths, thronged Shiva temples and performed special poojas, abhishekams and archanas to Lord Parameshwara. Many devout Hindus observed daylong fasts to mark the

occasion. Major Shiva temples across the state reverberated with chants of 'Om Namah Shivaya' as thousands of devotees offered prayers. Large gatherings were witnessed at prominent temples, including Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple at Vemulawada and the Keesaragutta temple. To facilitate devotees, the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation

(TGSRTC) operated hundreds of special buses to major Shiva kshetras across the state. Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, union minister G Kishan Reddy and other leaders extended Maha Shivaratri greetings to the people and prayed for peace, prosperity and a happy life for all.



Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the Centre over the proposed trade agreement with the United States, alleging that Indian farmers' interests were being compromised. In a post on X, Gandhi, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, wrote, "In the name of a US trade deal, we are witnessing a betrayal of India's farmers," and posed a series of questions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking clarity on the implications of agricultural imports under the proposed agreement.



ALLEGES 'BETRAYAL' OF FARMERS

INBRIFS

Indian student found dead in California

New Delhi: Indian student Saketh Sreenivasaiah, 22, has been found dead in California, six days after he went missing, the Indian consulate said late Saturday. Sreenivasaiah was pursuing chemical and biomolecular engineering at University of California Berkely. He was missing since February 9. "The Consulate deeply regrets to convey that the local police has confirmed the recovery of the body of the missing Indian student, Saketh Sreenivasaiah. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones," it said. "The Consulate stands ready to provide all necessary assistance to the family, including coordination with local authorities and arrangements for the repatriation of the mortal remains to India at the earliest. Our consular officers are in direct contact with the family and will support them with all required formalities and services," it added. The Indian Embassy, too, promised early repatriation of Saketh's body to India. Saketh was last seen around a kilometre away from the campus and a search was launched city-wide around Lake Anza and Berkeley Hills areas. Sreenivasaiah's roommate, Baneet Singh, had sought leads on the social media about his whereabouts.

Om Birla to attend Bangladesh govt swearing-in ceremony in Dhaka on Feb 17

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent the Government of India at the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected government of Bangladesh in Dhaka on February 17, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Sunday. According to the statement, Birla will attend the ceremony of the government led by Tarique Rahman, Chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, following the party's victory in the recent elections. "Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent the Government of India at the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected government of Bangladesh led by H.E. Mr. Tarique Rahman in Dhaka on February 17," the foreign ministry said.

Rahul only one standing up for farmers says CM Revanth

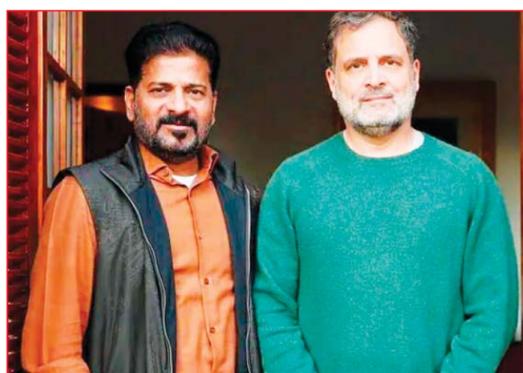
Kishan Reddy slammed the Congress leader, alleging that his remarks were aimed at "misleading and scaring" farmers and exporters about the agreement.

Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Sunday, February 15, said Rahul Gandhi is the only leader who has questioned the Centre over the "incompetent and compromised" trade deal with the US. Union Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy accused Rahul Gandhi of trying to "sabotage India's growth story with his politics of negativity".

Referring to the India-US trade deal, the CM in a post on X, said India is a nation of farmers, and that to "betray and sell out farmers is to betray and sell out the country itself". He further said that historically, setting aside political differences, the entire Indian polity has united to defend farmers.

He asserted that national sovereignty, security, foreign policy and the interests of farmers are above politics.

"Today, only one leader is standing up for Indian farmers—Shri Rahul Gandhi—and ques-



tioning the Central government over an incompetent, compromised and botched surrender in the name of a trade deal. Time to remind ourselves—Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan aur Jai Samvidhan (hail the soldier, hail the farmer, and hail the Constitution)," the chief minister said. Kishan Reddy slammed the Congress

leader, alleging that his remarks were aimed at "misleading and scaring" farmers and exporters about the agreement. "Rahul Gandhi's fearmongering, through which he is misleading farmers and exporters, will not work again, as the facts are contrary to his statements," he said.

DGP B. SHIVADHAR REDDY URGES MAOISTS TO SURRENDER AND JOIN MAINSTREAM LIFE

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU: B. Shivadhar Reddy, Director General of Police (DGP), Telangana, has appealed to underground CPI (Maoist) leaders and cadres to lay down arms and join the mainstream of society. In an official statement, the DGP said that, in line with the earlier call given by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, those who are currently living underground should return, reunite with their families, and lead a peaceful, secure, and dignified life.

He stated that due to the sustained efforts of Telangana Police over the past two years, 588 Maoist leaders and cadres belonging to various levels from Telangana and Chhattisgarh have surrendered and rejoined normal life. All of them, he noted, have been extended benefits under the government's rehabilitation policy and are now living safely and happily with their families in their native villages.

The DGP added that the effective implementation and



credibility of Telangana's rehabilitation schemes have encouraged more underground Maoists from other states to surrender before Telangana Police and integrate into society.

He made a special appeal to the remaining 15 Maoist leaders and cadres from Telangana to utilize this opportunity and step toward a peaceful future. He assured that the government would provide immediate assistance and all necessary support to ensure that surrendered members can live with self-respect and stability.

BRS will continue fight for Singareni workers' rights: KTR

Hyderabad (TSIT): Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K T Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday asserted that the party's struggle to protect the interests of Singareni workers would continue, irrespective of political alignments. After participating in the 287th birth anniversary celebrations of Sant Sevalal Maharaj at Telangana Bhavan, KTR spoke to the media on developments related to Singareni Collieries, municipal politics, tribal welfare and festival greetings.

He said BRS had extended support to the CPI in Kothagudem only to prevent the Congress from exploiting Singareni and accused both the Congress and BJP of acting in a manner detrimental to the organisation. While stating that CPI and Congress were already in an alliance, he said he was unaware of the reasons or pressures behind AITUC agreeing to the arrangement, and maintained that BRS would continue to fight for Singareni workers' rights as it had done in the past.



T20 WORLD CUP 2026 INDIA DEFEATE PAKISTAN BY 61 RUNS

COLOMBO (TSIT): Ishan Kishan merged power with finesse for a fifty before Jasprit Bumrah destroyed Pakistan top-order with his malevolently talented right-arm, powering India to a T20 World Cup Super Eight berth clinching one-sided 61-run win here on Sunday. Kishan's supersonic 77 (40b) on a tacky Premadasa pitch was worth its weight in gold, carrying India to a competitive 175 for seven after they were asked to bat first. It was easily one of the most entertaining T20I knocks by an Indian batter if one factors in degree of difficulty. Pakistan needed a strong Power Play segment to chase 176 on this surface. But Bumrah (2/17) and Hardik Pandya (2/16) jettisoned big-hitting Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha to bowl out them for 114, reducing the much-anticipated match into a no-contest. India now lead 8-1 in all T20 World Cup encounters.

Pandya started the bedlam in the first over of Pakistan's chase, as his snorter got big on Farhan and he could only sky it to Rinku Singh.



Entered the irrepressible Bumrah. The premier pacer unleashed himself on Pakistan batters in his first over itself. Ayub could not handle a devilish inswinging yorker to get caught in front of the wicket. Agha was as clueless as an exchange student in a foreign country against Bumrah's back of length delivery, scooping it to Panyda at mid-wicket.

Pakistan was in all sorts of trouble at 13 for three, and which soon became 34 for four after Babar Azam's horren-

dous slog sweep off Axar Patel saw his stumps getting rearranged. Their Powerplay produced 38 for four compared to India's 52 for one, and that massive difference continued to widen as the match progressed. Pakistan did not have either skill or resolve to get out of the marshy land, and continued to perish against Indian spinners through the middle overs as Kuldeep Yadav, Axar, Tilak Varma and Varun Chakravathy kept them under an unbreakable spell.

Jana Sena has taken first step in Telangana, says Pawan Kalyan

Hyderabad (TSIT): By winning two seats in municipal elections in Telangana, the Jana Sena has taken the first step in the land where it took birth, party President and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan said on Sunday. He congratulated Aruri Vijayalakshmi and Aggu Sagar, who were elected as a councillor and a corporator, respectively.

The Jana Sena, which contested 332 seats in the recently held elections, won a seat each in a municipality and a corporation. Vijayalakshmi has been elected from one of the wards in Nereducharla Municipality in Nalgonda district. Aggu Sagar has been elected as a corporator in Mancherla Municipal Corporation.

Pawan Kalyan said they laid a foundation for a strong future of the party in Telangana, noting that even a big tree grows from a tiny seed. According to Jana Sena's Telangana unit leaders, the party candidates came second in five places and



third in 47 wards. They said the Jana Sena outperformed all or one of the top three parties in 16 per cent (54) of contested wards. Ruling Congress, and the opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the top three parties in Telangana. Jana Sena is a part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The party led by the actor-politician is sharing power with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the BJP in Andhra Pradesh. The Jana Sena fielded the candidates in Telangana municipal elections on its own after the BJP made it clear that

it would not have an alliance with any party.

Contesting wards in 11 districts, the maximum number of candidates fielded by the party was 48 in Nizamabad district, followed by 46 in Nalgonda, 44 in Mahabubnagar, and 39 in Adilabad. Elections for 116 municipalities and seven municipal corporations in Telangana were held on February 11. Jana Sena had announced that Pawan Kalyan will campaign for Jana Sena and BJP candidates on February 7 and 8. However, the visit was cancelled. While the sources in Jana Sena said that it was cancelled because of a minor health issue, it triggered speculation that it could be because of some remarks made by Pawan Kalyan about Telangana in December last year. Telangana Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy had warned that Pawan Kalyan's movies would not be allowed to be released in theatres in Telangana if he failed to apologise over his "insulting" remarks about Telangana.

BJP trying to snatch citizenship through SIR: Asaduddin Owaisi

Hyderabad: AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi has alleged that the BJP-led Central government was attempting to "snatch citizenship rights" through the SIR of electoral rolls. Addressing a public meeting organised as part of the 68th Revival Day celebrations of the AIMIM here, the Hyderabad MP on Saturday, February 14, claimed that after Bihar, the Special Intensive Revision would be undertaken in Telangana and Maharashtra. "I appeal to the people to ensure that when the SIR is conducted, all genuine names are included. The BJP wants to snatch citizenship through the SIR. It is attempting to do so by



during April-May this year. Owaisi also condemned the alleged harassment of a Muslim bun vendor by certain YouTubers during the recently held Medaram Jatara tribal festival in Telangana. He demanded that the Telangana Police register cases against those who harassed the vendor, stating that such acts of intimidation and communal targeting are unacceptable and must be dealt with firmly under the law.

"He (the vendor) was selling kova bun, but you (YouTubers) see 'food jihad' in it. If you did not like the food, you should have informed the police. You are enemies of the country.

conducting the revision through the Election Commission of India (ECI)," he alleged. Election authorities in Telangana have said that the SIR of electoral rolls in the state is likely to be announced

Stalin writes to PM seeking to address four key issues concerning SL Tamils living in India

Chennai (TSIT): On a key issue of profound humanitarian, constitutional, and national importance concerning Sri Lankan Tamils who have sought refuge in India, predominantly in Tamil Nadu, for over four decades, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin highlighted four key issues concerning them and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take a humanitarian decision on them.

In a Demi-Official letter to Mr Modi, he urged the union Government to consider rescinding earlier administrative instructions that bar consideration of citizenship applications from Sri Lankan Tamils and issue an executive



clarification waiving passport and visa requirements, where appropriate, for the purpose of citizenship or long-term visa applications, based on verified identity documentation issued by the Tamil Nadu Government. He also wanted the Centre to

delegate appropriate powers to designated district-level authorities for streamlined processing and formally clarify the legal status of registered Sri Lankan Tamil nationals sheltered in India up to January 9, 2015. Mr Stalin said these individuals have lived in India with dignity, discipline, and deep cultural affinity for more than four decades and their presence has been supported and regulated in coordination with the union Government.

The continued characterization of their status as irregular does not reflect the humanitarian context of their entry nor the State-sanctioned nature of their stay, Mr Stalin said and

exuded confidence of Mr Modi taking a favourable and humanitarian decision on these requests.

He said since 1983, successive TN Governments with the support and concurrence of the union Government, have extended shelter, subsistence support, education and health-care to Sri Lankan Tamils who fled ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The Chief Minister pointed out that "Today, approximately 89,000 individuals continue to reside in Tamil Nadu—a significant proportion of whom have lived in India for more than 30 years, and nearly 40 percent of whom were born on Indian soil".

