

26-02-2026
Total pilgrims: 62,074
Tonsures: 27,784
Hundi kanukalu: 421CR
Waiting Compartments: Outside line at Silathoranam.

www.thesouthindiatimes.com
facebook.com/thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in

thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in
@thesouthindiatimes

HUNDREDS OF FLIGHTS CANCELLED WORLDWIDE AFTER STRATEGIC AIR CORRIDORS CLOSE

New Delhi, March 1: The global aviation industry is under heavy strain after rising military tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran triggered widespread airspace closures across West Asia, disrupting flight operations around the world.



NINE PEOPLE KILLED IN MISSILE STRIKE ON ISRAEL'S BEIT SHEMESH



SAMSON SEALS INDIA'S BIGGEST WC CHASE TO MAKE SEMIS



T20 WORLD CUP

SHORT TAKES

HUNDREDS OF INDIANS STRANDED AT AIRPORTS AMID US-ISRAEL STRIKES ON IRAN



New Delhi (TSIT): As flight operations to and from West Asia remain disrupted after the US and Israel's attack on Iran, hundreds of Indians are stranded in Dubai and other key hub airports, with many of them taking to social media to appeal to the Indian government for assistance.

Amid Middle East tensions, CM Revanth seeks safety for Telugus in Gulf



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei was killed along with several other top commanders.

Hyderabad (TSIT): Amid escalating geopolitical tensions after the United States and Israel launched large-scale attacks on Iran, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed concern over the safety of Telugu people residing in Gulf countries.

In a statement on Sunday, March 1, the Chief Minister urged all Telugu-speaking people to remain vigilant and strictly follow the advisories issued by Indian diplomatic missions and local authorities.

On Saturday, February 28, a barrage of missiles hit Iran targeting hundreds of military and strategic sites, including air defence systems, missile launch facilities and bases linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Centre's goal is to develop TN, says PM inaugurating Rs.4,400 cr projects in Madurai

MADURAI (TSIT): (Mar 1) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Centre's "collective goal" was a developed India, and assured that the Centre remained fully committed to enabling inclusive development and the state's progress.

He assured that the Centre would remain fully committed to enabling inclusive development and the state's progress. Tamil Nadu, he said, has a rich history, and historic sites such as Adichanallur will be developed into global heritage destinations.



the sacred and historic city of Madurai. I bow to Meenakshi Amman and Bhagwan Sundareswarar. Today's event marks a proud chapter in Tamil Nadu's development journey.

The projects would transform connectivity, boost the

economy, create jobs and transform lakhs of people's lives, he said. He recalled that the government of India has made huge investments in Tamil Nadu's highway network and over 4,000 km of highways have been built in the State since 2014.

and it is emerging as a modern, efficient and people-centric transport system.

"This transformation is particularly visible in Tamil Nadu. The railway budget allocation for Tamil Nadu has increased nearly nine-fold since our government came in (2014), he said.

In 2026-27, it increased to Rs 7,600 crore, he said. Noting that 9 Vande Bharat trains and 9 Amrit Bharat trains benefited people of Tamil Nadu, he said their coaches were manufactured at ICF.

Highlighting that the infrastructure funding to Tamil Nadu has tripled compared to the previous decade, Modi said, "The budget of 2026 continues the trend with a strong focus on Tamil Nadu."

In this budget, the Centre has proposed Bengaluru-Chennai and Chennai-Hyderabad bullet train corridors. "They will revolutionise the economy of this whole region," he said.

PV Sindhu, Manchu Vishnu among Indians stranded at Dubai airport amid war tensions

Hyderabad (TSIT): Escalating war tensions involving Iran, Israel and the US have disrupted international travel, leaving Indian badminton star P V Sindhu, actor Manchu Vishnu and several Telugu celebrities stranded at Dubai airport.



Priority to rescue Kannadigas stranded in war-affected nations: CM Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru, Mar 1 (TSIT): With the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel causing severe disruptions in the Middle East, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday assured that the state government is taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety and rescue of Kannadigas stranded in various countries, particularly Dubai.

"We are taking the safety of Kannadigas living in Middle Eastern nations, including Israel, UAE, Iran, and Qatar, very seriously. I have instructed



ed the resident commissioner in Delhi to take all essential steps for their security," the CM stated.

Due to the suspension of flight services across the Middle East, many residents have been unable to return to the state. Siddaramaiah urged

those currently stuck in conflict zones to move to safer locations as advised by local authorities.

Helpline to be launched The chief minister further noted that he has ordered officials to set up a dedicated helpline for the affected individuals and their families. He appealed to family members in Karnataka not to panic if they are unable to establish immediate contact with their loved ones abroad.

Siddaramaiah also mentioned that former minister Nagendra had informed him about 32 individuals from Ballari currently stranded in Dubai. He confirmed that specific measures are being initiated to ensure their safety and eventual return.

Owaisi calls Khamenei's assassination 'immoral, unlawful'

Hyderabad, (TSIT): A I M I M President Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday termed the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei as an immoral and unlawful act. The Hyderabad MP, on behalf of his party, offered condolences to the Shia community, who consider Khamenei as their leader.



India's foreign policy 'completely exposed': Congress

New Delhi (TSIT): The Congress, on Sunday, launched an acerbic attack on the Union government's foreign policy in the backdrop of the tension in West Asia, claiming that the country's foreign policy has been "completely exposed".

A day after criticising the US-Israel joint strike on Iran and calling upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government to intervene citing safety of expatriates, Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secretary Communications Incharge, publicity and media, in a social media post on X, said, "The country is paying a heavy price for both the substance and the methods of Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy."



"No matter how much the Prime Minister and his coterie try to put on a show, the reality is that India's foreign policy under the leadership of the self-proclaimed 'Vishwa Guru' has been completely exposed," he wrote. He said, "The American President (Donald Trump) has been consistently maintaining his closeness with Pakistan and repeatedly praising the very individual whose inflammatory statements laid the groundwork for the terrorist attacks in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025.

PM Modi to chair urgent CCS meeting tonight amid escalating Middle East tensions



New Delhi (TSIT): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a high-level meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) upon his return to the national capital on Sunday night, government sources said.

The meeting of the Cabinet committee, the apex decision-making body on security and strategic matters of India, comes against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating geopolitical situation in the Middle East following coordinated US-Israeli airstrikes on Iran, which have intensified regional conflict and raised global security concerns.

PM Modi is expected to land in Delhi around 9:30 pm after concluding a two-day tour across several states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry. During the visit, the Prime Minister inaugurated development projects, flagged off new train services like Amrit Bharat Express trains connecting southern cities, and reviewed key infrastructure initiatives worth thousands of crores.

"The Prime Minister will chair a meeting of the CCS on returning to Delhi tonight from his two-day tour of the states. He is expected to land here at around 9:30 pm," a government source said.

The CCS, India's apex body for national security decisions, comprises the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Defence, Home, External Affairs, and Finance. The urgent convening of the CCS is widely seen as a response to the latest developments in West Asia, including US-Israel strikes on Iranian targets and subsequent retaliatory actions.

Iranian Supreme Leader killed in US-Israeli strikes, Iran launches retaliatory attacks, Middle East peace in limbo

Tehran/New Delhi (TSIT): Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a coordinated US-Israeli military strike on Tehran early Sunday, triggering Iranian retaliatory attacks on US bases in many countries, threatening destabilisation of the entire Middle East. Ali Khamenei was killed in strikes that targeted areas in northern Tehran, including locations near his compound and offices. Multiple missiles hit areas close to the presidential palace and the Supreme Leader's residence.

Some top security officials were also killed in Saturday's strikes, along with Khamenei's daughter, son-in-law and grandson. The reports, however, could not be confirmed. Iran's police intelligence chief Gholamreza Rezaian was also killed during the strikes, Iranian media reported. "General Gholamreza Rezaian, head of the national police intelligence, was killed following the enemy attacks," Iran's Fars news agency said.



The killings mark one of the most significant blows to Iran's leadership since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Photos released by the White House showed President Trump closely monitoring the strikes on Iran from his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, joined by

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and CIA Director John Ratcliffe during the tense operation. Trump, while announcing Khamenei's death on his social media platform, said "Khamenei, one of the most evil people in history, is dead. This is not only Justice for the

New supreme leader to be chosen in a day or two, says Iran's foreign minister

Israel said on Sunday it had launched another wave of attacks on Iran, as Iranians grappled with uncertainty after the killing of their supreme leader in US-Israel strikes a day earlier, while President Donald Trump warned Tehran of consequences for retaliation. Hours after the US and Israel said an air strike killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in



the military campaign to overthrow the government of the Islamic Republic, Iran's state media confirmed the 86-year-old leader had died. The Israeli military said on Sunday that he had been killed in a large-scale operation carried out by its air force. In another blow for Iran's leaders, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Abdolrahim Mousavi was killed in the strikes.

people of Iran, but for all Great Americans..." Trump also said "other leaders" had been killed along with him (Khamenei). He, however, did not name those leaders. Trump said Khamenei was unable to avoid US Intelligence and Highly Sophisticated Tracking Systems, and, working closely

with Israel, there was nothing he or the other leaders who had been killed along with him, could do. He said the US has been hearing that many of their IRGC, Military, and other Security and Police Forces no longer wanted to fight, and were looking for Immunity from the US.

PM inaugurates semiconductor plant at Sanand; says after software, India making its mark in hardware

SANAND: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated Micron Technology's semiconductor plant at Sanand in Gujarat, and said that after being known for its strength in software, the country is "firmly establishing its identity in the hardware sector too. The inauguration of the US-based company's ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging) plant -- the first such facility in the country -- reflects a deep partnership between India and the United States, he said. The message has reached the world loud and clear: India is capable, India is competitive and India is committed, Modi said. India's message for global

investors is "India is ready, India is reliable, and India delivers," and both dynamic market and global opportunities await investors in the country, the prime minister added. "India, long known for its software strength, is now firmly establishing its identity in the hardware sector as well," he said. The prime minister said the event is a testament to the strong cooperation and collaboration between India and the US, especially in the areas of AI and chip technologies where the partnership between the two countries is very important. "The world witnessed a period of industrial revolution throughout the 20th century. During that time, countries that were ahead

in factories, machines, and mass production made rapid progress. But this is the century of the AI revolution, and semiconductors are the bridge to this change. The tiny chip is the medium connecting both the industrial revolution and the AI revolution," he said. "If oil was the regulator of the last century, the microchip will be the regulator of this century. With this thought in mind, India decided to move forward rapidly in the semiconductor sector," Modi said, noting that the country announced its Semiconductor Mission at a time when the world was battling COVID. "During the pandemic, everything felt like it was falling apart, but the seeds we planted with conviction are



now growing and bearing fruits," the PM further said. India is rapidly becoming an integral part of the global semiconductor value chain, and the entire world wants to secure the supply chain of both these technologies for a better future for humanity, he said. The two largest democracies - India and the US -- are continuously striving for this, the PM stated, adding that their collective effort will also make the global supply chain of critical minerals more secure and reliable. His government has so far approved 10 projects under the Semicon India programme, and besides the Micron plant, three more projects are also going to start production very soon, he added. "The semiconduc-

tor ecosystem we are building is not limited to any one region, it is pan-India," the PM said, adding that work has started in projects located in Noida (Uttar Pradesh), Assam, Odisha and Punjab. The semiconductor ecosystem isn't just about a single factory and India is focusing on the entire value chain, said Modi. "India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 was announced in this budget. Its objective is the same: as production increases, demand for material components and services in India will also increase. This is the biggest opportunity," he said. The PM said another advantage for India is its significant manufacturing ambitions. "India has a large population that is becoming

first-time users of gadgets. Whether it is electronics, automobiles, or other technologies, demand in India is constantly growing," he said, highlighting the exponential growth of electronics production and exports in the last 11 years. As electronic component manufacturing expands, domestic demand for semiconductors will also grow, Modi said, adding that both a dynamic market and global opportunities await investors in India. The new plant will create a new ecosystem at Sanand, the prime minister said. "When a major automotive company arrived here, an entire ecosystem developed with it," he said, in apparent reference to the setting up of TATA Nano factory years ago.

AI Summit Protest: Delhi court grants bail to IYC president Chib

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court has granted bail to Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Uday Bhanu Chib, who was arrested in connection with a protest at the India AI Impact Summit. Chib was produced before the duty magistrate around 1 am on Saturday as his four-day police custody, granted by the court on February 24, came to an end. Duty Magistrate Vanshika Mehta was hearing an application by the Delhi Police seeking a seven-day extension of his custody. However, she dismissed the plea and granted him bail. Speaking to the media, Chib's counsel informed that bail was granted by the magistrate against the surety bond of Rs 50,000, and the court has also directed his client to surrender his passport and electronic gadgets. "The duty magistrate was pleased enough to grant bail to Uday Bhanu Chib and has explained in the bail order that the police crime branch has not been able to explain the reasons for seeking extension of PC remand to Uday Bhanu Chib," the IYC president's counsel said. On February 24, the court allowed four days of custody to the police to question Chib over his role in the AI Sum-



mit protest held at Bharat Mandapam here, during which IYC members took their shirts off to reveal anti-Modi and anti-Centre slogans on T-shirts beneath. The summit began on February 16 and saw packed halls and long queues throughout, as tech moguls, industry leaders, policymakers, and founders thronged the venue. The accused wore T-shirts bearing images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, with slogans against the government and the India-US trade deal. The protesters also allegedly engaged in a protracted scuffle with security personnel and police staff deployed at the venue.

