



Government of India



## EMPOWERING THE WOMEN OF TAMIL NADU

**₹1000+ crore** assistance to **19+ lakh** beneficiaries under PM Matru Vandana Yojana

**1.1+ crore** tap water connections and over **41 lakh** Ujjwala gas connections improving quality of life for women

**14+ lakh** pucca houses under PM Awas Yojana and **65 lakh** toilets ensuring dignity of life for women

**23+ lakh** women-led MSMEs driving entrepreneurship, creating new opportunities for women

**5.6 lakh** Lakhpati Didis achieving financial independence, strengthening women-led economic empowerment

**40+ lakh** daughters secured under Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, with **₹33,000+ crore** in savings empowering their future

**3.3+ lakh** Self-Help Groups (SHGs) strengthening community-led development, empowering women and rural livelihoods

**7,000+** women-led startups shaping innovation in Tamil Nadu, strengthening the state's startup ecosystem

**DEVELOPED TAMIL NADU  
FOR DEVELOPED INDIA  
MODI GOVERNMENT'S RESOLVE**



“Our goal is a developed Tamil Nadu for developed India. The Central Government remains fully committed to enabling inclusive development and the state's progress.”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi

# Poland eyes joint defence production with India after Operation Sindoor success

**NEW DELHI:** Poland is looking forward to expanding defence cooperation with India, particularly in advanced drone technologies, a Polish Foreign Ministry official said on Friday. Michal Baranowski, Under Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, told PTI Videos that Poland possesses some of the best drones in the world, both for observation and explosive (loitering munitions) roles. "These capabilities are something that we can share and have shared before with India. This is something that can also continue to grow," Baranowski said in response to what Poland shared with India during Operation Sindoor. He emphasised viewing India not merely as a market but as a strategic partner. "We are looking at not only India as a market, but India as a partner. So over the next months, I hope that we can move more of the production in a joint venture kind of way," he added. Baranowski noted that one of Poland's leading defence companies already has a subsidiary in India. The WB group, with its subsidiary WB Electronics India Pvt Ltd, is boosting its "Make in



India's presence in the drone segment. Operation Sindoor, launched by India in May 2025, involved precision strikes using missiles and drones on nine terror-related sites in Pakistan and

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. A Polish official stated that Polish drones played a role in dismantling terror infrastructure during the campaign. Baranowski highlighted the elevation to a strategic partnership following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Poland in August 2024. Prime Minister Donald Tusk is likely to visit India later this year, he added. Baranowski said he plans to return to India soon with a business delegation to implement steps that would take economic relations "from a good level to a very high potential level." "We have just concluded an FTA between the EU and India. The negotiations have been concluded. This gives us a framework to build our business-to-business and government-to-government relations," he said. Addressing the ongoing US-Iran conflict that has disrupted the Strait of Hormuz, Baranowski called for an immediate end to hostilities and a return to diplomacy. "So, we look forward to the fastest possible cessation of hostilities and going back to the diplomatic track," he said. "We are already seeing an impact on energy, both when it comes to gas and when it comes to oil. Again, if the conflict continues, this will have a negative impact, beyond what we are currently seeing on the world economy," Baranowski warned.

## If not in politics, would have probably done entrepreneurship in aerospace: Rahul Gandhi

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said that if he was not in politics, he would probably be doing some entrepreneurship in the aerospace world. Rahul was responding to a query during a dialogue with the Information Technology (IT) Fraternity at Technopark here. He said he has been defined as a politician by many, but he actually does a lot of other things. Rahul, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, said he was of the view that calling someone a politi-

## Nitish's son Nishant likely to join JD(U) on Sunday

**PATNA:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar is all set to formally join the JD(U) on Sunday, marking a generational shift in party leadership, sources said. Nishant's joining will take place at the party's headquarters here in the presence of senior leaders, ministers, MPs, MLAs and MLCs, they said. The development comes two days after the JD(U) supremo filed nomination papers for the March 16 Rajya Sabha elections, marking a turning point in Bihar politics and virtually bringing the curtain down on his tenure as the state's longest-serving chief minister. "Nishant Kumar met party MLAs and MLCs at the residence of JD(U) national working president Sanjay Jha here on Friday and discussed his future strategies at length. It has been finalised that Nishant will enter active politics after formally joining the



JD(U) on Sunday," one of the party sources said. Senior JD(U) leader Sharvan Kumar was the only Bihar minister who was present in the meeting, another party source said. JD(U) legislators had on Friday expressed their anguish to Nitish Kumar over his decision to move to Delhi as a Rajya Sabha MP, but had drawn

## Mamata calls incoming Bengal Guv R N Ravi 'BJP cadre', alleges Bose was forced out

**KOLKATA:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday alleged that incoming Governor R N Ravi is a "BJP cadre" and claimed that the sudden exit of C V Ananda Bose from Lok Bhavan was the result of pressure from the Centre. Addressing supporters at her ongoing dharna against deletions in voter rolls, Banerjee accused the BJP-led central government of attempting to convert Lok Bhavan into a political outpost in the run-up to the assembly elections in the state. "Have you seen how C V Ananda Bose was removed? I know everything. He was threatened. They want to distribute money from Lok Bhavan. They want Lok Bhavan to be converted into a BJP party office. But everybody may not agree to such whims and fancies of Delhi," she



alleged. Without citing specific instances, the Trinamool Congress supremo also took a swipe at Ravi's tenure in Tamil Nadu, claiming that the governor had faced "many comments" from the Supreme Court. "The person who is coming to West Bengal now, I heard that he had to face many comments from the Supreme Court. He is a cadre of the BJP. But remember, West Bengal is a different place. You may

have done whatever you wanted in Tamil Nadu, but here you can't do that," Banerjee said. Escalating her attack on the BJP-led Centre, the chief minister accused it of undermining constitutional institutions and not allowing governors to complete their tenures. "The Centre is not letting anyone finish their term. You did the same thing with Jagdeep Dhankhar," she said, referring to a former West Bengal governor who later became vice president. Banerjee said those ruling at the Centre were behaving "worse than Muhammad bin Tughlaq", invoking a phrase often used in the Indian political discourse to describe arbitrary or whimsical governance decisions. "If you try to threaten us, we will ensure the fall of the BJP government at the Centre," she said. Banerjee's remarks come amid a fresh political storm triggered by Bose's sudden resignation earlier this week, just days before the Election Commission is expected to announce the schedule for the West Bengal assembly polls. In a dramatic development on Thursday evening, Bose stepped down from his post in New Delhi, setting off intense political speculation in the state. Soon after the resignation, Banerjee said Union Home Minister Amit Shah had informed her that Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi would take over as the governor of West Bengal. Ravi, however, is yet to assume charge. The developments have added fuel to the already tense political climate in the state, where the Trinamool Congress and the BJP are locked in a fierce battle ahead of the assembly elections, with the Lok Bhavan often emerging as a flashpoint during Banerjee's confrontations with the Centre. Banerjee's latest remarks also signal a renewed attempt by the ruling TMC to frame the upcoming polls as a fight to "protect West Bengal's autonomy" from what it calls interference by the BJP-led central government, a narrative the party has repeatedly deployed in past electoral contests.

## Woman declared foreigner gets Indian citizenship under CAA

**GUWAHATI:** A woman, who spent two years in detention after being declared a foreigner, has been granted Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Assam's Cachar district, her lawyer said. The woman, identified as 59-year-old Depali Das, a resident of the Hawaithang area under the Dholai assembly constituency, was declared an illegal migrant by a Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) in February 2019. Depali is the first declared foreigner in Assam who had once been lodged in a detention centre and later released on bail to receive Indian citizenship under the CAA. The police detained her after the tribunal's order and sent her to the Silchar detention centre on May 10, the same year, where she remained for nearly two years before being released on bail on May 17, 2021, following a Supreme Court order, her lawyer Dhar-



mananda Deb said. Depali was originally a resident of Dippur village under Dhirai police station in Bangladesh's Sylhet district and had married Abhimanyu Das of Parai village under Baniachong police station in Habiganj district in 1987, he said. A year later, in 1988, the couple entered India and moved to Cachar district, where they have been living since then. Her citizenship came under scrutiny in 2013 when police initiated an in-

quiry against her, and a chargesheet was submitted by the police on July 2, 2013, stating that Depali was a resident of Baniachong in Bangladesh and had entered India illegally after March 1971, Deb said. "The chargesheet later proved crucial in her application for Indian citizenship under the CAA because the applicant must provide documentary evidence showing migration from Bangladesh, Pakistan or Afghanistan," he said. "In most cases, applicants

fail to produce such documents, but in Depali's case, the chargesheet submitted by the police officer in 2013 clearly mentioned that she was from Bangladesh. The authorities accepted this document as valid proof," he added. After her release on bail in 2021, she wanted to apply for citizenship under the CAA and had approached Deb for legal assistance once the rules of the Act were notified in 2024. Her first hearing took place on February 24 last year at the office of the Superintendent of Post Offices in Silchar, which is designated to process such applications. Two more hearings were held subsequently, after which all her documents were submitted online to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). "She was called to the office of the Superintendent of Post Offices in Silchar for a final appearance on May 25 last year after the field ver-

## Dera Sacha Sauda chief acquitted in 2002 journalist murder case

**CHANDIGARH:** The Punjab and Haryana High Court has acquitted Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in the 2002 murder case of a journalist, sect head's lawyer Jitender Khurana said on Saturday. The court acquitted the Dera chief more than seven years after he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. "The high court division bench headed by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu on Saturday acquitted him in the murder case of journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati," Khurana said. The division bench passed the order while hearing appeals challenging the 2019 conviction in the case, he said. "The bench, however, has upheld the conviction of three others in the case," Khurana added.

The journalist's son, Anshul Chhatrapati, said he will challenge the verdict in the Supreme Court. Ram Rahim and three others were convicted by a special CBI court in Panchkula in January 2019 for the murder of the journalist in Haryana's Sirsa. Chhatrapati was shot outside his house in October 2002 after his newspaper 'Poora Sach' published an anonymous letter narrating the alleged sexual exploitation of women followers at the Dera headquarters in Sirsa. The journalist later succumbed to injuries, and a case was registered in which Ram Rahim was named as a conspirator. The case was handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2006. The Dera chief is currently lodged in Rohtak's Sunaria jail. He is serving a 20-year jail term, given in 2017 for raping two of his disciples. Anshul Chhatrapati termed the acquittal as a "setback" for his family. "It is a setback for us, but whatever legal remedies we have, we will use them. We will challenge this verdict in the Supreme Court. We expect that the investigating agency, CBI, would also challenge the high court verdict," he said. In May 2024, the Punjab and Haryana High Court had acquitted Ram Rahim and four others in the 2002 murder of the sect's former manager Ranjit Singh, citing "tainted and sketchy" investigations into the matter. Earlier, a special CBI court had sentenced them to life imprisonment in the case. It held Ram Rahim guilty of hatching a criminal conspiracy with the co-accused.

## Iran-Israel conflict: CBSE postpones Class 12 board exam in Middle East countries

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Saturday postponed the Class 12 board exams scheduled on March 9, 10 and 11 in the Middle East region amid the Iran-Israel conflict, officials said. "Due to the current situation in parts of the Middle East--Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE, the board has decided to postpone 12 exams on March 9, 10 and 11," said CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj. The new dates will be announced later, and for further exams, the situation will be reviewed on March 10, Bhardwaj added. Previously, the board had postponed the exam scheduled on March 2, March 5 and March 7 in the region. The board has cancelled Class 10 exams till March 11 and said mode of declaration of results will be announced separately. The US and Israel launched military strikes on Iran on February



28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Following the military offensive, Iran has 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. "Due to the current situation in parts of the Middle East--Bah-

## After six-year cancer battle, Chhattisgarh man cracks UPSC exam in third attempt

**MAHASAMUND:** Overcoming a six-year battle with cancer and resigning from three jobs, Sanjay Dahariya from Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district has secured the 946th rank in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025 in his third attempt. The 38-year-old son of a farmer from Beltukri has brought immense pride and joy to his family and the people of his village. Dahariya's academic journey began at a local government school, but it took a significant turn when he was selected for Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Mana (Raipur), in Class 5. The path to the civil services was fraught with professional and personal hurdles for Dahariya. After a stint with the State Bank of India in West Bengal from 2009 to 2011, he resigned to focus on higher goals. However, in 2012, he was diagnosed with cancer in the salivary glands, leading to a gruelling treatment that lasted six years. Undeterred, Dahariya, who also suffers from a minor vision impairment, continued his pursuit of civil services



and kept his career on track with another stint at a bank in Raipur and at the Mahasamund Post Office. He began appearing for the UPSC Civil Services Examination in 2022, dedicating himself entirely towards his goal, striking gold in the third attempt in 2025. "I hope to serve the country through the civil services. Whether I secure an IAS cadre or another service, my commitment to public service remains firm," Dahariya said, crediting his success to the unwavering support of his family and mentors during his illness. Mahasamund Collector Vinay Kumar Langeh and District Education Officer Vijay Kumar Lahare congratulated Dahariya, hailing his achievement, which serves as an example for courage and perseverance.