Terrorism humanity's greatest enemy: HM Shah on Pulwama attack anniversary

New Delhi: Paying tributes to martyrs of Pulwama attack, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that terrorism is humanity's greatest enemy and India is determined to eradicate it completely. Home Minister Shah remembered the bravery of the soldiers martyred in the Pulwama terrorist attack and paid tributes to them. In a post on social media, the Union Home Minister said, "I remember the bravery of the soldiers martyred in the Pulwama terrorist attack and pay tribute to them." He also reiterated the country's resolve to end terrorism which he described as "humanity's greatest enemy". Home Minister Shah said that the nation will always be indebted to the courage, dedication and sacrifice of the security forces and agencies who face terrorism. India is marking the 7th anniversary



of the 2019 Pulwama attack, honouring 40 CRPF personnel killed in a suicide bombing by Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists on a convoy in Jammu and Kashmir. India responded with airstrikes on

a JeM camp in Balakot, Pakistan, sending a firm message against terrorism. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also honoured the bravehearts who were martyred in the horrific Pulwama terror attack, stating that their dedication and service to the nation will always be remembered. In a post on X, PM Modi said, "Remembering the brave heroes who laid down their lives in Pulwama on this day in 2019. Their devotion, resolve and service to the nation remain forever etched in our collective consciousness. Every Indian draws strength from their enduring courage." Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta also took to social media and said, "Heartfelt tributes to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in defence of Mother India during the 2019 Pulwama terrorist attack. The nation shall forever remain indebted to your indomitable courage and valour."

Under PM Modi, number of AIIMS has increased from 6 to 23: Nadda

Dehradun: Showcasing the in-crise in number of AIIMS from 6 to 23 in 11 years, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda on Saturday urged fresh medical graduates to uphold the highest ideals of the profession and dedicate their skills to the service of humanity. Speaking at the 8th Convocation Ceremony of Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun, Nadda highlighted the transformative strides made in India's health sector under Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the number of AIIMS increasing from 6 to 23 in just over a decade. Pointing to the expanding access to advanced tertiary healthcare services across the country,



The Minister said that institutional deliveries have risen to nearly 89 per cent, reflecting strengthened maternal healthcare systems. The Minister noted that the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has declined from 130 per lakh live births a decade ago to 88 per lakh live births, while the Infant Mortality Rate

(IMR) has reduced from 39 per thousand live births to 27 per thousand live births, demonstrating sustained progress in maternal and child health outcomes. Citing estimates from the World Health Organisation and UN agencies, Nadda stated that India has achieved a significantly faster decline in the Under-5 Mortality Rate over the past decade compared to the global average, underscoring the impact of focused policy interventions and expanded healthcare access. Referring to tuberculosis control efforts, he noted that India has recorded a substantial decline in TB incidence, outperforming the global average reduction through sustained public health measures and community-based interventions. The Union Health Minister also highlighted India's historic Covid-19 vaccination drive, under which more than 220 crore vaccine doses, including precautionary and booster doses, were administered nationwide, demonstrating the scale, resilience, and efficiency of India's public health system.

Movement curbs imposed within 5 km of international border in J&K's Kathua district

Jammu: To safeguard the lives of vil-lagers living close to the international border from cross-border firing, the District Magistrate in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district on Saturday imposed restrictions on movement within five km of the international border. An order issued by Rajesh Sharma, District Magistrate Kathua, said on Saturday, "Whereas, the security situation in the border areas has become sensitive and there is a possibility for cross-border firing at any time. The movement in border areas is required to be restricted to ensure the utmost safety of the villagers and prevent any anti-national activities." Sharma further said that to check these kinds of activities in the border areas, "I am satisfied that there are sufficient grounds for proceedings under section 163 BNSF for immediate prevention of danger to human life and disturbance to public tranquility, and it is necessary to impose restrictions to restrict unnecessary movement in border areas." "Now, therefore, I, Rajesh Sharma, JKAS, District Magistrate, Kathua in exercise of the powers vested in me under Section 163 BNSF, do hereby restrict unnecessary movement in the border area in a strip of 5 Km from the International Border in Area of Responsibility of the Unit i.e. from BOP (Border Outpost) Paharpur forward to BOP (Border Outpost) Karol Krishna between. Moreover, movement of heavy vehicles, including trucks, tippers and multi-axle vehicles is prohibited on the old Samba-Kathua road from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. He said the order shall come into force from Saturday and shall remain in force for a period of Sixty Days from the date of its issuance or if rescinded, whichever is earlier.

Lakshadweep electorate stands at 57,607 after final roll publication

Kochi: The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Kavaratti, has announced the final publication of the Photo Electoral Rolls for 2026 in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, following a Special Intensive Revision conducted under the directions of the Election Commission of India. The revision exercise, with January 1, 2026, as the qualifying date, was carried out from December 16, 2025, to February 14, 2026. The final rolls were published on Saturday, February 14, after the disposal of claims and objections received during the revision period. As per the final data, Lakshadweep's total electorate stands at 57,607 voters, comprising 29,222 male voters and 28,385 female voters. There are no registered voters in the third gender category. Notably, 1,268 electors fall within the 18-19 age group, reflecting fresh enrolments among first-time voters. The final electoral rolls have been displayed at all polling stations across the Union Territory and will be available for public inspection at the offices of the Electoral Registration Officer and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers for seven days from February 14, excluding public holidays. The rolls can also be accessed online through the CEO's official website. First-time voters aged 18-19 who are yet to receive their Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPIC), as well as existing electors who have sought corrections following migration, will receive their EPICs through Booth Level Officers at their residential addresses.

Bengal LoP urges ECI to take direct action against errant electoral officers

Kolkata: The Election Commission of India (ECI) should directly initiate disciplinary action against errant electoral officers at different levels accused of deliberate irregularities in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in West Bengal, instead of sending repeated advisories to the state government to act against them, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari said on Saturday. "The ECI has every right to directly take action against errant electoral officers and register FIRs against them. So far, the Commission has been extremely soft on this issue. But enough is enough. It should now act directly against such officers instead of merely sending advisories to the state government," the Leader of the Opposition said while speaking to media-persons in Kolkata. Adhikari also appealed to the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) to refrain from acting on what he described as unethical verbal instructions allegedly issued by some district magistrates (DMs), who also function as District Electoral Officers (DEOs). "I request the EROs and AEROs not to act on verbal orders given virtually by district magistrates. Instead, insist on written orders. Remember, any violation of the ECI-prescribed guidelines could not only cost you your jobs, but may also lead to legal consequences," he said. Meanwhile, during a virtual meeting of the full bench of the ECI with electoral officers in West Bengal, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar reportedly reprimanded seven DMs/DEOs for various reasons, mainly related to alleged violations of the Commission's guidelines for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision exercise.



Metro pillar collapse: MMRDA forms high-level probe panel, seeks report on priority

Mumbai: The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) on Saturday constituted a high-level inquiry committee headed by Basavraj M. Bhadragond, Director, to investigate the collapse of a portion of an under-construction Metro Line 4 pillar that fell onto moving vehicles, killing one person and injuring three others. In a statement, MMRDA said the committee will examine the construction methodology, quality control protocols, supervision mechanisms and compliance records. A detailed report has been sought on priority.

The incident occurred at around 12.15 p.m. near Pier P196 of the under-construction Metro Line 4 corridor (Wadala-Kasarvadavali), close to the Mulund Fire Station, when a part of a parapet segment fell from a height and struck a passing

auto-rickshaw. One individual, identified as Ramdhan Yadav, was pulled out from the wreckage and rushed to hospital but was declared brought dead. Three others were admitted to a local hospital. According to police, Rajkumar Indrajiet Yadav (45) is in critical condition in the ICU, while Mahendra Pratap Yadav (52) and Deepa Ruhiya (40) are reported to be stable. MMRDA said it will bear the complete medical expenses of the injured. Financial assistance will be provided as per the applicable policy, and the disbursement will be processed on priority.

The authority said that immediately after the incident, the project team reached the site and secured the area. The affected stretch has been barricaded and a detailed structural safety assessment has commenced in



coordination with the BMC, disaster management authorities, local police and fire brigade officials. Clarifying reports circulating on social media, MMRDA said some visuals being shared were from a previously flagged location. "The present incident occurred near Pier No. P196,

whereas the visuals being circulated pertain to a different location and not the same pier. The two sites are distinct and geographically separate within the corridor alignment. Any suggestion that the incident occurred at the earlier visually flagged location is factually incorrect. This aspect will nonetheless be examined as part of the inquiry to ensure complete transparency," the statement stated. As a precautionary measure, construction activity along the immediate stretch has been temporarily halted pending preliminary findings. "Public safety remains paramount. Strict accountability will be ensured based on the findings of the inquiry, and appropriate corrective measures will be implemented to prevent recurrence. Further updates will be shared upon receipt of the inquiry findings," it added. Earlier, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ordered a probe into the incident. He announced financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the deceased and free treatment for the injured. In a post on X, Fadnavis expressed grief over the incident in Mulund and said the state government would bear the treatment costs of the injured and prayed for their speedy recovery. Meanwhile, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Harshwardhan Sapkal targeted the state government, alleging lapses in safety and corruption. He said the Chief Minister should take responsibility for the incident and questioned whether adequate safety measures were being followed during metro construction in densely populated areas. "Why is safety not being taken care of when metro work is being carried out in populated areas? Will the government look into the quality of work and safety or not? This question cannot be brushed aside by taking action only against the contractor. The BJP-led grand alliance government should learn to take responsibility as well as take credit," he said.

BJP leader's vehicle collides with Rajasthan Dy CM Bairwa's convoy in Jhunjhunu

Jaipur: A major mishap was averted in Rajasthan on Saturday morning when vehicles in the convoy of Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Premchand Bairwa collided in the Udaipurwati Ghat area of Jhunjhunu district with another vehicle that was entering a nearby resort. Deputy Chief Minister Bairwa was unharmed in the accident, and no injuries were reported to anyone in the incident.

The accident occurred around 10:45 a.m. while Deputy Chief Minister Bairwa was on his way to attend a function at a private school in Gudhagorsiji, approximately 16 kms away from the site of the mishap. According to officials, BJP leader J.P. Khatana suddenly drove his car into the path of the convoy by mistake while attempting to enter a nearby resort. During this manoeuvre, an escort vehicle in Deputy Chief Minister Bairwa's convoy lost control and collided with J.P. Khatana's car. Eyewitnesses stated it



was fortunate that Deputy Chief Minister Bairwa's vehicle had already passed the spot safely at the time of the collision with J.P. Khatana's car. The collision occurred primarily between the escort vehicle of the Deputy Chief Minister with the BJP leader's car. The headlights and front portions of both the vehicles were damaged in the accident, but officials confirmed that no major damage to the cars was reported nor were any injuries reported in the mishap. Following the incident, the convoy of the Deputy Chief Minister was

Security forces demolish five Maoist memorials in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district

Raipur/Bijapur: In a concerted effort to curb Maoist influence in the sensitive South Bastar region, security forces on Saturday conducted joint operations across multiple police station areas in Bijapur district, resulting in the demolition of five memorials erected by Maoists. The operation marks another step in the ongoing anti-Maoist campaign aimed at dismantling insurgent propaganda and psychological hold over local communities. According to the police officials, the actions were part of intensive and effective measures against the Maoists. Under the Tarrem police station jurisdiction, a joint team comprising CRPF battalions identified and demolished one such memorial in the Mandimarka forest area, adhering to established security protocols. In the Usur police station area, operations yielded significant results with the destruction of four memorials in total.



A combined force of a CRPF battalion and Cobra battalion razed two structures in the Marudhabaka forests, while another team from CRPF battalion eliminated two more such structures in the Parguda and Singanapalli forest regions. These memorials, often built to commemorate fallen Maoist leaders and cadres, serve as symbols of rebel ideology and recruitment tools in remote tribal areas. By removing them, security personnel aim to disrupt the narrative of martyrdom propagated by the insurgents, thereby weakening their grip on vulnerable populations. The officials further said that this success contributes to eliminating Maoist propaganda in the South Bastar area, with forces continuing

search, area domination, and patrol activities to maintain pressure. This latest operation follows a pattern of escalated anti-Naxal activities in the region. Just a day earlier, on February 13, reports indicated that security forces in Bijapur defused improvised explosive devices and demolished additional Maoist memorials, including one honoring Nambala Keshava Rao, alias Basavaraju, the former general secretary of the CPI-Maoist killed in a 2025 encounter. Similar actions were noted in areas like Awapalli-Murdanda and Gangaloor, where IEDs planted to target security vehicles were neutralised, and memorials in forested stretches such as Todka-Korcholi and Peddakorma were razed.