9 cheetahs from Botswana get new home in MP's Kuno National Park; India's count rises to 48

SHEOPUR: Nine cheetahs airlifted from Botswana arrived at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday and were released into an enclosure, boosting India's big cat count under the reintroduction programme to 48. Union Forest Minister Bhupendra Yadav released six female and three male cheetahs into the enclosure for quarantine, Madhya Pradesh Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) L. Krishnamoorthy told PTI. The third batch of cheetahs from Africa arrived earlier in the day on an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft as part of a four-year cheetah population revival plan, officials said. Speaking to reporters, district public relations officer Avantika Shrivastava said that the animals were flown from Botswana to Gwalior on an IAF aircraft and were later transported to Kuno in IAF helicopters. The IAF has been assisting the cheetah revival programme and had earlier transported the animals from Namibia in September 2022 and from South Africa in February 2023, said Project Cheetah Director Uttam Sharma.

"The arrival of more cheetahs will strengthen the revival programme. With the support of the Central government, we aim to increase the population to 50 as soon as possible," he said. Three cheetahs have been relocated to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, while 36 remain at Kuno, Sharma said. Officials said endangered animals are generally not kept in a single habitat due to the risk of disease outbreaks that could wipe out an entire population. The cheetah, the world's fastest land animal, became extinct in India nearly seven decades ago. Last year, 12 cubs were born at Kuno, though six, including three cubs, did not survive. This year, nine cubs were born in two litters between February 7 and February 18. In all, 39 cubs have been born at Kuno since 2023, of which 27 have survived. Namibia-born Jwala and Aasha, South Africa-born Gamini, Veera and Nirva, and India-born Mukhi have all produced litters at the park.

Education shapes character, nation's future: C P Radhakrishnan at St Berchmans Centenary

KOTTAYAM: Vice-President C P Radhakrishnan on Saturday underscored the transformative power of education, asserting that it shapes the character of individuals and, in turn, the future of the nation. Addressing the valedictory function of the centenary celebrations of St Berchmans College at Changanassery, he said education plays a vital role in moulding responsible citizens from a young age, enabling them to make meaningful contributions to society and the country. "Education builds character. An educated citizen shapes society and the nation," he said, urging people to maintain an open mind and embrace continuous learning regardless of their position, social status, or economic background. Highlighting the need for research and technological advancement, the vice president said India has moved beyond the era when education merely produced clerks for colonial administration. "The time of merely adopting technologies is over. We must become creators of technology so that the world adopts what we produce," he said, expressing confidence in the country's youth-driven transformation. Referring to the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said institutions like St Berchmans College would play a crucial role in nurturing innovators, leaders, and socially responsible citizens. Describing the 100-year-old institution, founded in 1922, as more than just a campus of classrooms and corridors, he said it had served as a centre of intellectual awakening during colonial rule and had steadily contributed to nation-building over the decades. He noted that several distinguished personalities were alumni of the college, including actor Prem Nazir and former Chief Ministers Oommen



Chandy and C Achutha Menon, calling the institution's role in producing two Chief Ministers among its significant contributions to the state. Emphasising mutual respect and social harmony, Radhakrishnan said respecting the sentiments of others was essential for ensuring respect for one's own beliefs. He also stressed that living for oneself is not wrong, but living only for oneself is undesirable. Recalling his recent participation in a convocation ceremony at the University of Kashmir, he highlighted the growing participation of women in higher education, noting that a majority of gold medals at the ceremony were awarded to women. "No religion is against education," he said, describing the trend as a positive social transformation. Addressing students, he urged them to dream big, work hard, and remain rooted in values, stating that they would shape the institution's next century. On the occasion, the vice president inaugurated the Berchmans Centre for Emerging Technologies and the Dr K M Abraham Centre for Energy and Environment as part of the centenary celebrations. He also said this was his third visit to Kerala after assuming office and described it as a special one, noting that "Kerala has become Kerala," reflecting the deep cultural identity and pride of the state.

63.66 lakh names deleted, 60 lakh under adjudication in post-SIR electoral rolls in Bengal



KOLKATA: Around 63.66 lakh names, nearly 8.3 per cent of the electorate, have been deleted in West Bengal since the Special

Intensive Revision (SIR) began in November last year, bringing down the total number of voters in the state to over 7.04 crore ahead of the assembly elections due in April, EC officials said. The post-SIR rolls, released on Saturday after a 116-day exercise, also show that over 60 lakh electors have been placed in the "under adjudication" category, with their fate to be decided by judicial officers in the coming weeks, a process that could further recalibrate constituency-level equations. The draft rolls, published on December 16, had already pared down the electorate from 7.66 crore to 7.08 crore, deleting

over 58 lakh names on grounds of death, migration, duplication and untraceability. Following hearings, scrutiny and disposal of claims and objections, another 5,46,053 deletions were recorded through Form-7 applications, taking the total SIR-linked omissions to around 63.66 lakh. More than 1.82 lakh electors were added through Form-6 and Form-6A submissions, partially offsetting the deletions. Officials said the figures could still witness marginal changes as fresh inclusions and objections continue to

be processed. Earlier in the day, a senior official of the Chief Electoral Officer's office told PTI that the EC was likely to delete nearly eight lakh names over and above the 58 lakh removed in the draft rolls, taking the total SIR-linked deletions in the state to around 66 lakh. He had also said that the figures following the post-SIR publication may not be definitive, as further inclusions through Form-6 applications and fresh deletions based on Form-7 objections could alter the overall numbers.

AAIB releases preliminary report on Baramati plane crash

NEW DELHI: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) in its preliminary report on the Baramati plane crash has recommended that the aviation regulator DGCA may issue necessary directions to all operators flying VFR to uncontrolled airfields to strictly adhere to the laid-down standard operating procedures. In its 22-page preliminary report on the VSR Venture's Learjet plane crash near Baramati in January that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others, the aircraft accident probe agency AAIB also said that all aspects of the plane crash will be investigated to bring out facts, root causes and contributory factors. "In view of the interim findings brought out so far, it is considered necessary to issue following interim safety recommendations so that necessary preventive actions can be taken promptly to enhance aviation safety. "It is recommended that DGCA may issue necessary directions to all operators operating VFR flights to uncontrolled airfields to strictly adhere to the laid down standard operating procedures," the AAIB said. Further, "necessary directions may also be issued to all the aerodrome operators/organisations responsible for handling

the aerodrome services at the uncontrolled airfields to ensure that the flying operations (including Non-scheduled/Private/Charter operations) in the airfield are allowed only when the prevailing meteorological conditions are within the criteria laid down in the relevant DGCA regulations," the report said. The aircraft, a Learjet, was cleared for landing at Baramati on the morning of January 28 after a go-around due to poor visibility, but after receiving the clearance, it did not give any read-back to the ATC, and moments later, it burst into flames on the edge of the runway. "Later, the aircraft was heard transmitting 'Oh S*t... Oh S*t...' before it crash landed on the left side of the runway abeam runway 11 threshold," the report said. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four other persons on board a chartered aircraft were killed after it crashed barely 200 metres from the edge of a tabletop runway at Baramati airport. The others killed in the tragedy were Captain Sumit Kapoor, who had a flying experience of 15,000 hours, co-pilot Capt. Shambhavi Pathak with 1,500 hours of flying, Personal Security Officer (PSO) Vidip Jadhav and flight attendant Pinky Mali.

High proportion of law graduates opting for corporate jobs is worrisome: CJI

AHMEDABAD: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Saturday said if a high proportion of law graduates are opting for jobs in corporate firms instead of practising in courts, then the situation is worrisome. Addressing law graduates at the 16th convocation of the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) in Ahmedabad, he also advised the students that the classroom cannot teach what practical experience can. "As (GNLU) Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr S Shanthakumar pointed out, if 93 per cent of you have been hijacked outside the gates of this university by corporate entities, then it increases my worry. Because I presume, as a very selfish head of the Indian Judiciary, that the national law schools will produce more and more

members of the bar and the bench," the CJI said. He advised newly-graduated law students about their career as a lawyer, and explained the difference between studying law and actually practising it in a real courtroom. "From experience, I remember the early months of practice with clarity that decades have not dulled. There is a particular disorientation in discovering that the law you studied so carefully bears only a partial resemblance to the actual profession," CJI Surya Kant said. "The textbooks gave you doctrines. Your seniors now give you deadlines. In moot courts, you are co-coined by your mentor, but in real courtrooms, you argue within constraints you do not choose and may not



even agree with. This is not a failure of education. It is simply the friction between learning the map and navigating the territory," he added. The classroom cannot teach what years of practical experience can. Initial years of practice also teach you things no classroom ever could. You learn to read the mood of a bench before you have spoken even a word. You figure out how to sit with an anxious client and

say something useful before you have the answers, he said. You discover how to disagree with a senior without damaging a relationship you will need the very next week, and how to lose a case and still leave your client with the impression that the system, not indifference, hurts them. No curriculum details any of this, and only you can discover where within all of it you truly belong, he added. CJI noted that the discipline of knowing the "game" is important. Drawing an analogy from the recent T20 World Cup, he emphasized, "Some of you might be cricket followers, and if you have been catching the T20 World Cup between hearings, you may have noticed something relevant here. The teams that

succeed are not built on the assumption that every player must excel at everything. "No one expects (batsman) Suryakumar Yadav to bowl the death overs, or (bowler Jasprit) Bumrah to anchor a chase. They are trusted to do precisely what they do best, and the team is built around that clarity," he said, adding that the same principle applies to the legal profession. He, however, added that the profession rarely teaches this lesson at the beginning. "In the initial years, you are simply expected to keep up. If you observe closely, those you admire did not become distinguished by attempting everything equally," the CJI noted. Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court Sunita Agrawal was also present at the event.

Most parts of India to see above-normal heatwave days between March and May: IMD

NEW DELHI: Above-normal heatwave days are expected over most parts of the country between March and May, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its monthly forecast on Saturday. These parts include West Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, southern and eastern Maharashtra, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of north Karnataka and north Tamil Nadu. "During the March-April-

May (MAM) season, the increased likelihood of heatwave conditions may pose significant risks to public health, water resources, power demand, and essential services, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, outdoor workers, and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions," IMD DG Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said at a press conference here. During March, however, maximum temperatures are likely to be normal to below normal over many parts of the country, ex-

cept northeast and east India, and some parts of the Western Himalayan region and central and peninsular India. Meanwhile, normal minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country except some parts of northwest India, south peninsula and along east coast, where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are likely during March. "This could be because rainfall averaged over India is most likely to be normal during March 2026. The LPA of rainfall over the country during March,

based on data from 1971 to 2020, is about 29.9 mm," he said. While many parts of the country are expected to experience normal to above-normal rainfall in March, northeast India, and some parts of northwest and east-central India might witness below normal rainfall. The meteorological department has also noted that, currently, weak La Nina conditions are prevailing over the equatorial Pacific. But, in the following months, neutral El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions could

return, according to the forecasts by global models and IMD's Monsoon Mission Climate Forecast System (MCMFS). Reviewing weather conditions that prevailed during February, the IMD said that the rainfall all over India last month was the lowest since 2001. Also, no cold waves or cold days prevailed during February. "The absence of any active western disturbances and lack of their interactions/confluences with easterly (winds) are the major reasons for subdued snow/rainfall in the month," the IMD said.

Holi played with funeral pyre ashes at Varanasi's Manikarnika Ghat

VARANASI: Holi was played with funeral pyre ashes at Manikarnika Ghat here on Saturday, the second day of Rangbhari Ekadashi. Event organiser Gulshan Kapoor said that since morning, devotees had been preparing for the celebration. The auspicious sound of shehnai resonated at the ghat, which is known for cremations. Kapoor explained that due to the chaos caused by the construction work at Manikarnika Ghat, Shiva devotees were prevented from going to the ghat by heavy police force and barricades at Lalita and Scindia ghats. However, those who waited were able to offer ashes to Baba Mahashamshan Nath Ji (incarnation of Lord Shiva) after 2 pm. Kapoor also said that it is believed that on the day of Rangbhari Ekadashi, Baba Vishwanath brings Goddess Parvati to his abode in Kashi after her 'gauna' (farewell), which is celebrated by the people of Kashi as a festival and is considered the beginning of Holi.