**GOLD NEARS RS 1.70 LAC, SILVER EYES RS 3 LAKH AMID SAFE-HAVEN BUYING THIS WEEK**



**EMIRATES SUSPENDS ALL FLIGHTS TO AND FROM DUBAI UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**



**AHMEDABAD BRACES FOR HISTORIC SHOWDOWN AS IND-NZ CROSS SWORDS**



**IN BRIFS**

**INDIA HAS BEST US TRADE DEAL: GOYAL**



New Delhi: Piyush Goyal, Union Commerce and Industry Minister, on Saturday said India has secured the best trade deal with the United States compared to its competing nations. Speaking in New Delhi, Goyal said the two countries share a very powerful relationship and highlighted the importance of the US as the world's largest economy. He added that relations between the two countries remain strong, noting that Donald Trump has spoken positively about India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reflecting the close ties between the nations.

**130 MAOISTS WITH 124 WEAPONS SURRENDER IN TELANGANA**

Hyderabad (TSIT): In the biggest-ever surrender in Telangana, 130 cadres of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) laid down their arms before Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at the Integrated Command and Control Centre on Saturday.

The Maoists, including 125 from Chhattisgarh, surrendered 124 weapons in the presence of Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy and other senior officials. The weapons included one Light Machine Gun, 31 AK-47 rifles, 21 INSAS rifles, 20 SLR rifles, 18 .303 rifles and 33 other arms, along with 5,205 rounds of ammunition.

Police said the surrendered cadres include three State Committee members, one Regional Committee member, 10 Divisional Committee members, 40 Area Committee members and 76 party members. With the surrender, the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) has effectively ceased to exist in the state.

The Chief Minister said the government is ready to help



surrendered Maoists reintegrate into society, withdraw eligible cases within the legal framework and consider enhanced rehabilitation packages, including medical care and financial assistance. Revanth Reddy also appealed to remaining Maoist leaders, including Muppala

Lakshmana Rao (Ganapathy), to surrender and join the democratic process. He said discussions on proposals from Maoist leaders were conveyed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, stressing that peaceful and democratic means are the only way to resolve issues.

**Andhra will produce quantum computers for world: CM Naidu**

New Delhi (TSIT) Stressing that artificial intelligence is set to be a game-changer, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said his state will soon produce quantum computers for the world, while a data centre is also being set up by Google in the southern state.

Speaking at the 11th Raisina Dialogue here, the chief minister said artificial intelligence (AI) would soon change the daily lives of people. Naidu also stressed the importance of the demographic dividend to defend Andhra Pradesh's decision to incentivise having more children. "In Andhra, Google is investing 15 billion USD for a one gigawatt data centre, which is the biggest investment in the recent past," Naidu said.

"Today, we are all talking about Silicon Valley; in the future, people will talk about a Quantum Valley in Amaravati... By the year-end, manufacturing will start, and we will supply quantum computers to the world," Naidu said. Andhra Pradesh is setting up a dedicated Quantum Valley tech park in Amaravati, aiming to become a global hub for



quantum computing research, development and manufacturing. Naidu also termed India's move from IT to AI a "game-changer". "AI will play a crucial role in every person's day-to-day life. I am confident that it will effect transformative changes in the near future," the N Chandrababu Naidu said. The chief minister also said that the Andhra Pradesh government is now developing Amaravati as the "most liveable city" in the country. "A global leadership centre is coming up in Amaravati. Today, Hyderabad has become a knowledge economy. Telangana has the highest per capita income... Now I'm building another city, Amaravati, and everyone in the world is going to talk about it," Naidu said. Geographic Reference

**US EVACUATES 28,000 CITIZENS FROM MIDDLE EAST**

Washington, March 7 : More than 28,000 American citizens have safely returned to the US from the Middle East since late February, the State Department said on Saturday, as Washington continues large-scale evacuation and assistance efforts across the region. In a statement, Assistant Secretary of State Dylan Johnson said the US government had been coordinating flights, ground transport, and emergency assistance to help Americans leave the region amid ongoing security concerns.

"Since February 28, more than 28,000 American citizens have safely returned to the United States from the Middle East," Johnson added.

He said that the data does not include Americans, who have travelled to other countries in the region or those still in transit on their way back to the US.



"These figures do not include the many Americans who have safely relocated to other countries or those who have left the Middle East but are still in transit back to the US," the statement said. The US State Department said that it had organised special charter flights to move Americans out of areas affected by instability.

"Additionally, the Department of State has completed more than a dozen charter flights and has safely evacuated thousands of Americans from the Middle East," Johnson said. Officials said the evacuation effort continues even as commercial aviation links across the region begin to stabilise. "While commercial flight availability across the region continues to improve, Department of State charter flight and ground transport operations continue to ramp up, as security conditions allow," the statement said. The State Department's emergency task force has also been coordinating assistance requests from American citizens across multiple Middle Eastern countries. "Through the State Department's 24/7 Task Force, we have directly assisted more than 16,000 Americans abroad, offering security guidance and travel assistance," Johnson added.

**TRUMP WARNS OF WIDER IRAN STRIKES**



Washington, March 7 : US President Donald Trump on Saturday warned that the United States could expand its military targets in Iran, hours after Iran's President apologised to neighbouring countries caught in the widening Middle East conflict but rejected calls for surrender. Trump issued the warning in a post on Truth Social as the war between the United States, Israel, and Iran entered its second week. "Today, Iran will be hit very hard! Under serious consideration for complete destruction and certain death, because of Iran's bad behaviour, are areas and groups of people that were not considered for targeting up until this moment in time," Trump wrote. The US President did not provide details on what additional targets might be considered.

**CM Mamata hits out at BJP over President's remarks on Santal event venue**

Kolkata, March 7 (TSIT) : West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over President Droupadi Murmu's displeasure earlier in the day regarding the West Bengal government allotting a smaller venue for the 9th International Santal Conference at Gossaipur in Darjeeling district, where the President was the chief guest. Addressing a sit-in protest against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) at Esplanade East in central Kolkata, which began on Friday, CM Banerjee accused the BJP of exploiting the office of the President to defame West Bengal.

"Where has the BJP taken the Constitution today? We feel ashamed to say that. We respect the Hon'ble President. Now she has also been sent to promote the BJP's politics and fulfil the BJP's agenda. I am sorry, Madam. I have the utmost respect for you. But you have fallen into the BJP's trap," the Chief Minister said.

Claiming that the President had accused the West Bengal government of deliberately preventing people from attending



the International Santal Conclave, the Chief Minister said such allegations were baseless, as the state government was not the organiser of the event. "It was not a state event. The state government was not even aware of the event. We get information about when she will come and when she will go. We try to make arrangements as far as possible. But if someone comes every day, how can I attend every time? Don't we have work to do? Do we have to be on your tail all the time? Come once a year, I will go and receive you. If you come 50 times a year, I do not have that much time to attend every time," Banerjee said.

**PM Modi lays foundation stone for Kota Airport, says project will accelerate development of Hadoti region**

New Delhi, Mar 7 (UNI) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday laid the foundation stone of the proposed airport in Kota through a virtual address, describing the project as a major step toward accelerating economic growth and connectivity across Rajasthan's Hadoti region.

Addressing the ceremony, Modi said the day marked "new hope and a new achievement" for the region comprising Kota, Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar. The airport project, estimated to cost about Rs 1,500 crore, is expected to significantly improve connectivity and boost trade and tourism once operational. "Today is a day of new hope and new achievement for the entire Hadoti region including Kota, Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar," Modi said, adding that the modern airport "is going to give new momentum to the development of the entire region in the coming times."

The Prime Minister said improved air connectivity would ease travel for residents and businesses that currently rely on distant airports in cities such as Jaipur and Jodhpur. "When this airport starts, travel will become easier and trade will grow rapidly across the entire area, includ-



ing Kota," he said. Highlighting the broader transformation underway in the region, Modi said Kota is rapidly emerging as a connectivity hub through improved air, rail and road networks. He noted that under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, Kota's two major railway stations are being upgraded with modern facilities to improve passenger experience and infrastructure. The Prime Minister also referred to the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, which passes through Kota and Bundi, saying the highway is opening "a new gateway for the development of the entire region." According to him, the addition of air connectivity will complement these

ongoing projects and further accelerate economic activity.

Modi described Kota as a unique centre combining education and energy production. The city is widely known for its coaching institutes that attract students from across India, while the surrounding region hosts power generation from multiple sources, including nuclear, coal, gas and hydropower. He also highlighted the economic potential of local products, saying the airport would help expand markets for regional specialties such as Kota Doria saree, Kota stone and agricultural produce including Bundi's basmati rice.

"This new airport in Kota will work to multiply these possibilities many times over," he said. The Prime Minister further underlined the tourism prospects of the region, pointing to spiritual and natural attractions such as Mathuradhish Ji Temple, Garadia Mahadev Temple and the wildlife-rich Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve. Greater air connectivity, he said, would make it easier for domestic and international tourists to visit these destinations, benefiting local youth and businesses.

**IRAN'S IRGC HITS 'VIOLATING' OIL TANKER IN STRAIT OF HORMUZ**



Tehran, March 7 (TSIT) : Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) hit an oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, the official news agency IRNA reported. The report said the "violating" oil tanker, sailing under the commercial name 'Prima', was struck by a drone after it failed to pay attention to frequent warnings issued by the IRGC's Navy about the prohibition of movement across the Strait of Hormuz due to security reasons, Xinhua news

agency reported.

The report quoted the IRGC as saying that the strategic Strait of Hormuz has been "under control" for eight days since the beginning of the US-Israeli strikes on Iran and the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and oil tankers and commercial vessels allied with the "hostile states" are not allowed to pass through it.

On Friday, Iran said that it has no plan to close the Strait of Hormuz and denied reports claiming that the country has fully blocked the strategic waterway. According to a report by Iran's Tasnim News Agency, a senior officer of IRGC said in an interview with state TV that claims by some media outlets that Iran had closed the Hormuz strait were inaccurate.

**If high command permits I will present two more Budgets: K'taka CM**

Mysuru (Karnataka), March 7 : Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said that he will present two more Budgets during the remaining tenure of the government if the party high command permits him to do so.

He made the statement in response to a question on whether he would present two more Budgets as the Congress-led government has two more years remaining in its term.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah spoke to the media on Saturday after receiving a guard of honour from the district administration at the Pillahalli helipad in Varuna hobli of Mysuru. When asked again whether he was confident of presenting two more Budgets, Siddaramaiah said, "People



"I have confidence. I will be committed to the decisions of the high command. Breaking records in terms of presenting Budgets is not important. If people give an opportunity, it is possible."

across the state want that. But what decision the high command takes is what matters." When asked whether he was confident about it, Siddaramaiah said, "I have confidence. I will be committed to the decisions of the high

command. Breaking records in terms of presenting Budgets is not important. If people give an opportunity, it is possible."