Committed to women's safety at workplace: WCD minister Annpurna Devi

New Delhi: Union Minister for Women and Child Development (WCD) Annpurna Devi said on Saturday that women's safety at the workplace is not merely a statutory requirement but a reflection of the nation's commitment to justice and equality. Addressing a National Conference on Safety of Women at Workplace (SHe-Box), the Minister said that with over 1.48 lakh institutions registered on the SHe-Box portal, more than 60,000 Internal Committees functioning actively, and female labour force participation rising from 23 per cent to 42 per cent in the past six

years, India is witnessing a decisive shift towards accountability and women-led development. Referring to the historic Budget allocation of over Rs 5 lakh crore, she reiterated that women's dignity, security, and economic empowerment remain central to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, and that a truly developed India will be one where every woman can work and lead without fear. Union Minister of State (MoS) Savitri Thakur underscored that workplace safety is a fundamental right. She highlighted the broader ecosystem of empowerment that has strengthened women's par-



ticipation in the economy — from the rise in women's labour force participation to nearly 41.7 per cent in 2023-24, to 70 per cent of Mudra loans being extended to women, 44 per cent of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries being women, and over 10 crore women being connected through 90 lakh Self-

Help Groups. She emphasised that while these figures reflect progress, the goal is to ensure that every woman feels safe, respected, and empowered in every sphere of life. Echoing these sentiments, Sudhanshu Trivedi, Member of Parliament from Rajya Sabha, highlighted that ensuring women's safety at the workplace is integral to India's constitutional commitment to equality and justice. He noted that legislative and institutional mechanisms such as the PoSH Act and the SHe-Box portal strengthen transparency, accountability, and trust across sectors. A thematic film titled "Safe Workplaces as Drivers of Viksit Bharat through Equality and Economic Participation of Women" was also screened. A nationwide PoSH training video was also screened. The Ministry of Labour and Employment shared insights on the role of the new Labour Codes

in promoting safe workplaces. Earlier, Women and Child Development Secretary Anil Malik highlighted the scale of institutional progress made through SHe-Box, stating that with over 1.5 lakh workplaces onboarded and Local Committees active in every district, a nationwide safety architecture has been established. At the same time, he underlined that with women's labour force participation at 42 per cent and over 80 per cent of women engaged in the informal sector, sustained efforts are essential to ensure comprehensive coverage and protection.



Andhra Pradesh minister Lokesh comes out in support of Muslim vendor

Amaravati, Feb 15 : Andhra Pradesh minister for education and information technology Nara Lokesh has come out in support of a Muslim vendor who faced harassment by some YouTubers during the recent Medaram Jatara in Telangana.

Lokesh reacted to the media reports about the harassment of Shaik Shaiksha Vali, the vendor from Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh.

Shaik Shaiksha Vali was selling 'Khoya bun', a famous food from his region, during the tribal fair in Telangana's Mulugu district.

A group of YouTubers made Vali eat the food he was selling to prove he was not committing what they called "food jihad".

"Dear Brother Vali, I am deeply sorry that you had to endure this. Such divisive and communal behaviour has no place in our Telugu society, which has always stood for harmony, mutual respect, and brotherhood," Lokesh posted on X. "I will meet you soon and look forward to tasting your



famous Khoya bun! We stand together," added Lokesh, who is the national general secretary of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and son of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

The vendor has received support from residents in his town, as well as several social media influ-

encers and political parties, who slammed the YouTubers for making such divisive videos.

Meanwhile, Minister for MSEM, SERP and NRI empowerment and relations, Kondapalli Srinivas, has also come out in support of Vali. "Every hardworking individual deserves dignity and

respect while earning their livelihood. Our Telugu society has always been rooted in harmony, empathy, and togetherness, and it is our shared responsibility to protect these values," he posted on X while appreciating Lokesh for his decision to personally meet Vali. He said this reflects the importance of standing with people during difficult moments.

"Food safety and public awareness are important, but they must be approached with responsibility and sensitivity. Humanity is greater than religion, and compassion must guide our actions," added the minister. Earlier, AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi strongly condemned the harassment of a Muslim by certain YouTubers in Medaram Jatara.

Owaisi sought immediate and stringent action against those responsible, stating that such acts of intimidation and communal targeting are unacceptable and must be dealt with firmly under the law.

AP: TDP Chief asks coalition MLAs, MLCs to explain the objectives of Budget to people

Vijayawada, Feb 15 (UNI) Telugu Desam Party State president Palla Srinivasa Rao on Sunday called upon coalition MLAs and MLCs to take the 2026-27 Andhra Pradesh Budget to the grassroots, describing it as a carefully crafted road-map aimed at restoring institutional momentum and accelerating the State's progress.

Addressing legislators through a teleconference, Rao said the Budget was designed to move forward on three equally significant pillars - development, welfare, and wealth creation. He added that the financial blueprint was aligned with the long-term Vision-2047 goals and offered a clear direction for Andhra Pradesh's future.

The teleconference was attended by Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar and BJP State president PVN Madhav, reflecting the coalition's collective commitment to the Budget's outreach.

Rao acknowledged that the Budget framed with the aspirations of nearly five crore citizens in mind, provided a decisive trajectory for the State's growth and welcomed the enhanced allocations for key areas such as agriculture, industry, irrigation, education, and healthcare, calling them critical engines of long-term transformation.

Highlighting the welfare dimension, Rao observed the Budget carried unprecedented allocations for the upliftment of Backward

Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and women.

The TDP State Chief pointed out that Rs 91,527 crore had been earmarked collectively for these sections, describing it as evidence of the government's seriousness in placing social justice at the centre of governance. Welfare, he added, remained a defining priority in the coalition's policy agenda.

Emphasising human development, Rao mentioned that the government had accorded the highest priority to education, with Rs 32,308 crore allocated for school education — a move he said would lay enduring foundations for future generations.

Devotees throng Shiva temples on Mahashivratri in Mahabubabad district

Mahabubabad :

Shiva temples across the district witnessed heavy rush on the occasion of Mahashivratri, with devotees chanting "Om Namah Shivaya" and participating in special rituals from early Wednesday morning.

At the ancient Sri Parvati Ramalingeswara Shiva Temple, thousands of devotees offered prayers and took part in Abhishekam and Rudrabhishekam performed between 3:30 am and 5 am. Priests said the temple's Shiva Lingam dates back to the Kakatiya period. In the evening, the celestial wedding of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati was scheduled at the Kalyana Mandapam with grand arrangements.



Similarly, special Mahashivratri celebrations were held at Sri Uma Chandramouli Swami Temple, where Mahanyasa Parayana and Abhishekams were performed from early morning. A divine Kalyanam ceremony was also planned in the evening.

At the Sri Bhakta Markandeya Temple, devotees gathered in large numbers for special pujas and Abhishekams, marking the festival with devotion and spiritual fervor across the district.

Tiger's pug marks spark panic in Siddipet villages

Hyderabad: A tiger's pug marks were reportedly spotted in the villages of the Chinnakodur mandal of Siddipet district, on Sunday, February 15, creating panic among villagers. "A local farmer spotted the pug marks this morning near the outskirts of Vittalapur village and alerted the forest officials. The place of the sighting is nearly kilometers away from the forest. Farmers have been asked to stay vigilant and not venture out at night," an official from Chinnakodur police station.. Last week, the tiger had reportedly killed five cattle in the Koheda mandal of Siddipet district. Before that, it was spotted in Jangaon, where it reportedly killed two sheep, the police official added. The forest department has been trying to catch this tiger for the past two months, he said.

Pawan Kalyan launches Jana Sena's membership drive

Amaravati, Feb 15 : Jana Sena Party president and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Sunday launched party's membership drive at the party's central office in Mangalagiri.

The actor-politician took first membership after donating Rs 2 crore for registration. Speaking on the occasion, he said those who understand the party's ideology and take the party's aspirations forward are important to the organisation. The party needs such people, he said.

He recalled that Jana Sena started with 150 people. "When the first phase of active membership was started in 2021, we registered 90,000 members. Before the elections, that number reached six lakh.



After the elections, we achieved 12.98 lakh membership," he said.

The Jana Sena leader said that from those who do small businesses to those who work on daily wages and those who are educated, many people enrolled as members.

Pawan Kalyan announced that those who come forward to deeply

understand the party's ideology and work in accordance with the party's ideologies, ideals and aspirations and take up the party membership will be called "Udyami". Those who provide more strength to the party's struggle, inspire the new generation, get attracted by the party's ideologies and register themselves as members will be

known as 'Sadhak'. The Jana Sena chief said that those who indirectly contribute their time, financial, technical service and intellectual support to the public and political struggle of the Jana Sena Party will be called "Pradatha".

Jana Sena said the programme was organised in the presence of those who had registered highest number of members in the previous membership registration. Chairman of the party's political affairs committee, Nadendla Manohar, political secretary of the party president, Pidugu Hariprasad, the party's general secretary, Ram Talluri, chairman of the party's programme management committee, Kalyanam Shiva Srinivas and others participated in this programme.

Massive rush at Kuravi Veerabhadra Swamy temple on Mahashivratri

Mahabubabad: Devotees turned up in huge numbers at the renowned Kuravi Bhadrakali Sametha Veerabhadra Swamy Temple on the occasion of Mahashivratri. From early morning, pilgrims from across the state stood in long queues for darshan of Sri Bhadrakali Sametha Veerabhadra Swamy. Chants of "Hara Hara Mahadeva" echoed through the temple premises as special abhishekams and archanas were performed. Devotees offered milk, broke coconuts to fulfil vows, and participated in night-long bhajans and Harinama sankirtans, creating a deeply spiritual atmosphere. The ancient temple in Kuravi mandal holds special significance during Mahashivratri, and thousands believe that darshan on this day brings auspicious results. Authorities arranged drinking water, annadanam, and medical camps for devotees, while police tightened security to manage the heavy crowd.

Implementation of Section 144 Cr. PC (163 BNSS) in Mahabubabad District Center

Mahabubabad District Correspondent (Balne Suman) Since the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Mahabubabad Municipality is on February 16th without any untoward incident, the District SP has issued orders that Section 144 Cr. PC (163 BNSS) will be implemented from the morning to the evening of February 16th. Groups of four or more people should not move around in groups. Victory rallies and bursting of crackers will be considered a crime and cases will be registered against the said persons, he said. Legal action will

be taken against those who violate the state election code. DIVERSION AT MANY PLACES: In view of the election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Mahabubabad Municipal Corporation, as per the orders of District SP and Town DSP Tirupati Rao, traffic control and security arrangements have been made at the Mahabubabad Municipal Office since Monday morning. All types of vehicles going from the Ilandu side towards the railway station should go from the bypass road from YSR Center towards the RTC bus stand and

FRO Center, while vehicles going towards Nehru Center should go from the flyover bridge Kuravi Gate. Vehicles going from the railway station towards Ilandu, Nehru Center and Kuravi Road should take a diversion from the FRO Center, while vehicles going from the underbridge from Nehru Center towards the FRO Center and YSR Center will have to go via the Kuravi Gate flyover bridge, said Mahabubabad Town Inspector Gatla Mahender Reddy. All the people are requested to follow the instructions of the police and cooperate.

Mahabubnagar mayor race sparks intense Congress infighting

• A feud between two families who are in the same party!! • Anand Goud, Ramadevi Srinivas Raj, who are seeking the post • BC associations demand that Mudiraj, who has a strong vote bank, be given the vote. • Minorities demand that the mayor's post be given to them, who have 40 percent. • Who should give party support to? Is that the hundred dollar question? • Will it finally reach the top...it needs to be clear who's strengths are there?

Mahabubnagar (TSIT) : Palamuru rulers in turmoil... The Congress party, which won the most seats and captured the corporation, is not giving up on the mayor's seat. The Congress has captured 29 divisions in the 60-division Mahabubnagar Municipal Corporation. It has reached 33 with the support of four independents. The mayoral seat, which has been good so far, is not giving up on the mayor's seat again. Although it was mainly thought that the mayor's seat was a contest between two people, now there is a big pressure on one side to allocate it to the Mudiraj community. Apart from this, minorities are also pressuring to give the mayor's seat.



Sanjeev Mudiraj and other senior Congress leaders wanted to give the post of mayor to his wife. However, due to the conspiracies and machinations that were carried out to defeat them in the election, Neha Sri lost by a narrow majority. But now

With the defeat of the leading candidate in the mayoral race

The choice of mayor has become a headache for the MLA and DCC president. With this, the party

The situation has changed as if one thing is happening but another is happening. Many say that the two leaders who are now in the mayoral race moved their pawns before the elections to secure the position of municipal corporation candidates, and were responsible for the defeat of the main candidates in both places.

The defeated leaders say that some Congress leaders worked towards their defeat with the intention of getting the mayor's

post, and they will complain to the DCC, the MLA, and the party high command about this matter.

One of these two would definitely sit in the mayor's chair. The party also decided that whoever wins will be given the mayor's post. But due to conspiracies, the two leaders lost their heads before the results came. With this, the Congress candidate's hopes of becoming mayor were dashed. The leaders who lost this are blaming their own party leaders.

TWO CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR: With the defeat of the two candidates in the mayoral race...two more winners have come to the fore. Former municipal chairman Anand Goud, who has been hoping for the mayor's post since the beginning, has been making his voice heard loudly since before the elections that his wife Prasanna Lakshmi should be given the mayor's post. Because in the past, he won as a councillor from BRS and

got the municipal chairmanship but had differences with the then BRS minister Srinivas Goud... After some time, he left the party and joined the Congress. He brought many councillors with him. In the subsequent assembly elections, he campaigned in support of Congress candidate Yennam Sri Nivas Reddy and participated in his victory. Anand Goud is working hard to rise from councillor to municipal chairman and from corporator to mayor. Everyone says that he has the qualities to become an MLA from mayor later. During his tenure as Municipal Chairman, he became known as a highly capable person among the people, bringing together all sections of society.

