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IN BRIFS

ED ATTACHES RS 26.86 CRORE PROPERTIES IN BANK FRAUD CASE



HYDERABAD, MARCH 6 (TSIT): Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office has provisionally attached immovable properties valued at Rs 26.86 crore in a bank fraud case of Sowbhagya Ispat India Pvt. Ltd. (SIPL). The attached properties under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 include residential flats, residential house, and open plots of land. The ED said in a statement on Friday that it had initiated investigation on the basis of FIR registered by CBI, BS&FB, Bangalore under Sections 120-B, 420, 468 and 471 of IPC and Section 13(2) read with 13(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 against Sowbhagya Ispat India Pvt. Ltd., its directors and others for defrauding Andhra Bank (now Union Bank of India) and causing wrongful loss to the bank. ED investigation revealed that SIPL had availed term loans and working capital facilities from then Andhra Bank for establishing and expanding a steel manufacturing unit.

ANDHRA PRADESH TO BAN SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CHILDREN UNDER 13



Amaravati, March 6: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Friday that the state government will ban use of social media for children under the age of 13 years and that a decision on whether to bar children in 13-16 age group from using social media will be taken after arriving at a consensus. Speaking on the Appropriation Bill in the State Legislative Assembly, he said steps would be taken within 90 days to ban social media for children under the age of 13. "A discussion is on what to do with regard to the children in 13-16 age group. A decision will be taken after arriving at a consensus," he said. Chief Minister Naidu's announcement came on a day when Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah declared that use of social media will be banned for those under the age of 16.

CM REVANTH CALLS ON GOVT EMPLOYEES TO STRENGTHEN STATE ECONOMY

HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday appealed to government employees to work with dedication to strengthen the state's economy and meet the growing financial requirements of Telangana. Addressing the Telangana Madiga Employees' Thanksgiving Programme in Hyderabad, the Chief Minister said employees have a crucial responsibility to curb irregularities and help generate more revenue for the state. He noted that employees act as the "eyes, ears and brand ambassadors" of the government and play a vital role in ensuring effective governance. The Chief Minister said the government is releasing around Rs.1,000 crore every month to clear the pending dues of retired employees. With nearly 1,000 employees retiring every month, he emphasised the need for coordinated efforts by the workforce to keep the administrative system functioning smoothly. Highlighting the government's 99-day action plan, Revanth Reddy said the programme aims to ensure that welfare schemes reach the needy. He said the government is working to provide ration cards, fine rice, Indiramma houses and free power to eligible beneficiaries and urged employees to support the administration in delivering these benefits to the people. Criticising the previous BRS government, the Chief Minister said it failed to take progressive steps for the empowerment of poor BC and SC communities and limited its initiatives to schemes such as distributing sheep and buffaloes and promoting traditional occupa-



A. Revanth Reddy urged government employees to work with dedication, curb irregularities and help strengthen Telangana's economy while ensuring welfare schemes reach the needy.

tions. He said the present government aims to transform the lives of Dalits by promoting quality education and enabling them to become doctors, engineers and IAS officers. Revanth Reddy described the 2023 Assembly elections as a battle between the "mighty BRS rulers" and a struggling Congress determined to end what he called a dicta-

India's strategic autonomy under threat, says Congress over US Russian oil waiver

NEW DELHI (TSIT) With the US announcing a temporary waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil, the Congress alleged on Friday that India's strategic autonomy and national sovereignty are under "dire threat" because Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being "blackmailed" by America. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said India's current foreign policy is the result of the "exploitation of a compromised individual". His attack on Modi came after the US announced the temporary waiver for the purchase of Russian oil. Amid an escalating conflict with Iran, the United States said it is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver on Russian oil purchases. "President (Donald) Trump's energy agenda has resulted in oil and gas production reaching the highest levels ever recorded. To enable oil to keep flowing into the global market, the Treasury Department is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Thursday. In a post on X, Gandhi said: "India's foreign policy emerges from the collective will of our people. It should be rooted in our history, our geography, and our spiritual ethos based on Satya and Ahimsa." "What we are witnessing today is not policy. It is the result of the exploitation of a compromised individual," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said. He also shared his



February 11 speech in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the budget, where he spoke about India's energy security being compromised. "The US will tell us who we can or cannot buy oil from, if it is Russia or Iran, the US will decide. But our prime minister will not decide," Gandhi had said. The Congress also shared Gandhi's speech on X. "The proof is here to be seen - and the silence of the compromised Prime Minister is shameful," the party said. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that India's strategic autonomy and national sovereignty are under dire threat "because PM Modi is getting blackmailed on Epstein Files and Adani Case". "The US proclamation to 'allow' and grant us 'permission' to buy Russian oil, as a 'waiver for 30-days' clearly demonstrates Modi government is continuously ceding diplomatic space. "This is the kind of language which is used for sanctioned states, and not India, who has been a responsible and an equal partner in global order," he said in a lengthy post on X. "Now, the US grants India a 'temporary 30-day waiver' and 'allows' Indian refineries to buy Russian oil. From trade to oil, from data to India's long-term relationships with friendly countries, Modi ji SURRENDERED it all," Kharge alleged. India, he said, has a proud record of chartering its own destiny and one that has remained unblemished until now. "From Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi to even Atal Bihari Vajpayee - No Prime Minister has buckled under pressure of any country and made India a virtual vassal state, except Modi ji," he said. "Main Desh Nahi Jhukne Doonga" was a mere slogan-cry to win elections. 140 crore Indians stand betrayed.

RSP sweeps Nepal polls with leads in 101 out of 165 seats in first election after Gen-Z revolt

Kathmandu/New Delhi, Mar 6 (UN) The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) appeared to be heading for a sweep in Nepal's first elections since a Gen-Z revolt in September last year toppled the Communist-led coalition headed by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. With two of four seats declared and leads in 101 constituencies out of 165 where direct elections are held, the newbie RSP party led by former Kathmandu Mayor Balendra 'Balen' Shah looks set to form the government. The Nepal Congress, often called the 'Grand old party of Nepal' has won one seat and is leading in 11 more seats as of 6.30 pm. "The two Communist parties - Nepali Communist Party led by Prachanda Oli's



CPN (UML) - which dominated the country for more than a decade are really fighting for the third spot with 12 and 10 leads as of now," said Kuvera Chalise, Consulting Editor of Nepalkhabar. The two winners from RSP

are 30-year-old Ranju Neupane (Darshana) who won against her nearest Nepal Congress candidate from Kathmandu-1 by 15,455 votes and Biraj Bhakta Sreshta, who has won by more than 24,000 votes from Bagmati. From Nepal Congress, 32-year-old Yogesh Gauchan Thakali has won by 3,307 votes from Gandaki in Mustang. "This victory in Nepal is really the net result of the anger and frustration of the younger generation because of the poor governance and lack of efforts by the old guard to create employment opportunities within Nepal even as rampant corruption and its fruits became more and more visible," added Chalise, a well-known political analyst.

Mamata Banerjee holds protest over voter roll deletions ahead of Bengal polls

Bengal (TSIT) Mamata Banerjee on Friday staged a dharna in Kolkata, protesting alleged large-scale deletions in voter rolls ahead of the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections. The All India Trinamool Congress chief accused the Election Commission of India and Bharatiya Janata Party of conspiring to disenfranchise Bengali voters. The protest was held at Metro Channel in Esplanade, a politically significant venue in the city. Banerjee said the issue of voter list revisions would be a key campaign point for her party ahead of the high-stakes state elections expected in April.

Hyderabad to become a world-class city: CM Revanth



HYDERABAD (TSIT): A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister of Telangana, said Hyderabad has the potential to become one of the most beautiful and globally competitive cities with proper planning and governance. He was speaking at the inauguration of Eco Hill Park in Hyderabad. The Chief Minister said the government is focusing on improving infrastructure, beautifying the city and developing the Musi River riverfront to boost tourism and create employment opportunities. He also noted that the area around Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad could emerge as a major bullet train hub connecting cities such as Bengaluru, Amaravati and Chennai. Revanth Reddy assured that people affected by development projects would receive proper rehabilitation and reiterated the government's commitment to transforming Hyderabad into a world-class city.

CM STALIN UNVEILS VISION 2030 FOR TRILLION-DOLLAR TN ECONOMY

CHENNAI (TSIT): Laying out an ambitious roadmap for the future, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday presented the State's 'Tamil Nadu Vision 2030' dream, outlining key goals to transform the State into a trillion-dollar economy while ensuring inclusive development and social welfare. He also spoke about his dream of making the whole country a 'Samathuvapuram'. Speaking at the event 'Kanavugal Meipada - Dreams to Reality', organised under the 'Ungal Kanavai Sollunga' (Tell Us Your Dream) initiative in Chennai, the chief minister said the government wanted the people to articulate their dreams that would shape Tamil Nadu's future.

Quoting poet Subramania Bharati, who wrote about the need for dreams to become reality, Stalin said Tamil Nadu's development must benefit the land, the people and the State collectively. He added that the Vision 2030 framework reflects those aspirations and charts a structured path for growth over the coming years. The chief minister outlined 14 key focus areas under 'Tamil Nadu Vision 2030', aimed at improving housing, economic growth, education, infrastructure, agriculture and social welfare. A major highlight of the vision is the goal of transforming Tamil Nadu into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2030, strengthening its position as one of India's leading economic engines.

A Narrow Window: Washington's 30-Day Waiver for India's Russian Oil

New Delhi (TSIT) The United States' decision to grant India a temporary 30-day waiver to purchase Russian crude oil currently stranded at sea, represents a carefully calibrated move to keep a strategic ally happy while maintaining the threat of pressure on Russia for the future. The waiver was announced Friday by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, underscoring how Washington is attempting to balance pressure on Moscow with the realities of global energy dependence, while reinforcing its 'Asian pivot' towards New Delhi. The waiver will allow Indian refiners to buy Russian oil cargoes already loaded and in transit, ensuring that these supplies can reach markets



without generating significant new revenue streams for Russia. According to highly placed sources, "Washington's waiver will act as a pressure-release valve for global markets." Approximately 20 million barrels of Russian crude will be eligible under the temporary measure, allowing Indian refiners to secure immediate cargoes that might otherwise remain stranded. Major state-run companies, including Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL), along with private

sector giant Reliance Industries have reportedly resumed or intensified negotiations for these shipments, indicated sources. However, market dynamics have shifted, pointed out officials. Russian Urals crude, once available at deep discounts of about USD 13 per barrel below Brent, has now become costlier amid tight supply and strong demand for prompt cargoes. Indian refiners will have to pay USD 2-4 more per barrel of Urals crude oil than for Brent, market analysts said. They said nearly 20 million barrels are on tankers in the Indian Ocean area. These shipments are expected to reach Indian ports within a week, for more supplies Indian shippers will have contract oil tankers which are in the Black Sea and bring them through the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea. By limiting the authorisation to oil already stranded at sea, the American administration wants to signal it will not allow disruptions in global supply while maintaining the broader sanctions architecture imposed upon Moscow ever since the Ukraine conflict started. The immediate rationale behind the decision lies in the fragile state of global oil markets. Rising tensions in West Asia, in particular concerns over the security of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's energy cargos transit, have heightened fears of supply disruptions.

Rajnath Singh calls for Indian maritime leadership amid West Asia crisis

KOLKATA: In this era of changing geopolitics, oceans have once again come to the centre of the world's power balance and it is India's responsibility to provide leadership with confidence and capability, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday, referring to the escalating conflict in West Asia.

The unfolding developments in West Asia are "highly unusual" and the situation in the region could adversely impact the global economy, he said addressing an event here.

"What is happening in West Asia is highly unusual. It is difficult to make any firm comment at this stage on the direction in which conditions in



West Asia might proceed going forward," he said.

"If we look at the Strait of Hormuz or the entire Persian Gulf region, it is an extremely important area for the world's energy security. When there is disturbance or disruption in this region, it directly impacts the supply of oil and gas," he said. "Not only that, today we are witnessing supply chain disruptions not just in the energy sector, but in other sectors as well. The direct impact of these uncertainties falls on the

economy and global trade," he said. Singh said the current situation has once again reflected the importance of oceans. "In this era of changing global geopolitics, oceans have once again come to the centre of the world's power balance. At such a time, as a major maritime nation, it is India's responsibility to provide leadership with confidence, capability, and a clear vision," he said.

The defence minister, however, did not make any direct or indirect reference to the US sinking an Iranian warship off the coast of Sri Lanka two days back. The Iranian frigate, IRIS Dena, was returning home after participating in the Milan multilateral naval exer-

cise hosted by India. At least 87 Iranian sailors were killed in the attack, which marked a major escalation in the conflict between the US and Iran outside of the Persian Gulf.

The US launched military strikes on Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Following the military offensive, Iran carried out a wave of attacks mainly targeting Israel and American military bases in several Gulf countries including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

In the last three days, the conflict has widened significantly with attacks and counter-attacks by both the sides.

IAF jet crash: Pilot took part in Op Sindoor, had family get-together 10 days ago, says father

NAGPUR: Ravindra Duragkar could only recall memories of his son, Flight Lieutenant Purvesh Duragkar, the most vivid being their phone chat on Wednesday and his visit home ten days ago for a family get-together. As IAF officials tried to console the retired railway employee at his home in Nagpur's New Subedar Layout, the grief-stricken father occasionally regained his composure to say that Purvesh took immense pride in flying a fighter jet.

Squadron Leader Anuj and Flight Lieutenant Purvesh were killed when a Su-30 MKI fighter jet crashed in

Assam's Karbi Anglong district, the IAF said on Friday. The jet was on a training sortie and disappeared from radar shortly after taking off from Jorhat airbase on Thursday.

"We had spoken on Wednesday. His Group Captain got in touch with us and informed us about the accident," said Ravindra, his eyes welling up. His 28-year-old son had taken part in Operation Sindoor, which India launched to target terror bases in Pakistan following last year's Pahalgam attack, he said, adding that Purvesh was deeply committed to his work.

Ravindra said Purvesh

was originally posted in Tezpur, Assam, but was operating from Jorhat as work was being carried out on the Tezpur runway.

