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(with out SSD Tokens), 18 H

SHORT TAKES

West Asia conflict hurting India and the world, says Tharoor

New Delhi: The damage being done to the combatants, the neighbourhood, and the wider region, including to India, due to the West Asia conflict has "crossed all acceptable limits" and it must be made to stop, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has said. Interacting with reporters on the sidelines of an event here on Friday, Tharoor said that he's been someone who has always been "in favour of the doves" in this particular conflict and most of the conflicts.

On hawkish remarks from both sides

He was asked to comment on the hawkish remarks emanation from both sides when it comes to the West Asia conflict which began three weeks ago, with no end in sight.

4 arrested over Iftar leftovers dumped near temple in UP

Shravasti: Four people were arrested here on Friday for allegedly dumping leftovers of non-vegetarian food in a freshwater drain near an ashram's temple, police said. The incident took place near Sonpathri Ashram Temple in the Sirsia area, they said. In a video statement, Circle Officer Satish Kumar Sharma said a written complaint was lodged on March 19 by Hari Sharnanand, who heads the ashram. According to the complaint, on the evening of March 17, an iftar party was organised near a freshwater drain adjacent to the temple, where non-vegetarian food was served.

Musalmaan allowed nahi: Delhi Rapido driver refuses pick up

New Delhi: "Musalmaan allowed nahi hai meri gaadi mein (Muslims are not allowed in my vehicle)," a Rapido driver allegedly told his Muslim passenger and refused to pick up despite a confirmed booking. The incident occurred on Saturday, March 21, in the national capital, when India celebrated Eid. Zain, a journalist hailing from Kerala and based in New Delhi, had booked a Rapido cab. He was assigned Subhash Rawat's service. However, when Rawat realised Zain was a Muslim, he refused to come. "Why are you saying I am not allowed? Because I am a Muslim?" Zain asks. "Yes, Muslims are not allowed in my vehicle. This is not your father's vehicle," Rawat replies bluntly and asks the journalist to stop calling him.

CM Launches Oil Palm Factory Announces 9,000 Crore Rythu Bharosa Support

By M.RAJANIKANTH
Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU: Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy on Sunday inaugurated an Oil Palm factory at Narmetta in Siddipet Assembly Constituency and announced that 9,000 crore under the Rythu Bharosa scheme will be credited to farmers' bank accounts in three instalments within 45 days.

Releasing the first instalment during the "Farmers Festival" programme, the Chief Minister said the government is committed to strengthening the agricultural sector and ensuring financial security for farmers. Addressing a large public gathering, the CM stated that while the previous BRS government spent 2,533 crore per month on farmers' welfare, the present People's Government is spending nearly ₹5,500 crore every month. He added that over 1 lakh crore has already been spent on farmers' welfare within two years, including compensation for crop losses. Highlighting Telangana's achievement as the top paddy-producing state in the country, the Chief Minister emphasised the need for crop diversification to ensure better profits for farmers. He pointed out challenges in paddy procurement, noting that while



the state procured 71 lakh metric tonnes, the Centre limited procurement to around 50 lakh metric tonnes. "We must move towards diversified cropping patterns so that agriculture becomes a profitable venture," he said, adding that the government is also working to facilitate exports of agricultural produce to international markets. In view of the ongoing Iran-America conflict and its potential impact on fertilizer supply, the Chief Minister cautioned about possible shortages and directed officials to seek increased fertilizer allocation from the Centre. He stressed the need to meet

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to secure adequate urea supply for Telangana. The CM also made a political announcement, stating that the Congress leader who wins the Siddipet Assembly constituency in the next elections would be inducted into the State Cabinet. He appealed to voters to support Congress and bring an end to what he termed "family-run politics" in the constituency. Reaffirming confidence in the party's future, Revanth Reddy said the Congress will retain power in the 2029 Assembly elections. Underscoring the importance of the oil palm sector, the Chief Minister said the government is ready to procure produce cultivated

across 10 lakh acres and directed Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwar Rao to establish a similar oil palm processing unit in Kodangal. He also expressed readiness for a public debate on fund allocations to Kodangal during the previous BRS regime. The Chief Minister highlighted several welfare and development initiatives, including free bus travel for women, large-scale financial support to women self-help groups, and efforts to promote them as economic drivers. He noted that ₹57,000 crore in loans has already been extended to women groups through bank linkages.

Telangana BJP congratulates PM Modi on long public service

Highlights

■ Telangana State BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Sunday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for achieving a milestone in longstanding public service as both the PM and CM.



Hyderabad: Telangana State BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Sunday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for achieving a milestone in longstanding public service as both the PM and CM. Rao was speaking at a function organised by the state party unit on Musi River Rejuvenation and Facts. "Today is a proud day for all BJP workers that Narendra Modi has completed 8,931 days in public service as Chief Minister and Prime Minister combined, surpassing the record of former Sikkim CM Pawan Kumar Chamling," a party press release quoting Rao said. "This was a unique milestone in India's political history. On behalf of the BJP and

the people of Telangana, he extended heartfelt congratulations and wished him a long, healthy life." Meanwhile, Rao said the BJP supports the Musi River Rejuvenation, but opposes the manner in which the Congress government is implementing it. He claimed that many people are being displaced without a valid reason, and the government is more focused on real estate development around the river. He said the BJP will stand by those affected by the displacement. "Today is a proud day for all BJP workers that Narendra Modi has completed 8,931 days in public service as Chief Minister and Prime Minister combined," he said. "Today is a proud day for all BJP workers that Narendra Modi has

completed 8,931 days in public service as Chief Minister and Prime Minister combined, surpassing the record of former Sikkim CM Pawan Kumar Chamling," a party press release quoting Rao said. "This was a unique milestone in India's political history. On behalf of the BJP and the people of Telangana, he extended heartfelt congratulations and wished him a long, healthy life." Meanwhile, Rao said the BJP supports the Musi River Rejuvenation, but opposes the manner in which the Congress government is implementing it. He claimed that many people are being displaced without a valid reason and the government is more focused on real estate development around the river.

IMD Hyderabad forecasts two days of thunderstorm, issues yellow alert

Hyderabad: India Meteorological Department (IMD) Hyderabad has issued a yellow alert in view of expected thunderstorms for two days in Telangana. The alert has been issued for all districts of the state.

■ LIGHTNING EXPECTED

As per IMD Hyderabad, the state will also witness lightning along with squalls on March 24 and 25. Meanwhile, as per Telangana Development Society (TGDS), the temperature in the state has crossed 40 degrees Celsius. The highest temperature of 40.1 degrees Celsius was recorded in Jayashankar district on Saturday, March 21. In the case of Hyderabad,



the highest temperature of 36.4 degrees Celsius was recorded in Bandlaguda, Bahadurpura, and Golkonda.

■ IMD FORECASTS HAZE ALONG WITH THUNDERSTORM IN HYDERABAD

The weather department has forecast hazy conditions along with thunderstorms in the city till

March 25. It is forecast that hazy conditions will prevail in all zones, viz., Charminar, Khairathabad, Kukatpally, LB Nagar, Secunderabad, and Serilingampally of the city in the morning hours. In view of the expected thunderstorms in all districts of the state, as forecast by IMD Hyderabad, residents need to plan their travel accordingly.

India Assures Fuel Security Amid Rising Global Prices Due to West Asia Conflict

AGENCY

New Delhi: The ongoing conflict in West Asia has disrupted global energy supplies, pushing fuel prices higher worldwide, with noticeable effects in India. The government, however, has assured that the country has sufficient crude oil reserves to meet demand. At a press briefing on Friday, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, stated that all refineries are operating at maximum capacity and adequate crude oil stocks are available. Domestic LPG production continues uninterrupted, and sufficient stock is maintained nationwide, with no reports of distributor-level shortages. Sharma urged consumers to switch to piped natural gas (PNG) wherever feasible and men-



tioned that state governments have been requested to facilitate this transition. Sharma added that over 13,700 connections have been provided in the top 15 gas-producing regions, with approximately 7,500 consumers shifting from LPG cylinders to PNG. Online LPG bookings currently account for about 93% of transactions, and deliveries are authenticated via secure codes. Panic bookings have declined, and around 5.5

million refills were booked yesterday alone. Commercial LPG supply continues normally, with 18 states and union territories issuing allocation orders and about 11,300 tons of commercial LPG delivered in the past week. All states are reported to have sufficient supply. In the joint briefing, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, confirmed that

no maritime incidents have been reported in the past 24 hours. All 22 Indian ships and 611 Indian sailors in the Gulf region are safe under continuous monitoring by the Directorate General of Shipping. The ministry's helpline and control room received about 125 calls and over 200 emails in the past 24 hours, all addressed promptly. Additionally, 25 Indian sailors were safely repatriated during this period. Sinha also mentioned that the New Mangalore Port has issued a circular providing waivers for crude and LPG cargo ships from March 14 to March 31. An additional 3,500 square meters of covered storage and 76,000 square meters of open yard space have been earmarked for extra capacity.