Attack on Iran school condemnable; rescue Indians in Middle East: DCM DK Shivakumar

Bengaluru / Balehonnuru : Condemning the attack of US-Israel on an Iran school which killed over 70 children, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar today said the ongoing conflict in Middle East is not the right way to go about. Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence and later at Balehonnuru, he said, "The war in Middle East is not right. Why attack school children who are at no fault? This is condemnable. It is time to rescue Indians stuck in Dubai and other parts of Middle East."



are a lot of Indian citizens also stuck there. Moreover, there are a lot of Indians are working in Middle East and many Indian educational institutions are located there," he added. "Kannada organisations in Middle East must give confidence to the people stranded there. The people who do business with us from Dubai are worried," he added. Asked if anyone from Bengaluru is stranded, he said, "The CM and I have

given instructions to the Commissioner about this." Asked if there was any plan to open helplines, he said, "State and Centre can't have separate helplines. Ministry of External Affairs must open the helpline." Let humanity win "We need peace in the world. I pray for no casualties. Hope humanity triumphs. Gangadhar Ajjaiiah has said that world peace is possible only by universal humanity. The

US must stop the war. This war can negatively impact India," he noted. "It is not about Kannadigas or others, we are all Indians. Saudi Arabia runs on Indians. Every other family from Mangaluru or Kerala work in Middle East. More than 70 school children are dead in the US-Israel attacks. There were two main transit hubs - Middle East and Singapore- for Indians to travel abroad," he added.

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT:

K'taka activates emergency centres as airspace closures strand thousands

Bengaluru, Mar 1: The government of Karnataka has fully activated its emergency response mechanisms following significant disruptions to international flight operations caused by the prevailing conflict in the Middle East. Several nations have declared a closure of airspace (NOTAM), leaving a large number of passengers, including those from Karnataka, stranded in affected countries, particularly in the UAE. According to the latest advisory from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, airspace over Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, UAE, and Qatar remains closed until March 2. State emergency response activated On the directions of the chief minister and the revenue minister, the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) and all



District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOCs) are now functioning 24x7. These centres are monitoring the fluid situation and extending necessary assistance to stranded residents and their families. The Karnataka resident commissioner has also activated the Karnataka Bhavan team in New Delhi to maintain close coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and its

Rapid Response Cell. Guidelines for stranded Kannadigas The state government has urged people from Karnataka residing in the affected regions to strictly adhere to the guidelines and advisories issued by local governments. Stranded citizens are advised to: Contact respective Indian Embassies or Consulates through designated helpline numbers.

Register on the Sarthi Sahayata portal and other official embassy portals. Contact the nearest FRRO for any visa-related matters. Emergency Helpline Numbers The government has released comprehensive helpline details for those seeking assistance. Requests received at the state and district levels are being compiled and forwarded to the MEA for immediate action. District-specific helplines (Select Districts): Dakshina Kannada: 0824-2442590 Udupi: 0820-1077, 0820-2574802 Bengaluru Urban: 080-22967200 Uttara Kannada: 08382-229857 The situation is being continuously monitored by the relief commissioner and principal secretary, Murnish Moudgil, with further updates to be issued as necessary.

Bengaluru FC Soccer Schools kick off Match Day 2026 in Bengaluru

Bengaluru : Going to School, through an MOU with the Government of Karnataka, brings dynamic future-ready skills to school for girls in Grade 5-10 Government Schools. The Outdoor School for Girls (and boys), supported by exciting partnerships with Oracle, BT Group, The British Asian Trust and Bengaluru FC, is designed to equip her with the skills she needs to transition from grade to grade and one day soon, to make the jump from school to the future of work or sustainable enterprise start-up of her choice, in the city.



Through design-driven stories, games, football and technology, young people learn the skills they need to be able to access new green jobs and create new sustainable start-ups that solve for climate change and create green jobs. Match Day brought together 2,000 girls and boys, their teachers, 100 volunteers from partner organizations and all of our partners in dialogue with young people, from fun Q & A's on the pink and green football stage, to nine tents for coding challenges led by Oracle and BT Group volunteers, the Bengaluru FC women's team showed us all the

power of the great game, to bring us all together to play, learn and design for city-wide inclusion and change. Going to School, a creative not-for-profit trust, in partnership with the Government of Karnataka, Oracle, and British Telecom (BT) Group, the British Asian Trust and Bengaluru FC kicked off Match Day, an ecosystem celebration and collaboration for girls, boys as allies to girls, life skills, digital skills, education, sport, the city, climate change and technology. It's always a good day when we get the chance to go outside and

play, together. Taking place at the Jay Prakash Narayan Sports Ground in JP Nagar, Bengaluru, and welcomed over 2,000 girls from 18 government schools. Placing girls at the center of their story, the day featured a unique blend of sports and technology. Key partners, including Oracle, BT, Bengaluru FC, and the Government of Karnataka, were on the stage answering questions from the crowd of children in a fun Q&A session, then it was time for everyone to hit the pitch and complete the coding challenges in the nine tents and every 15 minutes

switch to play football. 36 teams of children, with embedded volunteers, moved through the playful tech and football challenges led by a DJ, two MC's and two giant leaderboards that showed which team had won that round.

Following the opening Q&A, the "Game On: Climate Change Games began". Young people participated in a dynamic rotation of challenges, mini football matches run by Bengaluru FC coaches and coding challenges led by Oracle and BT volunteers. The coding stations were hands on enabling children to build calculators using AI and designing quizzes for climate and smart city solutions.

In keeping with its theme, Match Day 2026 was a 'zero-plastic' event. A sustainable and locally sourced lunch was served on leaf plates, and climate action messaging was integrated throughout the venue.

The 'Outdoor School for Girls and Boys, which Match Day celebrates delivers sport (football) combined with digital, life, STEM, and Sustainable Entrepreneurial skills through an integrated curriculum for girls in Government schools from Grades 5-10.

Instructions to Develop 50 km of Safe Footpaths in 2 Months: Maheshwar Rao

10 KM WALKATHON IN WHITEFIELD - OVER 120 CITIZENS PARTICIPATED

Bengaluru : Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao* instructed officials to develop 50 km of safe and accessible pedestrian pathways in the Mahadevapura zone within the next two months.

Speaking after flagging off a 10 km pedestrian walk program organized from Phoenix Mall to Hope Farm under the Bengaluru East City Corporation limits, he stated that prioritizing footpath development in areas along Metro corridors would greatly benefit citizens.

He directed officials to identify and remove obstacles on footpaths, resolve road widening issues, and clear other encroachments to ensure safe pedestrian movement. He also assured that necessary funds would be provided for footpath development and instructed officials to expedite works through partnerships with corporate organizations wherever required.

Officials were instructed to carry out phased assessments of the 50 km footpath development works planned



in the Mahadevapura zone and submit progress reports. This would help in comprehensive monitoring of project implementation.

11th Walkathon: The pedestrian walk initiative under 'Project Wakaluru' began on November 1. So far, a total of 88 km of footpaths have been inspected across various areas including Shivajinagar (11 km), Koramangala (5 km), Jayanagar (5 km), Banaswadi (5 km), Thansandra (8 km), Yelahanka (10 km), and Bengaluru South. Today's walk marked the 11th event, with a target of covering 100 km in total by next month. Issues Identified During

Inspection: More than 120 citizens participated in today's walkathon. A continuous 10 km stretch of footpath along the Metro Purple Line from Phoenix Mall to Hope Farm was inspected.

The inspected 10 km stretch of footpath was found to be largely clean and conducive for smooth pedestrian movement. The inspection program was attended by Bengaluru East City Corporation Commissioner Ramesh D.S., Development Additional Commissioner Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar, citizens, and other officials.

"It Is Our Collective Duty to Coordinate With the Centre and Bring Kannadigas Home"

Haveri (Savanur): Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai urged the State government to take immediate steps to bring back Kannadigas stranded in Dubai and other Middle Eastern countries due to the impact of the ongoing conflict between the United States and Iran.



Speaking to the media in Savanur of Haveri district on Sunday, Bommai said the war between America and Iran is highly alarming and is likely to have serious repercussions on India as well. The petroleum sector would be severely affected, which in turn would impact the country's economy. The consequences of the conflict would be felt globally and stressed that the situation should be resolved through dialogue before further loss of lives occurs.

The MP noted that several Middle Eastern nations have been affected by the conflict, leaving many Indians - particularly Kannadigas - stranded in places such as Doha, Dubai, and Kuwait, where they had travelled for employ-

ment. Many passengers transiting through Dubai and Doha from Europe are also reportedly stuck. While the Government of India has already initiated several measures to ensure the safety of Indian citizens, the Karnataka government must actively coordinate with Indian embassies in Dubai and other locations to arrange temporary food and accommodation for those in distress.

Recalling how Prime Minister Narendra Modi had previously ensured the safe evacuation of Indians during conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the former CM said it is the

responsibility of the state government to ensure the safe return of Indians, especially Kannadigas.

Many stranded individuals are facing hardships without money or food. Given the large presence of Kannadigas in Dubai, the state government to work through community networks and Indian diplomatic missions to provide immediate relief and make all necessary arrangements to bring them safely back home.

"Joining hands with the Government of India to bring Kannadigas and all Indians back to the motherland is our collective duty," he noted.

Provide special grant to Hosaneeralagi Government School: MP Basavaraj Bommai

Haveri : Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai urged the state government to sanction a special grant to the government school at Hosaneeralagi, which is celebrating its Amrit Mahotsav.



He was speaking after releasing a commemorative souvenir at the Amrit Mahotsav celebration of the Government Upgraded Senior Primary School in Hosaneeralagi village of Savanur taluk in Haveri district on Sunday.

Bommai described Hosaneeralagi as a beautiful village where people of all communities live in harmony and appreciated the unity shown in organizing the celebration. He had participated in several programmes in the village over the years, including temple events, school functions, and road inauguration ceremonies. "This is a village that has given me immense love and trust," he remarked.

The former CM said it was a matter of great joy that the school was celebrating 75 years of service. On this occasion, he

appealed to the state government to provide special financial assistance to the institution.

He also assured that Rs.10 lakh would be sanctioned from the MP Local Area Development Fund of Union Minister and local MP Pralhad Joshi.

On the occasion, Sri Shivananda Shivacharya Mahaswamiji of Shaneshwara Math, Ranebennur, graced the event. Minister Satish Jarakiholi, MLA Yaseer Ahmed Khan Pathan, HESCOM Chairman Syed Ajjampur S. Khadri, Border Area Development Authority Chairman Somanna Bevinamarad, SDMC President Dhariyappagouda Patil, leader Gangadhar Banad and several other dignitaries were present.

95% Waste Segregation Achievement in Rajajinagar Assembly Constituency: Kareegowda

Bengaluru : Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd. (BSWML) CEO Kareegowda appealed, Waste segregation in the Rajajinagar Assembly Constituency has currently reached 95%, and citizens must continue to cooperate with the authorities to achieve further progress. In recognition of the remarkable achievement in waste segregation in the Rajajinagar Assembly Constituency under the Bengaluru West City Corporation limits, Hon'ble MLA Suresh Kumar congratulated the officials and later addressed them after sharing refreshments and tea. He stated that the 95% achievement was possible only due to citizens' cooperation and requested the public to mandatorily segregate wet and dry waste at source to achieve even greater progress in the coming days. The Rajajinagar area includes 7 wards, where initially only 61% waste segregation was being achieved. At present, for waste management, 14 compactors, 137 auto-tippers, 274 drivers/helpers, and 347 pourakarmikas have been deployed. Systematic Waste Collection Process: Every day between 5:30 AM and 6:30 AM, auto-tippers record attendance at



the mustering point through RFID and proceed to roadside garbage dumping locations (black spots) to collect mixed waste. The mixed waste is then segregated into wet and dry categories and handed over to compactors.

After this, door-to-door waste collection is carried out until 10:30 AM. Following household collection, black spots are re-inspected, and any garbage dumped is immediately cleared. Pourakarmikas mark attendance at 6:30 AM and begin cleaning activities on ward roads covering a stretch every 750 meters. After 10:30 AM, mass cleaning drives are conducted on major roads. Plastic waste is collected separately.

During door-to-door waste collection, marshals and link workers are also present. If citi-

zens fail to segregate wet and dry waste, segregation is done on the spot. Repeated offenders who continue to give mixed waste are fined between Rs.200 and Rs.500.

Awareness Programs: Awareness campaigns on wet and dry waste segregation have been conducted across Rajajinagar through rallies, loudspeaker announcements, and Swachh Survekshan initiatives in schools, colleges, parks, and religious centers.

"All officers and staff of BSWML deserve congratulations. By working as a team and creating awareness among citizens, an extraordinary achievement in waste segregation has been accomplished in Rajajinagar Assembly Constituency. Securing the first position in the GBA jurisdiction is a matter of pride.

EDITORIAL

Insider' Info? Why US-Israel Couldn't Have Struck Khamenei Without Help

The assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, who had been Iran's spiritual and overarching leader since 1989, by a coordinated day-time raid conducted jointly by the United States and Israel, has pushed the Shia seat of power into a timeline of the unknown. In a departure from the air strikes of last year, which actively did not target the Ayatollah, today the American-led narrative was clear: that of regime change.

The removal of Khamenei is a tectonic shift in the region. Iran since 1979 had solidified its role as a pole of power, ideology, and identity. During its monarchic era, specially under Reza Shah Pahlvi, it was pro-West and had strategic relations with Israel, which were severed following the Islamic Revolution. Since then, the centrality of the Ayatollah in taking Iran down the path of having a vehemently anti-US and anti-Israel stance has been core to the theocracy's very identity.