A neighbour told PTI that Purvesh is survived by his parents and a sister settled in the US. Purvesh and his sister, an IITian, had come home ten days ago for a family get-together, the neighbour said. Ravindra also recalled the family function. Purvesh, who did his schooling in Nagpur, was single. Ravindra said his son's body is likely to reach Nagpur in the evening.

"My son was extremely proud to be part of the Indian Air Force.

UN will survive; G20 reflects contemporary realities much more than UNSC: Shashi Tharoor

NEW DELHI: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday said the G20 could evolve in a way that might threaten the primacy of the UN Security Council as it reflects today's contemporary realities much more and is not "hamstrung" by a charter.

Speaking at a session at the Raisina Dialogue, Tharoor said the United Nations will survive and even though it may not be the UN that Harry Truman envisioned in 1945, it will still be the nucleus of international cooperation.

"What I see rising is a plethora of other forms of international cooperation. The most striking of them is the G20, which, unlike the UN, is not handicapped by a charter, so they can write their own rules. "The G20 is a far more representative body than the UN Security Council because while that body reflects the geopolitical realities of 1945, the G20 both reflects much more today's contemporary realities with 20 most significant economies on it plus the EU and now the AU.... They have no bar on taking new members as and when a country acquires the economic size, heft and military strength to deserve to be there," the former UN under secretary general said.

So far, the G20 is a macro-economic body and it has no role in peace and security and in geopolitics in the conventional sense, but it is not hamstrung by a charter, he



said.

"This forum could evolve in a way that could threaten the primacy of the security council," Tharoor said at the session on the evolving role of the UN in global governance.

However, he expressed optimism that the UN will survive.

"It may not be the UN that Harry Truman envisioned in 1945, but I think it will be the nucleus of international cooperation. The strength and success of international cooperation will wax and wane as the years go by depending on the crises," the Congress leader said.

Mamata holding sit-in in Kolkata to shield infiltrators: Union minister Giriraj Singh

KOLKATA: Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Friday accused West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of holding a sit-in in the heart of the city to protect infiltrators belonging to the minority community and labelling her as 'anti-Hindu.'

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme, Singh alleged that the Trinamool Congress government would soon be voted out of power and warned "partisan state government officials and lumps sheltered by the TMC" to mend their ways or face consequences.

"Banerjee is only interested in saving the infiltrators belonging to the Muslim community, which constitutes the bulk of her vote bank. She should be ashamed that she is holding a sit-in protest to save infiltrators, with whose help she managed to win the previous elections. But not any more," the se-



nior BJP leader said.

Later addressing a 'Parivartan Yatra' rally at Narayanagar in Paschim Medinipur district, Singh described the Mamata Banerjee-led government as "anti-Hindus, anti-Bengali Hindus and appeasement-friendly towards Muslims under whose reign the state is turning into West Bangladesh."

Referring to Direct Action Day in 1946, he said after the call by Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, which led to

Hindu vote bank ahead of the Assembly polls.

"If Mamata Banerjee is in power this time again, it will be next to impossible to stop the demographic change in Bengal and save Bengali Hindus. We have to vote out this Mamata Banerjee government from the root," he added.

"Hindus were brutally killed in Murshidabad by Islamist Jihadis last year, but Mamata Banerjee could not prevent that and allowed the situation to drift," he alleged.

Accusing Banerjee of raising hue and cry over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to save her vote bank of infiltrators, he said, "She may try to commit irregularity of voting, but will not succeed this time."

"Mamata didi shouts about SIR but keeps mum on the loss of jobs of 26,000 teachers due to the recruitment

scam involving her party leaders and ministers," he alleged.

Bengal's people are waiting for this 'Ravan Raaj' to go and 'Ram Rajya' to usher in with the double-engine government, he said.

He said if the BJP formed the government in the state, it would expedite the investigation into the alleged teaching job scam and ensure that those responsible, including the kingpins, were brought to book.

Listing the party's promises, Singh said that like some other BJP-ruled states, women would receive Rs 3,000 in their bank accounts every month. He also alleged that crores of rupees allocated by the Union government for welfare schemes were siphoned off by TMC leaders, depriving people of benefits such as wages under the rural employment scheme and housing assistance.

Tell US President Donald Trump to stop West Asia conflict: Owaisi to PM Modi

HYDERABAD: AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "break his silence" on the conflict in West Asia and ask US President Donald Trump to end the war.

Addressing a gathering here, he also asked the PM to provide a full account of the sinking of an Iranian ship, IRIS Dena, off Sri Lanka by a US military submarine two days ago.

Taking strong exception to US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's recent announcement regarding Indian oil imports, he said the BJP-RSS should give a strong response to the American official and assert that India would purchase oil according to its own will. He accused the BJP-RSS combine of being "scared" of US President Donald Trump.

"This war should end. Prime Minister should

break his silence. Take the phone and tell Trump to stop this tamasha. They (US) are not suffering any losses. Our citizens are suffering. Who is dying there? Indians are dying. You maintained silence over Gaza," he said.

Owaisi dismissed the argument that the Iranian vessel sank outside the Indian waters, saying it is important to realise that it occurred close to India.

"If a Chinese ship comes close to our nation, what would you do? You say that it was not in Indian waters. Water does not have borders. You see how close the enemy has come. It is the Constitutional responsibility of the Prime Minister to tell the country what happened. We are with America in Quad," he said.

Pointing to India's strategic agreements with the US, the AIMIM leader said the Iranian frigate had vis-

ited Visakhapatnam at the invitation of India, while America had refused to participate in the naval exercise there.

Highlighting that one crore Indian citizens work in the Gulf region, a widening war lead to job losses for Indian diaspora.

He alleged that Israel aims to create a 'Greater Israel', encompassing much of the Arab region.

"The evil eye of these oppressors extends up to the holy city of Madinah."

Responding to US Treasury Secretary's comments that America is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil, Owaisi wondered if India truly is a sovereign country. "Have you mortgaged India before US. Speak out BJP-RSS people. A (US) minister says you purchase for a month. Is this what we have secured freedom

from the English that a white-skinned person says you purchase for a month? But, they will not speak. They are scared of Trump," he said.

Quoting America's trade minister as saying that the US would not let India emerge like China, the AIMIM leader asked whether "India is a slave of America?"

He further questioned, "What is America's role in the progress of India?"

"BJP and RSS people are terrified of speaking against the white-skinned officials," he alleged.

He also hit out at the Centre for allegedly providing funds to a right-wing organisation to hold an event. The organisation has openly favoured making India a 'Hindu Rashtra', "converting the religion of Muslims and throwing away 25 crore people," he alleged.

'Baseless and preposterous': Govt sources deny providing intel to US for sinking Iranian frigate

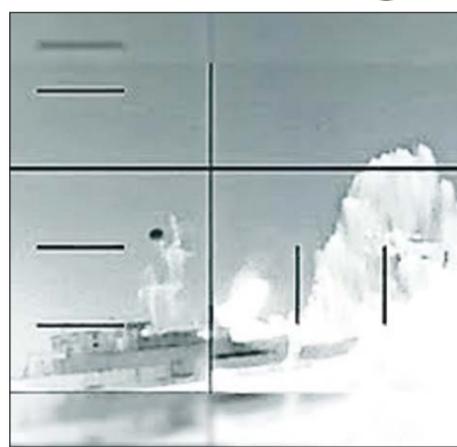
NEW DELHI: Top government sources on Friday described as "baseless and preposterous" claims that the Indian Navy provided intelligence to the US on an Iranian frigate that was sunk by a US military submarine two days ago off the coast of Sri Lanka.

There is no question of providing any input to the US and the claims are completely baseless, the sources said.

The US sank the Iranian warship IRIS Dena off the coast of Sri Lanka on Wednesday when it was returning home after participating in the Milan multilateral naval exercise hosted by India.

At least 87 Iranian sailors were killed in the attack, which marked a major escalation in the conflict between the US and Iran outside of the Persian Gulf.

There were reports that al-



leged that the Indian Navy provided some inputs on the sinking of the ship.

"IRIS Dena was a training ship. It was invited by the Indian Navy to take part in an exercise. They went there as guests. They were

unarmed," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

"Attacking such a ship is a war crime," he said.

Hours after the strike on the warship, the Pentagon released a short video of the sinking of the frigate.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said at a Pentagon media briefing on Wednesday that it was the first sinking of an enemy warship by a torpedo since World War II.

IRIS Dena participated as part of Indian Navy's premier multilateral maritime exercise Milan.

The mega exercise last month saw participation of 42 warships and submarines, including 18 ships from friendly foreign countries.

The warship had also featured in the International Fleet Review hosted by the Indian Navy in Vishakhapatnam last month.

ED raids against Reliance Power Ltd in Mumbai, Hyderabad

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in Mumbai and Hyderabad as part of an investigation against Reliance Power Ltd., a group company of businessman Anil Ambani, officials said.

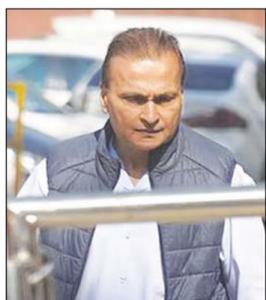
About 10-12 locations linked to the said company and its executives are being searched in the two cities, they said.

About 15 teams of the agency are undertaking the action, the officials said.

A query sent to the Reliance Group did not elicit an immediate response.

The ED is investigating multiple companies linked to Anil Ambani as part of an alleged bank fraud linked money laundering case apart from financial irregularities under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Anil Ambani, 66, has been questioned twice by the ED under the anti-money laundering law as part of this investigation.



The ED has formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the cases against Ambani's group companies on the directions of the Supreme Court.

According to information furnished by the ED to the apex court, it has filed three money laundering cases against the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) to investigate charges of bank loan fraud and other financial irregularities.

124 Bangladeshi nationals residing illegally in Bengaluru taken into police custody

BENGALURU: In a special operation, the CCB on Friday took into custody 124 Bangladeshi nationals who were allegedly residing illegally in Bengaluru, police said.

Among them 48 men, 42 women and 34 children, they said.

In the early hours, four special teams comprising officers and staff of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) conducted a targeted operation in the jurisdiction of Kadugodi and Varthur police stations here, police said.

"During the operation, 124 Bangladeshi nationals who had allegedly constructed temporary sheds and were residing there illegally were taken into custody. Among them were 48 men, 42 women and 34 children," the office of Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said in a statement.

They have been subjected to inquiry, and a report has been



submitted to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) authorities for further appropriate action to deport the illegally residing Bangladeshi nationals back to their country, it said.

Based on the directions of the police commissioner to collect information on foreigners illegally residing in Bengaluru and to take legal action against them, a special operation has been conducted over the past few days by

ED attaches Rs 441-cr worth assets in Andhra liquor 'scam' case

AMARAVATI: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it has attached assets worth more than Rs 441 crore of various accused involved in the Andhra Pradesh liquor 'scam' case, which allegedly took place during the previous YSRC regime in the state.

The attached properties consist of bank balances, fixed deposits, land parcels and other immovable assets belonging to the prime accused Kessireddy Rajasekhara Reddy, his family members and related entities, other accused like Booneti Chanakya and his related entities and relatives and entities of Donthireddy Vasudeva Reddy apart from some others.

The ED said in a statement that after the 2019 assembly elections, the newly-formed state government (led by former chief minister and YSRC leader Jagan Mohan Reddy) "monopolised" retail liquor outlets through government retail outlets (GROs) operated by the Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation Limited (APSBCL). It alleged that as part of a

criminal conspiracy, the automated system was "deliberately" disabled and replaced with a manual system, thereby vesting unfettered discretionary power with APBCL officials in issuing orders for supply (OFS).

The ED claimed that the manual OFS regime was "misused" to discriminate against established liquor brands, which were deliberately marginalised or removed from the market.

The YSRC has always maintained that all such allegations were baseless.

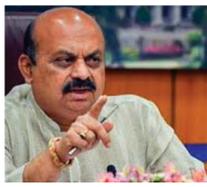
The federal probe agency registered a PMLA case in September 2025 to investigate the alleged scam, taking cognisance of an Andhra Pradesh Police SIT complaint. The ED said Kessireddy Rajasekhara Reddy, along with other members of the liquor syndicate, orchestrated a "multi-crore scam" for liquor procurement and distribution in Andhra Pradesh and this primarily involved controlling and manipulating the procurement process of APBCL.

Rs.819.74 Crore Loan Cheques Distributed to 301 Beneficiaries in Haveri

Haveri: Former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai said that farmers and the working class are the real "Kuberas" or wealth creators of the modern era, emphasizing that the nation's economy grows through their hard work and productivity rather than subsidies alone. He was speaking after inaugurating a loan distribution programme organised jointly by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Lead Bank at the District Panchayat Hall in Haveri on Friday. Bommai highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has introduced several welfare schemes to ensure financial inclusion for common citizens. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, around 60 crore bank accounts have been opened across the country, many of them belonging to women, helping them develop the habit of saving.

CM Misleading People on State Finances; Budget Directionless with Zero Development: MP Basavaraj Bommai

Haveri: Former Karnataka Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is misleading the people of the state on financial matters and described the recently presented State Budget as directionless with "zero development." Speaking to the media in Haveri, Bommai said the Chief Minister claimed that borrowings were kept within the limits of financial discipline, but the fiscal deficit has crossed the 3 percent limit. He alleged that certain adjustments were made to conceal the actual figures. Bommai stated that the budget imposes a heavy debt burden on Karnataka while failing to ensure meaningful development. According to him, the total budget size stands at Rs.4.49 lakh crore, out of which



nearly Rs.3.40 lakh crore is committed expenditure covering salaries, pensions, interest payments, subsidies, and administrative costs. He said about Rs.64,000 crore will be spent on government guarantee schemes, leaving very little for developmental activities. Bommai also questioned the government's claim of allocating Rs.74,000 crore for capital expenditure, pointing out that the previous year's target of Rs.47,000 crore was not fully achieved. He further alleged that taxes on motor vehicles, stamp duty,

petrol cess, liquor, and electricity tariffs had been increased during the year, placing additional financial pressure on citizens. The MP also claimed that Karnataka is receiving about Rs.63,000 crore from the Central Government through various schemes and grants, including Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi and Ayushman Bharat, but the state government has not utilized these funds effectively. Bommai further alleged that adequate funds have not been allocated even for major guarantee schemes such as Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, Shakti Scheme, and Yuva Nidhi Scheme. He added that the budget makes no significant contribution toward the development of Haveri district and warned that the state could face serious financial challenges in the coming years.