Responding to another question on whether he had confidence in the party high command, Siddaramaiah said, "We

always have confidence in the high command." "If not the high command, should I have confidence in you?" the Chief Minister said, pointing towards media persons. "No matter how you twist and ask questions, my answer will remain the same. The high command has to take a decision. If the high command wants me to continue, I will continue. If they do not want me to continue, I will not," Siddaramaiah maintained.

Speaking about the Budget, he said, "This is my 17th Budget. I have presented the highest number of Budgets in the state." Responding to a question on the increase in LPG cylinder prices, Siddaramaiah said, "Do you know what the price of LPG

was before Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power? After the BJP came to power, the prices increased. The media never writes about it."

Later, Siddaramaiah participated in and performed the consecration of the Kumbha Kalasha as part of the 'Dandimaramma Temple Pratishthapana Mahotsava' organised by the Sri Dandimaramma and Siddappaji Seva Samiti. Members of the Legislative Council Yathindra Siddaramaiah, Thimmayya and Shivakumar, Vice-Chairperson of the Guarantee Implementation Committee Pushpa Amarnath, and District Congress President Vijaykumar, along with several other prominent leaders, were present.

# EDITORIAL

## Can A Gen Z-Influencer-Rapper PM Really 'Change' Nepal?

Young and well-dressed, Balendra Shah, popularly known as Balen, was first noticed in Nepal's rap battles in the 2010s. By 2020, just two years before the Karnataka-educated structural engineer fought election to become Kathmandu mayor, his rap song, Balidan, filled with sharp attacks and disses against Nepali leaders, had become a big hit among Nepali rap and hip-hop lovers. No wonder it has already attracted over 12 million views. In the spring of 2022, his fame - plus his commitment to ensure good governance and reforms in the Nepali capital city - helped him win Kathmandu's mayoral election with a landslide vote. Soon, heeding Kathmandu valley traffic police's plea to clear the city's roads of encroachments, he mobilised bulldozers to do so and even visited some of the sites, winning many hearts and minds. Young and well-dressed, Balendra Shah, popularly known as Balen, was first noticed in Nepal's rap battles in the 2010s. By 2020, just two years before the Karnataka-educated structural engineer fought election to become Kathmandu mayor, his rap song, Balidan, filled with sharp attacks and disses against Nepal's leaders, had become a big hit among Nepali rap and hip-hop lovers. No wonder it has already attracted over 12 million views. In the spring of 2022, his fame - plus his commitment to ensure good governance and reforms in the Nepali capital city - helped him win Kathmandu's mayoral election with a landslide vote. Soon, heeding Kathmandu valley traffic police's plea to clear the city's roads of encroachments, he mobilised bulldozers to do so and even visited some of the sites, winning many hearts and minds.

### Advertisement - Scroll to continue

There was no stopping the 35-year-old rapper-turned-mayor. In September 2024, he firmly backed young Gen Z protesters protesting against rampant corruption, nepotism and elitism and rallying for a better, more liveable Nepal. Communicating through posts on Facebook and X, as he often did, he nudged the youngsters to keep going.

### Influencer PM

To his delight, Balen Shah's 2024 song, Ma Nepal Hasenko Herma Chahanchhu ("I want to see Nepal smiling"), became an anthem of the Gen Z protesters nationwide. As major landmarks, such as Singha Durbar and Parliament building burned, and top leaders, including then Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, scrambled for cover and safety, the Nepali Army was compelled to approach Shah to write social media posts, appealing to the protesters to stop it all. He did just that. Nepal's #GenZRevolt on 9/9 last year saw the death of 77 Nepalis, including young protesters and police personnel. At the peak of the revolt and the ensuing chaos - when government buildings and malls were burning and inmates from jails nationwide were busy fleeing - KP Oli was forced to quit, paving the way for a new interim administration led by former chief justice Sushila Karki. Just three months after he resigned as the mayor and joined the three-year-old Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by former TV show host Rabi Lamichhane, as a prime ministerial candidate, Shah has unseated beat Oli in his home constituency of Jhapa-5 in eastern Nepal. Much like Shah, the RSP candidates nationwide are marching to victory, one after another, leaving their rivals from Nepal's old guard parties such as the Nepali Congress, Oiled Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), or the former Maoist chair Puspa Kamal Dahal Prachanda-led Nepali Communist Party (NCP), or the pro-Hindu monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) far behind in the race. That the RSP chair Lamichhane - who was famously filmed leaving Nakku jail popping out of a car's sky roof during #GenZRevolt only to return to jail a few days later - is facing multiple criminal cases relating to cooperatives fraud and organised crime has not affected his party's electoral success.

# Flight of Dreams: Teacher and Writer Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

(Women's Day Special)

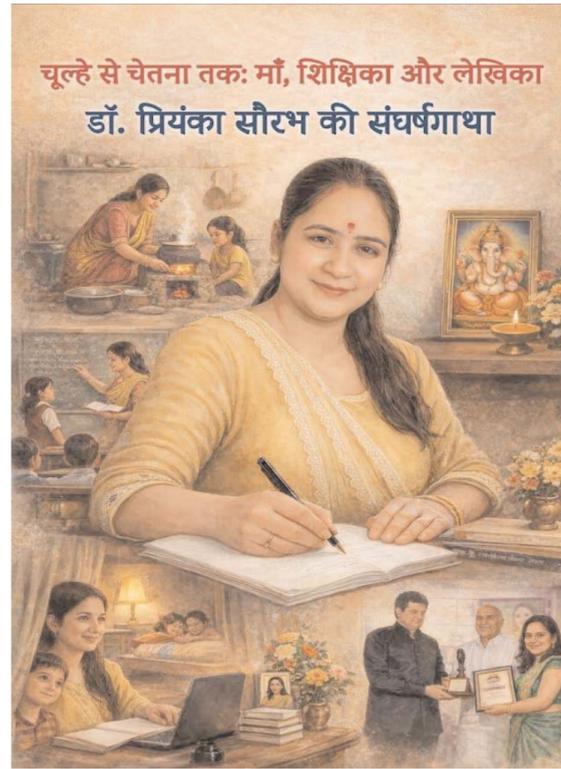
Dr. Vijay Garg

The history of society offers numerous examples of women who, despite limited resources and numerous social constraints, have charted new paths in life through their courage, patience, and determination. A woman is not only the center of the family but also the sensitive consciousness of society. When a woman recognizes her inner strength, she has the ability to inspire not only her own life but also the entire society. One such inspiring story is that of Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, a teacher, writer, and sensitive thinker, whose life journey is a beautiful confluence of struggle, dedication, and creation.

Born in the humble rural setting of Aryanagar village in Haryana's Hisar district, Dr. Priyanka Saurabh's childhood was spent in humble circumstances. She had neither special resources nor privileges. However, she harbored a deep desire to pursue an education and achieve something meaningful in life. This desire later became the driving force of her resolve.

Her life took a major turn during her education when she married while pursuing her bachelor's degree. After marriage, she faced the responsibilities of being a wife, daughter-in-law, and later, a mother. Often, in Indian society, girls' education and dreams are left behind at such times. Family responsibilities become their primary focus. But Dr. Priyanka Saurabh didn't let circumstances limit her. She embraced life's challenges, but never abandoned her dreams. She continued her studies while juggling marriage and family responsibilities. This wasn't an easy task. Limited time, the pressures of household chores, and societal expectations - pursuing an education amidst all this was nothing short of austerity. But through sheer determination and persistent hard work, she earned a double M.A. in Political Science. She then completed her M.Phil. and continued her research toward a Ph.D.

His academic achievements aren't limited to degrees, but rather the result of a struggle and dedication that defied every difficulty. This persistent pursuit of life also led him to success in government service. Being selected for government service five



times is a significant achievement for any individual. This is a testament to his tireless efforts, self-confidence, and dedication to his goals. He eventually established himself as a lecturer in the Haryana Education Department.

As an educator, Dr. Priyanka Saurabh goes beyond simply teaching the curriculum. She strives to instill confidence, sensitivity, and positive thinking in her students. For her, education is not merely a means of acquiring knowledge, but a process of personality development. She strives to instill in students that success in life is not achieved through marks or degrees, but through hard work, discipline, and a desire to continuously learn.

In addition to her teaching career, Dr. Priyanka Saurabh has also made significant contributions to the field of literature. For her, writing is not just a hobby, but a medium of expression.

Whenever she finds time, she strives to put her experiences, feelings, and social concerns into words. Gradually, this endeavor has blossomed into a powerful literary journey. Her works reflect the sensibilities of women's lives, social contradictions, the complexities of human relationships, and a deep understanding of life's mundane experiences. She doesn't dwell solely in a world of imagination, but draws on the real experiences of society as the basis for her writing.

Her poetry collection, "Termite-Stained Roses," exposes the invisible cracks in relationships that often go unnoticed but slowly weaken them from within. Similarly, "From the Stove to the Moon" depicts the journey of a woman's struggles, dreams, and aspirations. This collection demonstrates that a woman's world isn't limited to the four walls of her home; her dreams can reach the

heights of the sky. "Smiles of Silence" is another important work, giving voice to the silences that women often harbor within themselves. This collection compels readers to consider how many emotions and pains in society remain unexpressed.

He has also done significant work in the field of children's literature. Works like "Fairy Dialogues" and "Children's World" express children's imagination, curiosity, and sensitivity. These works beautifully capture the innocence and simplicity of a child's mind.

His essay collection, "On the Sands of Time," is particularly noteworthy. In it, he offers thoughtful essays on social change, human psychology during the pandemic, and changing sensibilities in society.

Similarly, "Nirbhayen" is a collection of inspiring stories of female courage and self-respect. This work shows that if a woman recognizes her inner courage, she can face any situation. In her English essay collection, "Fearless," she also presents the strength and struggle of Indian women in a global context.

The short story collection "Aanchal Ki Chupai" poignantly reveals the subtle emotions of a woman's mind. "Life Peeping from the Window" attempts to examine everyday experiences with a sensitive lens. Through these works, she has demonstrated that literature is not merely a means of entertainment, but also a medium that guides society. An important aspect of Dr. Priyanka Saurabh's writing is that she addresses issues of society that are often less discussed. She writes seriously on topics such as the problems of disabled children, neglect of the elderly, mental pressure on teachers, and the growing insensitivity in society. Her works inspire readers not only to read, but also to think. His literary career has seen him publish more than ten books and over ten thousand articles in various newspapers and magazines. These numbers are not mere statistics, but a testament to his continued writing and social commitment.

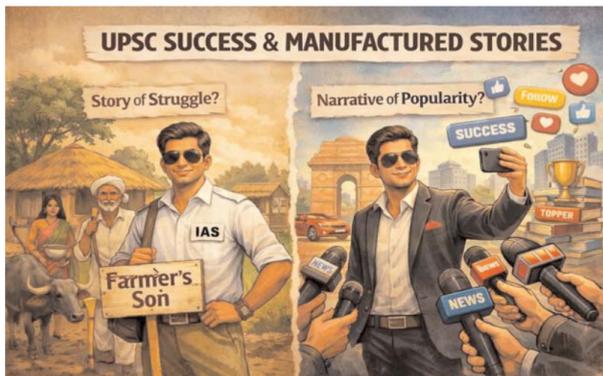
Her contributions to literature and society have been recognized by numerous organizations. She has received the IPS Human Award, the Nari Ratna, the Super Woman Award, and numerous national and international honors.

# UPSC Success Stories

(A STORY OF STRUGGLE OR A STORY OF POPULARITY?)

— Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

Many candidates actually come from villages or humble backgrounds and share their stories to inspire other young people. India boasts numerous successful officers with roots in small towns and rural settings. Their success demonstrates that hard work and dedication can lead to great achievements, even with limited resources. However, in this age of social media, a different trend is also evident. Some people overemphasize their identities, such as "farmer's son" or "village boy or girl," to cultivate their image. This is often intended to garner sympathy, make their story more inspiring, or attract more attention in the news and social media. The Union Public Service Commission's Civil Services Examination in India is not just an exam, but a symbol of the dreams, struggles, and aspirations of millions of young people. Every year, lakhs of candidates from across the country appear for this exam, and only a few hundred ultimately secure a place in the administrative service. Therefore, those who succeed in this difficult examination naturally become the subject of discussion and respect in society. The news media, social media, and the general public are eager to know their life stories. An interesting, and sometimes worrying, trend has emerged over the past few years. Successful candidates, often raised in affluent urban backgrounds, suddenly seem to identify themselves as "farmer's son," "village son," or "from a rural background." This trend isn't just a question of personal identity; it also highlights a broader socio-psychological process in which one's story is presented in a particular way to gain popularity and sympathy. It's natural to ask why this happens. Is it simply an attempt to inspire or a strategy to gain popularity? The answer to this question is not simple, as it lies in many social, cultural, and media-related reasons. Stories of struggle have always been highly respected



in Indian society. When someone overcomes difficult circumstances and achieves great success, that story inspires millions. This is why the news media often highlights examples where a candidate achieves success despite limited resources, financial difficulties, or a rural background. There's no doubt that such stories play a positive role in society. They instill in young people the belief that success can be achieved through hard work and determination, no matter the circumstances. In a country like India, where a huge gap still exists between rural and urban opportunities, such stories become a source of hope and inspiration. But the problem arises when the pressure to present a story that is more appealing or emotional than the reality increases. In this age of social media, everyone wants to present their story in a way that reaches and influences as many people as possible. In this process, sometimes the complexity of the real background is reduced to a simplified and sentimental narrative. Nowadays, the news media and social media play a vital role in shaping a person's image. The story of a successful candidate can spread across the country in a matter of hours. Various interviews, video platforms, and news articles often highlight aspects of the story that are emotional and inspiring. This is natural from the media's perspective, as viewers and readers feel

more connected to such stories. Headlines like "Youth from village joins administrative service" or "Farmer's daughter makes it to administrative service" attract immediate attention. As a result, sometimes some aspects of the story are given more prominence, while others are overlooked. If a candidate's family originates from a rural area, but they were educated and raised in cities, the media often highlights those rural connections. This presents a partial picture of reality.

In a society as vast and diverse as India, identity isn't always simple and one-dimensional. A person may be born in a village but educated in a city. One's parents may be engaged in farming, while the family's financial situation may be relatively stable.

In reality, both can be true simultaneously. But when an attempt is made to simplify and impact a story, one identity is often given prominence. This is why people sometimes feel that a reality-deflecting or exaggerated image is being presented. Today is a time of image and narrative. Social media has given everyone the opportunity to create their own image. People not only express who they are, but also decide how they want to appear to society. But when this process becomes more based on image-building than reality, it becomes a subject of criticism. Society begins to feel that identity is being used to gain popularity.

# "THE REALITY OF BEING A WOMAN IN INDIA TODAY"

In 2026, the experience of being a woman in India is a complex blend of rapid progress and deeply resilient traditional challenges. While many women are breaking ceilings in tech, politics, and sports, systemic issues continue to shape daily life. The problems faced by Indian women can be categorized into four main areas: 1. The "Double Burden" & Societal Expectations: For most Indian women, the workplace is an "addition" to their responsibilities, not a replacement for domestic ones. Time Poverty: According to 2025 Time Use Surveys, Indian women spend nearly three times more hours on unpaid domestic work and caregiving than men. The Marriage Penalty: In many families, a girl's education is still viewed as a "dead investment" because she will eventually leave to join her husband's family.

2. Safety and Personal Autonomy: Despite legal bans, a cultural preference for male children remains, leading to neglect of daughters' nutrition and health in some regions. Public Safety: About 46% of Indian women report that safety concerns influence their career decisions, such as avoiding night shifts or long commutes. Gender-Based Violence: Statistics show that a crime against a woman is reported approximately every three minutes in India. This includes domestic abuse, which is often dismissed as a "private family matter." Legal Lag: While laws like the POSH Act (for workplace harassment) exist, fear of social stigma and low conviction

rates (around 27%) often prevent women from seeking justice. 3. Economic and Digital Barriers: While more women are entering the workforce (reaching about 32.8% in 2024), significant hurdles remain: The Gender Pay Gap: India has one of the highest pay gaps globally, with women often earning significantly less than men for the same roles. Digital Divide: Rural women are far less likely to own smartphones or have reliable internet access, which locks them out of the modern "AI-driven" economy. Property Rights: Although laws have changed, only about 46% of women own a house or land (either alone or jointly), limiting their financial independence. 4. Health and Biological Taboos: Women's health is often secondary to the needs of the family. Menstrual Stigma: Taboos around menstruation still

restrict mobility and lead to school dropouts in rural areas. Maternal Health: While the Maternal Mortality Ratio has improved significantly (falling to about 80 per 100,000 live births), access to quality reproductive healthcare is still inconsistent in remote regions. Nutritional Neglect: High rates of anemia persist among Indian women due to the cultural habit of women eating last or eating "leftovers" after the rest of the family.



— Roja Nagapuri

# CHINA'S QUIET MILITARY AID TO IRAN - AND WHY BEIJING WON'T ADMIT IT

On February 23, Israel and the US launched a coordinated pre-emptive military strike against Iran. In retaliation, Iran launched ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones targeting Israeli military assets and US bases stationed across West Asia. The Chinese Foreign Ministry "strongly condemned the strikes", with Foreign Minister Wang Yi characterizing the "assassination" of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as a "blatant killing of a sovereign leader,

a severe violation of international law, and an unacceptable attempt at regime change". Beijing also urged an immediate halt to military operations and advised its citizens to evacuate Iran. Perhaps the most important pillar of the China-Iran relationship is the hydrocarbon trade. China absorbs approximately 80% of Iran's oil exports. The defence ties are a distant second in vitality, given that Beijing's approach to arming Tehran has been cautious.

■ BUT WHAT ARE CHINA'S ACTUAL STAKES IN THE WAR? Iran has been subject to a variety of international arms embargoes, from Australia, the US and the European Union (EU) placing stringent bans on the export and supply of arms and related material to Iran, to the UN Security Council approving a snapback provision allowing pre-JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action) sanctions on Iran to come back to life in

August 2025. In this regard, China has broadly refrained from violating such embargoes (even though most of them are unilateral). But, rising regional tensions following the 'Twelve-Day War' in June last year between Israel and Iran have led to a modest surge in Sino-Iranian military cooperation. For Beijing, selling Tehran arms at a moderate rate is killing two birds with one stone. It helps in securing a steady flow of heavily discounted crude oil.

## Built 4.29 lakh homes since 2021: Tamil Nadu government

CHENNAI: The State government of Tamil Nadu has constructed 4.29 lakh homes for downtrodden and marginalised people over the past five years under various housing schemes, including the Kalaingar Kanavu Illam (KKI) Scheme.

According to an official statement, during the previous AIADMK regime, about one lakh homes were constructed. However, over the last three years of Dravidian model governance, 1.79 lakh homes have been built under the Kalaingar Kanavu Illam scheme, and construction of another 1.20 lakh homes is currently underway.

Apart from the KKI scheme, houses have also been constructed through various departments and programmes, including the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board, the Housing Scheme for Sri Lankan



Tamils, and the Iyothee Thass Pandithar Habitation Development Scheme. "Under these schemes, around 2.75 lakh houses have been completed, while construction of nearly 1.5 lakh houses is in progress," the statement said.

The government further said that since 2021, about 23.56 lakh house-site plots have been issued, and approvals have been granted for 24,446 layouts under the single-window

system. Aiming to replace thatched houses with permanent structures for poor families, the government has set a target to construct eight lakh concrete houses by 2030. Under the scheme, each beneficiary family receives Rs 3.50 lakh to build a concrete house. "For the past three years, the government has allocated Rs 7,000 crore for implementing the scheme," the statement added.

## Stalin warns EPS of 'Nitish Kumar-like fate', attacks BJP over LPG price hike

CHENNAI: AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami could face the same political fate as Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, warned Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin on Saturday, noting how the Centre-ruling BJP has been sidelining its allies in different states.

Addressing a public meeting in Madurai organised by former chief minister and expelled AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam, who recently joined the DMK, Stalin alleged that

Palaniswami had "mortgaged the AIADMK to the BJP" in the belief that the national party would help him politically. Recalling political developments in Bihar, Stalin said the BJP could eventually swallow the AIADMK. "Today, it is Nitish Kumar who is facing the consequences of aligning with the BJP. Tomorrow it could be EPS," Stalin said, cautioning the AIADMK leadership over its alliance with the BJP. "The BJP had even selected a new general secretary instead of Palaniswami."



Honble Minister for Labour Welfare and Skill Development inaugurated the renovated Guest houses managed by Tamil Nadu Labour Welfare Board in Chennai and Mamallapuram...

## Centre's coconut promotion to help over 28% farmers in TN, says Chouhan

CHENNAI: Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday said that nearly 28 per cent of coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu are expected to benefit from the Coconut Promotion Scheme announced in the Union Budget, and asserted that the Centre is keen on expediting its implementation in consultation with growers.

Speaking to reporters at the Chennai airport, Chouhan said the initiative, announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the latest Union Budget, is aimed at boosting coconut production and enhancing farm productivity in the State.

"The central government has introduced a new coconut promotion scheme in the Budget to increase production and improve productivity. Farmers engaged in coconut cultivation in



Tamil Nadu will benefit significantly from this initiative," he said.

Chouhan said he would interact with coconut farmers from different districts of Tamil Nadu to discuss the scheme and gather their inputs before its roll-out. "About 28 per cent of coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu stand to benefit from

this programme. We will hold detailed consultations with farmers on the scheme's features and its swift implementation," the minister said. The meeting was held at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras campus, where farmers from several coconut-growing districts of the State participated.

## TVK chief Vijay makes string of promises for women, gold for marriage, monthly aid of Rs 2,500

CHENNAI: TVK chief Vijay on Saturday announced a slew of promises for women, including a monthly financial aid of Rs 2,500, a sovereign gold with silk saree as wedding gift to young women, and six LPG cylinders free for all families, if his party was voted to power in the upcoming state assembly election.

The monthly assistance would be provided to all women except government employees, upto the age of 60, when his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam comes to power, Vijay said at the International Women's Day event held under the aegis of TVK at Mamallapuram near here.

The six LPG cylinders would be provided annually under the 'Annapurani super six scheme'. In order to ensure zero dropout in schools, each mother or guardian



would be provided an annual financial assistance of Rs 15,000 under the 'Kamarajar Kalvi Uruthi Thittam'.

Ensuring safety for women in public transport, Vijay in his 20 minute

speech, said smart panic buttons would be established in buses.

To serve girl students, he said free sanitary pads would be provided through ration shops, schools and in

colleges. Vijay also announced interest-free allocation of upto Rs 5 lakh for women Self-Help Groups.

The actor-politician assured that every new born child born in Tamil Nadu would receive a gold ring and a baby welcome kit, comprising baby powder, baby oil, diapers, as the state government's 'Ashirwad' (blessing). He announced free bus travel in all state government-run buses for women, zero tolerance for crimes against women, dedication of 'Rani Velu Nachiyar' unit in police to ensure safety for women, and special fast-track courts for expeditious disposal of cases of crimes against women. Vijay also hit out at the ruling DMK, alleging that a "30 per cent Stalin sir tax of loot and corruption was taking place out of the state's Rs 4.39 lakh crore budget".

## Antibiotics and 6 other medications linked to disrupted gut microbiome

The study, published in the American Society for Microbiology's Journal mSystems, found that, in addition to antibiotics, antidepressants, beta-blockers, stomach acid reducers, and anti-anxiety drugs, these substances could continue to disrupt the microbiome long after use.

Babak Firoozi, MD, board certified gastroenterologist at MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA, welcomed the study, but urged caution when interpreting the findings: "The methodology was robust, and convincingly linked changes in gut microbiome to medication uses, but this was not a controlled trial. There are far too many variables that cannot be accounted for, such as environmental factors, diet, geographic location. The most surprising finding is how many classes of drugs appeared to have influence on the gut biome."