That is why there is information that MLA Yennam is pressuring him to give the post of mayor to his wife Prasanna, who is currently elected from 49 division. It is known that the MLA and DCC are also pressuring him to give the post of mayor to another division candidate. Chaluvagali Ramadevi Srinivas Raj, who was unanimously elected as the Congress Corporation candidate from 58 division, is also

She is insisting on the post of mayor. Winning from here for the 5th time... is unanimous. It is reported that the Congress state high command is putting pressure on her, the district DCC and MLA.

Meanwhile, pressure is mounting on leaders to ensure that the mayor's post is reserved for the Mudiraj community.

Anand Goud's elevation as Mahabubnagar mayor will challenge Srinivas Goud's influence

Mahabubnagar : Anand Goud... This name is currently buzzing in Palamuru... This name has a history... It has created a brand image. He was first elected as a councillor in Palamuru Municipality and

then secured the post of chairman. He brought glory to the post for all the days he was in this post. During his tenure, he led Palamuru on a path of development in all fields.

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POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule 8 (1) and (2)]

Whereas, The Authorized Officer of the Secured Creditor mentioned herein, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Act), 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with (Rule 3) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of NHFL has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned against each property.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The borrower(s) 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 NHFL for the amount mentioned below and interest and other charges thereon.

Loan Account Number	Borrower(s) & Property Details	Amount & Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Possession Status
LNCUDLAP-07230034065	1.MANDA VENKATA RAMANA (BORROWER) 2.MANDA RAMESH (GURANTOR)	RS. 6,16,803/- (RUPEES SIX LAKH SIXTEEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED THREE ONLY) DATE: 14-NOV-2025	10-Feb-2026	SYMBOLIC POSSESSION

PROPERTY BEARING :- ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF THE PROPERTY BEARING ALL THAT THE SY NO 434-3, ADMEASURING 80.SQ.YARDS D NO 00,BEEDAVANDLA PALLI VILLAGE, RACHAPALLI RAMAPUJARM MANDAL,ANNAIAH-516504 A.P.STATE, THE FOLLOWING BOUNDARIES ARE BY: SOUTH : HOUSE OF M.LAKSHMIAMMA, WEST: ROAD, EAST : HOUSE OF SRINIVASULU, NORTH: HOUSE OF M.NARESH MEASUREMENTS: EAST-WEST:40 FEET NORTH-SOUTH:18 FEET TOTAL LAND EXTENT 80 SQ.YARDS, CONSTRUCTION AREA 67.550 SQ.FT

Date: 16-02-2026
Place: Andhra Pradesh

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EDITORIAL

THE LOGIC AND THE RISKS OF TRUMP'S NEW IMPERIALISM

In early January the United States invaded a sovereign nation in the Western Hemisphere and abducted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. President Trump declared that the US would 'run Venezuela and rebuild the oil infrastructure.' Then Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced the US intention to purchase Greenland from Denmark, and asked about the potential use of military force, the White House declined to rule it out, causing many European leaders to affirm that Greenland belongs to its people, and that an attack would mean the end of NATO. Both Venezuela and Greenland reveal a coherent logic: the return of imperialism in great-power competition, now driven by the demands of artificial intelligence and management of America's relative decline. A new mercantilism

In the 19th century, European powers scrambled for colonies because mercantilism believed in zero-sum wealth, trade partners were not to be trusted and territorial ownership was the only guarantee of supply, a doctrine that ultimately produced two world wars. This century's neo-mercantilism is about supply chain vulnerability; namely, the exposure of advanced economies to disruption of the complex chains that produce semiconductors, batteries, defence systems, and AI infrastructure. High-tech economies are fragile; a modern semiconductor requires thousands of inputs from many countries, processed through facilities that took decades to build. A single missing component, a rare earth element, a specialized chemical or precision tool, could halt production. Unlike wheat or oil, these inputs have no ready substitutes, and processing is more concentrated than mining. China controls roughly 60 percent of global rare earth extraction, but over 90 percent of processing capacity, a dominance constructed through sustained industrial policy, state subsidies and tolerance of environmental costs. Its strategy has been to construct chokepoints across critical supply chains: rare earth processing, lithium battery production, solar panel manufacturing and pharmaceutical precursors.

Chinese strategists note that the US weaponised interdependence first, using control of the SWIFT financial network and the dollar to sanction adversaries, restrict China's access to semiconductors and block technology transfers. China repaid the US in the same coin when it announced export controls on rare earth elements in October 2025, and a former White House staffer observed that China "crafted a policy that gives it the power to forbid any country from participating in the modern economy." China's Belt and Road Initiative has made inroads into Latin America since the early part of this century, financing ports, railways and mining operations. This was tolerable to the US as long as it was normal economic competition but the 2025 embargo revealed it to be construction of leverage that could be activated. Building alternative processing capacity takes a decade or more. An adversary can disrupt supply chains faster than markets adjust. Trump's response looks imperial because supply chain vulnerability in high-tech economies creates pressures that alternative liberal reactions will struggle to address.

Liberal miscalculation

Post-Cold War western liberalism rested on three assumptions: trade is positive, creating mutual gains; interdependence generates shared interests; institutions influence states into cooperative norms. This reasoning welcomed China into the World Trade Organization in 2001. Such openings had worked before with Germany and Japan, who integrated into the liberal order and became democracies. President Clinton called China's accession "the most significant opportunity that we have had to create positive change in China." The new Chinese middle class was expected to demand political liberalisation. These expectations proved wrong; China's GDP increased roughly tenfold between 2001 and 2025 under a state-led, mercantilist trade regime. The expectation that prosperity would produce demands for liberal democracy rested on the notion that any people, once educated and materially secure, would demand recognition as autonomous individuals with rights against the state.

Why a New PMO Building Does Not Signal an End to 'Imperial' Mindset

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has shifted to its new abode, named 'Seva Tirth'. It is said that shifting from the colonial-era South Bloc will lead to a mindset change in government - from imperial to a "new" model of governance where "citizens will be at the centre of decision-making". The Prime Minister, inaugurating the new building, said, "The decisions made here [in the new premises] will serve as the foundation for advancing the ambitions of 140 crore citizens rather than reflecting the will of a monarch." Can a change of buildings change the mindset of the rulers? Will they suddenly become responsive to 140 crore Indians? Since they operated from the same colonial buildings being decried now, were they also not responsive to the people since 2014? Is that the government's justification for implementing a faulty Goods and Services Tax (GST), the disastrous demonetisation and the sudden lockdown that adversely impacted people? To admit this would undermine the ruling party's refrain that India did not gain freedom in 1947 but in 2014 - when Narendra Modi became Prime Minister. One may then ask, how was the Constitution of India drafted and adopted in these colonial-era buildings? And is it not this foundational document that enabled the ruling party to come to power?

While India has lagged behind other countries in development, it has developed considerably in the last 79 years. Did the colonial-era buildings now come in the way of those advances? Do buildings determine the thinking of people who work in them? Is it not too deterministic an assertion? Can those who work in grand buildings not be sensitive to the needs of the people? If they happen to be insensitive, will the architecture of a building prevent them from changing for the better? Which way does the causation run? Is it from the ambitions of the rulers to the buildings they build to rule - or does it work the other way round? Built to awe. No doubt, the imperialists wanted to awe the ruled with their grand constructions. The contrast between their lifestyle and that of the ruled was used to overwhelm the latter. The kings of yore did that too, did they not? Their temples, mosques and cathedrals were awe-inspiring then (as now). This was also done by design - to leave people in awe of their deity and their religious leaders. Visitors



still flock to these religious structures and the palaces of former kings and queens to admire the architecture. Bankers and corporates also build grand headquarters. The powerful still in large rooms with big desks to demonstrate their power to their visitors. Clearly, all those who want to awe people, to dominate over them, build grand buildings. It is no wonder that Gandhi, the people's man, wanted the government of independent India to work from modest buildings and not occupy the imperial buildings in New Delhi. He wanted the present

Rashtrapati Bhavan to be converted into a hospital. It could have been done. After all, the earlier Viceroy's residence was converted into Delhi University. Opulence of the new buildings are the new 'bhavans' simple and people-friendly? The pictures on TV screens showed the Seva Tirth and Kartavya Bhavan as opulent - no less than palaces. How, then, do they represent the aspirations of the mass of Indian people, impoverished as they are? If the hypothesis of the rulers is correct, those who work in these buildings will

be as non-responsive to the needs of citizens as they were while working in the colonial-era buildings. The mindset of those who decide to build the new palaces is as imperial as that of the colonial masters who constructed the buildings now being vacated. This has been the case all through the last eleven years. The Bharat Mandapam is opulent and not a place that people can comfortably visit. It replaced the iconic Hall of Nations where people thronged every year during fairs, which held and represented powerful symbolism that has been lost in the new construction. For the G20 summit held in 2023, New Delhi was put through a massive overhaul. It was possibly a result of the inferiority complex of the rulers. Given that India is the poorest of the G20 nations, they wanted to show that India could match the opulence of the wealthy nations. The slums of the poorest and most disadvantaged Delhiites were barricaded so that neither the outsiders could see them nor could they participate - or even observe - the G20's 'festivities'. Unnecessary and costly changes were made - lighting, temporary gardens, fountains, flower pots, posters and banners and walkways. Living conditions in Delhi are Indians living in civilised conditions? Do they have access to good education and health services, clean drinking water and sanitation or proper roads and transportation or communication facilities - especially those in villages? What should the priority of the people-friendly government be? Could the tens of thousands of crores spent on grand projects not have been better spent in providing people decent, humane and dignified conditions of living while also hosting a stately G20 meet? The rulers, much like the kings and imperialists from our past, seem to want to leave their mark for the future. They want to be remembered by the new palaces and grand structures they build, not for the aspirations of the people they rule over, who are relegated to dehumanising conditions. Opulent new buildings, where corporate-centric and elitist policies are made, cannot represent a change in the mindset of the rulers. Future generations of Indians would accuse those who are in power today of doing exactly what they accuse the imperialists of. Buildings are being changed only to glorify the rulers and have little to do with people.

101 Years of the Rudra Dinner at St. Stephen's College



Every year, on February 12, a special event is organised by the Social Service League in the St. Stephen's College mess. The long, wooden tables of the high-ceiling hall, on whose walls hang portraits of former principals, are occupied by karamcharis and other non-teaching staff on this day, and the students and teachers of the college serve them dinner. A tradition started in 1926, as per the will of Sushil Kumar Rudra (1861-1925), the fourth and the first Indian principal of the college, the dinner, now named the "Rudra Dinner", is in its 101st year. In the College Record Section of the March 1926 issue of St. Stephen's College Magazine, Head Monitor Randhir Singh of the Allnutt Hostel writes: On the 12th of February, the College Social Service League gave a dinner to all the servants of the College and the various hostels. The late Principal Mr. S. K. Rudra has bequeathed a sum of Rs 1,000/- for this purpose, and the dinner is now to be an annual feature of the College activities. It will always be given on 12th February, which is the death anniversary of the late Mrs. Rudra, and also by a strange coinci-

dence, the birthday of C.F. Andrews. Originally a fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge, an English faculty at St. Stephen's College and later a foundational figure in Santiniketan, Andrews was an associate of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranatha Tagore. He was an author and educationist, known as Deenbandhu Andrews, for his excellent work for social justice and for his anti-imperial positions. The commitment in this line - "the dinner is now to be an annual feature of the college activities" - has been borne out over ten decades, even when so much has happened: two world wars, the end of the British empire, India's freedom and Partition, different political dispensations, riots and pandemics and paradigm shifts in society and economics. When I heard of the practice 16 years ago, three things came to my mind: first, the act seemed to resonate with the rejection of social hierarchy in Jesus washing the feet of his disciples during the Last Supper and the lessons of simplicity and service thereof, now a Christian Maundy Thursday rite. The dinner extended the religious act symbolically to the domain of everyday life

and integrated it as an ethical reminder. In the absence of any affirmative action that the Republic was to later bring in, in the 1920s, the students and faculty must have been exclusively Hindu and Muslim upper caste, other than the British/Scottish/Irish faculty. It must have been a non-religious ritual against the performance of purity that caste embodies and since caste cannot give exceptions even for a day on its strict demands of exclusivist purity, this must have been a step of unsettling hierarchy. The early 20th century efforts towards inter-dining between different caste groups, known as Panthibhojanam in Kerala history, rhymed well with this dinner. A brief look over some published materials from this time didn't reveal any documented unease or misgivings from even entitled students or faculty. A character sketch, "Principal Rudra", in the October 2025 volume of St. Stephen's College Magazine by N.K. Sen quotes students from those days: "It is not difficult to defy authority; but Barasahib's (a name given to Principal Rudra by the college) love is irresistible".