Karnataka Budget a 'Blueprint for Destruction', Neglects Dryland Regions: MP Dr. K. Sudhakar

Chikkaballapur: Member of Parliament Dr. K. Sudhakar criticized the State Budget presented by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, calling it a "blueprint for Karnataka's destruction" and alleging that it provides no meaningful support for dryland regions. Reacting to the 2026-27 budget, Sudhakar said he did not expect such a poor financial plan from a Chief Minister presenting his 17th budget. He alleged that the budget places a heavy debt and tax burden on the people and has transformed Karnataka from a welfare state into a "debtor state." The MP stated that the budget lacks a clear vision for the development of Chikkaballapur, Kolar, and Bengaluru Rural districts. He noted that although Chikkaballapur is known for flower and vegetable cultivation, the government failed to allocate



funds for the proposed high-tech flower market that was planned during the previous BJP government.

Sudhakar also expressed concern over the lack of clarity regarding the Ettinahole Project, stating that no clear timeline has been provided for supplying irrigation water to the Chikkaballapur region. He further pointed out that the budget made no mention of third-stage processing in the HN Valley Project and the KC Valley Project, which he said is essential for public health and water management. Raising concerns over the state's financial condition, Sudhakar alleged that nearly 88-90 percent of the government's revenue receipts are being spent on salaries, pensions, and loan interest payments. He also claimed that the state's total debt has crossed Rs.8 lakh crore, warning that increasing borrowings and fiscal deficit could severely impact Karnataka's economic stability.

Total Rs. 8.22 crore compensation distributed to the dependents of 35 deceased personnel: Ramalinga Reddy

Bengaluru: Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that Rs. 4 crore compensation has been distributed to the dependents of 4 personnel who died in the accident, at Rs. 1 crore each. Speaking at a program held at the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation headquarters, he said that Rs. 14 lakh each and Rs. 3.92 crore compensation have been distributed to the dependents of 28 personnel who died due to reasons other than accidents. He said that Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 30 lakh compensation have been distributed to the dependents of 3 deceased personnel. Concluding the dependents of the personnel who died in the accident, he said that may the Lord grant their families the strength to bear the immense pain caused by the untimely departure of the personnel.



tion amount being given now for the protection of themselves and their families without giving it to anyone. They should keep FD only for children's education, house construction, other good deeds and in the bank, and should not lose money by investing money elsewhere for the sake of excessive interest.

So far, 1400 posts have been appointed on compassionate grounds in the four road transport corporations. He said that we will always stand with the families of our transport staff.

Transport Safety Insurance Scheme: With the aim of providing financial security to the dependents of its employees, the company has implemented the Transport Safety Accident Insurance Scheme, which provides an accident insurance compensation of Rs. 1 crore in case of death due to an accident while on duty or off duty. Under this scheme, till now, a total of Rs.

34.00 crore has been distributed to the families in *34 cases, each at Rs. 1 crore. Employees' Family Welfare Compensation Scheme: (Compensation to dependents of employees who die due to reasons other than accidents) In view of the fact that the number of employees who die due to heart attack, cancer, stroke and other causes has been increasing in recent times, the compensation amount of Rs. 3 lakhs has been increased to Rs. 10 lakhs with effect from 01.11.2023 to provide financial support to the dependents of the family who die due to these reasons.

Date: The said amount has been increased from Rs.10 lakh to Rs.14 lakh* with effect from 01.09.2025. In 28 eligible cases, a total of Rs.3.92 crores of compensation cheques of Rs.14.00 lakhs each were distributed to the family members and in 3 cases, a total of Rs.30 lakhs* of compensation cheques of Rs.10 lakhs each were distributed.

Bengaluru: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Friday assured members of the Karnataka State Contractors' Association that a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would be arranged soon to address their concerns

KARNATAKA BUDGET A BLUEPRINT FOR DESTRUCTION, NEGLECTS DRYLAND REGIONS: MP DR. K. SUDHAKAR

Chikkaballapur: Member of Parliament Dr. K. Sudhakar strongly criticized the State Budget presented by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, calling it a "blueprint for Karnataka's destruction" and alleging that it offers no support for the development of dryland regions. Reacting to the 2026-27 budget, Sudhakar said he did not expect such a poor financial plan from a Chief Minister presenting his 17th budget. According to him, the budget places heavy debt and tax burdens on the people and has transformed Karnataka

from a welfare state into what he termed a "debtor state." The MP pointed out that the budget lacks a clear plan for the development of Chikkaballapur, Kolar, and Bengaluru Rural districts. He expressed disappointment that the proposal for a high-tech flower market in Chikkaballapur, which was planned during the previous BJP government, was not included in the budget. Sudhakar also criticized the lack of clarity regarding the Ettinahole Project, stating that the government failed to provide a clear timeline for

supplying irrigation water to the region. He further noted that there was no mention of third-stage processing under the HN Valley Project and the KC Valley Project, which he said are essential from a public health perspective. Raising concerns over the state's finances, Sudhakar alleged that nearly 88-90 percent of the government's revenue is being spent on salaries, pensions, and interest payments. He warned that rising borrowings and increasing fiscal deficit could push the state into a serious debt crisis.

STATE BUDGET DIRECTIONLESS, WILL PUSH KARNATAKA INTO DEBT TRAP: MP BASAVARAJ BOMMAI



Haveri: Former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai strongly criticized the State Budget presented by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, describing it as a directionless and zero-progress budget that could push the state into a serious debt trap. Speaking to the media in Haveri on Friday, Bommai said the budget lacks a clear development vision and could have long-term negative consequences on the

state's financial stability. He alleged that the government has borrowed nearly Rs.1.32 lakh crore, imposed new taxes worth around Rs.25,000 crore, and presented a deficit budget of about Rs.32,000 crore.

DCM D.K. SHIVAKUMAR ASSURES MEETING WITH CM TO RESOLVE CONTRACTORS' PENDING BILLS ISSUE



Bengaluru: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Friday assured members of the Karnataka State Contractors' Association that a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would be arranged soon to address their concerns

over pending payments. Speaking to contractors protesting at Freedom Park demanding the release of dues, Shivakumar said he, along with Public Works Department Minister Satish Jarkiholi, would facilitate a discussion with the Chief Minister

during the current Assembly session to find a solution.

ENSURE DRAINS ARE MAINTAINED FOR SMOOTH FLOW OF RAINWATER — D.S. RAMESH



Bengaluru (TSIT): The Commissioner of Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S. Ramesh, instructed all divisional Executive Engineers to ensure that the desilting works of drains along main roads, sub-arterial roads, and ward roads within the corporation limits are completed as a precautionary measure ahead of the monsoon season.

ACCELERATE DRAIN DESILTING While inspecting the drain desilting works being carried out at K. Narayanapura, Horamavu, Kaggadasapura Railway Gate and other areas, the Commissioner directed officials to expedite the removal of silt and waste from stormwater drains to enable the smooth flow of rainwater. He stated that proper maintenance of the drainage system will help prevent water stagnation on roads during the monsoon, thereby avoiding traffic congestion caused by flooding. Such measures will also help protect public life and property, he added.

FOOTPATH ENCROACHMENT CLEARANCE DRIVE A footpath encroachment clearance drive was carried out along the 60-Foot Road in AECS Layout, starting from the Ganesh Temple up to ITPL Main Road. The operation covers a total stretch of approximately 1.6 kilometres on both sides of the road, and the drive will continue in the coming days, the Commissioner said. During the operation, petty shops, illegal sheds, canopies, temporary roofing structures, railings, push carts, and other encroachments constructed along the roadside were removed.

ROAD CLEANING DRIVE — VARTHUR KODI TO VARTHUR A road cleaning drive was also undertaken from Varthur Kodi to Varthur, covering a stretch of approximately 700 meters. During the operation, dust, flex banners, and unauthorized tiles placed in front of shops along the roadside were cleared. So far, around 6 tons of debris and waste have been removed, the Commissioner informed. Joint Commissioner Dr. Dakshayini K., Chief Engineer M. Lokesh, Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, Assistant Engineers, and other officials were present during the operation.

ENERGY MINISTER K.J. GEORGE PRAISES 'MUKHYA MANTRI SAURA KRISHI YOJANA'

Mukhya Mantri Saura Krishi Yojana' to ensure daytime power supply for agriculture. Announcement of 100 new power substations in 2026-27, 2,000 MWh Battery Energy Storage System, 1,250 EV charging stations to boost electric mobility.



able power supply to all," Energy Minister KJ George further added.

Bengaluru : Energy Minister K.J. George commended Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for introducing the 'Mukhya Mantri Saura Krishi Yojana' in the State Budget. He called it a significant step toward fulfilling the government's promise. The scheme delivers seven hours of daytime electricity to farmers for operating irrigation pump sets.

during the daytime. On similar lines, the government has now announced the implementation of the Mukhya Mantri Saura Krishi Yojana. This aims to generate around 3,000 MW of solar power to supply daytime electricity to agricultural pump sets. Moreover, by allocating Rs.19,290 crore for the scheme providing free electricity up to 10 horsepower pump sets, the Chief Minister has once again demonstrated his commitment to farmers.

Similarly, to meet electricity demand during peak periods and store power generated from renewable sources, the government invested about Rs.3,400 crore in a 2,000 MWh Battery Energy Storage System project. In addition, the government established 1,250 EV charging stations at a cost of Rs.777 crore to promote the use of electric vehicles, which reflects its people-centric approach, the Energy Minister added.

Reacting to the Budget, the Energy Minister said, "When our government came to power, the state was facing a severe drought. Despite this, we took all necessary measures to ensure seven hours of power supply to farmers. In addition, we effectively implemented the centrally sponsored KUSUM-C scheme, solarising agricultural feeders to provide farmers with electricity

"The State Government's Gruha Jyothi scheme, which provides free electricity up to 200 units for domestic consumers, has illuminated crores of homes. The savings from electricity bills are enabling people to utilise that money for other needs and improve their economic condition. Since the government pays ESCOMs the subsidy amount in advance, it also reduces their financial burden. In this year's Budget, the Chief Minister has allocated Rs.10,578 crore for the scheme, enabling its more effective implementation," Energy Minister KJ George said.

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

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Datta Patil (Borrower) Roopali Datta Patil (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHBM00001594380 & LHBM00001594426	Plot No. 04, RS No. 124 GP No. 1714 Rdpr No. 150400302000122158 Situated at Balekundri Kh Na Belgaum Karnataka - 591124	Rs. 16,40, 125/-	Rs. 28,05, 921/-	March 16, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	March 23, 2026 02:00 PM To 05:00 PM	March 20, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Physical Possession
2.	Irfan Khan (Borrower) Ameena Khanum, (Co-Borrower) Aarshiraj Builder and Developers Limited, (Co-Borrower) Th Akbar Khan (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHNXN00001560155	2nd Floor 4th Cross A as Samudaya Bhavana Ranganatha Badavane Shivmogga Ward No. 29 Shivmogga Karnataka-577201	Rs. 128,42, 644/-	Rs. 2,15,44, 720/-	March 16, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	March 23, 2026 02:00 PM To 05:00 PM	March 20, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession
3.	Irfan Khan (Borrower) Ameena Khanum, (Co-Borrower) Aarshiraj Builder and Developers Limited, (Co-Borrower) Th Akbar Khan (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHNXN00001562457	5th Cross B Block Gopala Badavane Ward No. 24 Sri Ranganatha Layout Shivmogga Town Na Shivmogga Karnataka- 577205	Rs. 28,75, 573/-	Rs. 48,19, 711/-	March 16, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	March 23, 2026 02:00 PM To 05:00 PM	March 20, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-https://BidDeal.in) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Limited. The Mortgage/notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till March 20, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule. The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before March 20, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before March 20, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article. For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit https://www.icicifh.com/ Date: March 07, 2026 Place: Belgaum, Shivmogga Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited", CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

WHAT WAR LOOKS LIKE

What happens when war comes to a city? Many of us imagine that wars are fought between soldiers far in the mountains, in the deep sea, or high in the clouds. But Tehran is neither of those things.

I've lived through a war in Tehran before, and I know a little of what it feels like. It feels like a bad dream. A very bad one.

With a population of nearly 14 million, ringed by snow-capped mountains to the north and dotted with green parks, Tehran looks like Srinagar with skyscrapers. The bulk of the city's elite and upper middle class, as well as government and security buildings that are targets of hourly airstrikes now, are based in the north of the city. The roads are clean and in excellent condition, but they meander, and traffic jams around the bends are frequent. With good schools, universities, museums, cafes, art galleries, a metro system, spacious public squares with street musicians singing 'Hotel California' and Farsi rap with equal gusto, Tehran is a vibrant, modern city. But if you lived in Tehran today, what would you do? Anyone who could has already left the city. Roads leading out of the city were choked with traffic in the first two days of the airstrikes. But now the question is, if 174 cities have been bombed across the country, where is it safe to go? When a cruise missile slams into concrete within hearing distance, your first thought is of your children. Parents rushed to schools to pull children out immediately after the first airstrikes on February 28. But how do you explain the reasons for this conflict to your crying child, especially when every consecutive night comes with louder explosions? You decide to stay at home, as some of the war advisories ask you to. But what do you do all day? The offices are closed. There is an ongoing internet blackout. You can't "work from home", or get on social media or answer a WhatsApp call from a family member abroad. Depending on the channel, the TV only spouts war propaganda from one side or the other. All you can do is stand on the terrace and watch precision bombing spring ten-storey high mushroom clouds in the distance. It's possible that one of the bombs lands too close and shatters your windows. Your spouse is hurt but not fatally. But the hospitals are too full of casualties to attend to your minor injury. You decide to self-medicate, but as many international drug patents exclude Iran, the pharmacy only sells locally made drugs, and you don't trust their quality.