Those Working From Within

Over the past years, the question of who replaces Khamenei, who was 86 and ailing, was a contested one. Even when Ayatollah Khomeini, who was popular as he took over the state coming out of his exile in France, died, his selection for his successor was unexpected. There were others, more senior, and those closer to Khomeini, who were looked past to allow a youngish, 50-year old cleric to take charge of one of the Middle East's largest states, and one that was going to build its capacities that would end up building a level of consensus between Arab powers and Israel, most in the former who did not have political relations with the latter.

What, or who, will be Khamenei's replacement is an open-ended question right now. However, Iran also has bigger issues to deal with in the interim. The only way actionable intelligence would reach Israel and the US on Khamenei's whereabouts, movements, and schedules, is if the calls were coming from inside the house itself. Following 2025, the Iranian government ran an extensive programme across its political and military ranks to weed out those who were helping provide intelligence to the enemy. Reports suggested that hundreds were taken out of their ranks, often without trial, and were made an example of - via imprisonment or being sent to death - to instil fear. The fact that the Ayatollah was killed in his own office shows that those working against the Islamic Republic from within remain prominent. Only a few days prior, America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) posted multiple videos online in Farsi, asking Iranians to contact them with intel and information in exchange for dividends.

Iran, oddly today, stands at a poetic juncture where two roads stare at it: one it has been taking since 1979, and one which is yet to be taken. It remains unlikely that an inward collapse of the Islamic Republic will take place purely due to Khamenei's death. The US is demanding capitulation of not the Ayatollah, but the system in place, defanging much beyond the nuclear programme.

How Will Iran Respond?

As a response, beyond regime sustainability, Iran is also facing a stark crisis of an ability to respond. Tehran over the past months seemed to have realised that while it does indeed have a large stockpile of missiles, their technological prowess, which is needed to target Israel around a thousand kilometres away, is severely restrained. So, to cause maximum regional concern over the trajectory of the conflict, it has lobbed drones and missiles, seemingly in a restrained manner, towards Gulf capitals such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Manama, Doha and Kuwait City. The hope here would be to push a regional crisis, and at this stage, pull the US even further into an entrenched and protracted war, something Trump is averse to.

Who Gets The 'Peace Prize' Now, Mr Trump - The Drones Or The Bombers?

First it was Maduro. In complete disregard of international law, the US forces attacked the presidential palace in Caracas and kidnapped the president. And now, Iran's Supreme Leader, Khamenei. They bombed his house and killed him. This is the modern reality, and this is how America has become what it is under Trump. It's dagagiri of the highest order, with no accountability. The entire West Asian region has been pushed into a level of chaos it has not seen in decades. Airports are scenes of panic, port cities are on edge, American bases are on high alert and vulnerable to Iranian retaliation. And hundreds of thousands of Indian workers, who send billions of dollars in remittances back home, are stranded in a war that is not theirs. To add to the chaos, insurance premiums are rising, shipping lanes are under threat, oil markets are nervous and every government is drawing up evacuation plans. It's Iraq 2003 All Over Again! The Trump administration has made clear that a nuclear deal was never the endgame; removing the Islamic Republic was. It is safe to assume that the strikes are designed not to bring Iran to the negotiating table but to create the conditions for internal collapse, economic devastation, political fracturing and popular revolt. It is Iraq 2003 all over again, except this time, the target is far larger, more capable and busily engaged in retaliation. The assumption in Washington seems to be that sufficient military pressure will either trigger a coup or embolden opposition movements to finish what sanctions and isolation could not. It is quite possible, especially if the supreme leader's death is confirmed. History suggests otherwise. But then, history has rarely constrained American ambitions in the region. What makes this especially reckless is that Washington appears to have no coherent plan for what comes after. Regime change is the goal, but the options beyond that are dangerously thin. Will the United States occupy Iran? Partition it? Install a client government and hope it holds? Support exiled opposition groups with no domestic legitimacy? Every one of these paths has failed elsewhere, particularly in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya. And yet, the same playbook is being deployed again. The real objective may not be stability at all, but prolonged chaos



that ensures no regional power can challenge Israeli or American dominance. If that is the strategy, then the human cost is not a failure of planning; it is the plan. What Does Trump Want, Anyway? The most disturbing question is no longer why President Trump chose to fight. It is why the United States and Israel chose to strike at the precise moment Omani mediators said the Geneva talks were making real progress. Wars are launched for a reason. Any military general will testify that wars have to have an objective. They cannot be fought on the basis of the whims and fancies of a Maverik leader. If negotiations were moving forward, then stopping a nuclear programme overnight was not the real objective. Washington has for weeks, if not months, spoken openly about regime change in Tehran. Israel sees a once-in-a-generation chance to eliminate its last serious regional rival while it is strategically and economically

weakened. Strip away the language of security and the convergence is straightforward. The US is reasserting its global hegemony, with the message that it still decides which governments survive, while Israel is seeking undisputed military supremacy in West Asia. This is unipolarity by force. The world was not consulted. The UN was not convened. Allies were reportedly informed, not asked. The script is familiar. First the threat is constructed in the Western media. Then war is framed as a moral necessity. Dialogue is discarded just when it begins to show results. From Iraq's imaginary weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to Libya's 'humanitarian intervention' and now to Iran's collapsing negotiations, the narrative remains unchanged. The Trump Pattern What makes this moment more dangerous is that it fits into a pattern. The attempted suffocation of Venezuela through sanctions and

political delegitimation, followed by an attack and arrest of its president. The extraordinary treatment of its elected leadership as if sovereignty were negotiable. The open talk of taking over Cuba. The repeated insistence that Greenland could be acquired like a commercial asset. These are not stray incidents. They reflect a worldview in which power, not international law, defines legitimacy and where geography itself is seen as negotiable if it serves strategic interests. The contradiction in Washington is, therefore, stark. A president who returned to the White House on the promise of ending 'Forever Wars' now presides over the largest American military build-up in the region since the infamous Iraq war. The US foreign policy once again risks becoming a tool of domestic electoral calculation. If this escalation is linked to midterm positioning, then the lesson of the last three decades is being repeated: that war abroad is necessary to manage politics at home. Trump's West Asia war is a declaration that American power - unilateral, coercive and willing to bypass institutions - remains the organising principle of the global order. All the talk of BRICS (of which Iran is a full member), of alternative financial systems, of Global South solidarity collapses when one man in Washington decides that a government must fall or a region must be reshaped. There is also a harder material reality behind this return of force: energy and currency. The Gulf remains the heart of the global oil system. The dollar remains the currency in which that oil is traded. Any geopolitical shift that threatens to move energy trade outside the dollar system is, by definition, a challenge to American power. Seen through that lens, this war is not only about Iran. It is about control over the economic architecture that underpins American primacy. For the Gulf states, the crisis is existential. They host American bases as their security umbrella, yet those very bases now make them targets for Iranian retaliation. Their sovereignty seems to be dependent on decisions taken elsewhere. Their prosperity, built on stability and trade, is now hostage to a conflict they did not choose. India Isn't Immune For India and the wider Asian economies, the consequences of the ongoing war are immediate and tangible. Energy security, remit-

Khamenei's Martyrdom: The Final Journey of a True Friend of India



PRIYANKA SAURABH

The official announcement by Iranian state media shook the world—Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was martyred in a US-Israeli airstrike in Tehran on February 28, 2026. The social media post proved true—"Khamenei's passing marks the end of an era. India has lost a true friend." Humble tributes to Khamenei. Under his leadership, Iran supported us against Pakistan, voted in India's favor at the United Nations on the Kashmir issue, provided security in the energy sector, and made available cheap oil. Today, Iran is plunged into crisis. India must clarify its position. The global dictator, America, must be stopped—after Venezuela, Iran, who will be next? India-Iran relations have ancient roots. From the Indus Valley Civilization and the trade of the Persian Empire to today's Chabahar port—this friendship is a testament to history. The Non-Aligned Movement formalized it in the 1950s. The 1979 Islamic Revolution brought ups and downs, but Khamenei's leadership since 1989 has brought stability. His stance on Kashmir remained unwavering. In the 1971, 1994, and 2017 UN elections, Iran rejected Pakistan's propaganda and supported India. When most Muslim countries sided with Pakistan, Iran said Kashmir was India's internal matter. This was a diplomatic victory. Iran's support against Pakistan was evident. Iran sent a strong message to Pakistan in the Balochistan border disputes. India received support against the

Taliban in Afghanistan. The Chabahar port became a symbol of this. This \$500 million project, initiated by Prime Minister Modi in 2016, challenges Pakistan's Gwadar and opens alternative routes to Central Asia and Afghanistan. India invested \$370 million by 2024. In 2025, it was linked to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. Khamenei personally supported it. Energy cooperation was also historic. Between 2005 and 2015, Iran supplied 25 percent of India's crude oil, 20 percent cheaper than the market rate. Despite US sanctions, India saved \$12 billion through informal rupee-oil trade. Bilateral trade reached \$2.5 billion in 2023. Iran purchased rice, tea, medicines, and engineering goods from India. Khamenei had said, "India is our cultural brother." Iran's current crisis is profound. US sanctions have devastated the economy—inflation has reached 45 percent, unemployment 15 percent, and GDP has shrunk by 12 percent. The 2015 nuclear deal, the JCPOA, has failed, and Israeli cyberattacks and airstrikes have increased. Support for Houthi rebels has disrupted shipping in the Red Sea, harming global trade. Internally, the Mahsa Amini movement (2022) has sparked women's anger. Khamenei's martyrdom has sparked a succession war. The Expert Council will form a three-member provisional council. Possible successors are Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf or the head of the IRGC. But the threat of a military coup looms. US President Trump called it "Judgment Day." Israel celebrated. This is a unilateral dictatorship. Venezuela's oil crisis, Syria's destruction—now Iran. Is Yemen or North Korea the next target? India adopted a balanced policy. Full membership for Iran in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), partnership with the US in the Quad. A \$2.5 billion defense deal with Israel—drones and missiles. But Iran was never abandoned. The 2025 BRICS summit agreed on de-dollarization and energy cooperation. The Ministry of External Affairs spoke of keeping an eye on "regional

stability." The Chabahar project continues. But the social media question was justified—"Modi ji, say something about the dictatorship of America and Israel. You are not a world leader but a gurgughantal." The Modi government's silence led to criticism. The G20 (2023) slogan "One Earth, One Family" was given, but it remained silent on the Iran crisis. Abu Dhabi supported the Abraham Accords, but Iran was isolated. Is this balance or cowardice? What steps should India take? First, prioritize Chabahar. Additional investment of \$500 million, rail and road access to Afghanistan. Second, immediate contact with the new Iranian leadership. Send a high-level delegation to the condolence meeting. Third, strengthen energy security. Continue 2 million barrels per day from Russia, and restore 1 million from Iran. Fourth, active engagement on multilateral platforms. BRICS and SCO oppose US sanctions. Fifth, regional peace initiative. Host an Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan trilateral dialogue. India's diplomacy has been tested—purchasing oil during the Russia-Ukraine war, blocking China in Ladakh, and Qatar acting as a mediator. Repeat this in Iran. Haryana's importance—the state's green energy policy should receive cheap Iranian oil. Gurugram IT exports should go to Central Asia via Chabahar. Rohtak-Karnal farmers should double their rice exports. BJP MLA Nayab Singh Saini emphasized regional stability. Conclusion (about 100 words) Today is not a moment of mere grief or reaction, but of prudent decision-making. The instability in West Asia teaches us that the use of force does not suppress ideas, but rather intensifies them. India needs to rise above emotions and pressures and adopt a clear and balanced stance in support of its long-term interests, regional peace, and international law. Dialogue, multilateral cooperation, and sustained energy trade are India's strategic strengths. Becoming a world leader does not mean neutral silence, but leading with justice, stability, and self-respect in times of crisis. "

How Is A Supreme Leader Chosen, Who Will Succeed Khamenei

Iran has appointed senior cleric Alireza Arafai as the jurist member of a temporary Leadership Council following the reported death of its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in joint US-Israeli air strikes, according to state media. The ISNA news agency reported that the appointment took place on Sunday, placing Arafai alongside President Masoud Pezeshkian and Chief Justice Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei on an interim body tasked with exercising the supreme leader's authority until a permanent successor is chosen by the 'Assembly of Experts'. The transition marks the most consequential moment for the Islamic Republic since 1989, when Khamenei himself rose to power after the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Iran has appointed senior cleric Alireza Arafai as the jurist member of a temporary Leadership Council following the reported death of its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in joint US-Israeli air strikes, according to state media. The ISNA news agency reported that the appointment took place on Sunday, placing Arafai alongside President Masoud Pezeshkian and Chief Justice Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei on an interim body tasked with exercising the supreme leader's authority until a permanent successor is chosen by the 'Assembly of Experts'. The transition marks the most consequential moment for



the Islamic Republic since 1989, when Khamenei himself rose to power after the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Advertisement - Scroll to continue Khamenei, who ruled for 36 years, built Iran into a powerful anti-United States force, projecting military influence across the Middle East while suppressing repeated domestic unrest with force. Iranian state media said he was killed on Saturday, aged 86, when Israeli and American strikes destroyed his central Tehran compound after decades of failed diplomatic efforts to resolve disputes over Iran's nuclear programme. The announcement was repeated several times by state outlets, emphasising the immediate formation of the interim leadership structure. Immediate Transition: The Leadership Council Iran's

constitution provides for continuity if the supreme leader dies or becomes incapacitated. Authority temporarily transfers to a three-member council consisting of the President, the head of the judiciary and a clerical jurist chosen by the Guardian Council. Alireza Arafai's appointment as a jurist member does not mean he will become the next supreme leader. According to Professor Simon Mabon of Lancaster University, the council exists only to manage affairs until a successor is formally selected. "What they (Assembly of Experts) are doing is they are creating a leadership council to run until it formally names a successor to Khamenei. And so Arafai has been appointed as a jurist to that leadership council to offer some sort of theological guidance," Professor

Mabon told NDTV. It is possible he could emerge as a candidate later, but there is no automatic path from interim council member to supreme leadership. Importantly, being an Ayatollah does not mean someone is eligible or likely to become the supreme leader. Many clerics hold the title without occupying political authority. "I think it is just important to make the distinction. You can be an ayatollah and not be the supreme leader, the threshold for theological, moral and political skill sets. So just because you are an ayatollah, it does not mean you are a supreme leader. You can be an ayatollah and just be a religious cleric," Professor Mabon told NDTV. A System Prepared For Succession Analysts believe Iran had already been preparing for a leadership transition, partly because of Khamenei's declining health. Professor Mabon says that Tehran learned from previous crises, including the "12-day war" last June, when senior military figures were killed. Iran subsequently developed contingency plans to ensure continuity even in the event of leadership decapitation. "Iran has learned a lot from the 12-day war last June. It has put a lot of planning in place. It has worked hard to ensure that in the event of these decapitation strategies working, as they did in the 12-day war last June, it would be able to operate and to respond. And I think we are seeing that now," Professor Mabon told .