Beyond Realism: India's Chance to Bend History, Not Bow to It

A subtle fatalism has settled over India's strategic conversation. The new India-US trade deal - with its tariff cuts for Indian exports from punishing levels to 18%, in exchange for India's market-opening on industrial goods, select agricultural products, and commitments to buy hundreds of billions in US energy and technology - is being framed as the inevitable price of asymmetry. The strong dictate terms; the weak adapt gracefully. Power is a ledger of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and military might, and diplomacy its obedient accountant. This polished realism is seductive, but it is also profoundly incomplete. It mistakes a snapshot for the story. It confuses today's imbalance for tomorrow's destiny. Worst of all, it strips nations of the agency to rewrite their own trajectory. History offers a sharper lesson. Japan in the 1950s, South Korea in the 1960s, and China in the 1980s entered the global economy as clear underdogs. None negotiated from parity. Yet each turned weakness into leverage: trading market access for technology transfer, alignment for industrial depth, short-term concessions for long-term capacity. They did not accept unequal outcomes as fate; they engineered escapes from them. Had they internalised the counsel now directed at India - that asymmetry excuses asymmetry - their ascents would have stalled at the starting line. Realism without ambition is resignation in scholarly dress.



India in 2026 is no longer a peripheral supplicant. It is a central pivot: the world's most populous nation, a fast-growing consumer market, a vital node in Indo-Pacific supply chains, a trusted partner in democratic coalitions, and home to one of the largest skilled workforces on earth. These are not ornaments; they are instruments. Modern power flows through networks as much as through size. India's position - large enough to disrupt, independent enough to choose, credible enough to attract - gives it real cards to play. The current deal reflects genuine power differentials. The United States, wielding a \$30-trillion economy and tariff leverage in a fragmenting world order, extracted significant concessions: tariff reductions on US industrial and select agricultural goods, removal of digital services taxes, and alignment on energy security (including reduced reliance on Russian oil). India secured tariff relief on key export sectors - textiles, leather, chemicals, machin-

ery - and protection for sensitive agriculture. But the bargain is asymmetrical, as most such deals are when one side holds overwhelming leverage. The deeper question is not whether the terms could have been more equal today, but whether India can extract asymmetric gains tomorrow. That requires shifting from defensive negotiation to developmental statecraft. Three priorities stand out. First, make trade an explicit ladder for technological sovereignty: insist on binding commitments for joint R&D, skills transfer, and local manufacturing in high-value sectors like semiconductors, renewables, and biotech as a condition for further market access. Second, sequence liberalisation ruthlessly - protect or subsidise vulnerable sectors (small farmers, MSMEs) while aggressively building export-competitive clusters in labour-intensive goods that can absorb the demographic dividend. Third, end the opacity that surrounds these agreements. A democracy cannot

ask its citizens to trust executive judgment alone when livelihoods, food security, and public health hang in the balance. Full disclosure of terms, modeled on parliamentary scrutiny in other major democracies, would build legitimacy and sharpen negotiators' mandate. China's rise remains the clearest mirror India has yet to face squarely. Beijing did not win dominance in manufacturing, EVs, batteries, and critical minerals through wealth alone. It did so through purposeful strategy: staged market entry, mandatory technology transfer, and disciplined sequencing of reforms. India has hesitated to study this playbook, preferring lectures on hierarchy over lessons in leverage. That reluctance has already cost decades. Why does the passive-realist mindset endure? It is emotionally convenient. It excuses leaders from bold choices, analysts from creative thinking, and citizens from demanding more. It naturalises inferiority instead of treating it as a challenge to overcome.

India, France to hold key dialogue to boost defence cooperation on Feb 17

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will hold talks with his French counterpart Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru on February 17, with some key outcomes expected from the bilateral dialogue to boost defence cooperation. A defence cooperation agreement is expected to be renewed for another 10 years, with an MoU on joint venture for "manufacturing of Hammer missiles" likely to be signed at the meeting in the presence of both the ministers, the defence ministry here said on Sunday. "The two ministers are also expected to witness the virtual inauguration of the H125 Light Utility Helicopter Final Assembly of Tata Airbus by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron at Vemagal in Karnataka," it said in a statement. Singh will co-chair the sixth India-France Annual Defence Dialogue with Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs of France, Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru on February 17, the ministry said. The meeting will review the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation, with a focus on expanding industrial collaboration, officials said. An announcement is also expected



with respect to the reciprocal deployment of officers at the Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments, the defence ministry said. Defence has traditionally formed an important pillar of the relationship between the two countries. The "strong and enduring bilateral ties" were vividly reflected in 2024-2025 through a series of high-profile exchanges, the statement said. PM Modi was the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade in July 2023, before the French president graced the Republic Day Parade 2024 as the chief guest. "The recent India-EU Security and Defence Partnership marks a

significant step in deepening collective engagement with European nations," the ministry said. Also, military-to-military cooperation is on the increase. India and France have been regularly carrying out three major exercises — Exercise Shakti with the Army, Exercise Varuna with the Navy, and Exercise Garuda with the Air Force — and several other opportunity engagements, it said. This would be the maiden visit of Vautrin to India after she took over as the French defence minister on October 12, 2025, the statement said. The India-France Annual Defence Dialogue is a structured min-

isterial-level bilateral meeting to review and guide defence and security cooperation. The fifth edition of the meeting was held in France from October 11-13, 2023. The meeting will review the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation, with a focus on expanding industrial collaboration, officials said. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh will co-chair the 6th India-France Annual Defence Dialogue with Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs of France Ms Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru, Karnataka on February 17, 2026. The meeting will review the entire gamut of

bilateral defence cooperation, with focus on expanding industrial collaboration. During the meeting, a defence cooperation agreement is expected to be renewed for another 10 years, with an MoU on Joint Venture for manufacturing of Hammer missiles likely to be signed in the presence of both Defence Ministers. An announcement is also expected with respect to reciprocal deployment of officers at the Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments. The two Ministers are also expected to witness the virtual inauguration of the H125 Light Utility Helicopter Final Assembly of Tata Airbus by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and French President Mr Emmanuel Macron at Vemagal, Karnataka. Defence has traditionally formed an important pillar of the relationship between the two countries. The strong and enduring bilateral ties were vividly reflected in 2024-2025 through a series of high-profile exchanges. PM Modi was the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade in July 2023, before the French President graced the Republic Day Parade 2024 as the Chief Guest.

Bill Gates to visit Andhra, hold talks with CM Naidu

Amaravati: Microsoft founder Bill Gates will visit Amaravati on February 16 and hold discussions with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on expanding cooperation in health and artificial intelligence initiatives, Andhra Pradesh minister P Narayana said on Sunday. Gates is expected to arrive at the state secretariat here around 10 am on Monday and meet with Naidu, IT Minister Nara Lokesh and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan briefly. "Gates will visit Amaravati on Monday and hold discussions with Naidu on expanding cooperation in health and artificial intelligence initiatives," said Narayana, the state Municipal minister. The Gates Foundation has been working in Kuppam in Chittoor district on health-related projects, and the proposed talks are expected to explore scaling up these interventions to benefit a wider population across the southern state. Later, the tech czar will proceed to the Real Time Governance system (RTGS) to observe the utilisation of technology in governance, followed by Naidu showcasing the system's procedures and



results, a government source had earlier said. Naidu will give a presentation on "Swarna Andhra 2047" (golden Andhra) vision and the reforms ushered in various sectors, including med-tech, diagnostic services and Sanjeevani, a health record digitisation programme, said the source. Following these engagements at the secretariat, Gates and team will proceed to an agricultural centre in Undavalli village in Amaravati, where he will witness the use of drones and AI technology, the source further said. Gates had earlier visited Andhra Pradesh twice, and this visit follows an invitation extended by the chief minister to further deepen collaboration with the state government, the minister added.

China confirms visa-free travel for UK and Canadian nationals

UK and Canadian nationals will be able to travel to mainland China for up to 30 days without a visa from 17 February. China's foreign ministry said visa-free entry would be permitted for tourism, business or visits to family and friends, with the policy set to stay in effect initially until 31 December. It follows Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer's official visit to China last month, where he and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed travel rules would be relaxed. Sir Keir said the agreement would make it easier for businesses to expand to China, though critics say Downing Street's push to reset relations with Beijing overlooks human rights and national security concerns. Announcing the policy's start date on Sunday, China's foreign ministry said the scheme would "further facilitate people-to-people exchanges between China and other



countries". The move brings rules for UK and Canada passport holders into line with 50 other countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Australia and Japan. Hundreds of thousands of British people could potentially benefit from the change, with around 620,000 travelling to China in 2024, according to the Office for National

Statistics. During his official visit to China in January, Sir Keir said British businesses had been "crying out for ways to grow their footprints in China". Xi and Sir Keir also agreed to deepen trade relations in services, healthcare, green technology and finance - though no sweeping trade free trade agreement was announced. The visit,

which was the first by a British prime minister since Theresa May in 2018, was criticised by some opposition figures. Shortly before heading to China, Sir Keir's government approved plans for a major new Chinese embassy in central London, despite opponents claiming it could be used as a base for spying and pose security risks.

Govt doing a thorough study of non-scheduled flight operators: Aviation Minister

New Delhi: The government is conducting a "very thorough study" of flight operations by non-scheduled operators and uncontrolled airfields to look at areas where steps need to be taken, according to Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu. Flight operations by Non-Scheduled Operators (NSOPs) have come under increased regulatory scrutiny in the wake of the fatal crash of a VSR Ventures-owned LearJet 45 plane that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others on January 28. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has already initiated a special safety audit of NSOPs earlier this month. Naidu told PTI that the civil aviation ministry is doing a "thorough study" of the NSOPs, as well as the uncontrolled airfields. Areas where something needs to be done with respect to NSOPs and uncontrolled airfields will be looked into, he said. On January 28, VSR Ventures' Learjet 45, carry-



ing Pawar and four others, crashed near the Baramati airport, and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is expected to very soon come out with its preliminary report on the fatal accident. NSOPs are generally those entities that do not have a fixed schedule for operators and mostly operate chartered flights. Baramati is an uncontrolled airfield, and traffic information is provided by instructors/pilots from the flying training organisations at that place.

An uncontrolled aerodrome is an aerodrome without a control tower, or one where the tower is not in operation, according to the website SKYbrary. In a detailed statement on the LearJet 45 crash, the ministry, on January 28, said the "aircraft was cleared to land on runway 11 at 0843IST; however, they did not give a readback of the landing clearance". "Next, the ATC saw the flames around the threshold of runway 11 at 0844 IST. The emergency services then rushed to the

crash site," it had said. Meanwhile, the minister, speaking to PTI on the sidelines of an event here this week, also said the focus is to boost airlines with smaller operations. He was responding to a query on whether the ministry would be looking at having a 'too big to fail' concept for the airlines, similar to the banking sector, in the wake of IndiGo operational disruptions in December. DGCA has already initiated a special safety audit of NSOPs earlier this month.

Mcap of 6 of top-10 valued firms erodes by Rs 3 lakh cr

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of six of the top 10 valued firms eroded by more than Rs 3 lakh crore last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards amid a bearish trend in equities. The BSE benchmark declined by 953.64 points, or 1.14 per cent, over the past week. TCS, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), and Bharti Airtel faced erosion from their valuation, while State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and ICICI Bank were the gainers. The market valuation of TCS tumbled Rs 90,198.92 crore to Rs 9,74,043.43 crore, while Infosys' valuation eroded by Rs 70,780.23 crore to Rs 5,55,287.72 crore. The market valuation of HDFC Bank declined by Rs 54,627.71 crore to Rs 13,93,621.92 crore, and that of Reliance Industries



plunged by Rs 41,883 crore to Rs 19,21,475.79 crore. Life Insurance Corporation of India's market capitalisation (mcap) dropped by Rs 23,971.74 crore to Rs 5,46,226.80 crore, and that of Bharti Airtel declined by Rs 19,244.61 crore to Rs 11,43,044.03 crore. However, the valuation of State Bank of India (SBI) jumped Rs 1,22,213.38 crore to Rs 11,06,566.44 crore. The mcap of Bajaj Finance climbed Rs 26,414.44 crore to Rs 6,37,244.64 crore, and that of Larsen & Toubro's

valuation increased by Rs 14,483.9 crore to Rs 5,74,028.93 crore. ICICI Bank's mcap rose by Rs 5,719.95 crore to Rs 10,11,978.77 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, and Life Insurance Corporation of India. The BSE benchmark declined by 953.64 points, or 1.14 per cent, over the past week.