If you have a dog, as many in north Tehran do, you can't afford to take it out for a walk, and none of the kennels answers the phone. The dog cowers under the bed and whimpers at every explosion. You decide to go check on a friend. But how do you move around the city? You could take the metro, but several of the major metro stations have been converted into bomb shelters. You can drive, but many of the underground parking areas are also now bomb shelters. Alternatively, you can leave the car parked in the street, exposed to falling debris. You could always take a taxi and pay the all-day long surge pricing. But most drivers in the city are dependent on Google Maps and Wayz. And the maps get hacked before every round of conflict, showing your location 10 miles far from where you are. How does the cab driver then find your pick-up location? Even if the cab finds you, the driver is unable to navigate and asks you for directions to the destination. Since the January 2026 protests, internet access has been uneven. In the current internet blackout, only a select few white (unfiltered) SIM cards have been allowed internet access by the authorities. And so it is that the favour you seek from that special friend in high office is not a job or a loan or for your file to be pushed up the queue. All you ask for is a "white" SIM card. You decide to wait the war out and focus on caring for your elderly parents. Iran has a strong joint-family system, and it's common for working adults to live with their parents. Given economic distress and shrinking wages, many young people in Tehran do not marry until their 30s.

Where are the real heroines?

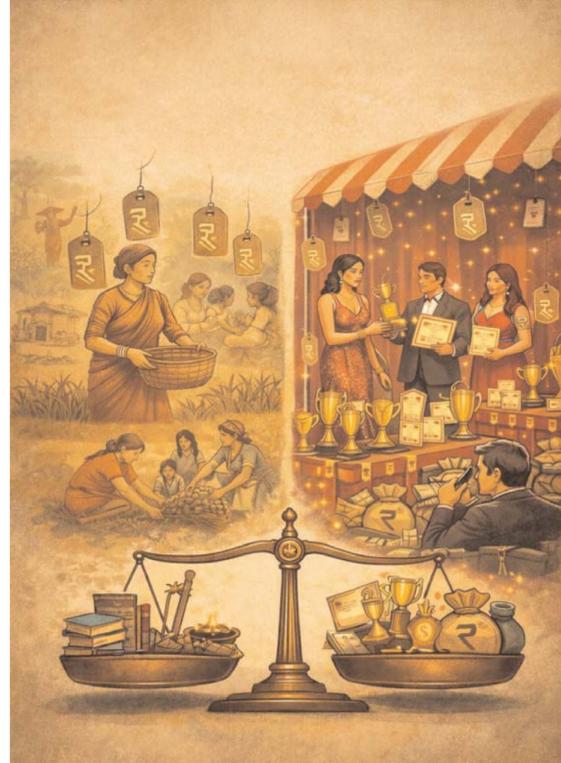


PRIYANKA SAURABH

The market for women's awards (Show business hidden behind the glitter of respect)

The purpose of Nari Samman should be to recognize women for their true role and contribution to society. But when recognition is limited to photos, certificates, and social media posts, it becomes not respect but a market for respect. More than trophies, women need equal opportunities, security, education, and a dignified life. They need a society where their hard work is recognized even without the glare of the stage. Respect once held a profound meaning in society. Honoring someone wasn't just a formal ceremony, but a moral obligation to publicly acknowledge their struggle, labor, and contributions. Respect meant society's acknowledgment of the individual's life's role in paving the way for others. However, in recent years, a strange trend has emerged—a market for awards in the name of "women's honor."

Today, it seems as if every institution, every platform, and every organization is competing to distribute awards with grand names like "Nari Shakti Samman," "Woman Icon Award," "Woman Leadership Award," and "Global Women Excellence Award." Open social media and every other day, you'll see photos of some woman being honored with the "International Women's Honor" or "National Women's Ratna." Smiling faces on stage, glittering trophies in hand, and large banners behind—everything looks incredibly attractive. But behind these glamorous images lie many questions that often go unaddressed. The question isn't why women are being honored; the question is: are these honors truly honors, or are they merely becoming a means of show and publicity? In fact, today, "women's empowerment" has become a term that, the more frequently used, the more its



true meaning is diluted. Podiums are proclaimed, speeches extol the power and potential of women are delivered, long lists of awards are distributed, photos are taken, social media posts are made, and the next day, everything returns to normal. In all this, the women who need empowerment the most are often missing. In Indian society, honors weren't just about trophies or certificates. Honoring someone was a recognition of that person's social contributions. It was a form of society's expression of gratitude—that you paved the way for others through your life. But when the purpose of honor shifts to publicity, networking, and personal branding, its value gradually diminishes. Today, many award ceremonies have a vague selection process. Participants are sometimes required to submit their own nominations, while others charge a fee, and ultimately, almost everyone is honored in a lavish ceremony. In such events, stage decorations, camera flashes, and social media posts are given more importance than the dignity of the honor itself.

The era of social media has further accelerated this trend. Today, honors are no longer just certificates, but part of digital identity. As soon as someone receives an award, photos are shared on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The captions often read, "I received the International Women's Honor." Looking at these posts, it seems as if receiving honors is the ultimate goal of empowerment. Gradually, the competition for honors becomes more important than the actual work itself. This trend is evident not only at the individual level but also at the institutional level. Many organizations use awards ceremonies as a means of publicity. They bestow grand titles, stage grand events, and then use the event to enhance their organization's recognition. Sometimes, it's even the case that a single individual is honored by several different organizations within a few months. The biggest question is: if so many awards are being given, are the hard-working and struggling women of society truly coming to the fore? There are millions of women in rural

India who are doing amazing work for their families, society, and communities. They are running self-help groups, promoting education in villages, contributing to environmental protection, or fighting against domestic violence and social evils. Many women are working tirelessly to educate their children despite limited resources. Many women are breaking social barriers and standing on their own feet. But these women lack access to major platforms or the means to promote themselves. Therefore, their work often remains unnoticed. They rarely appear on honor lists. In contrast, some individuals are honored repeatedly. Sometimes they receive the "Mahila Shakti Samman" from an organization, sometimes the "Mahila Prema Award" from another organization, and sometimes the "Rashtriya Mahila Ratna" from another platform. This situation calls into question the credibility of the honor itself. Today, it wouldn't be wrong to say that an "awards industry" has developed in some places. This industry has a set structure. First, an award is announced with a catchy name. Then, nominations are invited. A selection committee is formed, the process of which is often not transparent. Finally, a ceremony is held in a large hotel or auditorium, where dozens of people are honored. Often, these events prioritize connections, recognition, and pay over actual accomplishments. Some even charge enrollment or registration fees. When honors are commodified, it's natural to question their ethics. Women's empowerment won't happen simply through awards. True empowerment will occur when society provides women with equal opportunities. Even today, millions of girls in India are deprived of education. Many women are economically dependent. Problems like domestic violence, gender discrimination, and social pressure still exist. Distributing honors without addressing these issues will not solve empowerment, but will be a beautification of the problem. Honor is meaningful when it serves as a hallmark of struggle, not merely a decoration on the stage. If honor inspires, it propels society forward. But if it becomes merely a means of prestige and publicity, it gradually loses its meaning. This responsibility lies not only with institutions, but also with society. We must understand that honors are only valuable when bestowed with honesty and transparency.

WHY IS NITISH HEADED TO THE RAJYA SABHA?

Bihar will soon have a new chief minister. Nitish Kumar, the long-time chief minister of Bihar, is officially preparing to leave the CM post and get elected to the Rajya Sabha. Nitish, the leader of the Janata Dal (United), filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha on March 5. With BJP leading the government, JD(U) may be accommodated with two deputy chief minister positions as part of a power-sharing arrangement. The change could usher in a new chief minister from the BJP, which is the dominant partner in the ruling NDA alliance in Bihar. Speculations are also rife that with Nitish's entry into the Upper House, his son Nishant Kumar is expected to make entry into politics and may be given an important position in the government. In last November's Assembly election, the NDA won 202 of the 243 seats - the BJP was the largest party with 89 seats while the JD(U) got 85, a jump of 42 seats from the previous election. Nitish was the face of the election. This is not merely another political shuffle - it could reshape the state's power equations dramatically and reshape party strategies at both state and national levels. Several strategic and political factors appear to be driving this possibility. Leadership transition at 75, Nitish (celebrated his birthday on March 1) has been a dominant figure in Bihar politics for decades. Since Nitish has been unwell for a long time, this move has been on the cards. His shift to Rajya Sabha might reflect a planned succession strategy within JD(U) and the broader alliance. Earlier, even within JD(U), there was a debate over who should be nominated to Rajya Sabha. Nitish and his close confidantes including leaders like Manish Verma (former bureaucrat, who belongs to the same caste Kurmi as Nitish) preferred son Nishant Kumar for Rajya Sabha. But Nishant reportedly wanted to pursue state politics. This process was more than just a formal step; it's a potential inflection point towards intra-party power dynamics. There is still a section in the party which wants Nitish to continue as the CM. Sources say that



Nitish's son, Nishant Kumar entering active politics, possibly as deputy CM or in a growing leadership role could be part of a succession calculus inside JD(U). The JD(U) has been steered by its supremo, his son on the top post of the party would ensure its durability and survival. It could keep the flock together at least for the next 5 years with Nitish still around. Nitish has a clean image and had kept his family away from politics hitherto unlike the RJD, Congress and other political parties in the state. Nitish has a unique governance model - a mix of development promises, lean social engineering, and strategic alliances (with both BJP and adversarial blocs at different times) - which has kept him politically relevant for years. Whether Nishant would be able to carry forward his father's political legacy and governance model given that he is a political rookie? Other political scions like RJD's (Rashtriya Janata Dal) Tejashwi Yadav and Union Minister Chirag Paswan (Lok Janshakti Party - Ram Vilas) have already cut their political teeth. The NDA (National Democratic Alliance) - especially after its strong performance in assembly elections - may be recalibrating leadership roles to balance power between JD(U) and the BJP. A BJP chief minister could strengthen the alliance's cohe-

sion and reflect its electoral weight. BJP's strategic opportunity From the vantage of the BJP, this could be a long-anticipated moment. Following the state elections, the BJP emerged as the single largest party in the assembly, even though the JD(U) has historically held the chief ministership. If Nitish vacates the CM post, the BJP - with its stronger seat count - naturally positions itself to stake a claim for the top job. BJP is well-placed to push for its own leader as the chief minister. Given that, it now has most seats, this would be legitimate both constitutionally and politically. BJP sources said that the chief ministerial candidate from their party would either be from the Backward Class (27% of the population) or Extremely Backward Class (36%). Buzzing names are those of Samrat Choudhary, current deputy chief minister, Union Minister Nityanand Rai. Bihar minister Dilip Jaiswal, and Digha BJP MLA Sanjiv Chaurasia are also in the fray. The recent precedent cases in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh shows the BJP springing surprises in the choice of Chief Ministers. Bihar might continue this trend. A first BJP CM in Bihar would redefine regional politics and assert the party's dominance, which has been growing but often operated in the shadow of JD(U)'s senior leadership.

A FILTH MARKET IN THE NAME OF HARYANVI SONGS



(Desi beats, double meaning culture and the growing threat to the dignity of daughters)

The soil of Haryana is known not only for its agricultural strength but also for its rich folk culture. The raginis echoing in the village squares, the folk songs of weddings, the collective voices of women working in the fields, and the traditional songs sung during festivals—all of these have kept the cultural spirit of Haryanvi society alive. These songs contained love, satire, the struggles of life, and social consciousness. Most importantly, they were both entertaining and embodied in dignity and sensitivity. But in recent years, the direction of Haryanvi music appears to be rapidly changing. Modern beats, fast-paced rap, glamour, and the viral culture of social media have made this music popular, but they have also brought with them several worrying trends. Today, a large portion of Haryanvi songs are no longer limited to entertainment, but are often becoming a medium for double-meaning words, vulgar innuendos, and derogatory portrayals of women. This change isn't limited to language. Many song videos portray women as mere objects of attraction or entertainment. This trend not only impacts the quality of music but can also impact society's perception of women. Today, Haryana is rapidly changing. Its daughters are achieving new heights in education, sports, administration,

and science. These girls, who have risen from villages and made their mark in the country and the world, have proven that, given the opportunity, they are indispensable in any field. However, the portrayal of women in some parts of popular culture is worrying. When women are portrayed in light or ambiguous contexts in popular songs, it becomes more than just a subject of entertainment. This gradually gives rise to a social mindset in which women are viewed not as respectable individuals but as objects of entertainment. The concept of family and social respect has always been important in Haryanvi society. Daughters are considered the pride of the household. Ironically, this same society often enthusiastically listens to songs that use language that is not respectful towards women. Social media plays a significant role in this entire scenario. Today, songs are no longer limited to radio or cassettes. YouTube, Instagram, and other digital platforms have opened the way for music to reach millions of people. A song can go viral in a matter of hours, reaching millions of views. The problem is that in this viral culture, sensationalism often takes precedence over quality. Controversial or double-meaning lyrics quickly attract attention, and so some creators deliberately create content that generates discussion. But the question is: can social sensitivities be ignored for the sake of a few million views and likes? The true identity of Haryanvi culture has been its simplicity, clarity, and self-respect. The folk songs of this region contained humor, but it was restrained. There was satire, but no insult. Today, when we see and hear many modern songs, it seems that the culture has become merely a "desi package"—one that depicts tractors, fields, local clothing, and village scenes, but lacks the sensitivity in language and emotions that is the hallmark of true culture. Culture isn't made up of mere external symbols. The true meaning of culture lies

in the values and sensibilities of society. If a culture is reduced to a mere commodity for the market and entertainment, its dignity gradually diminishes. This issue isn't limited to artists. Every segment of society plays a role. Artists must understand that with popularity comes responsibility. Their songs reach millions of young people, and they can unknowingly influence society's thinking. Similarly, viewers and listeners have a responsibility. As long as people continue to listen to such songs enthusiastically, their demand will remain in the market. Therefore, society must also decide what kind of culture it wants to promote. The role of the government and cultural institutions also becomes crucial here. Imposing unnecessary restrictions on creative expression is not appropriate for any democratic society. However, it is also essential to ensure that a minimum degree of social sensitivity is maintained in the material presented on public platforms. The true strength of Haryanvi music lies in its folk tradition. This music emerged from the Chaupals, reached the stage, and then established its identity across the country. If this music is reduced to a mere medium of sensationalism and controversy, it would be an injustice to its soul. Entertainment is an essential part of society. Music connects people, brings joy, and eases the stresses of life. But entertainment is only beautiful if it respects the dignity and sensibilities of society. The true identity of Haryana is its hardworking people, its strong culture, and its daughters. If music truly wants to represent this culture, it must also respect this dignity. Today, there's a need for Haryanvi music to not be limited to fast beats and viral videos, but to also retain its core identity—simplicity, sensitivity, and respect. Because when filth is served in the name of culture, it's not just a crisis for the music, but also a crisis for society's thinking. The most important identity of any society is its culture and the dignity of its daughters.