Why is WhatsApp's privacy policy facing a legal challenge in India?

A landmark legal battle over privacy, data control and the business model of big tech is playing out in India as WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy faces close scrutiny from the country's top court. At stake is not just WhatsApp's policy, but broader questions over privacy rights, consumer choice and regulation of dominant online platforms. WhatsApp is India's most popular messaging app. A few days ago, WhatsApp told the Supreme Court it would comply by 16 March with an order requiring it to give Indian users greater control over how their data is shared with its parent company, Meta. In an affidavit, seen by the BBC, the messaging platform added that users could continue using the app even if they opted out of sharing data with Meta for advertising. The move comes days after the court criticised WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, warning that it would not allow WhatsApp or Meta to "play with" Indians' right to privacy or "make a mockery" of the Constitution, which guarantees privacy as a fundamental right. The remarks were made during open court hearings on WhatsApp's January 2021 policy update, which required users to share data with Meta companies to keep



using the app - a "take it or leave it" approach that India's competition watchdog, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), said left users with "no real choice". The update drew criticism from users who said they felt compelled to accept terms they were uncomfortable with, noting it differed from the 2016 policy, which had allowed existing users to opt out of sharing data with Meta for advertising. The policy has also been criticised by digital rights activists as invasive and a violation of user autonomy, while others argue that leveraging a platform's popularity for advertising is common practice in the

internet age. WhatsApp is ubiquitous in India with about 853 million users, according to World Population Review. Rivals such as Signal, Telegram and homegrown platforms like Koo exist, but none match in popularity. Given its vast reach, WhatsApp and its parent company are among the global tech firms closely watched by India's federal government which has, in recent years, tightened digital regulations and pushed platforms for greater accountability. A legal battle over WhatsApp's privacy policy began in March 2021 when the CCI ordered an investigation, alleging that Meta was engag-

ing in "exploitative and exclusionary conduct". It said forcing users to share data with Meta companies allowed the firm to leverage WhatsApp's dominance in India to deny advertising access to rivals. In November 2024, the CCI fined Meta \$25m for "abusing its dominant position" and ordered it and WhatsApp to implement behavioural remedies within three months. It barred WhatsApp from sharing user data with Meta entities for five years and directed the company to clearly specify the purposes of data sharing in its privacy policy. WhatsApp and Meta challenged the order before a company law tribunal, which

upheld the penalty but stayed the five-year data-sharing ban. In January 2026, the firms moved the Supreme Court to contest the fine. While hearing the case earlier this month, the Supreme Court criticised WhatsApp's "take it or leave it policy", saying that it was a way of "committing theft of private information". The court also voiced concern over personal communications being used for targeted advertising and directed WhatsApp to establish a consent-based framework for data sharing. In an affidavit to the Supreme Court, WhatsApp reiterated that personal messages are protected by end-to-end encryption and said it would implement the CCI's data-sharing remedies, which aim to give users greater control over their data. The app said it would notify users to allow them to opt out of data sharing and enable them to review or modify their choices through a prominent tab in the app's settings. "Sharing of user data collected on WhatsApp with other Meta companies or Meta company products for purposes other than for providing WhatsApp services shall not be made a condition for users to access WhatsApp service in India," the affidavit said.

Apollo Hospitals Vice Chairperson Upasana Kamineni Konidela Inaugurates 1000th Apollo Pharmacy Store in Telangana



Hyderabad, 28th February 2026: On 28th February, Upasana Kamineni Konidela, Vice Chairperson - CSR, Apollo Hospitals, inaugurated the 1000th Apollo Pharmacy store in Telangana, marking a significant milestone in Apollo's continued effort to expand access to quality healthcare. India's largest and most trusted pharmacy network now operates across all 33 districts of Telangana and employs more than 10,000 people across its retail, digital and supply chain ecosystem. 1,000 stores in Telangana Presence in all 33 districts 50,000+ medicines and wellness products 1.65 lakh daily medicine orders

10,000+ employees 25 lakh Apollo 24/7 users 200+ new stores planned over next three years The network provides access to over 50,000 genuine medicines and wellness essentials round the clock, with quick delivery facilities available across all districts, strengthening essential healthcare access across urban and semi-urban communities. Apollo currently services more than 1.65 lakh medicine orders daily and plans to add over 200 new pharmacy stores in Telangana over the next three years. Expressing her thoughts on the milestone, Upasana Kamineni Konidela said, "This milestone is not only about

expanding access to quality healthcare, but also about creating meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities especially for women across Telangana. As we grow, we are committed to building inclusive workplaces that empower women with stable careers, leadership opportunities, and financial independence, enabling them to uplift their families and communities." Through its omni-channel platform, Apollo 24/7, Apollo offers an integrated continuum of care including teleconsultations with Apollo doctors, diagnostic services, and customised insurance solutions all accessible from the comfort of home.

RAMADAN ENERGY GUIDE: STAYING ACTIVE THROUGH THE FAST

The holy month of Ramadan is a time of spirituality, reflection, and community. Fasting from dawn until dusk for 30 days can feel physically demanding, especially for mothers, college students, and professionals balancing daily responsibilities. The key to maintaining steady energy throughout the day is a thoughtfully planned Sehri. The focus at Sehri should be on balanced, slow-releasing foods that help sustain energy and prevent fatigue. Nutrient-dense options help provide steady fuel and prolonged satiety. On the other hand, starting the day with fried or overly sweet foods can lead to a rapid spike and drop in energy, often leaving one feeling tired and dehydrated as the day progresses. Making mindful, nutritious choices at Sehri can make the fasting experience more comfortable and energised. Here are five foods to include for sustained energy through the day:



California Almonds
Almonds are loaded with Vitamin B2, Vitamin E, magnesium, and phosphorus, which contribute to energy release from foods. They provide a healthy source of energy that helps you stay active. Incorporating California Almonds into your Sehri, whether soaked overnight or mixed into smoothies, can help maintain consistent energy levels during extended fasting periods.

A bowl of oats prepared with milk or plant-based alternatives provides complex carbohydrates and fibre. This promotes a slow release of energy, helping you feel full longer and preventing afternoon fatigue.

and support for muscle health.

Greek yoghurt with seeds
Greek yoghurt is abundant in protein and probiotics. By adding chia or flaxseeds, you enhance the fibre and healthy fats, which support digestion and an active body all day.

Bananas
Bananas are rich in natural sugars, potassium, and fibre, providing rapid yet balanced energy and assisting in maintaining electrolyte levels during fasting. A balanced Sehri that combines complex carbohydrates, high-quality protein, healthy fats, and essential micronutrients can significantly enhance the fasting experience. By choosing nutrient-rich foods such as California Almonds, eggs, oats, and bananas alongside wholesome staples, you can support sustained energy, remain active through the day, and stay well nourished throughout Ramadan.

Vedantu Delivers Standout JEE Main 2026 Results in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana with 118 Students Scoring Above 90 Percentile

Students from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana recorded impressive performances in JEE Main 2026 Session 1, with 118 Vedantu students scoring above 90 percentile, marking a significant milestone for the region. Among the top achievers from Andhra Pradesh & Telangana is Sahil B, who secured an impressive 99.72 percentile. Close behind are Bhaskarabatta Sai Aditya with 99.51 percentile and DM Ashwath with 99.34 percentile, adding to a strong list of high scorers from the region. Overall, 3 Vedantu students from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana scored above 99.5 percentile, while 10 crossed the 99 percentile mark, reflecting consistent performance across top percentile brackets. Growing Academic Momentum in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Vedantu currently operates 17 Learning Centres across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and these cen-



tres are now in their second full academic cycle. Over the past year, they have continued to strengthen their academic outcomes in national-level competitive examinations. Powering these centres is Ved, Vedantu's AI-powered personal learning system that strengthens personal attention across every classroom. Through Smart

Clickers, student responses in class are tracked in real time, enabling teachers to identify learning gaps instantly. Beyond classroom hours, students use Ved AI for personalised academic guidance and InstaSolve for 24x7 doubt resolution by simply typing or uploading a question. The system then recommends focused videos,

notes, and quizzes to reinforce understanding. "Seeing our students from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana perform at this level in JEE Main Session 1 is both inspiring and energising," said Anand Prakash, Co-founder & Head of Academics, Vedantu. "Behind every percentile is a story of persistence and discipline. These results reflect the strength of our integrated model of technology, teaching excellence, and personalised academic support." Congratulating the students and teachers across the region, Vamsi Krishna, Co-founder & CEO, Vedantu, added: "These outcomes reflect confidence built over years and potential unlocked through the right mentorship. With 17 Learning Centres across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and continued expansion planned, we remain committed to scaling personalised learning access across the region and across India."

Gold, Silver set for fiery start as Middle East tensions rise

New Delhi: Precious metal prices are likely to see a fiery start to the week when trading resumes on Monday, March 2, as investors would rush for safe-haven assets amid global uncertainties following the escalating Middle East tension, analysts said. President Donald Trump announced "major combat operations" in Iran after Israeli strikes on Tehran. Iranian state media confirmed the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday, February 28, triggering retaliations from Iran against US military installations and Israeli targets across the region. Analysts said the extent of the impact on domestic silver and gold prices will depend on how long the conflict persists, as global investors recalibrate risk exposure amid fears of a prolonged instability in the Middle East. Besides, they added that the geopolitical situation, macroeconomic data announcements (including



manufacturing/services PMI from across regions), and US retail sales and non-farm payroll and employment data toward the end of the week will be factors. "Gold and silver prices are set to remain highly volatile with gap-up on the opening session on Monday as the Middle East conflict involving renewed US and Israeli military action against Iran - continues to dominate global risk sentiment," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. He said escalating hostilities and diminishing hopes of a quick diplomatic

resolution are driving investors toward traditional safe-haven assets like gold and silver, and widely expecting a gap-up opening for bullion markets. "As global equities and risk assets come under pressure, capital tends to shift into precious metals, which act as a hedge against uncertainty," Trivedi added. The domestic commodities market will remain closed on Tuesday due to Holi. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, silver futures for the March contract surged Rs 22,054 or 8.72 per cent, while gold for April contract rose Rs 5,228, or 3.33 per cent.

String Metaverse Appoints Mr. Sai Kotha Venkata Former Capital One Technology Leader as Technical Advisor to String Metaverse Ltd, Unveils Global AI Agent Infrastructure Initiative

Hyderabad 2026: String Metaverse Ltd. (BSE: META), a blockchain infrastructure and artificial intelligence-driven financial technology company, announced the appointment of former Capital One technology leader Mr. Sai Kotha Venkata as Technical Advisor, alongside the launch of a global initiative to deploy autonomous artificial intelligence agents across financial markets, payments, and enterprise operations. The company said Mr. Sai Kotha Venkata, who has approximately 19 years of experience managing large-scale, mission-critical systems serving millions of users, will advise on technology architecture, AI deployment strategy, and enterprise-scale infrastructure as String Metaverse expands its AI-native financial platform. The announcement comes as financial institutions and technology firms accelerate investments in autonomous systems capable



of executing complex workflows, trading strategies, and payment transactions with minimal human intervention. String Metaverse also disclosed plans to establish a Singapore-based technology entity to develop and operate what it describes as an "Agentic Workforce Platform," intended to deploy thousands of specialized AI agents globally. The Singapore entity will be led

by Mr. Krishna Mohan Meenavalli, Executive Director of the company who holds a Master's degree in Finance and has experience in high-frequency trading platforms and capital markets technology. Mr. Krishna Mohan Meenavalli will oversee global deployment of the agent infrastructure in collaboration with Mr. Sai Kotha Venkata. The initiative is expected to focus on

multiple areas, including: Tokenization of real-world assets AI-driven risk management and financial intelligence systems High-frequency trading and market-making technologies Capital-efficient automated financial strategies Agent-to-agent commerce and micropayment infrastructure powered by stablecoins Autonomous enterprise operations The company said its Canada-

based fintech platform, "String Payx" will play a central role in enabling global agentic payment rails and programmable transactions between autonomous systems. String Metaverse expects the Singapore entity to operate with the following proposed ownership structure: String Metaverse Ltd. - 25% UM Family Trust - 45% Sai Kothavenkata - 25% Key Personnel Pool - 5% The expansion reflects a broader industry shift toward AI-driven automation across financial services, where firms are seeking to reduce operational costs and improve capital efficiency through machine-executed decision systems. String Metaverse operates across Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, India, Singapore, and Canada, with activities spanning blockchain infrastructure, trading technology, tokenization platforms, and programmable finance networks.