A New Language of Love: Valentine's Gifting That Reflects Care and Intent

February 2025: Valentine's Day is no longer just about grand gestures or one-day indulgences. Today, gifting is becoming more personal, thoughtful, and rooted in everyday care. As people look for ways to celebrate not just romantic partners, but also friends, family, and themselves, gifts that feel meaningful and practical are taking centre stage. This shift is opening the door to modern alternatives that move beyond chocolates and flowers with California Almonds emerging as a thoughtful gifting choice - combining great taste with everyday nourishment. They fit naturally into daily life, making them a gift that feels relevant long after Valentine's Day has passed. Naturally nutrient-rich and incredibly versatile, California Almonds blend effortlessly into daily routines, especially in the morning. From soaked almonds and smoothies to breakfast bowls, they support a growing lifestyle focus on balance,



intention, and well-being. Gifting almonds is a simple way to say you care, not just for a day, but every day. A gift that celebrates care, every morning. Small, consistent habits often make the biggest difference, and mornings set the tone for the day ahead. Adding California Almonds to a morning routine is an easy step towards feeling nourished and energised. Packed with 15 essential

nutrients, including protein, fibre, and healthy fats, almonds offer everyday goodness in a form that feels effortless. Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head of Dietetics, Max Healthcare - New Delhi, said, "I often recommend starting the day with California Almonds because of its protein and dietary fibre content. When included regularly, especially in the morning, almonds can support better blood sugar response, help manage fasting insulin levels, and contribute to weight management through their natural satiety. It's a simple habit that supports long-term lifestyle health." Sheela Krishnaswamy, Nutrition and Wellness Consultant, added, "A thoughtful gift today is one that supports wellbeing and Almonds can exactly be that. They are nat-

urally nutrient-rich, convenient, and easy to include in everyday routines, especially as a morning habit. With protein, fibre, healthy fats, and some of the vitamins and minerals, regular consumption can support heart health, weight management, and even skin health. It's a gift that reflects care in the most practical way." A modern expression of love - taste, glow, and wellbeing. Alongside nutrition, younger consumers are increasingly linking gifting with self-care and appearance making better-for-you options more relevant during celebratory moments. Bollywood Actress Soha Ali Khan shared, "An assorted box of California Almonds makes for a wonderful Valentine's Day gift. These natural, nutrient-rich nuts offer a variety of health benefits, including supporting skin health. Almonds are packed with healthy fats and vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol), known for their anti-aging properties."

IRAN READY TO DISCUSS COMPROMISES TO REACH NUCLEAR DEAL

Iran is ready to consider compromises to reach a nuclear deal with the US if the Americans are willing to discuss lifting sanctions, an Iranian minister has told the BBC. US officials have repeatedly emphasised that Iran, not the US, is holding up progress in this protracted negotiating process. On Saturday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said President Donald Trump preferred a deal but it was "very hard to do" one with Iran. But in an interview with the BBC in Tehran, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, said the ball was "in America's court to prove that they want to do a deal", adding: "If they are sincere, I'm sure we will be on the road to an agreement." Trump has threatened strikes against Iran if a deal to curb its nuclear programme cannot be reached, with the US building up its military presence in the region. This followed Iran's

violent repression of nationwide anti-government protests last month, which human rights groups say killed many thousands of people. The US and Iran held indirect talks in the Gulf state of Oman earlier in February, and Takht-Ravanchi, who confirmed a second round was set to take place in Geneva on Tuesday, said they had been "more or less in a positive direction but it is too early to judge". Trump has also described those talks as positive. The deputy foreign minister pointed to Tehran's offer to dilute its 60%-enriched uranium as evidence of its willingness to compromise. At near weapons-grade level, it has deepened suspicion that the Islamic Republic is moving towards the development of a nuclear weapon, something it has always denied. "We are ready to discuss this and other issues related to our programme if they are ready to talk about



sanctions," Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC. He would not confirm whether this meant lifting all or some sanctions. As to whether Iran would agree to ship its stockpile of

more than 400kg of highly enriched uranium out of Iran, as it did in the 2015 nuclear deal, Takht-Ravanchi said "it was too early to say what will happen in the course of negotiations". Russia, which accepted 11,000kg of uranium enriched to a low level as part of the 2015 multilateral accord that Trump pulled out of three years later, has offered to accept this material again. Other proposals previously reported in the media include an offer from Tehran to temporarily suspend nuclear enrichment. One of Iran's main demands has been that talks should focus only on the nuclear file, and Takht-Ravanchi said: "Our understanding is that they have come to the conclusion that if you want to have a deal you have to focus on the nuclear issue." If confirmed, this would represent a key step forward for Iran. It has viewed Washington's maximalist demands for zero enrichment as an obstacle to any deal. Iran regards that as a red line, a violation of its rights under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC the

"issue of zero enrichment is not an issue anymore and as far as Iran is concerned, it is not on the table anymore". This contradicts comments made by Trump to reporters as recently as Friday that "we don't want any enrichment". Iran's negotiator also reiterated Tehran's refusal to discuss its ballistic missile programme with American negotiators - which has been a key demand of Israel, a country targeted by these rockets. Its inclusion in any deal, along with Iran's support to armed groups across the region, has also been emphasised by US officials including Rubio. "When we were attacked by Israelis and Americans, our missiles came to our rescue so how can we accept depriving ourselves of our defensive capabilities," Takht-Ravanchi stressed. Rubio has also included Iran's "treatment of its own citizens" in his remarks regarding the elements essential to any deal.

Russian 'pick-up artist' accused of secretly filming women in Ghana



Ghana intends to request the extradition of a Russian man accused of illegally recording his sexual encounters with several women and sharing footage online without their consent. African and Russian media identified him as a self-styled "pick-up artist" and online blogger in his 30s who had travelled to Ghana to secretly film his interactions with women. Outlets in both countries claimed the man used a pair of sunglasses fitted with a camera to film some encounters and circulated them on social media, though officials did not confirm this. Speaking to journalists on Saturday, Sam George, Ghana's tech-

nology minister, said he had invited the Russian ambassador to discuss the alleged incident. Earlier, Ghana's Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection said an initial investigation had established the suspect had likely left the country. It added that did "not reduce the seriousness of the alleged conduct or the state's responsibility to pursue accountability". George said he had asked the Russian ambassador in the capital city Accra for Moscow's cooperation in getting justice for the victims. However, Russia does not extradite its citizens, except in extreme circumstances.

Rubio says US and Europe 'belong together' despite tensions



Marco Rubio has assured European leaders the US does not plan to abandon the transatlantic alliance, saying its destiny "will always be intertwined" with the continent's. The US secretary of state told the Munich Security Conference: "We do not seek to separate, but to revitalise an old friendship and renew the greatest civilisation in human history." He criticised European immigration, trade and climate policies, but the overall tenor of the speech was markedly different to Vice-President JD Vance's at the same event last year, during which he scolded continental leaders. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she was "very much reassured" by Rubio's remarks. Rubio, the Trump administration's most senior diplomat, said it was "neither our goal nor our wish" to end the transatlantic partnership, adding: "For us Americans, our home may be in the Western Hemisphere, but we will always be a child of

Europe. "And I am here today to leave it clear that America is charting the path for a new century of prosperity, and that once again we want to do it together with you, our cherished allies and our oldest friends." Follow updates on this story. However, he repeated several criticisms repeatedly levelled at Europe by the Trump administration, including describing immigration policies as a threat to civilisation, and saying a "climate cult" had taken over economic policy. On trade, he said Europe and the US had "made mistakes together" by adopting a "dogmatic vision of free and unfettered trade". He repeated familiar calls from the US for Europe to invest more in defence, saying: "We want allies who can defend themselves so that no adversary will ever be tempted to test our collective strength." In response, von der Leyen said: "[Rubio is] a good friend, a strong ally. And this was, for me, very reassuring to listen to him." She continued: "We want a strong Europe."

POLICE WEAR FANCY DRESS IN RIO CARNIVAL PHONE THEFT STING

Brazilian police have disguised themselves using fancy dress to blend in as Carnival-goers to target phone thieves in Rio de Janeiro. The undercover officers donned masks depicting Captain America, Batman and Jason Voorhees from Friday the 13th, among others, to nab a pair in the act, Brazil's Civil Police said. The two people were arrested after a woman was spotted by a drone grabbing a phone from someone attending Rio's famed Carnival before passing it to her alleged male accomplice, they said. The festival, which began on Friday and runs until next Saturday, attracts millions of visitors and locals each year to its street par-

ties and parades - but there is often a spike in petty crime. Five stolen phones were recovered during the operation in the Santa Teresa neighbourhood and will be returned to their owners, the Civil Police said. Footage it published showed officers, still in their masks, leading the two suspect away and into a waiting police car. Among the disguises was the red overalls and mask from the Spanish Netflix show Money Heist. Police said the two seen being detained in the footage had 30 criminal records between them, and that the woman pretended to be pregnant to avoid arrest. Police added that the arrests form part of Operation Tracking.

Russia killed opposition leader Alexei Navalny using dart frog toxin, UK says

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was killed using a poison developed from a dart frog toxin, the UK and European allies have said. Two years on from the death of Navalny at a Siberian penal colony, Britain and its allies have blamed the Kremlin following analysis of material samples found on his body. Speaking from the Munich Security Conference, Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said "only the Russian government had the means, motive and opportunity" to use the poison while Navalny was imprisoned in Russia. According to Tass news agency Moscow has dismissed the finding as "an information campaign", but Cooper said there is no explanation for the toxin,



called epibatidine, being found. While Cooper announced the findings, a joint statement was issued by the UK, Sweden, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Cooper met with Navalny's widow Yulia Navalnaya at the conference this weekend. "Russia saw Navalny as a threat," Cooper said at the event. "By using this form of poison the Russian state demonstrated

the despicable tools it has at its disposal and the overwhelming fear it has of political opposition," she added. In the statement the allies said: "Only the Russian state had the means, motive and opportunity to deploy this lethal toxin to target Navalny during his imprisonment in a Russian penal colony in Siberia, and we hold it responsible for his death. "Epibatidine can be

found naturally in dart frogs in the wild in South America. Dart frogs in captivity do not produce this toxin and it is not found naturally in Russia. "There is no innocent explanation for its presence in Navalny's body." The Foreign Office said the UK has informed the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons of Russia's alleged breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Praising Navalny's "huge courage", UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said "his determination to expose the truth has left an enduring legacy". "I am doing whatever it takes to defend our people, our values and our way of life from the threat of Russia and Putin's murderous intent," he added.

MOTORBIKE RAIDS ON VILLAGES KILL DOZENS IN NIGERIA

Gunmen on motorcycles have killed dozens of people in dawn raids across three villages in north-western Nigeria. Armed men shot locals dead, set homes alight and abducted an unknown number of people in Niger State, Musa Saidu, head of the State Emergency Management Agency (Sema), told the BBC. The attacks on Saturday morning occurred near the site of a suspected jihadist massacre earlier this month, in which more than 100 people were killed in a similar ambush. Armed criminal gangs, known as bandits, have carried out attacks and kidnappings in Nigeria for years, mainly targeting



those in the north-west - but reports of attacks in other parts of the country have risen sharply more recently. Bandits swooped on the village of Tunga-Makeri early in the morning, before striking the nearby villages of Konkoso and Pissa, local offi-

cials said. Police said six people were killed in one incident, and 20 more in the attacks on Konkoso and Pissa. Officials confirmed at least 29 people had been killed as of Saturday, but Saidu said that death toll could rise. The number of

people abducted is also unknown because many residents fled their homes and ran into the nearby bush or neighbouring communities, he said. "People are afraid because you can't tell which community is going to be next," he added. A security report cited by AFP news agency said bandits came on 41 motorcycles, each carrying two or three men. Abdullahi Rofia, a resident of neighbouring Agwara, told the BBC that many displaced people have taken shelter in his community, which was itself attacked two weeks ago. "People are so traumatised, they no longer go to farm nor do they go to market," he said.

Obama addresses racist video shared by Trump depicting him as an ape



Former US President Barack Obama has indirectly addressed a racist video posted on President Donald Trump's social media, telling a podcast host that the "shame" and "decorum" that once guided public officials is now lost. The offensive video included a clip depicting Obama and his wife Michelle as apes, which drew widespread criticism from Democrats and Republicans. The White House initially defended the video, calling backlash "fake outrage". The post was later blamed on a staff member and deleted. Obama spoke to liberal podcaster Brian Tyler Cohen, who asked the first black US president about the tone of political discourse. Cohen cited Trump's post among several recent controversies. The clip - set to the song The Lion Sleeps Tonight - was included at the end of a video Trump's Truth Social account shared containing unfounded claims about voter fraud in the 2020 election. The post led to outrage from politicians, including from senior members of Trump's Republican party. Senator Tim Scott - the only black Republican senator -

described it as "the most racist thing I've seen out of this White House". The clip recalls racist caricatures comparing black people to monkeys, and appears to have been taken from an X post shared by conservative meme creator Xerias in October. Trump has told reporters that he "didn't see" the part of the video that showed the Obamas. "I didn't make a mistake," he told reporters when asked whether he planned to apologise. The 47-minute podcast featuring Obama was released on Saturday. The episode begins with the host asking him to comment on US "discourse", which he says "has devolved to a level of cruelty that we haven't seen before". Cohen notes claims by the White House that the "victims" of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are "domestic terrorists", and adds "just days ago, Donald Trump put a picture of you, your face, on an ape's body". Obama responds by saying: "It's important to recognise that the majority of the American people find this behaviour deeply troubling. It is true that it gets attention. It's true that it's a distraction."