“WOMEN” — WE HAVE TO BECOME WARRIORS THAN A MERE PACIFIST

Women empowerment is a much-discussed theme over all today. Women have battled a long and hard fight for equivalent freedoms and rights, right to education and right to employment. Despite the fact that gender discrimination has not yet been completely tended to, we have made considerable progress from being simple parental caregivers. A woman's life is not generally bound to the kitchen yet on the off chance that she so chooses she can run the board room too. Just before international woman's day March 8, 2022 with a subject "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow" here are some of ongoing legal advancements in the status of women. Mothers are our essential parental care givers and are regularly underestimated and undervalued. However, when she figures out how to support herself nobody can cause her to feel not exactly any man deserving his salt. As far as possible we have been the ones we develop to us. Life will head down the path we need it to head. Our own contemplations are the ship we should figure out how to explore. To enable ourselves first believe in worth. our gender isnt our weakness and should not characterize what we are capable to do. There are



Women in the military significantly more considerable than their male counterparts. There are woman CEO's that have impelled their organizations to significance. We are living in liberated times and we should change our own convictions or beliefs to conquer discrimination. Assuming that if we can bleed every month, carry one more life in our womb for nine months and give birth, we can doubtlessly educate our self and work for an independent life. How difficult it should be when men can get it done; we can do it better. The thought of equality, be that as it may, requires equity. The historical backdrop of social advancement is additionally

the historical backdrop of imbalance and inequality. Inequality between countries, religions, identity, class, caste, race and sexuality. However, the subject of woman's privileges poses a potential threat, cutting through all the layers of social delineation. German theorist and communal scientist Friedrich Engels in his classical writing states that, Woman was the first human being that tasted bondage. Woman was a slave before slavery existed. The feminist resist for equal rights has been paved through legislation, be it the social justice, equal rights and the right to vote, to employment rights, property rights, rights gov-

erning divorce and marriage to child-care and medicine legislation in view of equivalent privileges and equal rights influences the actual very values of society, affecting the manner in which we vote, yet the manner in which we work, live and function as a family, the manner in which we access education, health care and justice. In the independent India some notable Rights exclusively for woman.

WOMEN AND INDISPENSABLE CHANGES IN INDIAN LAW

In India, the constitutionally ensured guaranteed for women is frequently contradictory to the harsh societal

reality of the land and its social standards. The struggle for woman's equality started in India in the twentieth century, during the struggle of for Independence. In the fight against the British, western educated pioneers like B.R.Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Savitribai Phule urged woman to step away from their homes and hearths and enter the public in the sphere for Independence. Indian values, patriotism and social and cultural legacy were celebrated through the symbolism of Mother India. Maybe without precedent for India, the possibility that a woman is essential for the larger Indian tapestry as a legal citizen flourished. The consideration of the female citizen into the public arena required citizenship rights and changes in the law, for example, right to education, inheritance privileges, abolition of sati and polygamy as well as remittance for widow-remarriage. While a struggle for nationalism changed the lawful landscape of woman's freedoms through the colonial era time, the post-colonial era in India has been set apart by major developments like globalization, neo-liberal arrangements and the leaps and in innovative development.

MARUTI SUZUKI'S HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN GURUGRAM, ROHTAK AND SONIPAT



Gurugram / New Delhi, 06 March 2026: Maruti Suzuki India Limited ("Maruti Suzuki") announced the start of two focused health interventions to address pressing public health challenges in rural and semi-urban communities in Haryana. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), these initiatives aim to improve awareness and enhance long-term health outcomes, especially for adolescents, women, and mothers.

Menstrual Hygiene

A year-long Menstrual Hygiene Project is underway in two Government Schools of Rohtak, and Kharkhoda and will subsequently expand to eight schools in Manesar. Menstrual health remains one of the most under-discussed yet critical aspects of well-being of women. Planned to reach over 4,500

students from class 6th to 12th, the program will help to spread awareness, overcome misconceptions, adopt hygienic practices and drive long-term behavior change. It will engage parents, teachers, and community stakeholders as well, to create a supportive environment.

Anaemia Reduction

A comprehensive Anaemia Reduction Program has also commenced across 10 villages in Gurugram, Rohtak and Sonipat districts. This builds upon the Anaemia related interventions taken in the past in Haryana. As per World Health Organization (WHO), Anaemia continues to be a global public health concern, mostly affecting young children, pregnant and postpartum women, as well as menstruating adolescent girls. Aligned with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's 'Anemia Mukh Bharat Mission', the initiative is set to reach around

16,500 beneficiaries with special focus on the vulnerable group. Maruti Suzuki is implementing this program in collaboration with the state government. The program includes screening, nutrition awareness, and sustained follow-ups for health-review of community members. Announcing these initiatives, Mr. Rahul Bharti, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs, Maruti Suzuki India Limited said, "At Maruti Suzuki, we believe that true leadership is about sharing and spreading progress. Through our comprehensive CSR interventions, we strive to uplift communities around our plants. Our community development efforts span across health-care, education, sanitation, water access, and infrastructure. Our Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Project and the Anaemia Reduction Program are set to reach over 21,000 people, including adolescents, women, and mothers."

Jai Raj Ispat Limited Revolutionises Construction with Launch of "ATOOT" Fe 550 D-Grade TMT Bars

Kurnool: 6th March, 2026: Jai Raj Ispat Limited, one of South India's leading steel manufacturing companies, known for its high-quality TMT bars and structural steel products, today announced the launch of its flagship product, Jai Raj ATOOT Fe 550 D TMT Bars. Engineered to meet the evolving demands of modern high-rise and infrastructure projects as well as to offer the best quality to individual home builders, ATOOT represents a significant leap in structural integrity and seismic safety.



Jai Raj Ispat Ltd., Kurnool, is the second primary steel producer in Andhra Pradesh and is among the few primary steel plants in India adopting an advanced steel-making process. The plant has an installed capacity of 0.50 million tonnes per annum. The management plans to double this capacity by 2026-27. This facility manufactures steel through a world-class process route comprising a blast furnace - energy optimising furnace (EOF) - Ladle Refining Furnace (LRF) - endless casting, using virgin iron ore and

coke as primary raw materials. The plant is also equipped with state-of-the-art Endless Casting and Rolling (ECR) technology. The Kurnool plant is expected to significantly contribute to the region's industrial growth, aiming to boost Jai Raj Steel's annual revenue to a minimum of ₹5,000 crore within two years of operation. The ATOOT ANDHRA product launch event served as the official launch platform for the Jai Raj ATOOT Fe 550 D TMT Bars, followed by inaugural bookings from the dealers. The attendees expressed strong confidence in the product, noting its potential to set a new benchmark for safety and strength in the region's construction industry. Speaking on the occasion,

Mr S.K. Goenka, Founder & Managing Director, Jai Raj Ispat Limited, said, "We aim to provide our discerning customers with high-grade quality and eco-friendly rebars. The launch of Jai Raj ATOOT Fe 550 D TMT bars, a new generation of steel rebar, is part of the Company's portfolio-building plan focused on helping the end-users to make informed choices. Strong homes are built with strong intentions, unwavering efforts, and unmatched building materials; the Jai Raj ATOOT is a pioneering product built to provide relief to the customers who wish to build safe homes." According to Mrs Rajshree Jain, Director, Jai Raj Ispat Limited, "The launch of the Jai Raj ATOOT Fe 550 D TMT bars is a pivotal moment for the Indian construction industry, noting that the next 25 years belong to India's growth story." She emphasised that by utilising the world-class Danieli ECR technology at their Kurnool plant, the company is now "making the best quality bars in India, better than some of the leading producers in the country".

L&T Finance Launches 'Spoothi' to Empower Women Entrepreneurs with Specialised Home Loan and Loan Against Property Solutions

Mumbai, March 6, 2026: On the occasion of Women's Day, L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), (formerly known as L&T Finance Holdings Ltd.), one of the leading Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in the country, is proud to announce the launch of Spoothi, a specialised program designed to empower women entrepreneurs by facilitating finance for the purchase of house property or providing Loan Against Property (LAP) for business expansion and working capital. This initiative recognises the critical role women play in the economy and aims to support those who are solely or jointly running a business or profession. Under the Spoothi program, LTF offers a range of specific relaxations and benefits, including extended loan tenors of up to 25 years for Home Loans and LAP for specific profiles. Furthermore, Industrial LAP tenors are offered for up to 12 years, and the program introduces enhanced eligibility norms such as higher



debt-to-income ratios to provide greater financial flexibility. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Sudipta Roy, Managing Director & CEO, LTF, said, "Our Company is deeply committed to supporting women borrowers because they consistently demonstrate a disciplined and strong repayment history, which makes them ideal borrowers. By launching Spoothi, the firm aims to harness this reliability while providing women with the necessary capital to scale their enterprises and secure their personal assets, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and robust financial ecosystem." The program is initially rolling out in major metropolitan hubs, including Mumbai MMR, Delhi NCR,

Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, and Hyderabad. To be eligible, the woman borrower must be a key person managing the business with at least a 50% stake in non-individual entities, and her income must constitute at least 50% of the total appraised income when clubbing with other borrowers. Additionally, the business must show an annual cash profit of at least Rs. 5 Lakhs as per the latest Income Tax Return (ITR) and must not have incurred a net loss in the last two years. Mr. Jinesh Shah, Chief Executive - Urban Secured Assets & Third-Party Products, LTF, said, "Spoothi is built upon a foundation of relaxed eligibility criteria and better pricing specifically tailored

for women. The program offers lower interest rates to ensure that financial barriers are minimised. By reducing the business vintage (i.e., age of a company) requirement to just two years for loans up to Rs. 75 Lakhs, LTF is making it easier for emerging women-led businesses to access the high-value credit they need to thrive." In the third quarter ended December 31, 2025 (Q3FY26), LTF's Home Loan and LAP segment recorded disbursements of Rs. 2,879 Crore, reflecting a 16% Year-on-Year and 6% Quarter-on-Quarter increase. The total book size grew to Rs. 28,682 Crore, a rise of 22% Year-on-Year and 5% Quarter-on-Quarter, driven by robust distribution networks and new partnerships.

Zerodha Mutual Fund Launches ETF Tracking Inside WhatsApp

Bengaluru 6 March 2026: Zerodha Mutual Fund ("Zerodha MF") has launched an industry first offering: Integrated ETF Tracking within WhatsApp interface - Founder of smallcase, Anugrah Shrivastava said in a post on LinkedIn.

Highlights
Zerodha Mutual Fund ("Zerodha MF") has launched an industry first offering: Integrated ETF Tracking within WhatsApp interface - Founder of smallcase, Anugrah Shrivastava said in a post on LinkedIn.

This new offering allows investors to view their entire Zerodha MF portfolio - including both mutual Funds and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) - in one unified, app-like dashboard without leaving WhatsApp. While the Zerodha MF recently introduced the ability to buy, sell, and track mutual funds via a tap-based WhatsApp interface, the inclusion of ETF tracking is a notable step in increasing convenience. Normally, tracking ETF holdings required investors to log into separate brokerage applications or demat accounts. With this update, the Zerodha Asset Management Private Limited ("Zerodha AMC")

becomes the first AMC in India to bring visibility of ETF holdings directly into WhatsApp interface, making portfolio monitoring seamless and easy.

Some of the key highlights of the new feature include:

Unified Dashboard: An investor can see the entire Zerodha MF's portfolio - Mutual Funds and ETFs (Equity, Debt, and Commodities) - in one place. Seamless Transactions: Buy and sell ETFs directly from WhatsApp. Powered by the

smallcase Gateway, users can connect to any major Indian broker and execute orders without leaving WhatsApp.

Zero Friction: No new apps to download. It is a 100% tap-based interface built right into WhatsApp. Vishal Jain, CEO of Zerodha AMC, commented, "Our goal has always been to meet investors where they are. By bringing ETF tracking directly to WhatsApp, we are removing an additional layer of friction for investors. You shouldn't have to jump between different apps to know how your investments are doing. This feature makes tracking a diversified, multi-fund portfolio truly simple and intuitive."

How to Access:

Investors can experience this new feature by connecting with Zerodha Mutual Fund on WhatsApp at +91-98453 35486. Simply send 'Hi' and click on "Track & Invest" to view the updated investment dashboard.

LENOVO CIO PLAYBOOK 2026: 99% of Indian Enterprises Plan to Increase AI Investments; Budgets Expected to Grow 19% Year-Over-Year

Bengaluru, India March 2026 - Enterprises across Asia Pacific are accelerating their shift from AI experimentation to execution, with 96% of organizations planning to increase AI investments over the next 12 months, according to the 4th edition of the Lenovo CIO Playbook 2026 - The Race for Enterprise AI, commissioned by Lenovo with insights from IDC. On average, organizations expect AI spending to grow by 15%, spanning GenAI and Agentic AI, public cloud AI services, on-prem AI infrastructure, and AI security tools. India stands out in AP, with 99% of organizations planning to increase AI investments over the next 12 months and the highest average year-on-year budget growth in the region at 19%. These investments prioritize deploying and supporting AI infrastructure, internal AI training including non-IT staff, and generative AI development and applications, fol-

lowed by AI devices and AI security, trust and transparency tools - underscoring AI as a core enabler of enterprise efficiency, resilience, and growth. "When 96% of organizations across AP are planning a 15% on average increase in AI investment, it tells us that AI decisions are now being made at the core of enterprise strategy," said Sumir Bhatia, President, Asia Pacific, ISG, Lenovo. "The differentiator will be how effectively organizations integrate AI, embedding it into infrastructure, operations, and security so value compounds over time." As AI becomes increasingly embedded into enterprise strategy, driving revenue growth, improving profitability, and enhancing business & customer experience have emerged as the top three business priorities for CIOs in Asia Pacific.