CBI grills Anil Ambani for 2nd consecutive day in Rs 2,929 crore SBI fraud case

AGENCY

New Delhi: Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani was interrogated by the CBI here for seven hours on Friday, March 20, for the second day in a row in connection with the alleged Rs 2,929.05 crore SBI fraud case. The CBI had registered an FIR on August 21, 2025, following a complaint filed by SBI over allegations of fraud to the tune of Rs 2,929.05 crore on the public sector bank, in which Reliance Communications Limited, Anil D. Ambani and others, including unknown public servants, are accused. During the investigation of this case, the CBI had summoned accused Anil Ambani for



interrogation on Thursday at the CBI Head Office in Delhi. Since the interrogation remained incomplete on Thursday, he was summoned again to the CBI office on Friday, a senior official said. A criminal case was registered against Reliance Communications Limited, Anil D Ambani and others unknown including unknown public

servants on the complaint dated August 18, 2025 from the State Bank of India (SBI) which is the lead bank in the consortium of 11 banks— Bank of India, Central Bank of India, UCO Bank, Union Bank of India, e-Corporation Bank, Canara Bank, e-Syndicate Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, IDBI Bank Limited, and e-Oriental Bank of

Commerce that had extended loans to the Anil Ambani group. The complaint is based on a forensic audit report that alleges large-scale diversion and misutilization of loan funds through interlinked and circuitous transactions among group entities during the period 2013-17, resulting in wrongful loss of Rs 2929.05 crore to SBI out of total exposure of Rs 19, 694.33 crore involving 17 public sector banks, according to an official statement. Subsequent to the registration of the case, separate complaints were received from Punjab National Bank, Bank of India, Union Bank of India, UCO Bank, Central Bank of India.

BENGAL SIR: ECI CONSTITUTES 19 APPELLATE TRIBUNALS

AGENCY

Kolkata: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Friday issued a notification announcing the constitution of 19 Appellate Tribunals to hear objections on decisions taken by judicial officers during ongoing adjudications of cases classified under the "logical discrepancy" category during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in West Bengal, which is heading for a two-phase Assembly poll next month. The notification stated: "In pursuance of the order dated 10.03.2026 passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in W.P. (Civil) No. 1089 of 2025 and ors, and as recommended by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the High Court at



Calcutta, the Election Commission of India (ECI) hereby constitutes the following Appellate Tribunal(s) for hearing appeals against orders passed by the designated Judicial Officers in respect of inclusion or exclusion of prospective electors in the electoral roll of the State of West Bengal." Of the 19 tribunals, 18 will be headed by

former judges of the High Court, while one will be headed by a former Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. Immediate Calcutta High Court Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam will head the tribunal handling cases from Kolkata, covering the two electoral districts of Kolkata (Dakshin and Uttar), as well as Kolkata-adjacent North 24 Parganas.

Vice-President Addresses 81st Foundation Day of Nisargopachar Ashram in Pune

The Vice-President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, addressed the 81st Foundation Day celebrations of Nisargopachar Ashram at Uruli Kanchan, Pune today. Addressing the gathering, the Vice-President noted that both Mahatma Gandhi, who conceptualised the Ashram, and the farmer who donated land for this noble cause deserve the nation's gratitude. He described the Ashram as not merely an institution, but a movement, a philosophy, and a way of life inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's vision of simple, disciplined living in harmony with nature. The Vice-President said that Gandhi believed nature to be the greatest healer and emphasised that true health lies in simplicity, discipline, and living in harmony with nature. Highlighting the growing burden of lifestyle diseases, the Vice-President said that the message of the Ashram is more relevant today than ever before. He emphasised that health is not merely the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. He called upon people to adopt balanced nutrition, regular physical activ-



ity, mental peace, and a lifestyle in tune with nature. Recalling his tenure as the Governor of Jharkhand and Maharashtra, the Vice-President said that he had the opportunity to closely observe the rich tradition of indigenous and natural healing practices among tribal communities. He noted that these time-tested practices, rooted in nature and traditional knowledge, reflect India's deep civilisational wisdom in holistic healthcare. The Vice-President noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri

Narendra Modi, India's traditional systems of medicine have gained renewed global recognition, with AYUSH institutions playing an important role in preventive and holistic healthcare and contributing to the growth of medical and wellness tourism in the country. He emphasised that Yoga and naturopathy are not alternatives but powerful complements to modern medicine, and described India's traditional wellness systems as invaluable gifts to the world. The Vice-President said that in today's fast-paced world, people often search

for happiness in material success, but true fulfilment comes from peace, balance, and harmony in life. He added that when individuals are healthy, families become strong; when families are strong, society prospers; and when society prospers, the nation rises. The Vice-President emphasised that as India moves towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, the goal must also be to build a Swasth Bharat, and institutions like Nisargopachar Ashram will play a significant role in achieving this objective. The Vice-President also paid floral tributes to

Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Manibhai Desai at the Ashram and released the book 'Secrets of our Happiness', authored by Dr. Narayan Hegde, Managing Trustee, Nisargopachar Ashram, on the occasion. The Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Jishnu Dev Varma; Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Shri Hariyansh; Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Smt. Sunetra Ajit Pawar; Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council, Dr. Neelam Gorhe; and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Coal Gasification Key to India's Energy Security and Industrial Growth: Union Minister G.Kishan Reddy

Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, today highlighted that coal gasification will be pivotal in strengthening India's energy security, reducing import dependence, and supporting industrial growth, while addressing the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026. Addressing industry leaders, experts, start-ups, researchers, students, and policymakers, the Minister said India's rapidly expanding economy requires a balanced energy approach that aligns development with sustainability. He noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country is experiencing strong growth across manufacturing, infrastructure, digital connectivity, and innovation. The Minister underlined India's robust coal reserves, estimating nearly 400 billion tonnes—among the largest globally—where coal accounts for about 55% of the energy mix and nearly 74% of electricity generation. With annual coal demand currently around one billion tonnes and expected to rise significantly by 2047, he emphasised the continued importance of coal. Even as India remains committed to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070. Describing coal gasification



as a key transformative technology, he explained that it converts coal into syngas, which can be further used to produce cleaner fuels, chemicals, fertilizers, and hydrogen. This approach enables more efficient and sustainable use of domestic resources while enhancing economic resilience. He also pointed out India's dependence on imports—approximately 83% of crude oil, 50% of natural gas, and over 90% of methanol and fertilizers—making energy security a strategic priority. To promote adoption, the Government has launched the National Coal Gasification Mission with a target of 100 million tonnes of gasification by 2030. An incentive framework of ₹8,500 crore has been introduced to support public and

private sector projects, with several large-scale initiatives already underway and investments exceeding ₹64,000 crore in the pipeline. Advanced technologies such as Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) were also highlighted for their potential to tap previously inaccessible reserves while reducing environmental impact. The Minister called for a collaborative ecosystem involving industry, academia, start-ups, and research institutions, noting that coal gasification spans multiple sectors including power, oil & gas, and fertilizers. He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to streamlined approvals, supportive policies, and incentives to encourage early participation and investment.