The researchers utilized data from 2,509 adults in the Estonian microbiome cohort, a component of the Estonian biobank — a population-based databank of volunteers in Estonia. The volunteers, who were ages between 23 and 89 years, provided blood, cheek swab, and stool samples. The researchers then used shotgun metagenomics sequencing-Trusteed Source on the stool samples to analyze the make-up of their gut microbiomes. A subsample of the cohort — 328 people — provided a second stool sample after a median follow-up period of 4.4 years, which the researchers also analyzed.

They accessed details of participants' current and historical prescription drug usage from their electronic health records. At the time of the first sample, participants were using a total of 433 different prescription drugs, and in the five years preceding it, they had used 507 different medications. Just over one-third of the participants (857 people) were taking no medications at the time of the first sample, and those taking medications were using, on

average, three different types of medication. The researchers did not assess the effects of antibiotics at the first time point, so they excluded anyone who had taken antibiotics within 90 days of the first sample, but the second sample was assessed for the effects of antibiotics.

In total, the researchers analyzed the effects of 186 drugs. Of these, 167 affected the microbiome in some way, and 78 showed long-term effects on the composition of the microbiome.

Measurable changes in the microbiome were seen in people who had taken the following medications:

Antibiotics — medications that treat bacterial infections by killing bacteria or stopping them from multiplying Antidepressants — these increase neurotransmitters in the brain to relieve symptoms of depression Antipsychotics — medications that treat psychosis associated with some mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder Beta-blockers — medications used to treat cardiovascular symptoms, such as angina and high blood pressure Biguanides — metformin, used to treat type 2 diabetes Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), which reduce stomach acid to treat acid reflux, heartburn, and stomach ulcers Benzodiazepines, which are prescribed for anxiety and sleep disorders. As well as antibiotics, beta-blockers, benzodiazepine derivatives, glucocorticoids, PPIs, biguanides, and antidepressants all had effects on the microbiome that were seen many years after participants' current and historical prescription drug usage. The researchers found that the longer people took medications for, and the more medications they took, the greater the effect on the microbiome. Multiple medications appeared to interact and have a greater impact on the microbiome, but for individual drugs, it was benzodiazepines that seemed to have the greatest negative impact. In their paper, the authors warned:

## Flavanol-rich foods may protect blood vessels from damage caused by prolonged sitting

Modern lifestyles mean that people spend an increasing amount of time sitting, whether working at a desk, watching TV, or travelling by car, train or plane. Prolonged sitting can adversely affect the function of the blood vessels. A new study has found that foods high in flavanols — antioxidants found in plant foods, such as cocoa, tea, and some fruits and vegetables — may improve vascular function during sitting or being sedentary. Sitting for long periods is linked to declines in vascular function, particularly in the legs, even in people who are physically fit. Recent research suggests that adults in the United States sit for at least 6 hours every day, and adolescents even more. Decline in vascular function can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases Trusted Source, such as strokes and heart attacks. However, many of us have sedentary jobs, spend a lot of time travelling by car, train, or plane, or enjoy watching TV or playing computer games, so we may spend much of the day sitting down. Now, researchers from the University of Birmingham, in the United Kingdom, have found that flavanols may help counteract the effects of prolonged sitting.

In their small-scale study, published in The Journal of Physiology Trusted Source, researchers found that young men who drank a high-flavanol cocoa drink before sitting for 2 hours maintained better blood flow in the femoral (leg) and brachial (arm) arteries than those who drank a low-flavanol version of the drink. "Even though the trial was small, its randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover design gives it strong internal validity for detecting acute physiological changes. However, the external validity is narrow: all were young, healthy, male, and the experiment lasted only two hours. The outcome, flow-mediated dilation, is a well-validated marker of endothelial function but still a surrogate, not a clinical endpoint. Thus, the findings are mechanistically meaningful but not clinically definitive."

— Christopher Yi, MD, board certified vascular surgeon at MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA, who was not involved in the study.

High vs. low flavanol cocoa  
Researchers recruited 40 healthy men, ages between 18 and 34, into the study. Half were high in fitness, and half were low, as measured by a cardiorespiratory fitness test conducted by the researchers. Before the experimental visits, participants fasted for 12 hours, and avoided caffeine, alcohol, polyphenol-containing foods and drinks, and any vigorous exercise for 24 hours. Upon arrival, they rested in a supine position for 15 minutes, after which researchers measured their blood pressure, resting heart rate, flow-mediated dilatation (FMD, a higher value indicating better



vascular function) in the superior femoral and brachial arteries, and tissue oxygenation in the gastrocnemius (calf) muscle. As soon as these tests were completed, participants sat still in a comfortable chair for 2 hours, with their legs parallel and both feet flat on the floor. They were allowed to make gentle arm movements, such as using a computer, writing, or texting. When they sat down, researchers gave them a randomly assigned high-flavanol cocoa or low-flavanol cocoa drink to consume within 10 minutes. The drinks, made using cocoa and 350ml spring water, were identical apart from their flavanol content, 695mg in the high-flavanol drink, and 5.6mg in the low-flavanol. During sitting, researchers recorded tissue oxygenation in the medial gastrocnemius, and after 2 hours, they repeated the other 4 tests done at the start. Get downloadable timelines, step-by-step instructions, and more expert guidance on Medicare open enrollment with our 4-day series.

Researchers assessed FMD of the superior femoral and brachial arteries using ultrasound.

They found no differences in retrograde shear rate Trusted Source (a measure of friction that can damage the lining of arteries) or blood flow between the groups. However, there were differences in FMD. In both arteries, FMD reduced during sitting in the low-flavanol group, and not in the high-flavanol group. After sitting, FMD remained higher in the high-flavanol than the low-flavanol group. Neither measure was influenced by the individual's fitness. "We have known for some time that flavanols have beneficial effects for blood flow from observational studies. It is surprising we can see such strong effects from one off dose on negative effects of sitting down."

— Eamon Laird, Assistant Lecturer in Human Nutrition at Atlantic Technological University Sligo and Adjunct Assistant Professor Trinity College Dublin, who was also not involved in the study. "Previous research already showed that prolonged sitting impairs endothelial function, and that cocoa flavanols acutely enhance FMD in other contexts. The novel contribution here is

showing that flavanols can preserve both upper- and lower-limb endothelial responsiveness during sitting and that cardiorespiratory fitness did not confer natural protection."

Why might flavanols have this effect?

Laird told Medical News Today: "Essentially, [flavanols] increase nitric oxide (NO) production that helps blood vessels relax and dilate, improving circulation. They can also reduce inflammation and have been associated with reduced oxidative stress. We are also unsure if the other dietary components that are often found with flavanols may also have an additive beneficial effect."

Yi explained further:

"Flavanols enhance endothelial nitric-oxide (NO) signaling by stimulating endothelial NO synthase (eNOS) activation, reducing oxidative stress and superoxide-mediated NO breakdown, and improving vascular smooth-muscle responsiveness to NO."

"By preserving NO bioavailability, flavanols maintain vasodilatory capacity and counteract the temporary endothelial 'stiffening' that occurs when leg blood flow and shear stress fall during sitting," he added. Together with exercise, flavanols may help vascular function. Experts agreed that although flavanols had a positive effect on vascular function, exercising or keeping active throughout the day is likely the most effective approach.

"Flavanol consumption may buffer the short-term vascular stress caused by sitting, but movement remains the most powerful tool for vascular health. [...] The most effective strategy is to take regular breaks from sitting by standing up or walking for a few minutes every 30 minutes, which helps restore blood flow and shear stress in your arteries. Even small movements, such as calf raises, fidgeting, or using a foot pedal under your desk, can keep circulation active and reduce the negative effects of prolonged immobility."

"In addition to movement, maintaining a consistent aerobic exercise routine strengthens overall endothelial health, while a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, tea, berries, and other polyphenol-containing foods provides further antioxidant and anti-inflammatory support. Managing blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar remains essential for long-term vascular protection. Flavanol-rich foods and drinks should be viewed as helpful adjuncts — not replacements — for an active lifestyle."

Laird echoed this warning:

"These findings [...] are highly significant and could be an easy, enjoyable way to try and stave off effects of sitting down. However, it is not a magic bullet and we shouldn't take this study as evidence to eat chocolates everyday as they contain fat, sugar, and energy!"

## Lonza Selects Hyderabad as new GCC location, Reinforcing Telangana's Global Life Sciences Leadership



**Hyderabad:** Lonza Group AG, a world-leading contract development and manufacturing organisation (CDMO), has announced its decision to establish a new Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad. The development further strengthens Telangana's growing prominence as a global life sciences hub. A delegation from the company met with Hon'ble Minister for Industries & Commerce, Mr D. Sridhar Babu, and CEO of Telangana Lifesciences, Mr Shakthi M. Nagappan, to formally convey the deci-

sion and share details of their proposed plans. Headquartered in Switzerland and founded in 1897, Lonza operates across more than 30 sites worldwide and employs close to 20,000 professionals. In 2025, the company reported sales of CHF 6.5 billion and a Core EBITDA of CHF 2.1 billion. The decision follows an extensive evaluation process from which Hyderabad was identified as a preferred destination based on its strong talent pool, quality infrastructure, and supportive industrial ecosystem. Over the past



several months, senior representatives of Lonza have engaged with Telangana Lifesciences, the Industries & Commerce Department, and other stakeholders, which further reinforced the company's confidence in Hyderabad as the right location for this investment. Mr D. Sridhar Babu, Hon'ble Minister for Industries and Commerce, Government of Telangana, said, "We are thrilled to welcome Lonza's decision to establish its new centre in Hyderabad. The city continues to stand out as the bright spot for global life sciences investments,

driven by its strong scientific ecosystem, digital depth, and world-class manufacturing capabilities. Lonza's investment further strengthens Telangana's position as a preferred destination for innovation-led growth in the global biopharmaceutical industry. I am delighted that the centre has the potential to create a substantial number of new jobs over the years. We remain committed to supporting such endeavours that promise job creation for our citizens." Mr Shakthi M. Nagappan, CEO, Telangana Lifesciences,

said, "We are delighted that Lonza has chosen Hyderabad for this expansion. This decision marks another significant milestone in the continued expansion of Telangana's life sciences ecosystem. We look forward to working closely with Lonza to ensure the successful execution of this project and to enable long-term value creation." The new GCC is expected to contribute to the generation of high-value employment and further integrate Hyderabad into the global biopharmaceutical value chain.

## Uber announces lunch of Intercity Bus ticketing on its app



**Bengaluru:** Ride-hailing platform Uber on Friday, March 6, announced the launch of Intercity Bus ticketing on its app, with India becoming its first market globally to roll out the product. The new offering expands Uber's Intercity portfolio, enabling riders to plan and book long-distance bus journeys with the same trusted Uber experience, it said. "Uber is starting Intercity Bus ticketing in partnership with Ixigo's AbhiBus, as its first supply integration. Starting today, riders across the country can book intercity bus tickets through the Uber app," the ride-hailing platform said in a statement. As an introductory offer, riders can avail a 25 per cent discount (up to Rs 200) on their first Uber Intercity Bus ride, and 10 per cent discount (up to Rs 100) on their

next three rides, it said. Speaking at the launch here, Praveen Neppalli Naga, Chief Technology Officer, Uber, said India is one of Uber's most important innovation hubs globally. Teams here are building technologies that power Uber's next phase of growth worldwide. "The launch of Intercity Bus ticketing reflects how products incubated in India are shaping our global roadmap, while expanding choice for riders through a trusted, reliable Uber experience," he added. The new offering expands Uber's Intercity portfolio, enabling riders to plan and book long-distance bus journeys with the same trusted Uber experience, it said. "Uber is starting Intercity Bus ticketing in partnership with Ixigo's AbhiBus, as its first supply integration. Starting today,

riders across the country can book intercity bus tickets through the Uber app," the ride-hailing platform said in a statement. As an introductory offer, riders can avail a 25 per cent discount (up to Rs 200) on their first Uber Intercity Bus ride, and 10 per cent discount (up to Rs 100) on their next three rides, it said. Speaking at the launch here, Praveen Neppalli Naga, Chief Technology Officer, Uber, said India is one of Uber's most important innovation hubs globally. Teams here are building technologies that power Uber's next phase of growth worldwide. "The launch of Intercity Bus ticketing reflects how products incubated in India are shaping our global roadmap, while expanding choice for riders through a trusted, reliable Uber experience," he added.