From ROI Validation to

Outcomes-Led AI Building on last year's AI-nomics focus on validating returns and business cases, the 2026 Playbook highlights a decisive shift toward outcomes-led AI adoption. CIOs remain confident in AI's value, but are applying greater rigor to ensure investments translate into sustained impact. 88% of AP organizations expect a positive ROI from AI in 2026, with an average anticipated return of 2.8x (US\$2.85 for every US\$1 invested). Yet, scaling AI beyond pilots remains a key challenge, reinforcing the importance of governance, operating models, and lifecycle management.

AI Adoption Expands Beyond IT AI adoption across Asia Pacific continues to accelerate and is no longer confined to IT. 66% of organizations are already piloting or systematically adopting AI, while 15%

remain in early stages and 19% are considering adoption. In India, 59% are already piloting or systematically adopting AI, with 19% in early stages and 23% considering adoption, highlighting sustained interest and a strong pipeline for broader deployment. AI is increasingly being deployed across customer service, marketing, operations, finance, and industry-specific lines of business, reshaping how enterprises operate and compete. Notably, half of surveyed organizations report that non-IT departments are now funding AI initiatives, elevating the CIO's role as an enterprise-wide orchestrator.

Agentic AI Emerges as the Next Enterprise Opportunity Interest in Agentic AI is expected to double over the next 12 months. Today, 21% of Asia Pacific organizations

report significant usage, 59% are exploring or planning limited deployments, particularly across telecommunications, healthcare, and government, where operational complexity and scale are highest. Despite growing interest, readiness remains uneven. Only 10% of organizations consider themselves ready for scaled Agentic AI implementation, with 41% requiring more than 12 months to meaningfully scale. Security, governance, data quality, and integration complexity remain key barriers. "Agentic AI represents a fundamental shift in how intelligence is embedded into the enterprise," said Fan Ho, ED & GM, Asia Pacific, Solutions & Services Group, Lenovo. "With nearly 60% of organizations already exploring Agentic AI and the majority are choosing a measured path to scale, it reflects that enterprises want AI that operates within core workflows."

Trump demands Iran's 'unconditional surrender' as Israel says it hit leadership bunker 'with 50 jets'

Tehran: In a further update from Trump on the situation in the Middle East, the president says on social media: "We are moving thousands of people out of various Countries throughout the Middle East." "It is being done quietly, but seamlessly," he adds, praising Secretary of State Marco Rubio. "We're continuing to receive pictures from the Lebanese capital Beirut, where the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) says it has been carrying out strikes. Some of the latest images we've seen show smoke billowing over the city's southern suburbs and streets filled with rubble. Residents in Beirut have been telling the BBC about their fear and confusion amid the strikes, which the Israeli military has said are targeting "Hezbollah command centres" and drone storage facilities. With his call for "unconditional surrender" by Iran, President Donald Trump appeared to cut off the possibility of quickly finding an off-ramp to end a war that has



spread across the Middle East. Trump's social media post signalled a fresh commitment by the US to continue the war until the government in Tehran fully capitulates. Trump didn't mention "regime change" - a term that senior administration officials have avoided since the US launched the attack six days ago. But it's hard not to interpret Trump's call for a full surrender as anything other than an end to the Iranian regime as it stands

now. Trump also reiterated his position that the US should play a role in shaping Iran's political future after the war. How Iran responds to this remains to be seen. But so far the regime has showed no signs of capitulating anytime soon. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre (UKMTO) says a "third party source" has reported a boat has been hit by projectiles in the Strait of Hormuz. The UKMTO says it received a

report of an incident six nautical miles north of Oman today. "A third party source has reported a tug being hit by unknown projectiles in the Straits of Hormuz," it says. "Vessels are advised to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO." The Strait of Hormuz is the world's busiest oil shipping channel, and is bounded by Iran to the north and Oman to the South. As a result of the US-Israeli attacks

on its territory, Iran has warned that it will "set fire" to any ships trying to pass through it. The Foreign Office says that a second charter flight carrying stranded British nationals back from Oman has taken off. Downing Street says more flights are expected in the coming days. US President Donald Trump says "there will be no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER". Writing on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump adds: "After that, and the selection of a GREAT & ACCEPTABLE Leader(s), we, and many of our wonderful and very brave allies and partners, will work tirelessly to bring Iran back from the brink of destruction, making it economically bigger, better, and stronger than ever before."

'IRAN WILL HAVE A GREAT FUTURE. MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN (MIGAI).'
Nikos Christodoulides has said he "rules nothing out"

when asked whether Cyprus could reopen discussions about Britain's sovereign bases on the island once the current crisis ends. Speaking to reporters, the Cypriot president says both the government spokesman and the foreign minister have already been asked about the issue. "The answer is that I rule nothing out," he says, referring to the possibility of revisiting the question of the British bases in Cyprus after the crisis. The British sovereign base areas at Akrotiri and Dhekelia are both UK-administered territory established under the 1960 independence agreements, meaning any changes to their status would require agreement with London. Asked about his earlier meeting with the head of Britain's foreign intelligence service, MI6, the president says they exchanged views on developments in the region, but adds that there was nothing further that could be said publicly about the discussion. One week into a widening war.

The young women who fought in Ethiopia's last civil war and don't want to see another one



Twenty-two-year-old Abeba Amdu has seen some of the best years of her life consumed by war - and she has no wish to see another conflict in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, which some fear could be about to break out. She went to the front lines in 2020 as a Tigrayan soldier to fight in the civil war against the federal army and remains deeply traumatised by her ordeal more than three years after the end of the brutal conflict. "I lost everything," she tells BBC Tigrinya. Before the war, Abeba had been a rising football star. Playing since the age of seven, she eventually became a striker for the 70 Enderta female

football team at 17. She saw herself as a feminist, taking on traditional attitudes about women's participation in sport. The teenager was also an outstanding student, studying IT in Tigray's main city of Mekelle, and had a clear vision for her future. Then the world she knew halted abruptly. First there was the coronavirus pandemic, leading to the suspension of her studies. Then war broke out. "I was not a believer in war, because I knew what my parents went through," she says. Abeba was referring to the fact that her mother and father bore the scars of the long and brutal war that finally ended in 1991 with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) overthrowing Ethiopia's then ruler Mengistu Haile Mariam. The TPLF went on to dominate the federal government until 2018, when current Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office following huge demonstrations against its repressive rule.

US ECONOMY UNEXPECTEDLY SHEDS 92,000 JOBS IN FEBRUARY



The number of jobs in the US economy fell last month, an unexpected contraction that has renewed questions about whether the labour market in the US might be starting to crack. Payrolls in the US dropped by 92,000 and the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.4%, according to the latest official figures, surprising analysts who had expected hiring to remain stable. It marked the biggest monthly job loss since October, when the US government shut down, and came amid concerns that a jump in oil prices sparked by the US-Israel war in Iran could threaten growth. Nearly every sector shed jobs including healthcare, typically a source of strength, which was hit by strikes last month. Employment in the federal government also continued to drop, shrinking by 10,000 last month. Since hitting a peak in October 2024, federal government employment has dropped by 330,000, or 11%, the Labor Department said. It also said job gains in December and January were lower than initially estimated. Even if healthcare employment bounces back as expected, the figures dented hopes that hiring might be starting to accelerate after the 2025

slowdown, which was the weakest year for jobs since the pandemic, said Samuel Tombs, chief US economist for Pantheon Macroeconomics. "What stabilisation?" he wrote in a note after the figures were published. "The idea the labor market has turned a corner implodes with this report." The hiring downturn sent shares on Wall Street lower and raised new pressure on US President Donald Trump, who campaigned on promises of improving the economy. Democrats quickly seized on the figures, with Senator Elizabeth Warren saying they showed that White House was "tanking the job market", while White House officials brushed off their significance. In an interview with CNBC, Kevin Hassett, director of the National Economic Council, said he still expected strong growth to power job creation in the months ahead. "There will be so much activity that everybody is going to be able to find a job that wants one," he said. The report also complicates the questions facing the US central bank. The Federal Reserve would typically respond to a weakening labour market by cutting borrowing costs.

'We have been preparing': Why the boots on the ground in Iran could be Kurdish



For a sixth day, the US and Israel are battering targets in Iran, waging war from the air. Could there soon be boots on the ground? Maybe. But not American ones. Iranian Kurdish opposition groups in exile in northern Iraq have told the BBC they have plans to cross the border - and have had them for decades - but they flatly deny claims that their fighters have already done so. "We have been preparing for this for the past 47 years, since the age of the Islamic

Republic," said Hana Yazdanpana, of the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), which claims to have the biggest armed force. But she insisted that "not a single Peshmerga has moved". The Kurdish word peshmerga means "those who face death". Yazdanpana told us that six opposition groups - which recently formed a coalition - were co-ordinating with each other politically and militarily. "No-one moves alone," she told us. "We will know if our brothers are going to move." She does not expect fighters to advance this week. First, the US needs to pave the way. "We can't move if the air above us is not cleaned," she said. "And we need the regime's weapons depots to be destroyed."

'WHAT IS THE GAME PLAN?': THE IRAN WAR IS UNSETTLING CHINA AND ITS AMBITIONS

China is not feeling the shock of war in the Middle East - yet. But it is feeling the ripples. In the short-term, it has enough oil supplies for several months, after which it could turn to neighbour Russia for help. But China will be calculating what this could mean long-term - not just for its investments in the Middle East, but also for its ambitions. This week, thousands of Communist Party delegates are meeting in Beijing to discuss a roadmap for the world's second-largest economy as it continues to battle low consumption, a prolonged property crisis and huge local debt. On Thursday, China lowered its annual economic growth target to the lowest level since 1991, even as Beijing continues its rapid development of high-tech



and renewables industries. China may have hoped to export its way out of economic trouble. But it has spent a year fighting a trade war with the United States, and now faces the prospect of upheaval in the Middle East, which supplies both its major shipping routes and a lot of its energy needs. The longer the war drags on, the more it could hurt, especially if traffic through the

Strait of Hormuz remains blocked. "A prolonged period of turmoil and insecurity in the Middle East will disrupt other regions of importance for China," says Philip Shetler-Jones from the Royal United Services Institute. "African economies, for instance, have been the beneficiary of substantial and steady flows of Gulf capital. If the investment tide goes out, this risks

wider instability that undermines the sustainability of China's broader and longer-term interests." That is, given China's global footprint, its investments and markets beyond the Middle East are also vulnerable to a protracted war. And like so many other countries, China too is wary of this fresh bout of unpredictability. "I think China is thinking the same as everyone else," says Professor Kerry Brown, director of the China Lau Institute at King's College London. "What is the game plan? Surely the Americans didn't go into this with no game plan." But then, he adds: "Probably, along with everyone else, they would also be thinking, oh God, they really have gone into this with no plan at all."

US AND VENEZUELA AGREE TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC TIES AFTER MADURO CAPTURE



The US and Venezuela have agreed to re-establish diplomatic and consular relations. The agency said in a statement that the two sides would make joint efforts to promote stability, support economic recovery and advance political reconciliation. While their diplomatic relations have been improving since the US military captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January in a surprise raid, the announcement of formal bilateral ties marks a hugely symbolic step. President Donald Trump ordered troops to seize Maduro and his wife,



bringing them to a Manhattan court to face allegations of weapon and drug offences, which they deny. The US embassy in Caracas, which closed in 2019, has already reopened, and Washington has appointed a new diplomat in Venezuela. The

Venezuelan government said on Thursday it was willing to advance a "new stage of constructive dialogue, based on mutual respect". It said the relationship must result in the "social and economic happiness" of the Venezuelan people". But the statement from Caracas made no reference to a transition or future elections, unlike the US state department's. The US has accused Maduro - who is due to stand trial this month in the US - and other members of his government of leading a criminal organisation involved in activities such as illegal mining and drug trafficking. Sources told the BBC that more diplomatic staff from the US embassy in Bogotá, Colombia, are expected to be transferred to Caracas soon. The move will make it much easier for officials to negotiate face-to-face and provide consular services.

Hungary to expel Ukrainian bank workers in row with Kyiv



Hungary says it is expelling seven Ukrainian bank workers arrested on Thursday while transporting \$80m (£60m) worth of cash and 9kg of gold in cash-transport vehicles to Ukraine. After Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha accused Budapest of taking the group hostage and stealing money, Hungary's tax authority said they had been detained on suspicion of money laundering. Ukraine's state savings bank, Oschadbank, said they had been part of a regular transport between Austria and Ukraine and were "unjustifiably detained". Hungary's tax authority said it was conducting criminal proceedings and added that the transport was being overseen by a former general of Ukraine's intelligence service. "This year alone, more than \$900m, 420m and 146 kg of gold bars were transported through the territory of Hungary to Ukraine," the national tax and customs administration said in a statement on Friday. It is not yet clear what has happened to the enormous sums of cash and the gold seized on Thursday, but

Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski said "they've stolen the money". Relations between Ukraine and Hungary have deteriorated during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and have descended into a war of words over a halt to Russian oil supplies through the Druzhba pipeline in Ukraine. The arrest of the bank workers comes deep in Hungary's election campaign, with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán trailing in opinion polls with little more than a month before the vote. Hungarian reports described how black-clad officials from Hungary's TEK counter-terrorism centre raided the Ukrainian-registered vehicles on Thursday and then their convoy headed to Budapest. Sybiha accused Orbán of dragging Ukraine into its "domestic politics and electoral campaign", adding that Kyiv would not tolerate "this state banditism". His opposite number in Budapest, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, asked why such enormous sums were being moved in cash: "If this is truly a transaction between banks."