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Launches GLIPIQ (Semaglutide) In India

Mumbai, 21 March 2026: Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd (Glenmark), a research-led, global pharmaceutical company, today announced the launch of GLIPIQ® (semaglutide) in India for the management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM), setting a new benchmark in affordability for GLP-1 therapy and expanding access to advanced diabetes treatment for patients. For many patients, the decision to start advanced injectable therapy is often delayed due to cost and complexity. By significantly improving affordability, GLIPIQ® aims to expand access to GLP-1 therapy and enable earlier treatment initiation across a broader patient population. GLIPIQ® is available in both vial and pre-filled pen formulations. The product has been approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) following a multicentre, randomised, com-

parative, active-controlled, open-label Phase III clinical study conducted in India, demonstrating favourable efficacy and safety outcomes in Indian patients with Type 2 diabetes. At the core of GLIPIQ® is its vial-based formulation with dose-specific syringes, designed to enable a more accessible, flexible, and clinically manageable approach to GLP-1 therapy. The vial formulation supports physician-guided dosing aligned to patient needs, particularly in the early stages of treatment. It also offers a cost-effective treatment pathway, helping expand access to therapy and treatment adherence. The expected weekly cost of treatment with GLIPIQ® vials range from ₹325 to ₹440, significantly lowering the cost barrier to initiate GLP-1 therapy in India and establishing a more affordable entry point into this class of treatment. In addition to vials, GLIP-

IQ® is also available in pre-filled pen format, offering convenience of self-dosing for long-term therapy. Together, the two formats – vial and pen – enable a structured treatment pathway. This approach supports continuity of care, improved adherence, and sustained treatment outcomes. Both presentations are available in strengths of 2 mg/1.5 mL, 4 mg/3 mL, and 8 mg/3 mL. Glenmark is also introducing 'Sankalp', a patient support program (PSP) designed to support therapy initiations, improve comfort with injectable treatment, and enables long-term adherence. This reflects Glenmark's commitment to not just improving affordability but enabling patients to stay on therapy and achieve better health outcomes. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Alok Malik, President and Business Head, India Formulations, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd., said, "Affordability is one of the

biggest barriers to initiating advanced diabetes therapy in India. With GLIPIQ®, we are setting a new benchmark in affordability for GLP-1 therapy, with weekly treatment starting at ₹325. The vial-based format enables us to offer a more affordable option while supporting clinically guided initiation and flexible dosing. Building on our experience in the GLP-1 category, including Lirafit™ (Liraglutide), and supported by our 'Sankalp' program, we aim to help more patients access, initiate, and continue therapy over time." Semaglutide is a GLP-1 receptor agonist widely used in the management of Type 2 Diabetes patients particularly with comorbidities like obesity, established atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF), and chronic kidney disease (CKD), reflecting its broad cardiometabolic benefit profile beyond glycemic control.

Van Heusen Innerwear Redefines the Wardrobe at its Flagship Store in Jayanagar

Bangalore : Van Heusen Innerwear from the house of Aditya Birla Lifestyle Brands Ltd. has announced the expansion of its flagship store in Jayanagar. The store now brings its complete range of high-performance innerwear for men and women under one roof. The refreshed Jayanagar store is envisioned as a destination for today's urban consumer. It showcases an elevated mix of innerwear, loungewear and athleisure that blends innovation with refined fits and everyday functionality. With engineered silhouettes and supportive essentials for women, alongside versatile, performance-led styles for men, the offering is designed to complement fast-paced lifestyles – from work to workout and beyond. Spanning 1,500 sq. ft., the flagship store features a streamlined layout with distinct zones for men and women. The men's assortment is tailored for a hybrid routine, combining ease of wear with performance-focused construction. Speaking on the occasion, Preeti Gupta, Chief Business Officer, Van Heusen Innerwear said, "Bengaluru represents a progressive and style-aware consumer base that values both innovation and comfort. With our expanded Jayanagar store, we are deepening our engagement with the city and offering a more comprehensive retail experience. Innerwear today has evolved from a basic essential to a category driven by



technology, fit, comfort and design. By bringing our men's and women's collections together in one destination, we aim to serve the modern consumer's complete lifestyle needs." The enhanced retail space spotlights the brand's hero collection that balance thoughtful design with daily wearability. For women, the Cotton Minimizer is crafted especially for fuller figures, delivering dependable support with a flattering fit that lasts through the day. The Seamless Bra offers a smooth, invisible finish under any outfit, creating a clean silhouette while remaining soft against the skin. For men, the Bonded

Innerwear range is engineered for a sleek, second skin feel that stays in place from morning to night. In addition, the brand presents a versatile selection of loungewear and sleepwear designed to transition seamlessly from relaxation to routine. To celebrate the launch, customers can avail a special inaugural offer of Rs 500 off on a minimum purchase of Rs 1,499 for a limited period. With this unified retail format in Jayanagar, Van Heusen Innerwear continues to redefine the category through smart design, precise fits and effortless style – empowering consumers to feel confident every day.

SBI Mutual Fund Files Draft Papers with SEBI for IPO



March 2026: SBI Mutual Fund, the country's largest fund house, on Thursday filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator SEBI to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO). The proposed maiden public offering is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 20.37 crore equity shares, with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). The offering will

see promoters, State Bank of India (SBI) and Amundi India Holding, pare their stakes. SBI Funds Management Ltd is a joint venture between SBI and Paris-based Amundi, holding 61.98 per cent and 36.40 per cent stake, respectively. The company is the country's largest asset management firm, with a quarterly average assets under management (QAUM) of nearly Rs 12.5 lakh crore as of December 2025. SBI Mutual

Fund, sponsored by SBI and established in 1987, was the first non-UTI mutual fund in India. A consortium of merchant bankers has been appointed to manage the issue, including Kotak Mahindra Capital, Axis Capital, BofA Securities India, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India), ICICI Securities, Jefferies India, JM Financial, Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors and SBI Capital Markets.

Jal Shakti Minister Releases Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 Guidelines digitally at Jal Mahotsav 2026 Culmination on World Water Day

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, today released the Operational Guidelines of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 as Jal Mahotsav 2026 culminated alongside the Sujal Gram Samvad on the occasion of World Water Day. Jal Mahotsav 2026 was observed as a 15-day nationwide campaign from 8 March, International Women's Day, to 22 March, World Water Day, marked by widespread community participation and Jal Arpan of drinking water assets to Gram Panchayats across the country. The culmination event was honoured by the presence of the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri C.R. Patil, and the Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Shri V. Somanna, who joined virtually, along with senior officials of the Department. On the occasion, a video on Jal Mahotsav 2026 was released, showcasing key activities and messages delivered by eminent leaders during the campaign.



The e-release of the JJM 2.0 Operational Guidelines by the Union Minister marked a significant milestone following the Cabinet approval for the extension of Jal Jeevan Mission till December 2028, with a renewed focus on structural reforms and long-term sustainability of rural drinking water systems. Addressing the gathering, the Union Minister said, Jal Jeevan Mission is not merely a scheme to provide tap connections, but a mission that has transformed lives, par-

ticularly of women and children in rural India, by ensuring dignity, health and ease of living. While the first phase of Jal Jeevan Mission achieved rapid expansion of infrastructure, experience on the ground has clearly shown that sustainability, functionality and service delivery must now be the central focus. It is with this objective that the Government has approved Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, extending the Mission till December 2028 with a

renewed emphasis on structural reforms and accountability, ensuring that rural households receive regular, adequate and safe drinking water on a long-term basis. Union Minister Shri Patil further said that, the Prime Minister has advised that initiatives such as Jal Utsav and Nadi Utsav should be observed across the country to strengthen Jal Sanchay se Jan Bhagidari, so that water conservation and water management become a people-led movement rather than a gov-

ernment-driven exercise alone. He said that Jal Mahotsav 2026, celebrated from 8 March to 22 March, has effectively translated this vision into action, with widespread community participation, awareness activities and collective efforts towards water conservation and sustainable water management being witnessed across rural India. He stated that it is in this larger context of strengthening community ownership, accountability and long-term sustainability that the government has approved Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, extending the Mission till December 2028 with a renewed emphasis on structural reforms and governance improvements. The Union Minister underlined that JJM 2.0 is aimed at ensuring that rural households receive regular, adequate and safe drinking water on a long-term basis, moving decisively from an infrastructure-creation approach to a service-delivery-oriented model.



KTR blames Congress for farmer suicide in Telangana

Hyderabad: Bharat Rahtra Samithi (BRS) Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday, March 22, blamed the Congress government for farmer suicide in Telangana. The former Telangana minister blamed the Congress for not implementing the Rythu Bandhu scheme and

a video of Ganapati, a farmer from Adilabad from 2025, in which the farmer narrated his ordeal to the media. He died by suicide on March 18.

like this, he wept, saying he had no option left but death." He termed the farmers' suicide as state-sponsored murder.

Earlier, the BRS held a protest demanding maize procurement ahead of the budget session of the Telangana Assembly, demanding the government procure maize at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

The BRS moved an adjournment motion accusing the Congress government of negligence in maize procurement. On March 21, BRS MLA T Harish Rao claimed that the Telangana government opened procurement centers after being pressured by the BRS.