## Driving for Ola or Uber? Platforms are quietly making drivers pay them

**Hyderabad:** If you have ever taken an Ola, Uber or Rapido, you know how it works. You pay the app, the app pays the driver. But a growing number of platforms are quietly experimenting with turning that arrangement on its head, making drivers pay the company just for the right to log in and work instead. This is the subscription model, also called the Software as a Service (SaaS) or leasing model, and according to a report released on Thursday, March 5, by the International Alliance of App-based Transport Workers (IAATW), it is spreading fast across Asia, Africa and Latin America. Under this system, a driver pays the platform a fixed fee to access its app for a set period, which can range from six hours, 12 hours, a week or a month. Some platforms charge for a fixed volume of rides, say Rs 10,000 worth of bookings, before the driver sees a rupee of profit. If business is slow, that is not the platform's problem but that of the driver. Shaikh Salauddin, who repre-



sents South Asia on the IAATW board and is based in Hyderabad, said the model was already taking hold across the region. "Some of the giants of the platform economy have already announced that this might be the future of the platform sector. It reverses the direction of the payment transaction from company to the driver, to the driver to the company," he said. The IAATW says this is not just a business model tweak. It is a deliberate strategy to keep drivers classified as software subscribers rather than workers, cutting them off from minimum wage protections, social security and the right to organise.

**Drivers are being left out**  
The timing of the report is pointed. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations body that sets global labour standards, is finalising new rules for platform workers ahead of its annual conference in Geneva in June, which is less than 12 weeks away. The ILO estimates that 154 million people work in the platform economy worldwide, with the vast majority in transport and delivery. The draft rules, however, do not account for the subscription model at all. The IAATW says it submitted detailed written comments flagging this gap well within the ILO's own dead-

line. Those submissions were ignored. Omar Parker, Secretary General of the National E-Hailing Federation of South Africa and an IAATW board member, said workers had been frozen out of the process entirely. "Throughout this ILO standard-setting process, IAATW and its members have attempted to raise our concerns about constantly changing complexities of these emergent problems. We have been locked out and our concerns dismissed," he said.

**Global South drivers must have a say**  
The alliance is also pushing a broader argument, that any new global rules for platform workers must be shaped by the workers most affected by them. Over 80 per cent of platform workers globally are from the Global South; yet, the loudest voices in the ILO process, the IAATW says, remain unions and leadership from wealthier countries, far removed from what drivers in Hyderabad, Nairobi or São Paulo deal with every day.

## LPG PRICE HIKED BY RS 60, NOW EACH CYLINDER WILL COST RS 913

**New Delhi:** Domestic cooking gas LPG price on Saturday, March 7, was hiked by a steep Rs 60 per cylinder, the second increase in rate in less than a year, as oil companies pass on a part of the spike in global energy rates that followed the West Asia crisis. Non-subsidised LPG – the one that common households use in kitchens – will now cost Rs 913 per 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi as against Rs 853 previously, according to the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) website. Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries – the over 10 crore poor who have got free LPG connection since 2016 – will also have to bear the same amount of price increase. They will now pay Rs 613 per 14.2 kg cylinder after accounting for a subsidy of Rs 300 per bottle they get for up to 12 refills in a year. The price increase, the website showed, is effective from March 7. This is the second increase in rate in 11 months. The price was last hiked by Rs 50 in April last year. Alongside, the price of commercial LPG – the one used by establishments such as hotels and restaurants – was



increased by Rs 114.5 per 19-kg cylinder. It now costs Rs 1,883 in Delhi. This increase comes on top of Rs 28 per 19-kg cylinder raise effected on March 1. Commercial LPG rate has risen by Rs 302.50 this year. Industry officials said the increase follows a steep rise in global energy prices since the US and Israel conflict in the oil and gas-rich Middle East. The conflict has led to a near halt in tanker movement through the Strait of Hormuz – the narrow but critical sea lane between Iran and Oman used by Middle Eastern producers to export oil and gas to global markets. The disruption has sharply curtailed energy shipments

from the region, triggering a spike in global oil and gas prices. Since the conflict broke out on February 28, US crude soared 35.63 per cent for the biggest weekly gain in the history of the futures contract dating back to 1983. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures closed at USD 90.90 per barrel. Brent jumped about 28 per cent for its biggest weekly gain since April 2020, to settle at USD 92.69 per barrel. Asian spot prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) have also jumped to around USD 25.40 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) – a three-year high and more than double of last week's levels of around USD 10 per mmbtu amid fears of supply disruptions and halt-

ed exports from Qatar. LPG markets have also tightened as shipments from key Gulf exporters face logistical disruptions, pushing international propane and butane benchmarks higher and raising concerns over supply availability for major importers such as India. Despite Saturday's price increase, cooking gas in India is priced at the lowest when compared with neighbouring countries, industry officials said. In Mumbai, non-subsidised LPG now costs Rs 912.50, Rs 939 in Kolkata and Rs 928.50 in Chennai, according to the IOC website. Rates differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT. The Strait of Hormuz is also a critical conduit for India's energy imports, with roughly half of the crude oil the country buys from overseas transiting through the narrow waterway. In addition, nearly 40 per cent of India's natural gas imports, largely in the form of LNG from Gulf suppliers like Qatar and the UAE, also pass through the strait.

## RBI proposes stronger safeguards for customers in digital banking frauds

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India on Friday, March 6, issued draft amendment directions to strengthen the framework governing customer liability in digital transactions, as it seeks to widen protection for users and speed up resolution of complaints related to fraudulent electronic banking transactions. The central bank has asked stakeholders and members of public to submit feedback or suggestion on the draft guidelines by April 6, 2026. The draft amendment directions have been issued with respect to the announcement made in the February monetary policy by the central bank. The central bank said the digital payment and banking ecosystem has evolved significantly since the existing rules on limiting customer liability in unauthorised electronic banking transactions were introduced in 2017. Following a review,



the RBI has proposed revised instructions that would expand the scope of the framework to cover additional categories of fraudulent electronic banking transactions. Under the draft amendments, banks will also be required to reduce the time taken to process customer complaints relating to fraudulent electronic banking transactions. The proposals further introduce a compensation mechanism for small-value fraudulent transac-

tions, aimed at providing quicker relief to affected customers. According to the RBI, the proposed compensation mechanism will remain in force for one year from the effective date of the directions. The arrangement will subsequently be reviewed based on the experience gained, with the objective of increasing the share of compensation borne by banks while reducing or eliminating the share contributed by the central bank.

## TELANGANA EYES USD 3 TRILLION ECONOMY, FOCUS ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: MINISTER

**Hyderabad:** Telangana Labour and Mines Minister G Vivek Venkataswamy on Saturday, March 7, said that the state government is aiming to achieve a USD 3 trillion economy. Vivek Venkataswamy called upon industries to actively cooperate with the government and comply with statutory regulations to ensure sustainable industrial growth. "To achieve this ambitious goal, the government is maintaining continuous engagement with industry leaders and stakeholders," he said, while addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) annual meeting in Hyderabad.

Venkataswamy said the government is focused on skill development to prepare the youth for emerging industrial opportunities. "The Employment Department has established Advanced Technology Centres (ATC) to train young people in line with the requirements of modern industries," he said. The minister said that the



Telangana government has also held discussions with the CII to identify the specific skills required for upcoming industries. He observed that Telangana is witnessing a steady inflow of investments and several new industries are expected to be established in the state. "In view of this, the government is making efforts to ensure the availability of a

skilled workforce that can meet the future demands of industry. New training courses aligned with evolving industrial needs are also being introduced," the minister added. Venkataswamy stressed that while the government is committed to improving the ease of doing business, equal importance is being given to ensuring the speed of doing business so that investments can be implemented quickly. He

reminded the attendees that the industries must also comply with the regulations of the state. He urged industrial units to strictly adhere to safety guidelines and statutory norms prescribed by the Government of India and the Government of Telangana. Referring to the recently introduced labour codes, he said that industries must ensure proper compliance to safeguard the interests of

workers. Venkataswamy added that the cost of following safety and statutory norms is minimal when compared to the losses that may arise due to negligence or non-compliance. Recalling the contributions of former Union Minister Kaka Venkat Swamy, the minister noted that he had once proposed the introduction of pension schemes for private sector employees despite facing resistance from industries at that time. "Today, such social security measures have proved to be highly beneficial for workers," he said. The minister called upon industries to actively cooperate with the government and comply with statutory regulations to ensure sustainable industrial growth and worker welfare in the state. Vivek Venkataswamy called upon industries to actively cooperate with the government and comply with statutory regulations to ensure sus-

# 'Perfect storm' for Russell but Norris unhappy with 'WORST CARS'

George Russell said he believed a "perfect storm" accounted for the chasm between Mercedes and their rivals in qualifying at the first race of the new Formula 1 season. The Briton's remarks were a reference to the fact that Max Verstappen, whom Russell said Mercedes believed was their closest rival, crashed without setting a time. But it may also be that the remark works as a more general reflection of an Australian Grand Prix grid that looks as if it was a function of possibly the most controversial set of new rules F1 has ever seen. McLaren's Lando Norris, the world champion, said after qualifying sixth in Melbourne: "We've come from the best cars ever made in Formula 1, and the nicest to drive, to probably the worst." Norris was talking about the impact of electrical energy management on the way drivers operate their new cars, with engines that have a 50-50 split between internal combustion



and electrical power, and the unusually large impact optimising that has on lap time. If that sounds complicated, it's because it is. The drivers are constantly managing the charge in their batteries throughout a lap, and do so through driving techniques that many would not typically associate with the ultimate motorsport challenge. "You just decelerate so much before corners," Norris said. "You

have to lift everywhere to make sure the (battery) pack's at the top. If the pack's too high, you're also screwed." Not having the information one needs to maximise the engine has an impact on this - and Norris had lost out by reliability issues on Friday. "It's certainly just not been an easy weekend for me," he said. "Just not a lot of laps, a lot of issues." "The problem is now, it's not like you can just get

back in the car and drive what you once knew and just click. This car is just odd. "Just getting into the rhythm of lifting everywhere to go quicker and using gears you don't want to use and just understanding that when you lift more, you brake later but you have to brake less." "That's why laps are more valuable than ever. In the past, miss P1, not too bothered. Now, you miss five laps, not only do you as a driv-

er have to figure things out quicker, the engine doesn't learn what it needs to learn and then you're just on the back foot." Russell ended the day leading a Mercedes one-two from team-mate Kimi Antonelli and 0.785 seconds quicker than the first driver not in a Mercedes, Red Bull's Isack Hadjar. Russell said: "We knew we had a fast car beneath us. I don't think we ever anticipated it to be this fast, but Max wasn't there. "We had him down as our top rival and if you look at his pace difference historically over the last seven years to his team-mate, you would have expected him to be in that mix as well." "It was a bit of a perfect storm." There may be a significant element of truth to that, but there is no doubt that Mercedes have the fastest car and that they are going to take some beating for a while. McLaren also have a Mercedes engine but their fastest driver, Oscar Piastri in fifth, was more than 0.8secs slower than Russell.