ELEVEN KILLED IN ISRAELI STRIKES ON GAZA

Eleven Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza on Sunday morning, according to Palestinian civil defence and health officials. The IDF said it had struck terror targets in response to ceasefire violations by Hamas, and that militants had been killed after emerging from a tunnel into the area of the strip controlled by the Israeli military. The Palestinian Red Crescent said a strike on a tent encampment in northern Gaza killed at least six people, while another strike in the south of the strip killed five. Both Israel and Hamas have accused each other of near-daily violations of a fragile ceasefire agreement since it took effect on 10 October. The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry has said at least 600 people have been killed since the



ceasefire went into effect. At least 32 people were killed in a wave of Israeli air strikes across Gaza earlier this month, according to local officials. The latest strikes came

as the preparations continued for the implementation of the second phase of a US-brokered ceasefire agreement. Last month, US President Donald Trump announced a

new body called the Board of Peace, which has a mandate from the United Nations Security Council to establish an international force tasked with securing border areas in

Gaza, and overseeing the disarmament of Hamas. The board, which was due to have its first meeting in Washington on 19 February, will also oversee the formation of a new technocratic Palestinian government in Gaza and post-war reconstruction. Last week it was announced that Indonesia, a Board of Peace member, would deploy 8,000 soldiers to Gaza as part of phase two of the ceasefire agreement. The war was triggered by the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on 7 October 2023, in which about 1,200 people were killed and 251 others were taken hostage. Israel responded to the attack by launching a military campaign in Gaza, during which more than 71,820 people have been killed, according to the territory's

health ministry. Elsewhere, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travelled to Washington on Wednesday to meet US President Donald Trump, where they discussed ways to curb Iran's nuclear programme - which Tehran has always insisted is for purely civilian purposes. Netanyahu was expected to press Trump to pursue an agreement that would halt Iran's uranium enrichment, as well as cutting its ballistic missile programme. However, Trump later said there was "nothing definitive reached" and that talks with Iran would continue. Iran's deputy foreign minister told BBC News further talks would take place in Geneva on Tuesday. An unnamed US official confirmed the date to Reuters news agency.

MUCHOVA DEFEATS TEENAGER MBOKO TO WIN QATAR OPEN

Karolina Muchova clinched her first title since 2019 as she overcame Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko in the Qatar Open final. After her 6-4 7-5 victory, Czech Muchova said it had "been a while since I won a tournament, so it's nice to get that feeling again". The win - her first WTA 1000 event and second overall after the Korea Open seven years ago - will move her from 19th to 11th in the updated world rankings on Monday. In a clean opening set the 29-year-old landed 75% of her first serves with just three points dropped on them. Mboko, 19, managed to take a 4-2 lead in the second set, but Muchova broke twice to seal victory in 94 minutes. Despite falling to defeat, Mboko, who started the 2025 season ranked outside the top 300, will jump inside the top 10 as she has the most match wins on the women's tour this season. Acknowledging it was "not the outcome I wanted", she added: "There are so many



positives to take away." The next WTA 1000 event gets under way in Dubai on Sunday, but without Aryna Sabalenka and Iga Swiatek, the world's top two players. Sabalenka, who has been out of action since losing last month's Australian Open final to Elena Rybakina, said she was "not feeling 100%" while Swiatek, a quarter-finalist in Doha, pointed to a

"change of schedule". Czech Muchova came through with the victory in one hour and 34 minutes in Doha as she picked up the second title of her career. It was a sweet moment for Muchova since she has struggled with multiple injuries, most notably being sidelined for 10 months following a wrist injury she suffered in 2023. Muchova has picked up a

remarkable 57 wins in WTA 1000 events before finally picking up a WTA 1000 title. Only three players have earned more WTA 1000 match wins before picking up a title. It was close between the pair for the first six games before Muchova then took control and broke to move 4-3 ahead before serving out the first set 6-4. "It's been a while since she

won a tournament," Muchova said. "So it's just nice to get that feeling again. To be reminded of that victory feeling here in Doha, it's incredible." She was then full of confidence in the second set and held all three break points but Mboko was not going to give up without a fight as she went 4-2 in front. However, Muchova then broke back and after moving 6-5 in front served for the title. On the way to the final, Mboko stunned Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina in the quarter-finals and she blasted past Latvian Ostapenko in 74 minutes to reach her second WTA 1000 final, following on from her dream run to the National Bank Open title in Montreal last August. Meanwhile, Muchova had defeated Maria Sakkari 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 in the other semi-final. This time last year, Mboko was ranked No 211 and on the way to collecting her fourth ITF title of 2025 at the Manchester W35.

Leeds beat Birmingham in penalty shootout in FA Cup



Leeds beat Birmingham in a penalty shoot-out to squeeze into the FA Cup fifth round for the third time in four years. Leeds goalkeeper Lucas Perri denied Tommy Doyle before Patrick Roberts, who scored a stunning equaliser in the 89th minute, blazed over. Up stepped Sean Longstaff to score Leeds' fourth spot-kick from four and send Daniel Farke's side into the last 16. Defeat was tough on Chris Davies' Birmingham side, who

pushed their Premier League opponents all the way before falling to only their third home defeat of the season. The hosts, whose fans applauded owner Tom Wagner as the American continues his recovery from a stroke, deserve huge credit for their display. And with their cup dream over for another year the ambitious Blues, who are two points off the Championship play-offs, will turn their attention to ending their 15-year

exile from the top flight. Although both sides made six changes, it was impossible to tell which one was Premier League and which was Championship because of Birmingham's storming start as they bossed both possession and chances. Perri made a superb fingertip save to touch Jay Stansfield's rasping half-volley on to the post from Birmingham's best effort. The best Leeds could muster in reply was a 25-yard drive from Longstaff.

India Repeats No-Handshake Policy vs Pakistan, Suryakumar Yadav's Gesture Viral

The Indian cricket team's "no-handshake policy" against Pakistan, introduced during the Asia Cup 2025, has continued into the T20 World Cup 2026 as well. There will be no post-match handshake between players or support staff of the two sides - a norm India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav has followed as a mark of respect for the families of the victims killed in the Pahalgam terror attack and in solidarity with the Indian Army after Operation Sindoor. Once again, Suryakumar and Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha ignored each other during the toss for the Group A clash in



Colombo on Sunday. The two captains did not look at each other even once during the toss. Suryakumar confirmed two changes, while an unchanged Pakistan opted to bowl. That the status quo would continue became evident when neither Suryakumar nor

Salman committed to shaking hands, with the latter stating that he would like to "uphold the spirit of cricket." Both India and Pakistan have played two matches each in the tournament so far, registering victories in their respective fixtures. India enters the contest on the back of

wins over the United States of America and Namibia, while Pakistan has defeated the Netherlands and the USA. The Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian side currently tops Group A with four points and a Net Run Rate (NRR) of +3.050, while Pakistan is placed second with four points and an NRR of +0.932. The arch-rivals have faced each other eight times in T20 World Cup history. India have secured seven victories, while Pakistan have won only one game. Overall, both sides have faced each other 16 times in T20I cricket. India has clinched 13 wins, while the Men in Green have secured three.

India vs Pakistan: Abhishek Sharma Joins Unwanted List With T20 World Cup Duck vs Pak

Star India batter Abhishek Sharma scripted an unwanted record after he was dismissed for a five-ball duck against Pakistan in their high-stakes T20 World Cup clash on Sunday. Abhishek, who had missed the previous game against Namibia due to a stomach bug, was removed off the final delivery of the opening over by off-spinner Salman Ali Agha. He was caught at mid-on by Shaheen Shah Afridi. He is yet to score a run in this edition of the T20 World Cup, having also been dismissed for a duck against the USA. Abhishek is only the third player in T20 World Cup history to register back-to-back ducks in their first two games. He joins



Bangladesh's Imrul Kayes and former India pacer Ashish Nehra on the unwanted list. Dismissed for duck in the first two games in T20 World Cups: Ashish Nehra Imrul Kayes Abhishek Sharma* After missing the game against

Namibia due to a stomach issue, Abhishek was officially cleared to play against Pakistan on the eve of the clash. Abhishek is currently the No.1 ranked batter in ICC T20I rankings. Earlier, India skipper Suryakumar

Yadav did not shake hands with his Pakistan counterpart Salman Ali Agha at the toss, continuing the status quo maintained since the Asia Cup in Dubai last year. That the status quo will be maintained was clear, when on the eve of the game, neither among Surya or Salman committed to shaking hands with the Pakistan skipper stating that he would like to "uphold" the spirit of cricket. In case of the Indian team, the emotions of the Pahalgam terror attack in April remain raw. There was a huge backlash after Suryakumar shook hands with PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi at the pre-tournament captain's press meet in Dubai.

'OVERWHELMED' KIM TAKES FIRST WIN AFTER 12 YEARS AWAY



An "overwhelmed" Anthony Kim completed a remarkable return to golf with victory at the LIV event in Adelaide - his first tournament win after a 12-year absence during which he battled drug and alcohol addiction. The 40-year-old disappeared from professional golf in 2012 after a string of injuries and said he suffered "very dark moments" as he fell victim to "scam artists" and "snakes" during his absence from the sport. The American revealed last year that he had battled drug and alcohol addiction, and had thought about ending his life. Kim initially joined LIV Golf as a wildcard in 2024 and recently became part of Dustin Johnson's 4Aces team following compatriot Patrick Reed leaving the breakaway league. The win in Adelaide is his first title since the 2010 Houston Open on the PGA Tour. "I always believed that this day would come," said Kim. "With the support of my wife, my daughter and my mum, I knew anything

was possible but for it to actually happen is incredible. "I just wanted to take it all in. In my twenties, I wasn't able to enjoy the moment but having my daughter and my wife here has made it the best situation I could possibly ask for. "I just want to thank all the people that have supported me when I was not playing well and I was struggling on the verge of never coming back." In 2008, Kim became the first American under the age of 25 since Tiger Woods to win two PGA Tour events in the same year. He was the youngest member of the United States' victorious 2008 Ryder Cup side, taking two-and-a-half points from four matches at the age of 23 during Europe's defeat at Valhalla. In Adelaide, he started the final round five shots behind overnight leaders Jon Rahm and Bryson DeChambeau. However, Kim sank nine birdies in a round of 63 to finish top of the leaderboard on 23 under at Grange Golf Club.



GB's Bankes & Nightingale win historic snowboard gold

Imran Khan's 85% Vision Loss Breaks Wasim Akram and Co's Hearts: 'Put Politics Aside'

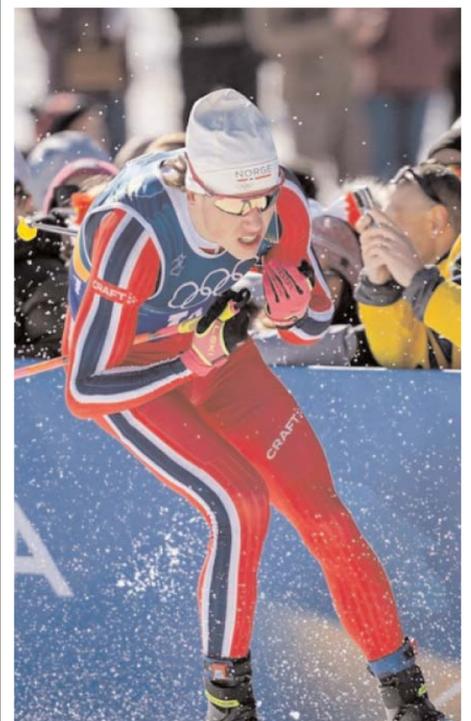
Former Pakistan cricketers, including Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, have led calls for Imran Khan to be allowed appropriate medical care. The legendary all-rounder has reportedly lost 85% of his vision in one eye. According to latest media reports, Imran is set to be moved to a hospital amid rising concerns about his health. Pakistan's 1992 World Cup-winning captain has been held in solitary confinement in prison since September 2023. His health has deteriorated in recent times after jail authorities allegedly ignored repeated medical complaints for months. Taking to social media, former captain Wasim Akram urged authorities to provide him with appropriate medical access. "It is heart-breaking to hear our skip-



per Imran Khan going through health issues. I sincerely hope the authorities take this seriously and ensure he receives the best possible medical care. Wishing him strength, a speedy recovery, and a full return to good health," Akram posted on X. Waqar Younis also made a desperate appeal, highlighting

ties ensure he gets the appropriate treatment in a timely manner. Get well soon skipper," the legendary pacer posted. Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar, who has been raising donations for the cancer center fundraised and built by Imran, hoped that the 73-year-old can make a quick recovery. "I'm deeply saddened to hear the news of him losing vision in his eye," Shoaib said. "I hope he gets the best treatment, and I'm wishing him a speedy recovery." The likes of Shahid Afridi, Ramiz Raja, and Mohammad Hafeez also stressed the right to "basic medical access." On Friday, former India all-rounder Ajay Jadeja rallied the Pakistan cricket fraternity to show their support for Imran in these challenging times.