Trump cuts his losses on Noem after controversial tenure at homeland security

Sooner or later, advisers in President Donald Trump's orbit all come to learn the same unwritten rule: no-one can outshine the boss. Kristi Noem, the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, became the latest reminder of that on Thursday when Trump announced he was removing her as the face of the administration's crackdown on immigration. Noem will be replaced by Oklahoma Senator Markwayne Mullin at the end of the month, Trump said in a post on Truth Social. The US Senate will have to confirm him in the post. The president said Noem would move to a new job as special envoy for a new US security initiative in the Western hemisphere



called the Shield of the Americas. "I thank Kristi for her service at 'Homeland,'" Trump said. It ends Noem's controversial tenure at the top of the department, which is tasked with carrying out the president's sweeping immigration agenda. Noem was one of the administration's brightest stars when she stepped



into the role last year after Trump returned to the White House. She immediately gained attention for joining immigration raids, often appearing in a bullet-proof vest alongside field agents carrying out enforcement actions. She was a vocal advocate of Trump's deportation drive, and touted policies that effectively

closed the US-Mexico border. She also took the message abroad, in one instance visiting a maximum-security prison in El Salvador that took in some migrants deported from the US. But Noem's unconventional approach courted controversy from the start. Homeland Security secretaries do not typically partake in field operations. Noem's decision to appear on the frontlines of Trump's immigration crackdown was viewed by critics as an effort to burnish her image as the tough-talking immigration enforcer-in-chief. She sparked a backlash by wearing a \$50,000 (£37,500) Rolex during her visit to Cecot, the notorious prison in El Salvador.

Indonesia to ban social media and other online platforms for under 16s

Indonesia says it will ban social media and other popular online platforms for children under 16, becoming the latest country to introduce restrictions aimed at protecting young people from online abuse. Meutya Hafid, the country's communications and digital affairs minister, announced that accounts for under 16s on "high risk" platforms would be deactivated from 28 March. "This will start with platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Threads, X, Bigo Live, and Roblox," said Hafid, adding that the ban would make Indonesia "the first non-Western country to delay children's access to digital spaces according to age". There was no immediate

response from the affected platforms. "Our children are facing increasingly real threats—ranging from exposure to pornography, cyberbullying, and online scams, to addiction, which is the most significant concern," said Hafid. "The government is stepping in so that parents no longer have to fight alone against the giants of algorithm-driven platforms." Children's charity Unicef reported in 2023 that roughly half of the 510 Indonesian children it surveyed had been exposed to sexual images on social media. "As a working mum with two children, especially with a teenage son, I don't have much time to constantly monitor what my son is doing in the digital world."



IRAN WILL NOT COMPETE AT WINTER PARALYMPICS

Iran will not take part at the Milan-Cortina Winter Paralympics, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has announced. The IPC said the solitary athlete who was preparing to represent the nation at the Games "cannot travel safely to Italy" because of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Cross-country skier Aboulfazel Khatibi Mianaei's withdrawal was confirmed on Friday, external a few hours before the Games' opening ceremony in Verona. IPC president Andrew Parsons said it was "really disappointing for world sport and especially for Aboulfazel" that he would be unable to take part in the Games. Parsons said: "Since the conflict began on Saturday, the IPC and the Milan-Cortina 2026 organising committee have been working tirelessly behind the scenes with the NPC [national Paralympic



committee] and national ski federation to find alternative routes for the safe passage of the Iran delegation to the Games. "However, with the conflict ongoing across the Middle East, the risk to human life

is too high." The Middle East has been plunged into crisis, following joint US-Israeli attacks on Iran targeting the country's missile infrastructure, military sites and leadership. Tehran, in response, has

launched strikes across the region, including on Israel. Residents in Tehran on Friday said they had experienced the "worst night" of Israeli strikes so far - with the US saying attacks are set to intensify. A fresh

wave of strikes was also launched on Beirut, Lebanon overnight, the Israel Defense Forces said, while Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain, reported intercepting Iranian attacks.

The IPC's Parsons said dialogue with Iran's sporting federations had "not been easy" with "communication systems down" across much of the country. He added: "To not compete at a Paralympic Winter Games because of factors outside of his control after years of training and dedication is heart-breaking for the athlete and our sympathies are with Aboulfazel at this difficult time." The 23-year-old, who has competed at the past two Winter Paralympics, was set to race in the men's sprint classic standing on Tuesday and the men's 10km interval start classic standing a day later.

AUSSIES EDGE INDIA ON DAY ONE OF HEALY'S LAST TEST

Canberra: Australia dismissed India for 198 on day one of the day-night Test in Perth as Alyssa Healy began her final match as captain of the hosts. Australia closed on 96-3 in reply, trailing by 102 runs, with Healy - who will retire from all formats after this series - falling for 13 at the Waca.

All-rounder Annabel Sutherland starred with the ball, taking 4-46, while left-arm fast bowler Lucy Hamilton impressed on her Test debut by claiming 3-31. After losing the toss, India slipped to 107-5 but Jemimah Rodrigues compiled a defiant 52 to prevent her side being skittled. In reply, Australia opens Georgia Voll (two) and Phoebe Litchfield (nine) both made single-figure scores to leave the hosts 31-2, bringing Healy to the crease. She started to rebuild alongside Ellyse Perry before picking out Rodrigues at point off Sayali Satghare as the Aussies fell to 58-3.



However, Perry remains unbeaten on 43 and Sutherland is 20 not out as

Australia will look to build a first-innings lead on day two of the four-day game.

Mahieka Sharma's Epic Reaction As Hardik Pandya Gets Scolded By Son For Getting Out

Hardik Pandya smashed a brilliant 12-ball 27 as India put 253 runs on the board against England, in the T20 World Cup 2026 semifinal on Thursday. Hardik's cameo with the bat was crucial to India crossing the 250-run mark, as England only suffered a defeat by 7 runs in the end. However, as Hardik walked back to the dressing room after being run out, his son Agastya wasn't happy. The little kid wanted his father to spend more time in the middle, and it was Hardik's girlfriend, Mahieka Sharma, who had to handle the situation. Hardik's son Agastya was sitting with Mahieka in the stands when Hardik was dismissed. Agastya gestured that Hardik



should have tried to hit a different shot on the delivery. Mahieka, sensing the situation, had to intervene and handle Agastya's anger. Here's the video: After India put a total of 253 runs on the board, Hardik was given an important role to play with

the ball. At one stage in the game, when Jacob Bethell was going berserk, it looked like England would go on to overhaul India's total. This is when Hardik and Jasprit Bumrah combined to put pressure back on Harry Brook's team from both ends

of the pitch. The match's turning point came when Bumrah delivered a brilliant 18th over, conceding just six runs while England needed 45 from the final three overs at the start of it. He bowled four pinpoint yorkers in the over. Following his effort, Hardik further tightened the pressure with an excellent penultimate over, giving away only nine runs and dismissing Sam Curran. India eventually managed to restrict England to 246/7, winning the match by a slim seven-run margin. For India, Jasprit Bumrah (1/33 in 4 overs), Axar Patel (1/35 in 3 overs) and Hardik Pandya (2/38 in 4 overs) were the standout performers with the ball.

Raha Takes Centre-Stage As Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt Attend India vs England T20 World Cup Semifinal

In one of the best matches in T20 World Cup history where even a 250-plus total did not look safe-India motored into the final after beating England by just seven runs at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday. The tournament co-host will defend its 2024 crown against New Zealand in the final on Sunday in Ahmedabad. India powered to 253/7, the fourth-highest total in T20 World Cup history, while England replied with 246/7, the fifth-highest ever. The match produced 499 runs and 34 sixes - 19 by India and 15 by England. Cheering from the stands were several celebrities. Bollywood stars Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, along with their daughter Raha, supported India from



the stands. Anil Kapoor and Varun Dhawan were also in attendance. Sanju Samson, dropped on 15, smashed 89 off 42 balls to lead India's innings. Jofra Archer returned figures of 1/61, the most runs conceded by an England bowler in a men's T20 World Cup match. Jacob Bethell led England's

reply with a career-best 105 off 48 balls, including seven sixes. He fell on the first ball of the final over, attempting a risky second run when England still needed 30 to win. Jasprit Bumrah bowled a controlled spell of 1/33 in four overs, while Axar Patel pulled off two stunning catches and

played a key role in another dismissal. India have now beaten England in back-to-back T20 World Cup semifinals and will look to become the first team to win three T20 World Cups and defend their title. New Zealand, meanwhile, are seeking their maiden men's T20 World Cup trophy.

Who's to blame for Spurs crisis?

Tottenham Hotspur's increasingly chaotic descent towards the Premier League relegation zone continued as thousands of supporters left early during their damaging home defeat by Crystal Palace on Thursday night. Spurs stand one point off the drop zone after interim manager Igor Tudor lost his third game in succession after replacing the sacked Thomas Frank. Tudor was appointed as a so-called "impact coach" based on his previous track record - but such has been his lack of impact that questions are already being asked about the Croat's future. Their campaign has been characterised by toxicity, misery and on occasion high farce - so who is to blame for the collapse of a club that won the Europa League last season



and reached the Champions League final as recently as seven years ago? Daniel Levy and the Spurs ownership? Former chairman Daniel Levy was always the lightning rod for criticism when Spurs struggled, with the 2008 League Cup and last season's Europa League the only successes in his reign before he "stepped down" after almost 25 years last September. Levy was the driving force behind Spurs'

magnificent stadium, but found himself in the crosshairs of supporters for what they regarded as his failure to provide the financial backing to break into the Premier League elite on a regular basis. Former Spurs and England goalkeeper Paul Robinson told BBC Sport: "This is a problem that has been building over years. You can circle a drain long enough but at some point you will fall in.

Mohammad Amir Takes Brutal 'One-Dimensional' Dig At Abhishek, Says He Won't 'Survive'

Former Pakistan cricketer-turned-pundit Mohammad Amir hasn't missed a chance to criticise Abhishek Sharma. As the India opener failed to deliver with the bat in the T20 World Cup 2026 semifinal against England, Amir came up with another bold verdict, saying the batter is destined to fail unless he changes his game. Abhishek arrived at the T20 World Cup on the back of exemplary form but has managed only one fifty-plus score so far. Amir, speaking about the difference between bilateral series and ICC events, highlighted how teams prepare for each player far more thoroughly in global tournaments than they do in one-off assignments. "Look, there is a world of difference between



a bilateral series and an ICC event. In a series, teams maybe don't focus in the same way; they think, okay, in this series we have to try out players, that's where their focus is, and they don't mark players that intensely. But when you come into ICC events, every team marks every player

they are going to face. By now, everyone has figured out which are Abhishek Sharma's strong areas and which are his weak zones. "You can see he gets stuck even against off-spinners, and when a fast bowler comes in and keeps targeting his body with the ball, he struggles. So to perform in international cricket, especially in big events, you have to be very strong technically and mentally," Amir said during a chat on Geo News.

LINGARD JOINS CORINTHIANS - WHAT AWAITS HIM IN BRAZIL?



It's a tradition that, with a few breaks over the years, has endured since the 1960s. Every time Corinthians unveil a big signing, a siren sounds at their social club headquarters, Parque Sao Jorge. It was like this with Socrates, Rivaldo, Carlos Tevez, Ronaldo 'Phenomenon' and, more recently, Memphis Depay. The siren will be heard once again in eastern Sao Paulo as Corinthians introduce Jesse Lingard as their new signing. The former Manchester United midfielder arrives as a free agent after leaving South Korean club FC Seoul in December. He has signed a contract until the end of the year, with the possibility it could be extended until the end of 2027 if certain goals are met. Lingard had offers from other clubs, but, after a quick call to his former United team-mate Depay, he was in no doubt about his decision and had a flight

booked even before a verbal agreement was in place. A unique experience now awaits Lingard across the Atlantic. Not only because the 33-year-old is set to become the first English footballer to feature in the Brazilian top flight. But also because Corinthians themselves are a unique force in the domestic context, too. "Every team has supporters. Corinthians are supporters who have a team," journalist Jose Roberto de Aquino famously put it. And they refer to themselves in a very particular way: "bando de loucos" - a bunch of crazies - a label the club has proudly embraced. "Welcome to the madhouse," reads a sign in the tunnel leading visiting sides to the pitch at the Neo Quimica Arena. Corinthians fans are widely known as the most loyal in the country. For better and for worse, as Lingard will soon find out first-hand.

NBA legend LeBron James claims another scoring record

LeBron James surpassed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the most field goals scored in NBA history as the Los Angeles Lakers lost at the Denver Nuggets on Thursday. James scored 16 points for the Lakers in the 120-113 defeat and passed Abdul-Jabbar's tally of 15,837 during the first quarter. The 41-year-old, who is playing in an unprecedented 23rd NBA season, passed Abdul-Jabbar to become the top scorer in NBA history in February 2023. Last year he became the first player to reach 50,000 points combined in the regular season and post-season, and cur-

rently has 43,127 in the regular season alone. "Being mentioned with some of the greatest to ever play this game has always been humbling," said James, the league's four-time Most Valuable Player. "I grew up watching, reading [about], idolising a lot of the greats, and if I was able to be part of the NBA, I wanted to put myself in position that I can be named with some of the greats by doing something right. "It's a pretty cool feat, but it's hard for me to kind of wrap my head around it or what it looks like." Lakers coach JJ Redick likened the evolution of James' career to that of Bruce

Springsteen, saying: "You get to the end and you're like, 'this guy's greatest hits are like insane.' "And LeBron's greatest hits, he just keeps adding to them. He just plays and plays and plays and the greatest hits, he's got a hell of a catalogue." James passed Abdul-Jabbar's points record before field goals as three-point shots were introduced midway through the NBA legend's career. The six-time champion spent most of his 20-year career with the Lakers and retired in 1989 having scored 55.9% of his 23,307 shots. James has a 51.6% scoring rate. The four-time champion is set to claim another

record as Thursday's game was his 1,606th in the regular season, putting him five behind Robert Parish. James earned his 22nd All-Star selection this year and says he has not decided whether he will continue playing next season. Fellow All Stars Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray each scored 28 points for Denver, who stayed fifth in the Western Conference standings, one spot above the Lakers. Second-placed San Antonio claimed their 13th victory from 14 games, with Victor Wembanyama returning to top form with 38 points and 16



rebounds as the Spurs won 121-106 at home against the Detroit Pistons, who lead the Eastern Conference.