"Robbers rule?" In a post on X, the Sircilla MLA shared

KTR questioned the Congress government over not procuring crops from the farmers and said, "If the Congress government continues to harass by not procuring the crop

Telangana to integrate vehicle services with Vahan from Monday



Hyderabad: The state government, from Monday, March 23, will begin integrating its transport service to the Vahan portal, a one-step digital platform for vehicle registrations and other services. This move will simplify problems, like adminis-

trative process delays, ownership details, RTO office visits, revenue tracking, paperwork and mainly, challenges faced by owners during interstate vehicle transfer. In the recently concluded state budget 2026-2027, Finance Minister

Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka announced Telangana would expand digital transport services, with Sarathi and Vahan platforms within six months. The Vahan portal is maintained by the Union Ministry of Road and Transport.

TWO DIE, ONE INJURED AFTER BALCONY PORTION CAVES IN BEGUMPET

Hyderabad: Two electricians died, and one person sustained serious injuries after a balcony slab collapsed at Srivatsa Apartments located in Methodist Colony of Hyderabad's Begumpet area on Saturday, March 21. The electricians have been identified as Devidas and his son Vivek. The injured person's name is Dwarka Prasad. According to Panjagutta police, Prasad called the father-son for electrical work at his residence. While working on the balcony, the slab caved



in causing all three people to fall down. Devidas and Vivek died on the spot. Their bodies were shifted to Gandhi Hospital in Secunderabad. Prasad is undergoing treatment at Wellness Hospital. A

case has been registered, and further investigation is underway. The electricians have been identified as Devidas and his son Vivek, while the third person has been identified as Dwarka Prasad.



343 arrested for drunk driving in Hyderabad, all males

Raja Singh writes to Amit Shah, seeks security for family



Hyderabad: Former BJP leader and Goshamahala MLA T Raja Singh wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah claiming that he has been receiving death threats repeatedly through phone calls and letters sent to his residence. He has appealed to the minister to provide security cover for himself and his family.

od, I have been subjected to relentless death threats—via phone calls and letters delivered to my residence. These threats have now escalated to explicitly target not just me, but my family members. While I have dutifully lodged multiple complaints with the local police, there has been a complete failure of action. The administration has shown either negligence or an unwillingness to act, leaving my family and me exposed to grave danger. This is my last letter on this issue. I will not beg for security anymore. I have exercised restraint and followed the due process of law, but my patience has reached its breaking point. I hold the administration accountable for the safety of my family," said Singh. The MLA has demanded a detailed and time-bound investigation to identify the people behind the threats. He has also called for strict punishment against those responsible.

RECEIVING THREATS FOR A LONG TIME, CLAIMS RAJA SINGH

In his letter to Amit Shah, the MLA stated that the threats have now extended to his family members. He said that despite filing multiple complaints with the police, no action has been taken so far. He mentioned that he has been receiving such threats for a long time through calls and letters. According to him, the situation has become more serious as his family is also being targeted.

"For an extended peri-

TEEN DIES AFTER TIPPER LORRY HITS SCOOTER IN HYDERABAD

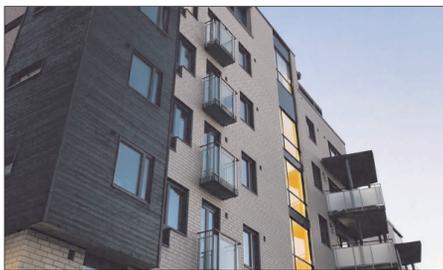


Hyderabad: In a tragic road accident that occurred under the Kancharbagh Police Station limits, an 18-year-old man was killed. The deceased has been identified as Mohammed Rehan Qureshi, a resident of Hafiz Baba Nagar C-

Block. The youngster, riding a Suzuki Burgman, was reportedly hit by a tipper lorry, leading to fatal injuries on the spot. On receiving information, Kancharbagh Police reached the scene and began an investigation.

TELANGANA AMENDS BUILDING RULES TO BOOST REAL ESTATE IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad: The Telangana government has amended building rules, relaxing TDR norms for builders in Hyderabad up to Outer Ring Road limits. The government has issued a Government Order (GO) to enhance flexibility in the rules related to the utilisation of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) for building constructions. Amendments relating to utilisation of TDR, relaxation of building parameters and rationalisation of utilisation of TDR provisions are expected to boost real estate in the city up to Outer Ring Road (ORR). The Municipal Administration and Urban Development



(MA&UD) Department has issued G.O. Ms No. 95, introducing several amendments to the Telangana Building Rules, 2012. The government said on Sunday that these orders were issued after examining representations received from various stakeholders, with the objective of rationalising the utilisation of TDR and increasing flexibility in

building regulations. After careful consideration, the government has approved and notified the amendments to streamline TDR usage and relaxation of parameters under the existing rules, it said. Under the new guidelines, buildings above 21 meters are classified as high-rise. For the plots from 750 square meters and 2,000 square

meters, buildings from 18 meters to 21 meters height will be permitted only through utilisation of TDR, subject to provisions of required parking and compliance with other rules, says the G.O. The new rules have allowed setback relaxation through the utilisation of TDR for non-high-rise buildings. The high-rise constructions will get 10 per cent setback relaxations through TDR, subject to maintaining a minimum of seven meters all-round setbacks. Plots above 2,000 square meters can now have additional floors through TDR. Extra floors will be allowed based on the width of the roads abutting the plots.

FULFIL TELANGANA CONGRESS MANIFESTO VOW ON HAMALI WELFARE BOARD: ACTIVISTS TO GOVT

Hyderabad: Invoking the Congress party's pre-election assurances in the Abhaya Hastam Manifesto 2023, a broad coalition of civil society groups and activists has written to chief minister A Revanth Reddy, urging the immediate constitution of a Hamali Workers Welfare Board during the ongoing Assembly session. The signatories stressed that fulfilling this promise is essential to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of more than ten lakh hamali workers across Telangana. Demand rooted in workers' conditions in their letter, the activists describe the harsh and exploitative conditions faced by hamali workers in markets and godowns, where

long hours, insecure employment, and lack of social protection remain widespread. They argue that despite playing a vital role in the state's economy, these workers continue to be excluded from basic welfare measures. The proposed welfare board, they say, would provide a structured mechanism to ensure fair wages, timely payments, and access to benefits such as provident fund, ESI, healthcare, and housing. Legal framework remains unimplemented. The appeal also highlights that the demand is not merely political but grounded in law. The Telangana Mutta, Jattu, Hamal and Other Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Welfare)



Act, 1976 mandates the establishment of a Welfare Board and an Advisory Committee representing workers, employers, legislators, and the government. With 2026 marking fifty years since the enactment of this legislation, the signatories note that its effective implementation is long overdue. Recent assurances from

the government The activists welcomed a recent assurance by minister Dansari Anasuya, who said she would take up the issue with the chief minister. The assurance came during the Hamali Maha Garjana held in Hanmakonda, where around 7,000 workers from 30 districts gathered, underscoring the scale of the

demand and the urgency of government action. The letter has been endorsed by a diverse group of signatories cutting across academia, social movements, and rights-based organisations. These include senior academics such as Prof. Haragopal, Dr. K Babu Rao and Prof. K Laxminarayana; human rights activists Jeevan Kumar, Dr. Tirupathiah and Vasantha Lakshmi; feminist activists V Sandhya, V Rukmini Rao, S Ashalatha, K Sajaya, Bhanumathi and Meera Sanghamitra; social activists Venkat Reddy, Kanneganti Ravi, P Shankar, Saraswati Kavula, Maria Tabassum, Shaik Salauddin, Sreeharsha, Lateef Khan and Sowmya

Kidambi; climate justice activists Ruchit Asha Kamal, Nikita Naidu and Deeksha; and legal researchers Akhil Surya and Raja Chandra, among others. It was jointly initiated by the National Alliance of People's Movements and the Telangana People's Joint Action Committee, in solidarity with the Telangana Hamali Workers Union, reflecting a wide and unified civil society push, a press release stated. Call for immediate action Citing examples from states such as Kerala and Maharashtra, where welfare boards for similar workers are already in place, the signatories urged the Telangana government to act without delay.

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
Regd Office: 8/56 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherpu - Thripuray Road, Thripuray, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 | Phone No: 0487-3520504, Website: www.manappuramhomefin.com

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd., having our registered office at 8/56A A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherpu - Thripuray Road, Thripuray, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 and branches at various places in India (hereinafter referred to as "MAHOFR") is a Company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 and a Financial Institution within the meaning of sub-clause (iv) of clause (n) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) read with Notification No. S.O. 3468 (E) dated 18th December, 2015 issued by the Govt. of India, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, inter alia carrying on the business of advancing loans for construction and / or purchase of dwelling units and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MAHOFR and whereas MAHOFR being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons. That in addition thereto for the purposes of enforcement of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.