KLAEBO WINS RECORD NINTH WINTER OLYMPIC GOLD



Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo, Norway's king of cross-country skiing, became the Winter Olympics' outright most successful athlete with a record ninth gold medal. Klaebo led his nation to the top of the podium in the men's 4x7.5km relay - alongside team-mates Emil Iversen, Martin Loewstroem Nyenget and Einar Hedegart - for his fourth title of the Milan-Cortina Games. At 29 years old, it adds to

the three golds he won in Pyeongchang in 2018 and two in Beijing four years later, while he is also a 15-time world champion. His medal haul could yet grow further, with two further opportunities for gold in the men's team sprint on Wednesday and 50km classic race on Saturday. In Sunday's relay, the Norwegian quartet won by a 22.2 second margin, with France and hosts Italy winning silver and bronze respectively.

'Emo Emo Idi' - Dr. Sailesh Kolanu and Sithara Entertainments' Naga Vamsi Team Up for a Fresh Rom-Com with Roshan Meka & Preity Mukundhan - Title & Glimpse Released

The title "Emo Emo Idi" itself instantly evokes breezy romantic vibes. The announcement glimpse opens with a fun and light-hearted conversation between a mother and son, touching upon today's Gen Z relationship terminology and the humorous chaos that follows modern-day marriages. The glimpse also introduces the female lead, seen listening to a classic old song from her playlist, beautifully establishing her deep emotional bond and love. Director Sailesh Kolanu, known for the blockbuster HIT Universe, steps into a completely new space with "Emo Emo Idi", marking his first-ever romantic comedy. After delivering gripping investigative thrillers filled with intensity and action, he is now all set to present a heartwarming, breezy, laid-back and goofy entertainer that promises laughter, love and freshness. The film stars Roshan Meka as Abhay, following his impressive debut with Pelli Sandadi and his recent success with Champion. He will be seen in a charming boy-next-door role, navigating love in today's Gen Z world. Playing Apurva is Preity Mukundhan, whose vibrant presence in the glimpse has already caught attention. With her refreshing screen appeal, she is sure to win over Telugu audiences. Adding to the film's charm is the



music by Hesham Abdul Wahab, whose soulful compositions and chartbuster tracks have made him one of the most sought-after names in recent times. His score perfectly complements this romantic world. The visuals, rich and breezy, are beautifully captured by cinematographer Vamsi Patchipulusu, enhancing the film's warm aesthetic. After a block-

buster start to 2026 with Anaganaga Oka Raju, the film is produced by Naga Vamsi S and Sai Soujanya under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas and presented by Sri Kara Studios. The film is slated for a grand Dussehra 2026 release. The shoot for "Emo Emo Idi" begins soon and more exciting updates will keep rolling out!

The second glimpse from the feel-good romantic entertainer What's Up Naresh released, As a Valentine's Day special



Youthful rom-coms always find their audience, and continuing that streak, Kavya Kalyanram of Balagam fame and Anvesh Michael of Kotha Poradu fame are teaming up for the upcoming film What's Up Naresh. Produced by Bhagya Laxmi Chinta under the CVV Cinema banner, the film is directed by CV Vishal. The first glimpse, released recently, instantly grabbed everyone's attention. Now, marking Valentine's Day, the makers have unveiled the second glimpse. The first glimpse introduced the protagonist, his family dynamics, their expectations around marriage, and eventually his first meeting with the girl. The newly released second glimpse shifts gears, presenting a more mature and grounded conversation between the lead pair who connect through a dating

app and open up about their past experiences, during a coffee date. What begins as a light-hearted, humorous exchange gradually takes an intriguing turn when the discussion moves to caste, followed by the protagonist's candid thoughts on how modern-day relationships work. The glimpse then transitions into moments that highlight the evolution of their bond, offering a warm and charming preview of their love journey, making it a perfect treat for Valentine's Day. Both Kavya Kalyanram and Anvesh Michael look perfectly cast in their roles and share a natural, appealing chemistry. Though the director takes a bold risk with the lengthy runtime, the emotion holds steady throughout, never losing its charm. Smaran Sai's soothing score beautifully heightens the romantic energy on screen.

Rakasa" goes global as Atharvana Bhadrakali Pictures acquires overseas rights and is gearing up for a grand release in 350+ theatres overseas

Rakasa is set to make a powerful mark on the international stage as Atharvana Bhadrakali Pictures officially acquires its overseas theatrical rights. The film will roll out across more than 350 theatres spanning the USA, Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, signaling a major global push. This expansive international release underscores the growing anticipation around Rakasa and reflects strong confidence in its theatrical draw across overseas markets. Atharvana Bhadrakali Pictures, known for its expanding footprint in international distribution, has strategically aligned with Rakasa to ensure a wide and coordinated overseas rollout. The scale of the release reflects a calculated push into key diaspora-driven territories, reinforcing the film's positioning as a theatrical event rather than a limited release. With a substantial screen presence confirmed across major global markets, the distribution plan emphasizes reach, accessibility, and a strong opening impact. Since its title announcement and the release of its first glimpse, Rakasa has generated notable traction across digital platforms, drawing engagement from audiences in India and overseas markets alike. The glimpse has clocked 1.8 Million views since its release, offering an initial look into the film's



tonal space and visual design while sparking conversation around its genre blend and theatrical ambition. The sustained online engagement and expanding digital footprint have translated into tangible market confidence, culminating in this wide-scale overseas acquisition. Having completed its principal photography, the film is currently in post-production, with the team focusing on refining the edit, background score, sound design, and overall visual texture in alignment with its theatrical vision. The previously released official poster and glimpse established the film's imaginative tonal space without revealing narrative specifics, allowing curiosity to build organically. Rakasa progresses toward its worldwide theatrical release with sustained interest across domestic and overseas territories. Rakasa features

Sangeeth Shobhan and Nayan Sarika in the lead roles. Sangeeth is coming back after back to back blockbusters MAD and MAD Square. They are supported by a strong ensemble that includes Vennela Kishore, Brahmaji, Tanikella Bharani, Ashish Vidyarthi, and Getup Srinu among others. Written and directed by Manasa Sharma who is already a proven story teller where both Manasa Sharma and Sangeeth Sobhan have previously collaborated with Niharika on web projects. Manasa Sharma worked as a writer and creator for Pink Elephant Pictures' web series Oka Chinna Family Story (ZEE5) and as a director for Bench Life (Sony LIV). Now, she is set to debut as a feature film director under the same banner. Meanwhile, Sangeeth Shobhan played the lead role in Oka Chinna Family Story.

Introducing Priya Bhavani Shankar As Kaveri Through This Lovely First Look Poster From Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, Shiva Nirvana, Mythri Movie Makers' Irumudi

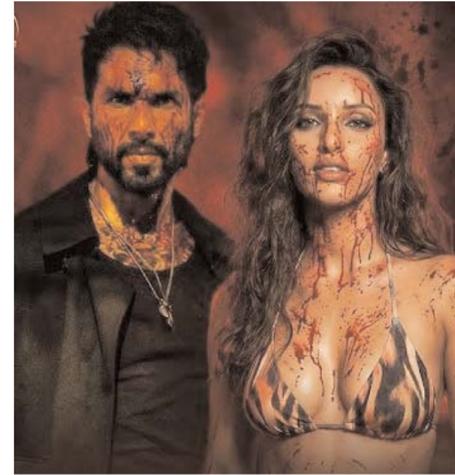


Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja joined forces with sensible director Shiva Nirvana for his landmark 77th project-Irumudi, creating significant excitement around this refreshing collaboration. The film is backed by the prominent pan-Indian production house Mythri Movie Makers. The makers, on Ravi Teja's birthday occasion released title and first look poster, which received stupendous response. Today, on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri, the makers released first look of lead actress Priya Bhavani Shankar. The poster introduces Priya Bhavani Shankar as Kaveri. Ravi Teja leans in affectionately to kiss Priya's cheek, sporting a rugged look with tousled hair, a full beard, and a casual striped shirt that reflects a rustic village charm. His

warm, playful expression highlights the intimacy shared between the characters. Priya Bhavani Shankar, dressed in a traditional maroon saree, radiates joy with her bright, natural smile. Her neatly tied hair adorned with flowers and minimal jewelry enhance the rural aesthetic. Set against a wooden cart filled with bananas, the poster uses earthy tones and soft lighting to convey a heartfelt, village-based love story rooted in simplicity and warmth. Shiva Nirvana penned a stirring narrative that seamlessly blends intensity, heartfelt drama, and commercial vibrancy. At the emotional center of the film is a deeply moving father-daughter relationship, presenting Ravi Teja in a refreshingly layered role that marks a significant departure from his previous outings.

O'ROMEO BECOMES FIRST HINDI FILM TO LEGALLY REMOVE REVIEWS ONLINE

Hyderabad: O'Romeo, a Bollywood crime thriller, has been creating a buzz since its release on February 13. Directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, the film stars Shahid Kapoor and Triptii Dimri in the lead roles, with an impressive cast that includes Vikrant Massey, Nana Patekar, and Tamannaah Bhatia. Based on the book Mafia Queens of Mumbai by Hussain Zaidi, the film follows a gangster named Hussain Ustara, who finds himself torn between love and crime in 1990s Mumbai. The film performed well at the box office, collecting Rs. 23.51 crore nett in its first two days. It started strong with Rs. 9 crore on opening day, followed by a 61% jump on Day 2. Despite a mix of reviews, O'Romeo quickly became a popular choice for audiences during Valentine's weekend.



REVIEWS DISABLED ON BOOKMYSHOW
However, O'Romeo made headlines for a unique reason: it became the first Bollywood film to have its

audience ratings and reviews disabled on BookMyShow. The film initially had a rating of 6.8, which later improved to 7, but the reviews section was removed after a court

order. A message on the platform now reads, "Reviews and ratings disabled as per court order," which surprised many. The decision to remove reviews came after the film's makers took legal action, reportedly to stop negative publicity. This move is believed to be a response to "review bombing," where films are targeted with negative reviews by organised groups.

AUDIENCE REACTION AND IMPACT
While some people support the decision, claiming it was necessary to prevent unfair attacks, others feel it limits the audience's ability to share their opinions. Despite the review controversy, over 100,000 users showed interest in the film, indicating that O'Romeo still has a strong public appeal.

We made 'Seetha Payanam' with complete honesty... audiences are connecting deeply with our film: Action King Arjun Sarja at the Thank You Meet

Arjun Sarja, popularly known as Action King, has produced and directed the film Seetha Payanam. Through this film, he introduced his daughter Aishwarya Arjun and Niranjan, son of actor Upendra's elder brother, to the screen. Produced under the Shri Ram Films International banner, the film was released on February 14 and has received overwhelming appreciation from audiences and the media alike. On this occasion, the film unit hosted a Thank You Meet on Sunday. Arjun Sarja said, "The story of Seetha Payanam revolves around gratitude and mindful thinking. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who showered love and apprecia-

tion on our film, and special thanks to the media for standing by us throughout this journey. Thirteen years ago, I witnessed an accident—had it been even ten seconds earlier or later, it wouldn't have happened. That incident planted the seed for this story. Everyone who watches the film says it feels like a reflection of their own life. The characters gradually realize that even within negativity, there is goodness. Life itself is a journey. I entered films without knowing what acting truly meant, and learned it along the way. Later, I felt compelled to direct as well. Winning the State Best Actor Award for Gentleman only increased my sense of responsibility. I am extreme-

ly happy with the output and the response to Seetha Payanam. Many are praising my daughter's performance—I passed right there myself. I'm not claiming this is a great film, but what we intended has connected with people. Niranjan delivered a wonderful performance. Prakash Raj, Sathyaraj, and Kovai Sarala are outstanding actors. Bitthiri Satti, Siri, and Charan also performed very well. The cinematographer, music director, and dialogue writer are the film's greatest strengths. Murthy and I completed this film together. Dhruva Sarja appeared in a powerful cameo. We made this film with complete honesty. I believe everyone will like it. Those who haven't watched



it yet—please do so soon. Wishing everyone a very Happy Maha Shivaratri." Aishwarya Arjun stated,

"Seetha Payanam is very special to all of us. The love we are receiving from the audience makes it even more spe-

cial. Thank you to both the audience and the media. Those who haven't watched the film yet, please go with

your family—it will definitely appeal to everyone. Anup Rubens' music is absolutely beautiful. My heartfelt thanks to my father—my director and producer—for trusting me and giving me this opportunity, and to everyone who supported me throughout this journey." Niranjan affirmed, "My sincere thanks to Telugu audiences for supporting newcomers like me. We worked extremely hard on this film. It's a perfect family watch. I'm grateful to Arjun sir for giving me such a meaningful role and film. This movie is filled with values and will connect with everyone. Working with Aishwarya was a wonderful experience. We're getting good openings everywhere,

and I hope audiences continue to support our film." Music Director Anup Rubens said, "Making a film with such a story requires immense courage. Arjun sir made this film with the sole intention of giving audiences a meaningful cinema experience. Gratitude is something everyone should carry in life. Films rooted in family emotions like this are what we truly need today. I'm glad people are appreciating the songs and background score. Aishwarya and Niranjan performed brilliantly. This is a film everyone must watch." Dialogue Writer Sai Madhav Burra avowed, "I thank Arjun sir for giving me the opportunity to write dialogues for such a meaningful film."