# "Scouting, Speed, Ambition": How Borussia Dortmund Plan To Topple Europe's Financial Giants

Borussia Dortmund may be far from reliving the glory of 2011-12, when they last won the Bundesliga title, but the club's CEO Carsten Cramer has a well-defined roadmap for the future. Balancing a candid admission of the financial gulf in European football with a fierce commitment to the club's "50+1" rule is a challenge, and Cramer had no hesitation in acknowledging it. In a recent assessment during NDTV's visit to Signal Iduna Park, Dortmund's home stadium, Cramer made it clear that the BVB family has no intention of compromising its soul to keep pace. Cramer was under no illusions about the sheer spending power of England's top flight and the heavyweights of Spain and France. "You described our challenge," Cramer told NDTV when asked how a club like Borussia Dortmund competes with Bayern Munich and other top European clubs with a smaller budget. "As long as we are



top ten in Europe, as long as we are playing a game like this, with a chance to come closer to Bayern Munich, I'm not complaining about the differences we do have. That's competition in the market. Of course, the Premier League clubs, PSG, the Spanish ones, are more powerful than us." He pointed to the club's growth as a source of pride, highlighting that Dortmund has successfully moved ahead of Italian giants such as Inter, AC Milan, and Juventus in terms of financial figures. Despite this progress, the gap

to the likes of Manchester City and Liverpool remains vast. For Cramer, this is not a reason to complain but a call to innovate and secure the most exciting talents before others. "We have to be creative. We have to be faster. We have to push our scouting... to hire talented players earlier than others." 50+1: A Non-Negotiable USP At the heart of Dortmund's philosophy remains the 50+1 rule, a regulation ensuring that club members retain majority voting rights, preventing a total takeover by commercial investors.

# Who Will Win T20 World Cup 2026 If India vs New Zealand Final Is Washed Out - ICC Rules Explained

The cricket world is all set for the India vs New Zealand T20 World Cup 2026 final in Ahmedabad on Sunday. India are chasing the world record of becoming the first team to win three T20 World Cup titles, while New Zealand are aiming for their first T20 World Cup crown. India scored 253/7 in the T20 World Cup semi-final against England - the highest score in T20 World Cup knockouts. On the other hand, New Zealand chased down a 170-run target in just 12.5 overs. As fans eagerly anticipate the match, concerns about the weather persist, leaving many wondering what will happen if the summit clash gets washed out due to rain. According to ICC rules, the final has 120



minutes of extra time to complete 10 overs per side, which is the minimum requirement in a T20 World Cup final. If the match cannot be completed on time, there is a reserve day on March 9, where the match will resume from where it stopped. If the match cannot be completed

on the reserve day and gets abandoned, then according to the rules, the T20 World Cup 2026 trophy will be shared between India and New Zealand. In the history of ICC tournaments, such a situation has happened only once - during the Champions Trophy 2002 final between

India and Sri Lanka - when the match could not be completed even on the reserve day, and the trophy was shared between the two sides. Well, the good news for fans is that there is no threat of rain for the final. According to the forecast, the skies will remain clear. However, the heat could pose a challenge for the players. The maximum temperature in the city may reach around 40 degree celsius, and it is expected to drop to around 23 degree celsius at night. India and New Zealand have faced each other 30 times in the shortest format of the game. Out of these encounters, the Men in Blue have registered 18 victories, while the Blackcaps have won 11 matches.

# Dale Steyn Threatens New Zealand With 'Chokers' Tag Ahead Of T20 World Cup Final vs India

New Zealand are through to yet another ICC final, as they prepare to face India in the title-deciding T20 World Cup 2026 showdown in Ahmedabad on Sunday. The Kiwis have a strong record against India, but when it comes to winning ICC titles - especially in white-ball cricket - history has not been on their side. While South Africa are often labelled "chokers" for failing in decisive stages of tournaments, Proteas pace legend Dale Steyn feels the tag suits New Zealand more. During a discussion with AB de Villiers on YouTube, Steyn urged the Kiwis to beat India and finally win the T20 World Cup title. Otherwise, he said, he would formally hand over the "chokers" label to them. "Look, let's be honest here.



New Zealand. Everyone likes to call South Africa chokers, but I am going to say it. New Zealand haven't won many World Cups themselves, and they have been in more finals than we have. So, no offence, New Zealand, but please go on to win this," said Steyn in a chat with AB de Villiers on the latter's YouTube channel. "Otherwise, I am formally

handing over that card to you; it's yours. I love New Zealand, but they won't beat India. It would require a monumental choke from India. I am calling it; it's possible. I really want them to win, but do I think they'll beat India? No," he added. Since winning the ICC KnockOut Trophy in 2000, New Zealand have reached eight ICC finals

but won just one - the 2021 World Test Championship final, against India. Hate New Zealand: AB de Villiers, sharing his opinion on New Zealand's cricketing journey, recalled the 2015 ODI World Cup final where they squared off against Australia. De Villiers believes the Kiwis were never good enough to beat the Kangaroos. For him, South Africa could have defeated Australia in the final had they not been eliminated by New Zealand in the semi-final. "I hate New Zealand for that. In 2015, they were never going to beat Australia in that final. And I mean, guys will hate me for saying this, but there was only one team that was going to beat Australia in Australia, and that was South Africa, alright.

# McCullum makes 'no apologies' for informal set-up

Brendon McCullum says he makes "no apologies" for running an informal dressing room as England coach but rejected the perception it is casual. Defeat by India in the T20 World Cup semi-finals brought to an end a winter in which England were also beaten 4-1 in the Ashes. Poor preparation and England's alcohol consumption came under scrutiny in Australia to put McCullum's position in doubt, but he looks likely to retain the support of those above him. "There's probably a perception that we run a casual operation," McCullum said. "It couldn't be more further from the truth. "We run an informal operation but the work is done, the preparation is put in place, there's an environ-



ment which operates in a certain way, and because you are relaxed around that doesn't mean that the work is not being done. "That's just an attitude to try and allow guys to be as free as possible to implement the skills and tactics that you're trying to achieve." A relaxed environment has been part of McCullum's England set-up

since he took over the Test side in 2022 - an attempt to relieve players of the pressures of playing international cricket. England were accused of a lack of adequate preparation for the Ashes, playing only one warm-up match against England Lions at a club ground in Perth before the first Test. After the Ashes it was revealed Harry Brook was punched by a nightclub bouncer the night before a one-day international in New Zealand, while a mid-series trip to Noosa was heavily scrutinised. A review by the England and Wales Cricket Board into England's winter is under way, the culmination of which will confirm McCullum's future, but there have already been some changes.

# NZ Captain Mitchell Santner's Clear Verdict On T20 World Cup Final Pitch In Ahmedabad

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner is clear about what to expect from the T20 World Cup 2026 final against India in Ahmedabad, at least as far as the pitch is concerned. When India last featured in an ICC final at the same venue, a lot was said and written about the nature of the pitch at the venue. Speaking ahead of the final against India at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Santner acknowledged the challenge posed by a "world-class" Indian bowling attack and a pitch that appears primed for high scores. Addressing the press conference eve of the summit clash, Santner said his side is excited for the final and acknowledged



pressure on India to win at home," Santner said during the pre-match press conference. Reflecting on the conditions in Ahmedabad, Santner noted that while the surface remained covered, expectations remain high for a batting-friendly deck. "Yeah, I mean I haven't had a look at the wicket yet, it's still under cover, but one can only assume it's going to be pretty flat and high scoring," Santner said. Bumrah Not India's Only Threat The Black Caps skipper was particularly complimentary of India's pace spearhead, Jasprit Bumrah, whose recent performances - including a decisive spell in the semi-final against England - have dominated pre-match discussions.

# VORONCHIKHINA WINS RUSSIA'S FIRST MEDAL AT GAMES



Para-alpine skier Varvara Voronchikhina won Russia's first medal of the Milan-Cortina Winter Paralympics with downhill bronze - marking the first time the Russian flag will appear on the medal table at a Games since 2014. Voronchikhina and her Russian team-mates only returned to international competition in January after their country won an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas) against FIS, the international governing body for skiing and snowboarding. FIS had initially refused to lift its ban on athletes from Russia and Belarus, despite the International Paralympic Committee ending its own suspension of the two nations in September. That ban had been in place since 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the eve of the Winter Paralympics four years ago, although it was

softened the following year to allow athletes to compete as neutrals. The Russian flag has not been flown at a Paralympic Games or shown on the medal table since Sochi 2014, firstly because of the country's state-sponsored doping scandal, before the Ukraine war led to those further sanctions. Voronchikhina, 23, finished 2.47 seconds shy of the gold medal-winning time set by Sweden's Ebba Aarsjoe in the women's standing downhill event in Cortina, while France's Aurelie Richard took silver. Voronchikhina's Russian team-mate Aleksei Bugaev won bronze in the men's standing downhill later on Saturday. "It's a really long time when we were without the flag, and I'm really glad [now]," Voronchikhina said. "All my country and all my team-mates, we [are] glad also."

# Wembanyama stars in 25-point San Antonio fightback

Victor Wembanyama enjoyed "one of the best wins" of his career as he helped the San Antonio Spurs make a 25-point comeback against the Los Angeles Clippers. The French star claimed 27 points and 10 rebounds as the Spurs fought back from 75-50 down in the third quarter to win 116-112 on Friday. The 22-year-old grabbed the go-ahead score with 16 seconds remaining to secure San Antonio's largest comeback of the season and their 14th win from 15 games. Wembanyama said in a post-game on-court interview

that he was "about to pass out. I've got zero left right now." "That was one of the best wins," he added. "That was one of the best games, best parts of my career, my basketball life." The Spurs improved to 46-17 and are now 2.5 games behind Western Conference leaders the Oklahoma City Thunder. Slovenian star Luka Doncic scored 44 points as the Los Angeles

Lakers won 128-117 at home to the Indiana Pacers. The Lakers were without LeBron James (elbow, foot) as Doncic scored his 10th 40-point haul of the season, breaking a tie with Minnesota's Anthony Edwards for the most this season. London-born forward OG Anunoby scored a season-high 34 points as the New York Knicks won 142-103 at

the Denver Nuggets. Denver's star guard Jamal Murray missed the second half after rolling his left ankle when he stepped on team-mate Nikola Jokic's foot. The Knicks remain third in the Eastern Conference behind the second-placed Boston Celtics, who won 120-100 at home to the Dallas Mavericks as Jayson Tatum played his first game of the season. The six-time All Star scored 15 points from 27 minutes of action on his return after suffering a ruptured Achilles during last season's play-offs.



The French star claimed 27 points and 10 rebounds as the Spurs fought back from 75-50 down in the third quarter to win 116-112 on Friday.

## Power Star Pawan Kalyan Stuns in the Powerful Glimpse of Ustaad Bhagat Singh



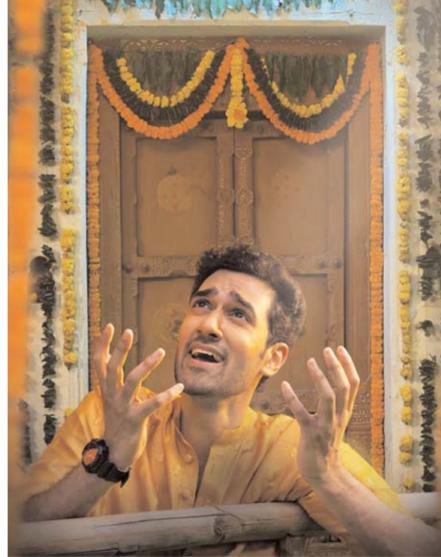
The team of Ustaad Bhagat Singh has unveiled a powerful glimpse from the much-anticipated film, sending fans into a frenzy. Featuring Pawan Kalyan in a striking and commanding avatar, the glimpse perfectly captures the mass energy and charisma that audiences love to see on screen. Right from the moment it dropped, the glimpse has been receiving an overwhelming response across social media platforms. Fans are celebrating Pawan Kalyan's stylish screen presence, impactful dialogues, and powerful body language, making the short preview an instant talking point among cinema lovers. Director Harish Shankar, often hailed by fans as the Cult Captain, has once again ensured that Pawan Kalyan is presented in the electrifying manner that audiences adore. The glimpse reflects the film's intense tone and the larger-than-life characterization crafted for the Power Star. The makers are

thrilled with the response pouring in and promise that this is just a small taste of what's in store. The team is now gearing up to unveil the much-awaited trailer soon, which will further elevate the excitement around the film. On the musical front, Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad has composed the songs for the film, adding his signature energy to the soundtrack, while Thaman S is handling the powerful background score, promising a pulsating musical experience that complements the film's scale and intensity. With the glimpse already striking a chord with audiences, Ustaad Bhagat Singh is steadily building massive anticipation among fans and moviegoers alike. The team will soon be unveiling the trailer — and the excitement is only getting bigger. Ustaad Bhagat Singh is prestigiously being produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y.Ravi Shankar under Mythri Movie Makers and is slated for a grand release on March 19th.