Sr.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrowers	Description of Secured Asset in Respect of Which Interest has Been Created	No. of Notices Sent	Date of Notices Sent
1	Chippakurthi Keerathana, Chippakurthi Prakash, ANK1109003820/Karni Nagar	All That The House Bearing Door No. 1-43 With An Area Measuring 150 Sq Yds, Plinth Area 375 Sq Fts Situated At Nazimaram Village of Kamangar Mandal of Peddapally Dist., Telangana, Pin: 505188, East-House of Aggimalla Raju, West-Road, South-House of Chippakurthi Rajiah, North-Road	13-02-2026	16-02-2026 & Rs.420392/-
2	Narabona Mounika, Narabona Rajith, Ramakrishna B, ANK1072023742/Warangal	All That The House With Open Place Bearing G.W.M.C. H. No. 58-5-90 (Part- New) (Old G.P.H. No. 5-85) To An Extent of 48.00 Sq. Yards or 40.13 Sq.meters Situated At Kadipikonda Village, Kaggel Mandal, Warangal Urban District, Telangana, Pin: 506003, East-House of Saralaha, West-H No. 58-5-90 Part of Donor Gifted To S. Jaya, South-30 Feet Road, North-House of Koramma.	13-02-2026	16-02-2026 & Rs.397376/-
3	Palapatla Gopikrishna, Palapatla Salsija, Kethavaram Krishna, ANLPH11012824/Therumala Talles X Road	An Extent of 128 Sq. Yards, Site With Structures Therein, Survey Number 204/A/2, Plot No. 08, Balthanapalle (6) Village, Myra Mandal, Kamranthi Dist. Near Police Station, Kamranthi, Telangana, Pin: 507165, East-Place of Sunikara Kiran Babu Plot No: 7, West-20 Ft Wide Bazaru, South-Place of Saminetti Kasturi Plot No: 5, North-Place of Bandarupali Leelavathi.	14-02-2026	18-02-2026 & Rs.362525/-

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrowers, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower, MAHOFR shall be constrained to take u/s 13(4) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above, steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by MAHOFR at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(6) of the SARFAESI Act. Take note that in terms of S-13 (13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.

Date: 23rd March 2026 | Place: TELANGANA | 56/ - Authorized Officer, Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

Candidates for by election selected by consensus: DCM D K Shivakumar

Bengaluru : Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar today said that the Bagalkote Assembly ticket has been given to Umesh Meti, the second son of late H Y Meti and the Davanagere South ticket has been given to Samarth Mallikarjuna, grandson of S h a m a n u r Shivashankarappa. Speaking to the media at his residence in Sadashivanagar, he said, "I, Chief Minister, Zameer Ahmed, Naseer Hussain, Saleem Ahmed, Hussain, Harris, Jabbar and all minority leaders discussed the matter with the AICC Secretary and arrived at a unanimous decision to give the opportunity to the Shamanur family. We have

decided to contest unitedly and win both constituencies," he said.

● **Will participate in nomination filing on Monday**
"The B-Form has been handed over to candidate's father S S Mallikarjuna. On Monday, the Chief Minister and I will go to Davanagere and Bagalkote to participate in the nomination filing event. The speculations in the media about ticket allocation has now been put to rest. The high command communicated the decision late at night," he said. "A legislature party meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday. AICC Secretary will also participate in the meeting," he added.

● **Minorities asking for a ticket is not wrong**
When asked whether the minority community was satisfied, he said: "There is nothing wrong with them in asking for a ticket. They are asking based on population — they are not wrong. Mallikarjuna said he filed his nomination on an auspicious date. Just as we have faith, so do they. He has said that if the party asks, he will withdraw. Samarth's mother, Prabha Mallikarjuna, also did not initially want to contest for the parliamentary seat — she was persuaded to. Mallikarjuna also did not want to, initially. Now he is growing into an asset of the party," he said. When asked

whether the minority community had placed any demands, he said: "They do ask. Mallikarjuna is committed to whatever the party says. So am I. If I am told not to contest from Kanakapura, I won't." When asked whether the confusion in the minority community has been resolved, he said: "Aspiring is not wrong. Personally, I wanted to give the ticket to Mallikarjuna in the Meti family. Another daughter, who is a Zilla Panchayat member, had also asked for a ticket. A total of four people from within the same family had asked for the ticket. When there is desire within a family itself, others will also have it. Several names had come up for

Bagalkote as well." When asked about BJP and JD(S) fielding minority candidates, he said: "I know, all these efforts are going on. In politics, they create divisions, and so do we. Do they have consensus among themselves? Because two people quarrelled, they gave the ticket to a third person. Why should I discuss that? That is their party's decision; this is ours." When asked whether the Opposition's candidates are strong, he said: "Ours is ours, theirs is theirs. I am not going to discuss other parties decisions. Let them field whoever they want." "The service and development work done by Shivashankarappa for Davanagere is excellent.

37th Annual Sports Day on March 24th, will be held at KITS WARANGAL

WARANGAL, March 20, TSIT : On 24th March, 2026, the department of Physical Education (PE) will celebrate Thirty Seventh (37th) Annual Sports Day at play fields, Kakatiya Institute of Technology & Science, Warangal (KITSW) an autonomous institute under Kakatiya University said by the Principal Prof. K. Ashoka Reddy. All the students from various departments have to attend the event for the grand success of the Annual sports day. The chief guest of the ceremony is P. Manoj Kumar, Former International Badminton Player, Hyderabad, Telangana. The Honourable Rajya sabha former MP,

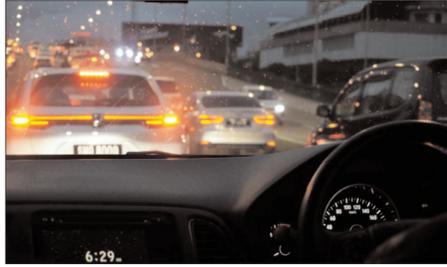


KITSW Chairman Capt. V. Lakshmi Kantha Rao will preside over the function, KITSW Treasurer P. Narayana Reddy will grace the occasion. In this programme KITSW Principal Prof. K. Ashoka Reddy, Administrative Officer, Prof. P. Ramesh Reddy, Head department of physical education, Dr.

M. Srinivas Reddy, sports club general secretary, student coordinator, faculty of PED: K. Venkataswamy, S. Mahesh, R. Nagaraju, all the deans, all the HoDs, faculty, staff, students and their parents, Associate professor of chemistry & PRO, Dr. D. Prabhakara Chary will be attending the sports day ceremony.

ONLINE ROAD SAFETY TEST MANDATORY FOR DRIVING LICENCE IN TELANGANA

Hyderabad: In line with the recent Supreme Court directives on road safety, the Telangana Transport Department has announced that from April, those applying for drivers' license must take a mandatory online road safety awareness test. Currently, an applicant needs to take the learner's licence test and the permanent driving test to obtain a driver's licence. The new rule is a three-hour-long test consisting of six modules, each lasting 30 minutes. The modules will include training as well as assessments related to road safety. Applicants will be shown



examples illustrating how accidents occur, who may be responsible in such situations, and the impact these incidents have on victims and their families. Candidates can either choose to take the test from their home or at a designat-

ed driving school. Once over, a special certificate will be provided, enabling them to proceed to the next step, the learner's licence test. According to official data, India loses nearly 1.7 lakh people every year in road accidents alone.



■ INDIAN NAVAL SHIP TRIKAND CONCLUDES PORT CALL AT PORT VICTORIA, SEYCHELLES

Regional Workshop on Tele-Law Programme under DISHA Scheme organised in Kurukshetra, Haryana

A Regional Workshop on Tele-Law Programme Activities under the Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice, (DISHA) Scheme of the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, was held today i.e. on 22.03.2026 at Kurukshetra University Auditorium, Kurukshetra, Haryana. The workshop was part of the Department's continuing efforts to strengthen access to justice through technology-enabled services and deepen stakeholder engagement with institutions involved in last-mile justice delivery.

The event brought together members of the judiciary, government officials, advocates, representatives of Common Service Centres (CSCs), law schools, students, field functionaries, and civil society representatives. The event was graced by Chief Justice, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, underscored the importance of leveraging technology to make justice more accessible, affordable, and citizen-centric. He emphasized that initiatives such as Tele-Law, Nyaya Bandhu, and legal literacy programmes are central to the Government's efforts to strengthen the justice delivery ecosystem and empower citizens through awareness and timely legal advice, in line with the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji to expand awareness so that more people can benefit from such schemes.