Everyone enjoyed watching 'Mrityunjay'.. Hero Sri Vishnu at the press meet of the premiere show

Content King Sri Vishnu is the hero of Hussain Shah Kiran's movie 'Mrityunjay'. This investigative thriller is produced by Sandeep Gunnam and Vinay Chilakapati under the banners of Light Box Media and Picture Perfect Entertainment. Sri Vishnu and Reba Monica John, who became a blockbuster hit pair with 'Samajavaragamana', will once again entertain with this film. This movie is going to release on March 6. The film was specially screened for the media on Thursday. In the press meet of the premiere show.



Shri Vishnu says .. Thanks to all who came to the premiere show of Mrityunjay. I saw the response in the theater. Everyone enjoyed it very much. The promotion of our film started from Rajamouli. Tarak released the trailer. Nani garu watched the night movie and appreciated it. Media and audience keep anchoring content movies whenever they come. I want everyone to come to the content movie and make it a success,' he said.

Producer Sandeep Gunnam said .. Thanks to everyone like Sukumar, Rajamouli, Tarak and Nani who supported Mrityunjay. Our team spent sleepless nights working for this movie. Sri Vishnu looks very new in this film. He said that this movie will impress everyone. Hussain Shah Kiran

said .. 'Nani garu saw the movie 'Mrityunjay'. I felt so calm after knowing that he liked it. His review is always a must. Thanks to NTR who supported me in this journey. Sri Vishnu acted as a reporter in this film. His performance in this movie will be very new. Reba Monica has done a fantastic job as a police officer. He said that this movie will impress everyone.

Reba Monica John said .. Thanks to the media for supporting the movie 'Mrityunjay'. We are very proud of our film. Our image is impressive. I want to work with this team again and again. Manisha A. Dutt speaking

..Thanks to the



director and producers who believed in me and gave me a chance. This is my second film with Sri Vishnu. We and our team worked very hard for this movie. I got into the industry

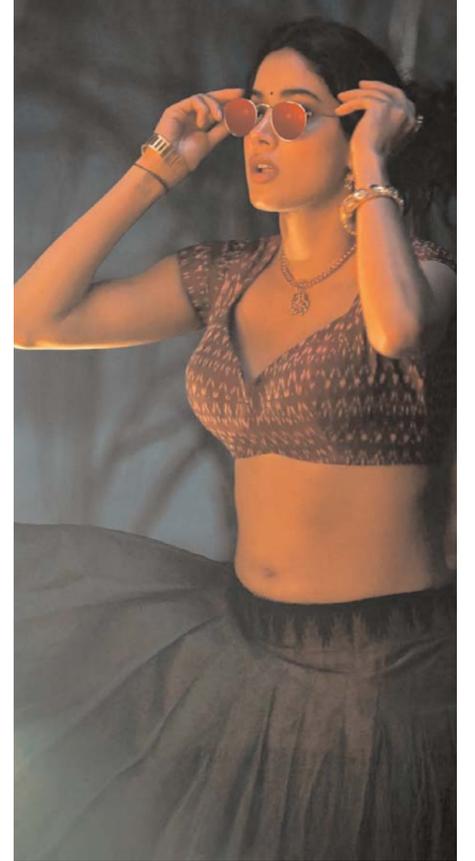
because of my elder brother Hussain Shah. He has a lot of talent and patience. 'Mrityunjay' will be very new. It will impress everyone,' he said.

Ramya says .. 'Mrityunjay' is very different and thrilling. He said that this movie will impress everyone. Actor Sudarshan says .. 'Mrityunjay' will satisfy everyone. Sri Vishnu impresses everyone with the content this time too. Thanks to the director and producers who supported me in this journey. Actor Ayyappa Sharma

said .. 'I like Gunnam Gangaraju very much. I am happy that Sandeep Gunnam is making a film like this. I liked this story told by Hussain. Sri Vishnu is equally entertaining in front of the screen and behind the scenes. This movie will impress everyone,' he said. Actor Rachcha Ravi said .. Producers Sandeep Gunnam and Vinay helped a lot in the case of 'Mrityunjay'. The director has already said that the role is settled. Sri Vishnu can play all kinds of roles as Avalis. He always tries to entertain the audience. This movie is made with heart touching emotion. This film will be enjoyed by all.

Janhvi Kapoor Looks Traditional, Yet Glamorous In Birthday Special Poster From Mega Power Star Ram Charan's Peddi

Mega Power Star Ram Charan's upcoming pan-India action drama Peddi has entered a crucial stage as the team accelerates both post-production and promotional activities. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana and produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under the Vriddhi Cinemas banner, the film is gearing up for a grand worldwide release on April 30th. Actress Janhvi Kapoor, the leading lady opposite Ram Charan in the film, grabs attention on her birthday with a traditional yet glamorous new poster. She steps into the role of Achiyamma, a village belle with a bold edge, leaning playfully in a dimly lit rural setting. Janhvi sports a deep maroon embroidered blouse with a plunging neckline that highlights her midriff, paired with a flowing matching lehenga. Layered necklaces, a bracelet, and round reddish-tinted sunglasses add a stylish touch, while her loose hair and confident pose blend traditional charm with a modern flair. The team also released a special birthday tribute video featuring Janhvi Kapoor, offering a behind-the-scenes glimpse that highlights her on-screen elegance and off-screen charm. It with Janhvi in striking traditional looks, holding a megaphone and singing into a vintage microphone. It also offers glimpses of the filmmaking process, with Janhvi interacting with director Buchi Babu Sana and her co-star Ram Charan. AR Rahman's soundtrack has already



struck a chord, with Chikiri Rathnavelu, editor Navin Chikiri and the recently released Rai Rai Raa Raa receiving massive love from music lovers. Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyendru, and Boman Irani play other prominent roles. Backed by top talent like cinematographer R

Texla' Movie Launch Ceremony Produced by Kannan Ravi Group

The launch ceremony of the film 'Texla', produced by Producer Kannan Ravi under the banner of Kannan Ravi Group and directed by Aishwarya Rajinikanth, starring Jai and Suraj Venjaramoodu, was held grandly in Chennai today (March 6, 2026). The film, helmed by Aishwarya Rajinikanth, Jai, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Anand Raj, G.M. Sundar, George Marian, and many others in prominent roles. Yuvan Shankar Raja is composing music for this film. It is produced by Kannan Ravi, with Deepak Ravi serving as the co-producer. Following the release of the film's introductory video that garnered an overwhelming response, the official launch ceremony of 'Texla' was held in grand style at a star hotel in Chennai. The occa-

sion was graced by eminent personalities including Naam Tamilar Katchi Chief Coordinator Seeman, Latha Rajinikanth, veteran producer R.B. Choudary, and acclaimed director Bala as special guests. The event also saw the presence of several prominent producers, actors, technicians, and distributors from the Tamil film fraternity, who gathered to extend their warm wishes and support to the film's team. Speaking at the event, Producer Kannan Ravi said, "I must admit that speaking on a stage like this always brings with it a sense of nervousness and humility, especially when stalwarts and creative visionaries of our industry are seated before me. In the world of cinema, I consider myself someone who is still taking baby steps. In my other arena of business, I may



such an opportunity has come my way so early in my journey. Aishwarya Rajinikanth is an immensely talented filmmaker. Beyond her talent, what touched me the most is her warmth and humility. I am confident she has a remarkable future ahead, and I extend my heartfelt wishes to her. I am equally delighted to be working with Suraj

Venjaramoodu, a phenomenal artist and a dear friend. There were earlier plans for us to collaborate on several projects, but they did not materialise at the time. I am happy that we are finally coming together through this film. My sincere thanks to Jai, Anirudh, and everyone who has graced this occasion today. I believe this is just the beginning of a long and meaningful journey." Seeman, Chief Coordinator of Naam Tamizhar Katchi, said, "It is often said that a good beginning is half the victory. In that sense, the launch of Texla has begun on a truly grand and promising note. We are all aware of the many challenges involved in producing a film today, yet Producer Kannan Ravi is courageously backing as many as sixteen films simultaneously. This itself reflects the depth of his pas-

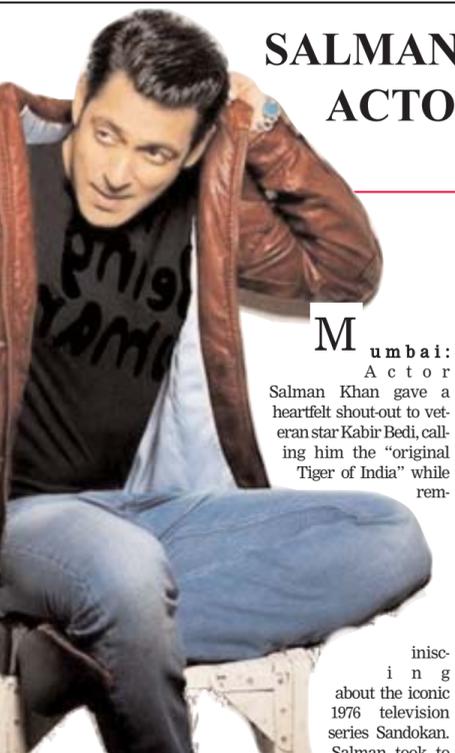
sion and commitment towards cinema. His recent production Thalaivar Thambi Thalaimeyil has already emerged as a notable success, and it is heartening to see him embark on yet another ambitious project. I extend my heartfelt wishes to the actors, technicians, and director Aishwarya Rajinikanth associated with this film. May the film achieve tremendous success. After all, a film's success becomes a celebration in the lives of many who have worked behind it. And ultimately, success is born out of relentless hard work, something that this talented team undoubtedly represents." Director Bala said, "My heartfelt wishes first go to my younger sister Aishwarya. I would also like to congratulate Producer Kannan Ravi for placing his trust in her and giving her this opportunity.

Rocking Star Manchu Manoj's massive pan-India period action film "David Reddy" has officially announced international actress Maria Riaboshapka as the female lead



Rocking Star Manchu Manoj is currently starring in the upcoming film "David Reddy." The movie is being produced by Nallagangula Venkat Reddy and Bharat Motukuri under the Velvet Soul Motion Pictures and True Radix banners. It is directed by Hanuma Reddy Yakkanti. Set against the backdrop of the British colonial era, "David Reddy" is being made as a large-scale pan-India film with an intense action drama storyline. The film is being produced in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada. The makers have now shared an exciting update by officially announcing that international actress Maria Riaboshapka will play the heroine in the film. According to the team, the scenes featuring Manchu Manoj and Maria Riaboshapka will showcase strong on-screen chemistry and are expected to impress the audience. "David Reddy" tells the story of a warrior who rises in rebellion against the British Empire. Manchu Manoj will be seen in a completely new avatar in this film. The glimpses and first-look posters released earlier have already received a huge response. Expectations are growing that this film could mark a strong comeback for Manoj.

SALMAN KHAN CALLS THIS ACTOR THE "ORIGINAL TIGER OF INDIA"

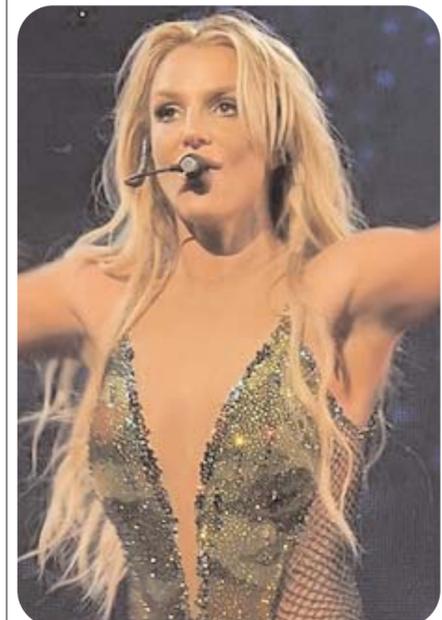


Mumbai: Actor Salman Khan gave a heartfelt shout-out to veteran star Kabir Bedi, calling him the "original Tiger of India" while reminiscing about the iconic 1976 television series Sandokan. Salman took to

his Instagram stories section to praise Kabir Bedi for creating history nearly five decades ago by becoming the first Indian actor to headline an international television show with "Sandokan." "Sandokan Sandokan 50 years ago the first Indian to do an international tv show, the forever handsome, enigmatic, the original Tiger, not only of Malaysia but of India," Salman wrote on a video featuring Kabir, who was seen introducing the new "Sandokan", Turkish actor Can Yaman. Salman also wished luck to Can Yaman, who will be stepping into the role in the upcoming adaptation of "Sandokan." He noted that the actor has big shoes to fill and expressed excitement about watching the new version. "My dua that everyone looks as strong and conducts their emotional life as

@kibirbedi. The new Sandokan @canyaman... u have big shoes to fill in. Best of luck! I'm gonna watch it right now! I love u @kibirbedi," he wrote. Sandokan is a 1976 Italian television series directed by Sergio Sollima, based upon the novels of Emilio Salgari featuring the pirate hero Sandokan. It was followed in 1977 by a feature-length spin-off film, and in 1996 by a sequel series named The Return of Sandokan, with Kabir Bedi reprising his role as Sandokan in both. Sandokan is a fictional late 19th-century pirate created by Italian author Emilio Salgari. His adventures first appeared in publication in 1883. Sandokan is the hero of 11 adventure novels. Within the series, Sandokan is known throughout the South China Sea as the "Tiger of Malava".

BRITNEY SPEARS ARRESTED, RELEASED; CHARGE NOT CLEAR



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