Iran names interim leaders as Israeli rescuers says nine killed in missile attack



The death toll from the Beit Shemesh strike has now risen to nine, according to a spokesperson from the Magen David Adom (MDA) medical emergency service. Additional MDA teams are providing medical treatment and evacuating 28 injured to hospitals in Jerusalem and to Shamir Medical Center, including two in a serious condition, two in a moderate condition, and 24 in a "light" condition, the spokesperson says. MDA paramedic Dror Eini adds: "We saw destroyed homes, flames and smoke rising from residential buildings, wrecked cars, and significant chaos at the scene. I saw three casualties lying on the ground with no signs of life and had to pronounce them dead at the scene. Later, additional MDA paramedics pronounced six more victims dead. In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera, external, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

says that, following the death of Khamenei, a new supreme leader may be selected in "a day or two". It comes after Tehran announced an interim leadership who Araghchi says "will act as in charge of the leadership before a new leader is elected". He adds that Iran's strikes are "an act of self-defence and retaliation to the American aggression against us". Iran President Masoud

Pezeshkian just appeared on state TV in what appears to be a recorded video message. He expresses his condolences over the death of Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and says that the interim leadership council has started its work. According to Iranian state media, Pezeshkian is himself part of the three-man interim committee that has stepped in to avoid a vacuum while

recent onslaught would "not disrupt the resolve of the government of the Islamic republic to carry out its duties and responsibilities". He also said that the "sorrow" from the death of Iran's supreme leader would "remain in the minds of people" for a "long time". The UAE Ministry of Defense (MoD) says three people have been killed by Iranian attacks since yesterday. In a statement, the ministry says it has dealt with 167 missiles and 541 Iranian drones so far. Of those drones, 35 fell within the country's territory, resulting in three deaths and 58 minor injuries as well as "material damage". The ministry says it remains on high alert and is ready to respond to any threats. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC) says in a statement that they have attacked USS Abraham Lincoln with four ballistic missiles, according to Iranian state media. USS

Abraham Lincoln is the fifth Nimitz-class aircraft carrier in the United States Navy. Lincoln includes the latest F-35 stealth jets, capable of evading enemy radar. The strike group also has three destroyers loaded with Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles, and is normally accompanied by a nuclear-powered submarine, which fires the same weapon. Emergency and rescue services are here in Beit Shemesh, where an Iranian missile hit a residential neighbourhood, killing at least eight people, according to medical services. Officials say a building where people were sheltering was hit and collapsed. A search operation is under way for people feared to be under the rubble. There are piles of broken concrete and twisted metal, and a huge crater which indicates the point of impact. Cars that were parked nearby were completely destroyed.

Wellness peptide craze: Why people are injecting drugs 'not for human consumption'



Katie carefully takes a syringe out of its packet. She pricks the top of a small jar of blue liquid and pulls up the plunger. She turns and jabs the needle into her bum cheek and gives the camera a big thumbs up, looking pleased. Katie's been injecting GHK-Cu, a copper peptide, for several weeks now and she's confident it's making a difference to her skin. So much so, she says, the stretch marks she developed after having her two children have almost disappeared. The only disconcerting thing? It clearly says "for research purposes only" on the label wrapped around the jar. This peptide is not suitable for human consumption.

Like the growing number of others on social media who film themselves injecting unregulated peptides, Katie is seemingly unfazed by the warning. She believes it's safe. Peptides are short chains of amino acids, or small proteins, which our bodies naturally produce. They act as messengers, telling our cells what to do, and play vital roles in our skin health, immune system and helping to control our hormones. "I've done a lot of research into them, and I am exercising caution," says Katie. "I started super small," she continues. "Just to make sure I didn't notice anything weird."

Where have Nepal's 'nepo kids' gone as corruption takes centre stage in election?



It was the excess on show on the social media accounts of politicians' children that provided the kindling for Nepal's Gen Z uprising last year. The lavish presents - all clearly marked with designer labels - piled up and decorated like a Christmas tree, the expensive trips to five-star resorts around the world, the extravagant wedding parties that closed roads to traffic. For many, the disparity between the haves and have-nots right there, on your phone, was too much to be ignored, in a country where youth unemployment stands at 20.6% and with three million working overseas. "The kids of big politicians celebrate special occasions in places like Thailand and Switzerland," Satish Kumar Yadav, a 25-year-old lab technician, tells the BBC. "But, the children of the general public are forced to go to Gulf countries to find jobs." A proposed ban on the very social media where young Nepalis were voicing their anger at the so-called "nepo kids" was the spark that would send thousands into the street on 8 September. Within two days, 77 people - many of them protesters shot by police - would be dead, and the prime minister would

have stepped down. As the country heads to the polls next week, it appears politicians have taken note of their anger, and have promised a raft of changes to appease it. Meanwhile, many of the social media accounts which so carefully curated privileged lives have gone quiet. Shrinkhala Khatiwada, a former Miss Nepal and daughter of a former health minister - who was reported to have more than a million followers at one point - appears to have shut her Instagram account down entirely. Her last post on YouTube is a 34-minute video explaining why she did not deserve the "nepo kids" label, uploaded months ago. Smita Dahal, granddaughter of a three-time prime minister and former Maoist guerrilla leader, who was criticised for showing off her expensive handbag collection, has set her Instagram account to private. Her Facebook page has not been updated since late August. There are exceptions. One of the most striking images doing the rounds last summer was that of a former minister's son Saugat Thapa, standing beside Louis Vuitton, Cartier and Gucci boxes piled high in the shape of a Christmas tree.

'Not the Dubai we know': Residents and holidaymakers react to Iran attacks

Thousands of people are stranded across the Middle East as Iran launched attacks across the region in response to a massive and ongoing attack against it by the US and Israel. In Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, two luxury hotels and its main airport - the world's busiest by passenger traffic - have been damaged. The BBC has spoken to people who live in the Emirate, as well as those who are on holiday. Dubai resident Becky Williams said she saw about 15 missiles "launched from behind my house yesterday", referring to missiles fired by UAE authorities to intercept incoming Iranian projectiles. "You can hear the interceptions happening in the air." But she added that

she and her family were remaining calm and trusted the UAE military to defend its airspace, saying she believed it would "all blow over soon". Iran's attacks in retaliation for the US-Israeli strikes continued into Sunday. On the Palm Jumeirah, Dubai's luxury man-made archipelago, the five-star Fairmont The Palm hotel was struck by a large explosion. Debris from an intercepted drone resulted in a "minor fire" on the outer facade of the five-star Burj Al Arab hotel, authorities have said. One resident was philosophical about their ordeal: "What we've lived through over the past 24 hours is a fraction of what others have been living through in areas of conflict so it puts things in perspective."

One killed and 11 injured at Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports as Iran strikes region

One person has been killed and 11 injured at airports in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as Iran launched attacks across the Middle East in response to a massive and ongoing attack against it by the US and Israel. Authorities in Abu Dhabi confirmed a drone targeting Zayed International Airport (AUH) was intercepted, leading to "falling debris" killing one person and injuring seven. Dubai International Airport (DXB) - the world's busiest by passenger traffic - was damaged in an "incident" that injured four staff, according to authorities, who did not give further details. Thousands of flights have been grounded to and from the region, in one of the most serious disruptions to global travel since the Covid-19 pandemic.



dem. Across the Gulf, Iran has used ballistic missiles and drones to launch large-scale attacks on US allies and assets, after Iran's supreme leader was killed in the ongoing US-Israeli air offensive launched on Saturday morning. Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait - all home to US military bases - said they had intercepted missiles fired towards them, but falling

Jumeirah, Dubai's luxury man-made archipelago, the five-star Fairmont The Palm hotel was struck by a large explosion on Saturday afternoon. Video verified by the BBC shows a fire raging as black smoke rises into the sky. Authorities also confirmed debris from an intercepted drone had caused a "minor fire" on the outer facade of the five-star Burj Al Arab hotel. Also in Dubai, debris from an "aerial interception" caused a fire in a berth at the Jebel Ali deep sea port - the world's ninth busiest. Another 34-year-old Dubai resident said: "What we've lived through over the past 24 hours is a fraction of what others have been living through in areas of conflict so it puts things in perspective."

AT LEAST 20 KILLED AFTER MILITARY PLANE CARRYING BANKNOTES CRASHES IN BOLIVIA

At least 20 people have been killed and others injured after a Bolivian air force cargo plane crashed in the western city of El Alto, the country's authorities say. The incident happened at 18:15 local time (22:15 GMT) on Friday as the plane was arriving at El Alto's airport from the city of Santa Cruz, aviation officials said. It reportedly skidded off the runway and hit nearby vehicles. The defence ministry later confirmed its C-130 Hercules was involved and that it had been transporting banknotes to the Central Bank of Bolivia. There were eight people



aboard the plane, the air force commander said. Police fired tear gas to disperse crowds allegedly trying to take the scattered banknotes. Firefighters had given an earlier death

toll of at least 15. Video footage showed the plane on the ground and badly damaged vehicles. In other videos, people could be seen running away from the tear gas and police officers, some holding shields, forming a line. Some in the crowds are seen throwing rocks. "While news crews were covering the accident, individuals attempting to steal the transported money attacked the press with unusual violence," the National Association of Journalists of Bolivia said in a statement. It said a mobile TV unit was "directly targeted", while other journalists "were attacked with stones, suffering serious injuries while carrying out their work". The government-run Bolivian News Agency reported that at least a dozen people were arrested for stealing banknotes.

Aid groups in Gaza and West Bank thrown lifeline as Israel court pauses ban threat



Israel's High Court has temporarily halted a ban on international aid groups from working in the occupied Palestinian territories unless they meet strict new rules. The injunction came ahead of an Israeli deadline for 37 well-known organisations to stop work, something the groups warn will remove a lifeline for vulnerable people and cause "irreparable harm". Four months into a fragile ceasefire in war-torn Gaza, most of the more than two million population relies on aid - for food, medical care and water. In the West Bank, humanitarian organisations have been helping Palestinian refugees, UNrwa, from operating in Israel, impacting its work in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has claimed that UNrwa - and other organisations, including MSF - have been infiltrated by members of Palestinian armed groups or have ties to them. The humanitarian groups strongly deny that. Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism says its "clear transparency requirements" mean all NGOs and humanitarian organisations must now give full details of their staff, funding sources and operational structures.

arguing that Israel has obligations as an occupying power under international humanitarian law. Responding on Friday, Judge Dafna Barak-Erez said there was "a real legal dispute" which would require more time to work through. The right-wing government of Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has taken a tough stance against international and Palestinian NGOs as well as UN agencies, some of which have operated in the region for decades, citing security reasons. It has also passed legislation banning the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNrwa, from operating in Israel, impacting its work in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has claimed that UNrwa - and other organisations, including MSF - have been infiltrated by members of Palestinian armed groups or have ties to them. The humanitarian groups strongly deny that. Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism says its "clear transparency requirements" mean all NGOs and humanitarian organisations must now give full details of their staff, funding sources and operational structures.

At least 148 dead after Israel strike on school

At least 148 people including children have died after a reported strike hit a school in southern Iran, according to Iranian officials. Iran has blamed the US and Israel. The US military's Central Command (Centcom) said it was looking into reports of the incident, while Israel's military said it was "not aware" of any IDF operations in the area. The girls' school was located in Minab, near an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) base which has previously been a target. At least 201 people have been killed in air strikes in Iran and 747 hurt since Saturday, the Iranian Red Crescent said. Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian called the incident a "barbaric act" and "another black page in the record of countless crimes committed by the aggressors". In a statement reported in US media, Centcom spokesman Tim Hawkins said: "We take these reports seriously. The protection of civilians is of utmost importance, and we will continue to



take all precautions available to minimise the risk of unintended harm." The six-day working week in Iran runs from Saturday to Thursday, with Friday being the only official day of rest, meaning

the school was likely occupied when it was hit. Following the incident on Saturday, Red Cross and Red Crescent officials in Geneva said the society had mobilised response teams to

go to the school. An official said that the school, in the town of Minab in Hormozgan province, had been "targeted by three missile attacks". It is located about 600m (1970ft) from the base of the IRGC. The BBC has verified clips of the aftermath of the explosion, which show smoke rising from a building as crowds gather nearby and people can be heard screaming in panic. But it has not been able to independently verify the death toll - international news organisations are often refused visas to Iran which severely limits their ability to gather information there. Iranian social media users have reacted with anger to news of the incident. An Iranian living abroad who opposes military intervention in Iran commented: "The first victims of this war are 40

girls in Minab, hit by a missile attack. Is this the war you cheer for?" Deep mistrust of the Iranian regime, however, makes official reports difficult for many to accept, and some Iranians directly blamed the regime for the attack. One user wrote: "Even if the regime did not directly target schools, the deaths of children in Minab remain the responsibility of the Islamic Republic. People have no shelters, the internet is cut, phone lines are down, and there has been no warning to keep children out of school. In these conditions, the minimum requirement should be to stay at home." The school tragedy took place as the US and Israel launched wave after wave of air strikes against targets in a number of Iranian cities throughout Saturday.