## Rapappa' - The First Single from Rakasa Arrives with a Catchy and Playful Heartbreak Twist

The makers of Rakasa have unveiled the film's first single, "Rapappa," introducing audiences to a lively and unconventional musical number that blends heartbreak with humour. Sung by Ram Miriyala, composed by Anudeep Dev, and written by lyricist Raghuram, the song marks the beginning of the film's musical journey with a track that is both entertaining and rhythmically infectious. Presented as a lyrical release, "Rapappa" instantly grabs attention with its playful tone and energetic structure, giving listeners an engaging glimpse into the film's musical personality while adding another exciting layer to the growing anticipation surrounding Rakasa.

What makes "Rapappa" stand out is its witty lyrical style and its strong sense of rhythmic wordplay. Instead of portraying heartbreak in a purely emotional or melancholic way, lyricist Raghuram turns the situation into a humorous and relatable musical narrative. The lyrics are filled with clever rhymes and playful punchlines that flow effortlessly with the beat, creating a lively conversational rhythm throughout the song. Lines that stack rhyming words in quick succession add a comic flavour to the protagonist's heartbreak, making the song feel both amusing and expressive at the same time. Ram Miriyala's distinctive vocal delivery enhances this mood perfectly, bringing a mix of frustration, sarcasm and charm to the performance.



The repeating hook "Rapappa... Rapappa..." serves as a catchy refrain that anchors the song's identity, making it instantly memorable and enjoyable for listeners. The choreography for the song has been designed by JD Master, adding another dynamic element to the musical presentation. The release of "Rapappa" arrives amid the steadily growing buzz surrounding Rakasa. The film's title glimpse has already crossed an impressive 1.9 million views, while the recently released teaser has generated strong engagement online, surpassing 2.7 million views within just five days. These

numbers reflect the rising curiosity around the project and the enthusiastic response from audiences who are eager to discover more about the film's world. With the arrival of the first single, the promotional campaign for Rakasa gains further momentum, giving fans another exciting preview of the film's tone and entertainment value. Headlined by Sangeeth Sobhan, who is currently enjoying back-to-back hits with MAD and MAD Square, alongside Nayan Sarika, Rakasa brings together a vibrant ensemble cast that includes Venela Kishore, Brahmani, Tanikella Bharani, Ashish Vidyarthi, and Getup Srinu.

## Everyone who has watched Mrithyunjay is praising it highly: Hero Sree Vishnu at the thrilling blockbuster success meet



The film Mrithyunjay, starring content king Sree Vishnu and directed by Hussain Sha Kiran, is an investigative thriller produced by Sandeep Gunnam and Vinay Chilakapati under the banners of Light Box Media and Picture Perfect Entertainment. Sree Vishnu, who previously delivered a blockbuster hit with Samajavaragamana, once again impressed audiences along with Reba Monica John. Released on March 6, the film is now a runaway blockbuster. In this context, the film unit organized a thrilling blockbuster success meet on Saturday, where the following statements were made: Sree Vishnu said, "Sandeep garu, Pavan garu, and I wanted to collaborate on a film. At that time, Sandeep introduced me to Hussain Sha. Sandeep garu wanted to make a film purely based

on content. On set, Ramya garu spent a lot of time looking after all of us. Chinna garu, Sudarshan, Raccha Ravi, Ayyappa Sharma garu, Reba garu, and Baby Ooha all delivered amazing performances. The audience is finding the film very fresh. Sagar garu presented all of us in a new light. Hussain's writing and twists were excellent. I was even shocked by Kal Bhairav's score. Because of him, the level of the film went up. He is the real hero of this film. Everyone who has watched it is praising it highly. For those who haven't seen it yet, watch it immediately. It's a rare thriller in Telugu, and this is a very good film in that genre. I hope everyone enjoys it, and I wish the film great success." Hussain Sha Kiran said, "Mrithyunjay" was promoted without songs or comedy scenes. We connected with the audience purely through

the content of the film. Seeing the positive reviews on social media after the release made us very happy. I thank the audience for supporting our film. Ramya garu, Vinay garu, and Sandeep garu gave me tremendous support throughout this journey. Baby Ooha performed wonderfully in the film. Raccha Ravi, Sudarshan, and others gave excellent performances. Kaala Bhairava elevated the film with his background score. My sister Manisha received recognition for her set designs. It was a pleasure to have Chinna garu in the film. None of this would have been possible without Sree Vishnu garu. His acceptance of the story brought all of us together. I feel I did not disappoint the trust he placed in me. I also thank my family for standing by me. I hope the audience continues to encourage our film in the same way."

## "Dhandoraa" Emerges Victorious with a Grand Triple Triumph at Telangana Gaddar Film Awards 2025

The impactful journey of Dhandoraa has reached another proud milestone as the film secured three major honours at the Telangana Gaddar Film Awards 2025 (TGFA). The film has been recognised as Second Best Feature Film, while Sivaji received the Best Supporting Actor award for his widely acclaimed performance, and Mark K. Robin was honoured as Best Music Director. This grand triple recognition marks a proud moment for the entire team and further reinforces the film's growing stature. Written and directed by Muralikanth D and produced by Ravindra Benerjee Muppaneni under the Loukya Entertainments

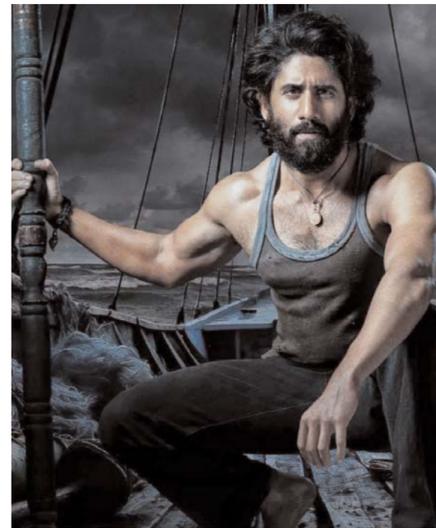


banner, Dhandoraa emerged as a striking Telugu social drama for its rooted storytelling and uncompromising engagement with themes of caste, dignity, and social conscience. Set against the lived realities of rural Telangana, the film places death at the

centre of its narrative, using it as the starting point to expose the deeply embedded social hierarchies that continue to shape everyday life. The honour for Second Best Feature Film reflects the strength of the film's vision and the conviction with which its story was told.

From the earliest stage of its promotional campaign, Dhandoraa signalled a strong ideological and emotional direction. The teaser, anchored by the powerful line "immediately established the film's philosophical tone and grounded rural setting.

## Double Honour For Naga Chaitanya's Thandel At the Gaddar Awards 2025



Naga Chaitanya Wins The Best Actor Award For His Intense & Emotionally Powerful Performance The sensational blockbuster Thandel, starring Yuva Samrat Naga Chaitanya and directed by Chandoo Mondeti, has achieved a proud double honour at the prestigious Gaddar Awards 2025. Naga Chaitanya won the Best Actor award for his intense and emotionally powerful performance, while Thandel which ended up as biggest grosser for the actor was also recognized as the Best National Integration Film. This rare double recognition highlights both the strength of Naga Chaitanya's performance and the film's meaningful impact. Known for choosing diverse roles, the actor delivered one of his most impressive performances in Thandel, earning praise for the depth, honesty, and realism he brought to the character. Produced by Bunny Vasu under Geetha Arts and presented by Allu Aravind, this marks the first time Naga Chaitanya has

received a state award for his performance. Despite stiff competition, his portrayal in Thandel stood out and secured him the win. His performance serves as a testament to his versatility, demonstrating his ability to excel in a wide range of roles, including complete rural characters, when given the right script and direction. The film's win as Best National Integration Film also reflects its strong and relevant message. Thandel explores themes of unity, humanity, and cultural harmony, allowing it to connect with audiences beyond regional boundaries. The award particularly recognizes the film's portrayal of the national flag and its exploration of cultural roots and origins. The Gaddar Awards, introduced by the Telangana government as a new platform replacing the long-running Nandi Awards, aim to honour excellence in cinema across various categories. The double recognition for Thandel, following Allu Arjun's win for Pushpa 2 the previous year, makes the moment even more special.

## THE GREAT PRE-WEDDING SHOW" SHINES WITH DOUBLE HONOURS AT THE TELANGANA GADDAR FILM AWARDS 2025



The Great Pre-Wedding Show continues its impressive journey with a proud new milestone, earning two honours at the Telangana Gaddar Film Awards 2025. The film has been recognized as the Third Best Feature Film, while Master Rohan Roy has been honoured with the Best Child Artist award for his lively and memorable performance in the film. This recognition further strengthens the film's growing reputation as one of the most heartwarming Telugu successes of the year. What began as a modest theatrical release has steadily evolved into a story of sustained audience affection and critical appreciation, culminating in recognition at one of the state's most respected film honours. Directed by Rahul Srinivas, The Great Pre-Wedding Show tells the story of Ramesh, a small-town photographer whose quiet life turns unexpectedly chaotic when a misplaced memory card from a pre-wedding shoot triggers a chain of unpredictable events. Built around grounded humour and gentle emotional observation, the film resonated with audiences for its sincerity and its ability to find comedy in everyday situations. The Telangana Gaddar Film Awards jury acknowledged the film's ability to blend humour, emotion, and rooted storytelling with authenticity.

The recognition for Third Best Feature Film celebrates the film's narrative warmth, its relatable characters, and the organic storytelling approach that allowed the story to unfold naturally. In an industry often driven by spectacle and scale, the film's recognition stands as a reminder that honest, character-driven stories continue to connect deeply with audiences. A particularly special moment for the team comes with Master Rohan Roy receiving the Best Child Artist honour for his role as Ram Charan. His energetic presence and natural comic timing added a delightful spark to the film's narrative. Whether navigating moments of panic, mischief, or loyalty, Rohan Roy's performance brought charm and spontaneity to the screen, making his character one of the most memorable aspects of the film. The film features Thiruveer in the lead role as Ramesh, delivering an understated and relatable performance that anchors the narrative. Teena Savya complements him with warmth and quiet strength, while Narendra Ravi brings an engaging dynamic to the ensemble. Together, the cast creates a believable small-town world where humour emerges organically from character interactions. Behind the scenes, the film's technical team played an important role in shaping its tone and atmosphere.

## VIKRAM ON DUTY CONTENT IS VERY INTERESTING. HAPPY TO SEE NEW TALENT COMING IN: OSCAR WINNER MM KEERAVANI AT PRESS MEET

Vikram on Duty is a crime thriller directed by Brahma Rudra and starring Bigg Boss winner Nikhil Maliyakkal. Produced by Praveena and Anil Kadiyala under the banner of Gnyapika Entertainments. This series, which is being streamed on Jio Hotstar, is trending in the top one. On this occasion, the makers organized a press meet. Oscar winner MM Keeravani attended this press meet as the chief guest. Oscar winner MM Keeravani said in the press meet... Hello everyone. My friend Anil came to this ceremony for Praveena. I have seen some glimpses in this web series. Crime investigation is done through a unit called Hunt. It is very happy that a talent hunt is being done with Hunt. Many new people should come to the industry. All the very best to



the new music director Suhas. His music bits are good. It is known that this is already number one in streaming. Congratulations to Hotstar. Harsha is making use of his experience. I read Kommuri Sambasivarao's detective novel as a child. In it, the detective uses his brain to investigate some crimes. Similarly,

Madhubabu's novels also have action. I hope this series will have both. Finally, if I have to give a hook line... Vikram on duty because of Harsha off duty. All the best to everyone. Bigg Boss winner Nikhil said. Greetings to everyone. Harsha garu, Praveena garu, Anil garu, the whole team did this project with a good team work.

Thank you so much to Nandini garu and Ramana garu from Jio Hotstar. I am very happy that Oscar winner Keeravani garu came to this ceremony. Aashu performed very wonderfully. Thank you to everyone who worked on this project. Actor Amar said... It is very happy to see Nikhil in Vikram on Duty.