Delhi traffic police issues fresh advisory ahead of T20 World Cup match

Special traffic arrangements will be in place in New Delhi on Sunday in connection with the T20 World Cup match between Zimbabwe and South Africa at Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi traffic police (DTP) said in its latest advisory. Traffic restrictions will be operational between 12 pm and 10 pm on Sunday, DTP wrote on its official X handle. Traffic movement is likely to remain affected in and around the stadium area. "Commuters are advised to plan their journeys in advance and use alternate routes to avoid inconvenience," DTP wrote on X. JLN Marg from Rajghat to Delhi Gate up to R/A Kamla Market (Both carriageways) Asaf Ali Road from Turkman Gate to Delhi Gate Bahadurshah Zafar Marg from Delhi Gate to Ramcharan Aggarwal Chowk (Both carriageways) Heavy vehicles will not be permitted from Daryaganj to Bahadurshah Zafar Marg and from Guru Nanak Chowk to Asaf Ali Road DTP also



advised commuters those who will be travelling to New Delhi railway station to plan their travel keeping in view heavy traffic on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg and ITO Chowk. Commuters might face diversions in the following roads except emergency vehicles: Bahadurshah Zafar Marg JLN Marg Entry to the stadium Those heading to Arun

Jaitley stadium, or previously referred as Feroz Shah Kotla for the match are urged to follow these entry routes: Gate Nos. 1 to 8 (Southern Side); Entry from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg Gate Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15 (Eastern Side); Entry from JLN Marg next to Ambedkar Stadium For those opting for a bus to reach the venue: Gate Nos. 16, 17 & 18

(Western Side): Entry from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg near Petrol Pump Free park-and-ride facility will be available from these parking locations to the stadium: Mata Sundari Road Rajghat Power House Road Velodrome Road Taxi pickup and drop points Gate No. 2, Maulana Azad Medical College on BSZ Marg (ITO to Delhi Gate carriage-

way) Rajghat Chowk Parking facilities Parking would not be available for the general public near the stadium except for labelled vehicles, which are urged to display their parking label on their respective wind-screens. Vehicle number and mobile number of driver/owner must be written on the label. Vehicles without valid parking label shall not be allowed in the proximity of the Stadium, DTP said. Entry for labelled parking will be from Vikram Nagar cut on BSZ Marg near Shahidi Park only. Labelled vehicle parking: P-1: JP Park (Opposite Gate No. 3) - Four-wheelers P-2: Vikram Nagar Parking (Adjacent to Shahidi Park) - Four-wheelers P-3: Near JJB/Prayas Office-Two-wheelers P-4: GLNS School (Deaf & Dumb School) - Near JJB/Prayas Office General Vehicle Advisory: No vehicles shall be allowed to park on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, JLN Marg and Ring Road from Rajghat to I.P. Flyover (both carriageways).

"THERE WILL BE TENSION":

Suryakumar Yadav Admits Ahead Of India vs West Indies T20 World Cup Virtual Quarter-Final

It's a virtual quarter-final between India and West Indies at the T20 World Cup 2026 at the Eden Gardens on Sunday. India captain Suryakumar Yadav won the toss and opted to bowl. The winner of the match will progress to the semi-final. Yadav admitted at the toss that there was "tension and nerves" in the side. "We want to bowl first tonight. The surface looks good. It has been a chasing ground. The wicket later on becomes even better. And also with a little bit of dew, I think chasing would be a better option," Yadav said. "Absolutely. I mean, it's already very wild. The crowd is in. Hopefully we can give them a good show tonight. (Mood in the dressing room) There will be tension. There will be nerves. But if there's no pressure, there's no fun. The mood in the camp is good. I think we



typed all the boxes in the last game. Taking that positivity into this game, I think it'll be a good one. No, we're going with the same team. Same team." India decided to go with an unchanged XI, while West Indies made one change, bringing in Akeal Hosen for Brandon King. Teams: India: Sanju Samson (wk), Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar

Yadav (c), Hardik Pandya, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakaravathy, Jasprit Bumrah. West Indies: Shai Hope (c & wk), Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd, Jason Holder, Matthew Forde, Akeal Hosen, Gudakesh Motie, Shamar Joseph.

Mitchell Starc Emotional As Alyssa Healy Slams Ton In Final ODI For Australia

In the annals of Australian cricket, Alyssa Healy is a name that will be etched permanently. Healy bid an emotional farewell to white-ball international cricket with a breathtaking 158-run knock in the third and final match at Bellerive Oval in Hobart on Sunday. The 35-year-old wicketkeeper-batter had earlier confirmed that the bilateral series against India would mark the conclusion of her 16-year international career. Australia, asked to bat first in the final ODI, were chasing a clean sweep against the touring Indian side. Healy was greeted with a guard of honour as she walked to the crease. She wasted no time asserting her dominance, striking 27



fours and two sixes in a quickfire 98-ball knock that helped Australia reach an imposing 409/7. Her teammate Beth Mooney also contributed an unbeaten 106 off 84 balls, ensuring the hosts crossed the 400-run mark. Alyssa Healy's husband and Australia skipper Mitchell Starc was present in the

stands when she reached the milestone. He was visibly emotional after Healy's feat. Healy, who debuted for Australia at 19 in February 2010, finishes her ODI career with over 3,500 runs. In T20 internationals, she amassed 3,054 runs at an average of 25.45, including a career-best 148 not out - the

highest individual T20I score among Full Member nations. She holds the record for the most T20I dismissals (as wicketkeeper) globally and ranks second in appearances for Australia in the format. Her glittering career includes six T20 World Cup triumphs (2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020, 2023) and two ODI World Cup titles (2013, 2022). Healy was also recognised as the ICC T20I Cricketer of the Year in both 2018 and 2019. The Australian star will conclude her international career in the longest format, leading the side in her 11th and final Test match against India, scheduled to begin on March 6 at Perth Stadium.

'LEGENDARY MOMENT' - KAVANAGH UPSETS EX-CHAMPION MORENO

Britain's Lone'er Kavanagh claimed the biggest win of his career as he upset former UFC flyweight champion Brandon Moreno in Mexico City. Kavanagh, who took the fight on just three weeks' notice, delivered a mature display to win by unanimous decision 49-46, 48-47 and 48-47. Kavanagh, 26, was unranked heading into the contest, but victory over sixth-ranked Moreno - in front of the Mexican's home fans - will see him take a big leap towards the top end of the division. "I said before this fight - I live for legendary moments," said Kavanagh. "This is a legendary moment. Brandon is a legend. Two-time world



champ. I'm a big fan. I watched him when I was a kid. To get to fight him is amazing." Kavanagh took

the fight against two-time flyweight champion Moreno when his original opponent Asu Albamaye

withdrew because of injury. The Briton came into the contest after the first defeat of his 11-fight career against Charles Johnson in August, but took control in the early stages against Moreno. Kavanagh kept Moreno at bay with a series of leg kicks, before hurting him with a flurry of punches midway through the second round. Moreno had more success in the third round, but Kavanagh regained control with more thudding leg kicks, before seeing out victory by defending a number of takedowns. The win was the 10th of Kavanagh's 11-fight career, while Moreno suffered a fourth defeat in his past six fights.

HOW DO LIONESSES SOLVE FULL-BACK SUCCESSION PROBLEM?



The Lionesses will be looking to win the Women's World Cup next year - but to accomplish that goal they may need to find a solution to their "full-back problem". At right-back, Lucy Bronze, 34, has been England's undisputed starter for the best part of a decade - but how long can she keep playing? And is there anyone following in her footsteps? There is even more ambiguity at left-back - with several centre-backs having filled the position in recent years, while striker Rachel Daly started every game there when England won the first of their back-to-back European titles in 2022. The full-back issue has not gone unnoticed at the Football Association - interim England Under-23s boss Lauren Smith admits they have been plotting a succession plan for more than 18 months. "You've probably been thinking 'hey, what's this full-back

problem?" And that's the same as we have been thinking a little bit over time," said Smith. "It's not something that is new to us. When I stepped into [my under-19s head coach] role, the conversation was happening about how we could maybe think differently or look differently for players in the pathway. "That work has been going on a long time. You are starting to see the fruits of it." In England's four friendly matches to end 2025, manager Sarina Wiegman started three different players at left-back, and Bronze and Maya Le Tissier at right-back. The Dutchwoman has made it clear she believes Le Tissier is the current back-up option for Bronze despite captaining Manchester United at centre-back. Versatile Washington Spirit defender Esme Morgan, who impressed at centre-back during Euro 2025.



Kosgei wins Tokyo Marathon in record time

GREEN WINS LPGA TITLE WITH HUSBAND AS CADDIE

=Australia's Hannah Green won the LPGA's Women's World Championship in Singapore after her husband stepped in as her caddie. With Green's usual caddie unable to leave the USA while he applies for a green card, her husband Jarryd Felton - who is a professional golfer - filled the role for the second time this year. Green, 29, carded a three-under-par 69 on Sunday to finish one shot clear of American Auston Kim and win this title for a second time. She married Felton in 2024 and has also caddied for her husband in the past. "It was absolutely a team effort over the last two weeks, and it's very special to share my seventh win, which is also my favourite number, with him," said Green. "My usual caddie is applying for a green card and couldn't leave the US, so it wasn't part of the



plan for the season. Luckily, my husband was able to pick up the bag for me." Green started the day tied for the lead with three-time major champion Minjee Lee, but took control with an early birdie followed by an eagle on the eighth hole. Green sank three more birdies on the

final nine, and - despite a nervous finish after bogeying her final two holes - ended on 14 under overall to win this tournament for the second time in three years, having triumphed in 2024. "I was feeling nervous and told Jarryd a couple of times that I wasn't comfortable. He reminded

me to take a deep breath, have a snack or even sip some water," she said. "I haven't played with this kind of adrenaline in a long time, and we handled it really well." England's Charley Hull, Mimi Rhodes and Lottie Woad all finished in a tie for 10th on six under.

CARRICK NOT INTERESTED IN PERSONAL GLASNER DUEL



Michael Carrick says the chance to inflict damage on one of the men thought to be a contender to be Manchester United's next head coach will not be a motivating factor in Sunday's game against Crystal Palace. Palace manager Oliver Glasner is second favourite for the permanent role with most bookmakers, despite a troubled campaign in which he has openly criticised his club's board, lost in the FA Cup to Macclesfield and fallen out with supporters amid a struggling Premier League campaign. Interim United boss Carrick is now the favourite, thanks to five wins and a draw from his six games in charge. It is a record which, after Aston Villa's shock defeat at Wolves on Friday, means United will go third in the table for the first time since the end of the 2022-23 campaign if they beat Palace at Old Trafford. That is enough of a motivation for Carrick, who says there is no personal element to his preparations at all. "It is not something that would cross my mind until you mentioned it," he said. "It doesn't make any differ-

ence whatsoever. "I have total respect for Crystal Palace and Oliver, in terms of the team that they are and the role they are doing. But it's the next game for us." Palace were ahead of United in the table when the two sides met on 30 November. One influential figure in United's 2-1 success that day, Matthijs de Ligt, has not played since because of a back injury. Fellow centre-half Lisandro Martinez missed Monday's win at Everton with a calf problem which Carrick regards as "a small issue" that will not keep the Argentine out "for very long". With fifth-placed Chelsea due to play Arsenal and Aston Villa in their next two games, this is looking like a chance for United to cement their position in the Champions League spots. It is an aim few thought likely when Ruben Amorim was sacked in January. "We are in a decent spot," Carrick said. "We feel like we are moving forwards, but it's just about what's in front of us, and trying to get to where we want to be, which is a little bit higher in the league. "That's literally all I'm worried about in the moment."

ZEE5 announces the world digital premiere of 'Gandhi Talks' streaming from March 6th!

Directed by Kishor Pandurang Belekar and starring Vijay Sethupathi, Arvind Swamy and Aditi Rao Hydari, the critically acclaimed theatrical success arrives exclusively on Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam ZEE5 from March 6th. After receiving amazing response during its theatrical run, the path-breaking silent film 'Gandhi Talks' is now set for its world digital premiere on ZEE5 from March 6th. The film will be available to stream in Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam, allowing audiences to experience its powerful and universal storytelling. Produced by Zee Studios along with Moviemill and Kyoorius, the film has been widely appreciated for its bold storytelling, powerful performances, and unique cinematic approach that transcends spoken language. Directed and written by Kishor Pandurang Belekar, Gandhi Talks features an exceptional ensemble cast including Vijay Sethupathi, Arvind Swamy, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Siddharth Jadhav. The film stands out as a rare modern silent film, relying entirely on visual storytelling and emotional depth, enhanced by a soul-stirring musical score composed by A. R. Rahman. Gandhi Talks follows the intertwined journeys of individuals navigating personal loss, financial struggles, and moral dilemmas in an unforgiving world. When their paths unexpectedly collide, their lives

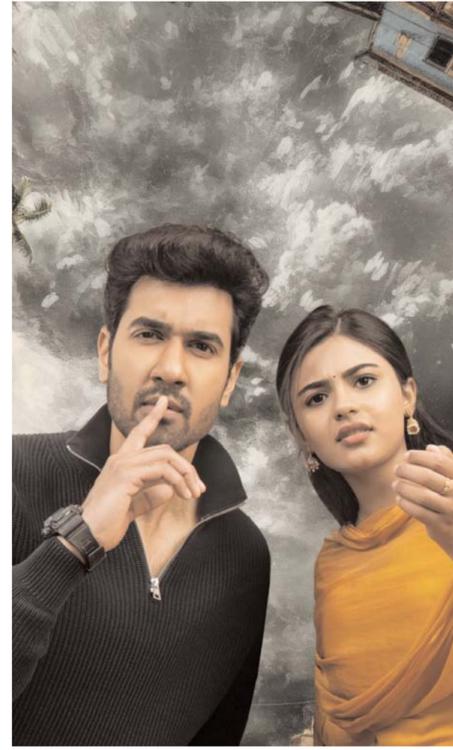


spiral into a gripping tale of survival, consequence, and human connection. Without spoken dialogue, the film powerfully captures emotions through performance and presence. The theatrical response was truly heartening, and I'm excited that the film will now reach many more viewers through ZEE5. I hope audiences connect with its message and experience the story in their own personal

way." Aditi Rao Hydari said, "What drew me to Gandhi Talks was its rare ability to convey an entire emotional world through stillness and visual storytelling. Every moment in the film feels intimate and reflective, allowing the audience to pause and truly feel alongside the characters. The theatrical journey has been very rewarding, and I'm grateful that ZEE5 is bringing this film to a wider audience across languages. It's a story that invites you to observe, reflect, and interpret in your own way." Director Kishor Pandurang Belekar said, "Gandhi Talks has been a deeply personal and ambitious project for me. Telling a story without spoken words challenged us to rely entirely on the power of visuals, performances, and music. The love and appreciation the film received in theatres has been incredibly encouraging. I'm grateful that ZEE5 is giving the film a platform to reach audiences everywhere, allowing more viewers to experience its emotional journey and unique storytelling." Tune in to Gandhi Talks, streaming on Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam ZEE5 from March 6th! About ZEE5: ZEE5 is Bharat's largest homegrown video streaming platform and the multi-lingual storyteller for millions of entertainment seekers. ZEE5 stems from the stable of ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL), a Global Content Powerhouse.

Rakasa' Teaser Out: A Spectacle-Driven Mythic World Blending Folklore Horror, Ancient Rituals and Supernatural Adventure with Entertaining Comedy

The teaser of Rakasa has been officially unveiled, offering a striking glimpse into a spectacle-driven mythic universe that merges folklore horror, ancient ritualistic traditions and high-stakes supernatural adventure, while retaining a lively streak of entertaining comedy. The teaser establishes a distinct tonal space, positioning the film as a rooted yet large-scale theatrical entertainer. Opening with an ominous prophecy - the teaser immediately situates the narrative within the framework of a generational curse haunting an entire village. The visuals depict a long-standing ritualistic practice tied to a sealed fortress wall, suggesting an ancient system of appeasement that has shaped the village's fate. Without revealing plot specifics, the opening builds tension through atmosphere and cultural rootedness. The tonal shift that follows introduces a vibrant social setting as Sangeeth Shobhan arrives in the village on a marriage bus, bringing youthful energy and situational humor into an otherwise ominous landscape. This contrast becomes central to the teaser's design. Once the imposing fortress gates open and close behind him, the narrative transitions into a contained supernatural adventure. Fiery manifestations, a towering demonic presence and intense confrontations unfold within the walled world, indicating both scale and mythic depth. The teaser

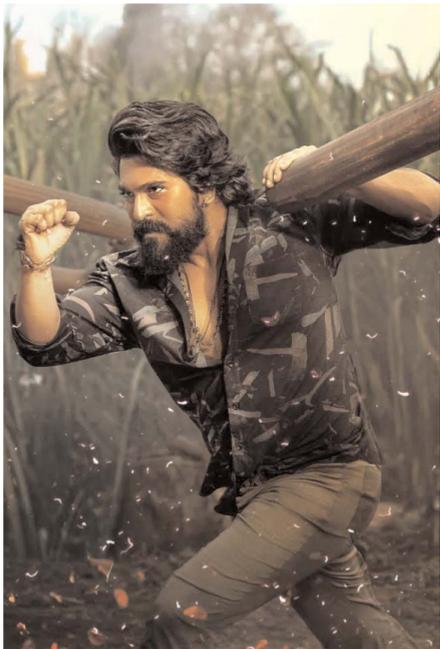


blends dread, spectacle and accessible entertainment while maintaining narrative intrigue. The teaser's visual grammar reflects narrative intention rather than surface styling. The interplay between cold blue frames and blazing amber tones is not merely aesthetic; it signals the collision between an inherited curse and erupting chaos at the heart of the story. The

fortress interiors, torch-lit assemblies and ritual-heavy staging suggest a lived-in mythic system, indicating that the film operates within a structured folklore universe rather than a generic horror setting. This level of visual coherence points to technical precision across cinematography, production design and VFX integration. The scale of staging, controlled lighting contrasts and textured

world-building collectively indicate that Rakasa is mounted as a grand theatrical experience - crafted for immersion, impact and large-screen engagement rather than functioning as a routine genre outing. Rakasa stars Sangeeth Shobhan, returning after the success of MAD and MAD Square, expanding into a performance space that combines humor with myth-driven intensity. He is paired with Nayan Sarika, while the ensemble cast includes Vennela Kishore, Brahmaji, Tanikella Bharani, Ashish Vidyarthi, and Getup Srinu, reinforcing the film's tonal versatility. Written and directed by Manasa Sharma, who previously served as writer and creator for Oka Chinnna Family Story (ZEE5) and directed Bench Life (Sony LIV), the film marks her feature directorial debut under Pink Elephant Pictures. Presented by Z Studios and produced by Niharika Konidela and Umesh Kumar Bansal, the film is backed by a strong production framework. The technical team includes music by Anudeep Dev, cinematography by Raju Eduroolu, and editing by Anwar Ali, shaping the film's visual and tonal identity. Prior to the teaser launch, the film's glimpse had already generated strong traction, crossing 1.9 million views across digital platforms. The consistent online engagement reflects growing audience curiosity around the film's genre blend and world-building approach.

MEGA POWER STAR RAM CHARAN BEGINS DUBBING OF MOST AWAITED PAN-INDIA PROJECT 'PEDDHI'



Mega Power Star Ram Charan's ambitious pan-India project 'Peddhi' has taken the buzz to the next level with the film set for a grand release this summer. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the film is being heavily produced by Venkata Satish Kilari under the banner of Vriddhi Cinemas. The film has already created a sensation in promotions. The first shot glimpses, composed by Oscar-winning music director A.R. Rahman, and the blockbuster first single Chikiri Chikiri have broken records with a tremendous response. Ram Charan has recently started dubbing for 'Peddhi'. The 'Yemadi' dialogue spoken by Charan in the role of Peddhi is impressive to everyone. In the video, Charan's words to

Buchi Babu, "Buchchi.. you acted so much for Mohit Chauhan's voice in the song Chikiri.. did you sing it or did he sing it? Do you have a doubt?.. don't tell me to act like that in dubbing too. I told you to dub it myself," made Buchi Babu laugh. This video is currently going viral on social media. Peddhi's second single 'Rai Rai Rara' is set to be released on March 2nd. Janhvi Kapoor is playing the female lead in this film. Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyandu Sharma, and Boman Irani are playing key roles. The film has music by Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman. Noted cinematographer R Rathnavelu is the DOP, National Award-winning editor Naveen Nooli is the editor.

Telangana Government's Special Chief Secretary, Vikas Raj Releases Special Song "Ode To Golconda"

Hyderabad: Telangana Government's Special Chief Secretary, Vikas Raj, inaugurated the special song "Ode To Golconda" in the presence of prominent dignitaries, including composer G.V. Rao, actor Vikram Dev Rao, and B. Vijay Kumar Raju. Hyderabad: The song, composed by G.V. Rao, celebrates Hyderabad's grandeur, cultural heritage, and modern development. Gvrao is a real Estate businessman, he also writes Socio political songs to pursue his passion. His songs Vote for future and Queen of Hearts are viewed by lakhs of people. this new composition has been produced in Bollywood-style. Speaking at the event, G.V. Rao expressed his admiration for the dedication and spirit of the members and staff at the golf club where he honed his golfing skills. He said that he has



long wanted to give back to the Hyderabad Golf Association (HGA) in some meaningful way, and this song was his tribute. "Ode To Golconda" creatively reflects Hyderabad's 400-year-old legacy, blending historical landmarks, cultural heritage, and modern advancements to capture the city's unique spirit. The song is more than just music—it is a musical homage to the city's

history and progress, combining creativity, artistry, and emotion. The inspiration for the song began one morning when Rao decided to write a poem about Golconda and the golf club. The poem flowed naturally, and six months ago, he approached his close friend Jack Burde, a renowned music director from Pune, to transform it into a musical composition. The song features BD, a

singer from Aizawl, Mizoram, whose distinctive voice brings life to the composition. The release event was attended and celebrated on stage by B. Vijay Kumar Raju, Vikas Raj, and Vikram Dev Rao. Sanjay, Jack Burde, and BD—have already won audiences with numerous classic songs, and this latest tribute to Hyderabad is expected to captivate music lovers as well.

SHWETA TRIPATHI TO ATTEND LIVE CONCERT BY HANS ZIMMER IN AMSTERDAM

Mumbai: Actress Shweta Tripathi is set to travel to Amsterdam to attend a live concert by the Oscar and Grammy-winning music composer Hans Zimmer. The actress had a long-standing wish to watch him perform live. Hans Zimmer is known for shaping the contours of Hollywood, and adding depth to stories through his music. For Shweta, film music has always been more than just something that plays in the background. It is often the first thing that stays with her after a film ends thanks to geniuses like Hans Zimmer. His com-



positions known for his iconic score for films like 'Dune', 'Interstellar', and 'The Dark Knight', in particular, have been a constant presence for her through her years as an actress. Talking about the same, she said, "His music has always stayed with me long after a film ends."

VIJAY'S WIFE SANGEETHA FILES FOR DIVORCE

Hyderabad: Thalapaty Vijay, one of the biggest stars of Tamil cinema, is making headlines for shocking reasons. His wife, Sangeetha Sornalingam, has filed for divorce, accusing him of infidelity and emotional cruelty. She claims Vijay was involved in an extramarital affair with an actress, causing her severe emotional distress. This divorce has stunned fans and the media alike, as Vijay's personal life takes a dramatic turn amidst his successful career.

VIJAY'S STARDOM
Vijay's rise to fame has been nothing short of extraordinary. Known for his roles in hits like Ghilli, Thuppakki, Bigil, and Leo,

he has built a massive fan following over the years. From a romantic hero to a mass superstar, Vijay has become one of the highest-paid actors in Indian cinema. His powerful screen presence and dedication have earned him the title of Thalapaty, making him a household name.

THALAPATHY VIJAY'S NET WORTH 2026
Vijay's estimated net worth is around Rs 600 crore. He is one of the highest-paid actors, earning between Rs 100 crore and Rs 275 crore per film. Apart from acting, his income comes from brand endorsements and investments in real estate. His lavish lifestyle includes a luxurious beach-facing bungalow in Chennai worth

Rs 70-80 crore and a car collection worth over Rs 8 crore, featuring top brands like Rolls-Royce and BMW.

SANGEETHA'S NET WORTH 2026
Sangeetha Sornalingam, Vijay's wife, also comes from a wealthy family. With assets reportedly valued at Rs 400 crore, she is financially independent. Her family's strong business background adds to her wealth, making the couple's combined net worth exceed Rs 1,000 crore.

VIJAY'S POLITICAL CAREER
In February 2024, Vijay launched his political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), focusing on social justice and Tamil

pride. As Vijay transitions from cinema to politics, the ongoing divorce controversy could affect his public image and influence his political journey. Vijay's upcoming film Jana Nayagan is also making news, with speculations about its release being delayed due to personal and professional issues. Fans are eager to see how these challenges impact the film and Vijay's career. Vijay has become one of the highest-paid actors in Indian cinema, his powerful screen presence and dedication have earned him the title of Thalapaty, making him a household name.