MINISTRY OF MINES TO ORGANISE NATIONAL DMF SUMMIT 2026

The Ministry of Mines, Government of India, will organise the National District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Summit 2026 on 23-24 March 2026 at the SCOPE Convention Centre, New Delhi. The Summit, titled "Effective Utilization of District Mineral Funds for ADP/ABP Areas", will be inaugurated by Union Minister of Coal & Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, in the august presence of the Union Minister of State for Coal & Mines, Shri Satish Chandra Dubey, and Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Shri Piyush Goyal. The Summit aims to strengthen inter-governmental coordination and identify policy reforms for improving the effective and outcome-oriented utilisation of DMF funds in mining-affected districts, particularly in Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Block Programme (ABP) areas. The two-day Summit will bring together senior officials from Central Ministries, State Governments, District Administrations, NITI Aayog, and other stakeholders to deliberate on challenges, best practices, and reform measures related to DMF planning, implementation, and monitoring. The Summit has been preceded by a focused consultative exercise led by the Ministry of Mines to capture State and district-level perspectives. A Concept Note outlining objectives and thematic areas was shared with DMF States, 306 DMF districts in ADP/ ABP areas, and NITI Aayog in

January 2026. This was followed by a virtual national consultation with the States/ Districts chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Mines, and a follow-up in February 2026. State-level internal deliberations involving district administrations and State line departments were organized by the States. Subsequently, the States submitted summarised inputs highlighting key challenges, actionable recommendations, and examples of effective DMF-funded interventions. Based on these inputs, the Ministry prepared a Comprehensive Final Note, which will serve as the principal reference document for deliberations during the Summit. The Summit will focus on effective fund utilization in ADP/ ABP areas, including aspects of governance, transparency, convergence, impact assessment and performance. Presentations will be made by the respected State representatives, NITI Aayog and BiSAG-N, followed by discussions by participating delegates. On the sidelines of the Summit, a DMF Exhibition will be organized, showcasing successful projects and best practices funded through DMF resources across States. The exhibition will feature initiatives across priority sectors such as health, nutrition, water supply, education, skill development, livelihoods, renewable energy, and infrastructure, demonstrating the role of DMF funds in driving inclusive development in mining-affected and aspirational areas.

WOMAN MURDERED IN SHADNAGAR, CHILD FOUND CRYING BESIDE BODY

RANGAREDDY

A gruesome murder has shocked residents of Rangareddygudem village in Devunipalli Gram Panchayat of Farooqnagar mandal, after a woman was allegedly killed and her body dumped in roadside bushes, with police suspecting the crime to be linked to a domestic dispute and an alleged extramarital relationship. The victim, identified as Pothula Shobharani, was a resident of Rangareddygudem village. She had married Raju, a native of Koyilkonda in Mahabubnagar district, nearly a decade ago. According to local sources, Shobharani had allegedly developed a relationship with Narsimulu, which is said



to have caused tensions and repeated disputes over the past few years. About a month ago, Shobharani reportedly left her husband and moved to her mother's house along with her two children. Villagers said that Narsimulu had recently approached caste elders and also spoken to Raju, expressing his willingness to marry her. Investigators suspect that this may

have led to the tragic turn of events. Police believe Raju allegedly murdered Shobharani on Saturday night and later dumped her body in bushes along the Rangareddygudem-Tan gadapally road. The murder came to light on Sunday morning when Govindu, a farmer heading to his field, noticed a young child crying near the bushes. On approaching the spot, he

found the woman's body and immediately informed the village sarpanch. The incident took an even more tragic turn after villagers discovered that Shobharani's three-year-old daughter had reportedly remained beside her mother's body throughout the night, crying helplessly. The heartbreaking sight left the entire village in grief. Following the alert, Shadnagar Inspector K. Sitaram and SI Sushila reached the scene, registered a case, and initiated an investigation. DCP Shadnagar C.H. Sirisha and ACP S h a d n a g a r Laxminarayana later visited the spot and reviewed the case. Further investigation is underway, and more details are awaited.

MBBS student ends life due to family conflict over pet cat



Hyderabad: A 23-year-old woman, who completed MBBS, allegedly died by suicide in Hyderabad's Alwal area after her family members objected to her keeping a pet cat at home, police said on Saturday, March 21. The victim, T Princy, ended her life by hanging at home on Friday, March 20. Princy, who was preparing for further studies after MBBS, had been

raising the pet for the last three months. According to Alwal police, the woman had recently brought a pet cat, which led to frequent arguments with her family members. "Family members were against the pet as they felt its presence was causing allergies," the police said. Upset over the matter, Princy allegedly hanged herself from the ceiling fan in her flat on the afternoon of March 20 while her family members were out due to work. When her parents called to check if she had lunch, there was no response. When the neighbours were asked to check on Princy, they found her hanging and called 108 ambulance service.

Best Friends Foundation Blesses Newlywed Couple Rakesh Goud and Varsha Goud

Hanamkonda : Best Friends Foundation extended its blessings to newlywed couple Rakesh Goud and Varsha Goud in a warm and family-like gathering held on Sunday. Rakesh Goud, son of Ponnamm Yadagiri and Vinoda from Matwada village of Gudur mandal in Mahabubabad district, recently married Varsha Goud, daughter of Gundaboyina Vishuvardhan and Aruna from Rangasaipet, Warangal. On the occasion, Best Friends Foundation founder Puli Devender Mudhiraj, along with Neerati Raju Mudhiraj, met the couple and conveyed their heartfelt blessings. Speaking on the occasion, Puli Devender Mudhiraj described the Best Friends Foundation as "a family" that stands by people in all circum-



stances. He praised the families of the bride and groom, stating that Vishuvardhan and Yadagiri are individuals who understand the value of hard work, and assured that the Foundation would always extend its support to such families. Family members including Ponnamm

Yadagiri, Vinoda, Vishuvardhan, Aruna, Charan Sai, Mitranand, Vinay, Poojitha, Padma, and Sujatha were present at the event. The programme was marked by warmth, goodwill, and blessings for the newly married couple as they begin their new journey together.

Government Committed to Welfare and Development: Minister Gaddam Vivekananda

Mancherial, March 22, TSIT: State Minister for Labour, Employment Training, Factories, and Mines & Geology, Gaddam Vivekananda, said that the government is committed to public welfare and overall development of the state.

On Sunday, the Minister, along with District Collector Kumar Deepak and Municipal Commissioner Maruti Prasad, inaugurated several development works in Kyathanpally Municipality. He stated that development works worth about 200 crore are being undertaken in the municipality. CC roads have been constructed in Wards 8 and 9 at a cost of 13 lakh, and foundation was laid for high mast



lights from Srinivasa Garden to Amma Garden with an outlay of 1.80 crore. He directed officials to complete the works within 30 days with quality standards. Under the AMRUT scheme, drinking water projects are being taken up with 30 crore in

Mandamarri, 40 crore in Kyathanpally, and 30 crore in Chennur municipalities. Steps are being taken to provide household tap connections for safe drinking water. He further said that infrastructure works including roads, drainage, lighting, and water supply

are being carried out with 32 crore. Works are in progress in every ward with an estimated 2 crore each. Development works are also being taken up with DMFT and CSR funds. High mast lights and CC roads are being installed across the municipality.

Under AMRUT 2.0, lake beautification works worth 2.09 crore are underway. Efforts are also being made to promote tourism with facilities like open gyms, fencing, and boating. In Mandamarri, tank bund beautification works worth 2.31 crore have been initiated. District Collector Kumar Deepak said that works worth 30 crore under DMFT are in progress, with 20% already completed. Solar high mast lights are being installed to reduce electricity costs and improve street lighting. Measures are also being taken to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply during summer. Officials and public representatives participated in the programme.

Justice Will Be Ensured for Farmers Affected by Fire Accident



Madhira, March 22: Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka stated that justice would be ensured for farmers who suffered losses in the fire accident at the Sri Sai Balaji Cold Storage facility near Atkur village in Madhira Mandal of Khammam district. He said that instructions have been issued to the concerned officials to ensure that farmers receive compensation as per insurance

policies. On Sunday, he inspected the cold storage facility where the fire occurred, accompanied by District Collector Anudeep Durishetty and Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt. He reviewed the steps being taken by officials to bring the fire under control. Interacting with the affected chili farmers, the Deputy CM directed that compensation be provided through insurance companies based on the records

maintained at the cold storage. He also suggested that chili trading at the Madhira market be streamlined on the lines of Khammam market operations. He further instructed officials to take all necessary precautions to prevent such fire accidents in the future. Former Madhira MLA Konda Bala Koteswara Rao, District Congress President Nuthi Satyanarayana, and others were present during the visit.

Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander's First Hyderabad Concert Draws Record Crowd

Hyderabad TSIT: Hyderabad witnessed an electrifying musical night as popular music composer and performer Anirudh Ravichander delivered a record-breaking live concert at the Gachibowli Outdoor Stadium as part of his "Rockstar Anirudh XV - 15 Years With You" Tour. In what marked his first-ever performance in the city, the event drew a massive crowd of over 30,000 fans, turning the stadium into a vibrant sea of music lovers. The concert, organised by Brand Avatar, was executed on a grand scale with seamless planning and



arrangements. Anirudh enthralled the audience with a lineup of his biggest chartbusters and fan-favourite songs, keeping the energy levels high throughout the night. The impressive stage design, dynamic lighting, and high-quality

visuals elevated the overall concert experience. Organisers ensured a comfortable and safe environment for attendees, with ample parking facilities, multiple food and beverage counters, and well-maintained restrooms across the venue. Medical teams and ambulances were stationed on-site as a precautionary measure. A strong deployment of police personnel and traffic marshals helped manage the large turnout efficiently. The Telangana Police ensured smooth crowd control and traffic regulation, contributing to the event's success.



Dhee Hospital in association with Akhila Karnataka Brahmana Mahasabha conducted a Health camp, successfully in Gayatri Bhavan Banashankari, between 10am to 2pm. AKBMS President Reghunath along with Dhee Hospital Marketing Team Headed by Smt. Manjula devi and Subramanya were present at the occasion.

Lake Development Benefits Farmers, says MP Basavaraj Bommai

Haveri (Shiggaon): Developing lakes benefits farmers and when they prosper, it benefits creation itself, and in turn, society, the nation, and humanity as a whole. By contributing to such noble, philanthropic work, they earn merit, said former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai.

He was speaking after inaugurating the desilting work of Kanchagaragatti Lake, organized by Bharata Seva Samsthe, at Tadas village in Shiggaon taluk of Haveri district on Sunday.

The MP said lakes are a shared asset belonging to all. Everyone has a responsibility to care for them. Water does not belong to any individual, group, state, or even the government—it is a gift of nature to the entire community. Therefore, they must treat water with the same concern as they do their homes and farms. If they understand this and maintain lakes properly, they will remain in good condition. Over time, silt accumulates in lakes and must be removed periodically. Similarly, unwanted thoughts accumulate in the human mind and must also be cleared from time to time.

A Sacred Task
The former CM said desilting lakes is a sacred task and some governments take the initiative

to carry it out. When his party was in power, their leader Yediyurappa instructed all legislators to desilt five lakes in their constituencies at their own expense. With public support, they went beyond that and desilted fifty lakes. Many people contributed to this effort. Through Bharata Seva Samsthe, Srikanth Dundigoudar also undertook such work. Once they develop a taste for helping others, it becomes a lifelong habit. Just as one gets accustomed to starting the day with tea or prayer, one should cultivate the habit of doing good deeds. Keeping their homes and villages clean is also a good quality.

Bommai said Bharata Seva Samsthe has been engaged in lake desilting work for the past seven to eight years. Due to good rainfall over the last three years, desilting work could not be carried out. Developing the habit of doing good work leads to meaningful achievements in life. Success is only a small part of life, whereas achievement is much greater. Success is for oneself, but achievement is when one uses that success to help society and the poor.

Quoting Swami Vivekananda, he said that for a true achiever, death is not the end—such individuals continue to live on through their deeds.

Upper Bhadra Project to Be Implemented with Centre-State Cooperation: MP Basavaraj Bommai



Haveri (Rattihalli): Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai said that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has approved the Upper Bhadra Project and expressed confidence that it will soon be implemented successfully with the cooperation of both the Central and State governments.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Kumudvati Commercial Complex constructed by the Town Panchayat in Rattihalli, he said it was a matter of happiness that the long-pending project had finally been completed, crediting the local MLA for taking keen interest in its execution. The complex would generate higher revenue and benefit the Town Panchayat, and congratulated the members and the MLA.

Recalling his association with the region, the former CM said that when he contested for the Legislative Council in 1998, he had campaigned in Rattihalli

when it was still a Gram Panchayat. The town has great potential for development and needs essential infrastructure such as an administrative complex, hospital, college, and mini Vidhana Soudha. Development must be carried out in a planned manner; otherwise, the town may stagnate. During his tenure, about ₹7,000 crore was allocated to urban local bodies, and she is ready to work with MLAs to secure pending funds recommended by the State Finance Commission. Priority to Development Bommai emphasized that all five levels of governance—village, taluk, district, Assembly, and Parliament—must work together.

He suggested focusing on development rather than politics for most of the five-year term. With rapid urbanization, strengthening municipalities and urban bodies through planned growth is essential to prevent the rise of slums.

State Government Must Allocate Separate Funds for Lake Desilting: MP Basavaraj Bommai

Haveri (Shiggaon): Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai said that if the state government truly intends to protect farmers, it must preserve lakes. Proper maintenance of lakes can prevent floods.

Speaking to the media in Haveri, he recalled that when B.S. Yediyurappa was Chief Minister, ₹200 crore had been allocated for lake desilting, and urged the current government to similarly earmark separate funds for the purpose. The MP said Shiggaon and Savanur taluks are rich in lakes, with around 500 lakes in total, including at least 100 large ones. Efforts must be made to fill water in over 150 big and small lakes. During the drought years of 2015, 2016, and 2017,

large-scale desilting work was carried out. Organizations like Bharata Seva Samsthe played a significant role in this "Bhagiratha-like" effort. In the past two to three years, good rainfall meant desilting work was not necessary. However, as lakes have dried up this summer, desilting activities have resumed under the initiative of Srikanth Dundigoudar through Bharata Seva Samsthe. Decision to desilt at least one lake in every Zilla Panchayat is noteworthy, he added.

The former CM said that if more people are inspired by such efforts and contribute according to their capacity, it will strengthen the sense of "our land, our home." Similarly, if people develop the feeling of "our land, our home, our lake,

our village," rural areas can achieve Gram Swarajya, which will eventually lead to good governance (Surajya). He congratulated Srikanth for his efforts in this direction.

Responding to a question on what the central and state governments should do for lake desilting, Bommai said that Haveri district has already been included under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, and an action plan has been prepared. Under this scheme, funds will be allocated for lake development in every taluk. Just like during Yediyurappa's tenure when ₹200 crore was set aside, the government must allocate funds again. Protecting lakes means protecting the land, as they are part of

the natural ecosystem and act as flood carriers. Proper lake management can prevent floods, and if the government truly cares about farmers, it must safeguard lakes.

Victory for BJP in both Constituencies
Replying to a question on the by-elections, he said that the party has carefully selected its candidate in Davanagere. In the coming days, they expect strong support from the poor and SC/ST communities, and predicted a surprising result in Davanagere. The BJP's victory is certain in Bagalkot, as many leaders who had joined Congress earlier are now returning to the BJP. Hence, the party is likely to win Bagalkot by a large margin and hoist the BJP flag in Davanagere for the first time.

Removal Drive of Unauthorized Flexes/Banners: Rajendra Cholaan

Bengaluru: In the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation, instructions were given by the Commissioner, Rajendra Cholaan, to remove unauthorized banners/flexes put up during the festivals of Ugadi and Ramazan. Accordingly, from this morning, officials and staff have been actively engaged in removing such unauthorized flexes/banners. Unauthorized installation of flexes/banners affects the city's aesthetics. Placing them across roads, on trees, and on electric poles causes obstruction to public movement. Additionally, during heavy rain and

In the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation, instructions were given by the Commissioner, Rajendra Cholaan, to remove unauthorized banners/flexes put up during the festivals of Ugadi and Ramazan.

strong winds, these banners may fall and create hazards for the public. Hence, the Commissioner had directed their immediate removal. Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, and sanitation staff from respective divisions participated in the removal drive.

TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud Attends DCC Swearing-in Ceremony in Yadadri

Hyderabad: TPCC President and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud attended the swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed District Congress Committee (DCC) executive members held at the district headquarters of Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri. The programme was organised under the leadership of District Congress Committee President and MLA Beerla Ilaiyah. The event commenced with the TPCC Chief lighting the ceremonial lamp. He later administered the oath to the newly appointed executive members and called



upon them to work with dedication and commitment towards strengthening the Congress party. He urged party workers to take the lead in addressing public issues and to ensure that government welfare and

development schemes reach every household. Speaking on the occasion, Mahesh Kumar Goud said that the Congress party stands as a symbol of equality beyond caste and religion. He highlighted

that leaders from Mahatma Gandhi to Mallikarjun Kharge have worked selflessly for the party and the nation. He questioned the role of the BJP in India's freedom struggle and criticised attempts to appropriate the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He also drew a contrast between Rahul Gandhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that there is no comparison between the two. The TPCC Chief expressed concern over remarks made against the Gandhi family and said such statements by communal forces are unfortunate.

EDITORIAL

Building India's Human Capital Amid Persistent Child Malnutrition

President Droupadi Murmu's assertion that children are not merely beneficiaries of welfare schemes but "architects of the nation's bright future" is both inspiring and sobering. She also said that ensuring good nutrition for a child is an investment in human capital. President Murmu made these statements while speaking at an event to commemorate the milestone of serving 5 billion meals and 25 years of service to the cause by Akshaya Patra Foundation at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre on Tuesday (March 17). As an implementing partner of the Government of India's flagship PM POSHAN initiative, Akshaya Patra - the not-for-profit organisation - has been serving fresh, nutritious meals to millions of children studying in government schools across India. It places nutrition at the heart of India's ambition to become a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Yet this vision collides with a stark reality. Millions of Indian children continue to suffer from stunting and wasting - conditions that silently erode the country's human capital. Despite flagship schemes like the Mid-Day Meal Programme, POSHAN Abhiyaan, and ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services), malnutrition persists due to weak implementation, poor inter-departmental coordination, and data gaps.

Cost of malnutrition

India has made measurable progress, but the scale of the challenge remains daunting. According to the United Nations' 2025 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report released on July 28, 2025, more than 172 million people in India were undernourished in 2024, much lower than 243 million in 2006. India may have reduced the number of undernourished people, but globally, India ranks 48th out of 204 countries assessed for undernourishment.

Nutrition pointers for children from India's own data from NFHS-5 (2019-21) [National Family Health Survey] show stunting at 35.5% and wasting at 19.3%. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent diminished cognitive potential, reduced productivity, and intergenerational cycles of poverty. Stunting reflects chronic undernutrition and directly impacts brain development, learning outcomes, and future earnings. Wasting, on the other hand, signals acute malnutrition and is associated with a higher risk of mortality. Together, they form a silent crisis that undermines India's demographic dividend. Research suggests that malnutrition contributes to nearly 0.6 million child deaths annually in India. Beyond mortality, it leads to lifelong consequences - lower educational attainment, reduced workforce productivity, and increased healthcare burdens. A malnourished child today is a less productive adult tomorrow, weakening the very foundation of a developed economy.

Uneven progress across states

While national averages show marginal improvement, they conceal deep regional disparities. In fact, stunting and wasting increased in about one-third of Indian states between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh continue to report high levels of child malnutrition. For instance, districts in Madhya Pradesh have reported over 40% underweight prevalence in some areas, highlighting persistent gaps in implementation and outreach. Child malnourishment in Gujarat became the topic of discussion in the Legislative Assembly recently (March 12). During a discussion on the budgetary demands of the Women and Child Development Department, Congress MLA Jignesh Mevani raised the matter saying, "...that 40 out of 100 children are malnourished. A very large section of them are tribals."

Donald Trump's "Little Excursion" Turns Into Prolonged Iran War Amid Russia-China Support

Earlier this month, Donald Trump described the United States and Israel's ongoing war with Iran as a "little excursion" that he said would finish pretty quickly. "We took a little excursion because we felt we had to do that to get rid of some evil," Trump told Republican lawmakers in Florida. But the war has already gone into its third week, with Iran appearing to be setting its tone, course and even duration. There is no doubt that Iran has suffered significant losses. Its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was assassinated, along with over 40 senior officials, on the first day of the war. The National Security Advisor, Ali Larjani, was killed on Monday, and the Intelligence Minister, Ismail Khatib, a day later, in Israel's policy of decapitating Iran's regime with the aim of inciting an uprising. Khamenei's son and the new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba, has not been seen in public since his appointment amid reports that he has been seriously injured. Relentless American and Israeli attacks have destroyed a large part, if not most, of Iran's military infrastructure. Israel has also inflicted major damage on Iran's oil and gas facilities in an attempt to cripple its economy. Iran is Undeterred But these setbacks have not deterred Iran, which has escalated the war with attacks not only on Israel and US diplomatic and military installations but also on civilian targets across the Gulf, including airports, hotels, and energy infrastructure. Trump now says he is surprised by Iran's retaliation, despite his military commanders' warning him beforehand of the exact scenario. On Tuesday, Trump's top counterterrorism official, Joe Kent, resigned over the war, urging



the president to "reverse course." He claimed that Trump "started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby." The Russia And China Hand If you look at their public statements, Moscow and Beijing have only provided diplomatic support to Iran, condemned the invasion and the killing of its head of state, the Supreme Leader Khamenei. They have also called for de-escalation and even criticised Iran for attacking Gulf countries. But their support for Tehran runs much deeper. US media have been reporting that Russia has been providing intelligence to Iran about military targets. Last week, Trump said that Russian President Vladimir Putin might be helping Iran "a bit". But Iran's successful hitting of US military bases and energy infrastructure in the Gulf suggests that Russian help is much more than what Trump described as "a bit". Russia is reported to have provided Iran with the precise locations of US warships and aircraft operating in the Middle East. Russia's Kanopus-V satellite gives Iran round-the-clock images of American assets and other targets in the region. An

important target reportedly provided by Moscow to Tehran was the precise location of a US military base in Kuwait, after which an Iranian drone killed six American soldiers. Moscow is attempting to replicate what the US has done over the past four years in the Ukraine conflict. The Ukrainian military has successfully targeted precise Russian positions and killed thousands of its soldiers after intelligence provided by the United States. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told a US broadcaster, MS NOW, on Sunday that both Russia and China are helping Iran militarily. "We have had close cooperation in the past, which still continues, and that includes military cooperation as well," said Araghchi. The Chinese Military Assistance China's military support for Iran is also significant, although more discreet, as it seeks to keep good relations with other Gulf states. Over the past decade, Beijing has enhanced its collaboration with Iran in missile technology, satellite and space programmes, intelligence exchange, cybersecurity, and electronic warfare. In the

days leading up to the current war, several reports indicated that China was engaged in direct arms sales to Iran of offensive drones. It finalised a deal to sell supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran, though the two sides had not agreed on a delivery date. Some reports say the missiles were delivered, though they have not been confirmed. During the first week of the war, two state-owned Iranian vessels left China's Gaolan Port for Iran and are believed to be transporting sodium perchlorate, a key precursor used in solid rocket fuel for missiles, according to the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. In 2021, China granted Iran full military access to its BeiDou satellite navigation system, according to the commission that monitors Chinese activities and reports to the US Congress. It is not clear, however, the extent to which Iran uses BeiDou. Cyber Warfare and Oil Beijing has also helped Iran in developing its cyber-war capabilities, which could pose a serious threat to Israel and the United States. Israel has been aware of that and has managed to infiltrate some of the Iranian networks

and kill dozens of cyber experts and other scientists. But it is not possible to destroy Iran's entire cyber network. China, Iran's biggest trading partner, which purchases over 80% of Iran's oil, has also helped Iran bypass US sanctions and supplied dual-use equipment, similar to its sales to Russia, to support its conflict with Ukraine. China is the first country in the current conflict whose oil tankers Iran has allowed to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Long-term Partnerships Moscow has been Iran's defence partners for over 30 years. Russia started selling its Soviet-era defence and civil nuclear technologies in the 1990s to Iran, which needed to rebuild its defence and economy after the devastating Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988. Russia sold aircraft and air defence systems, though in 2010, it decided not to deliver the S-300 long-range air defence system after US pressure. But Russia didn't stop the military supplies to Iran entirely and even developed a strong partnership with the Assad regime, along with Iran, in Syria after the 2015 civil war. Russia and China also helped Iran to build ballistic missiles. Tehran supplied a large number of these missiles to its proxies, like Hamas, Hezbollah, and Houthis, to be used against Israel. China has also played a significant role in Iran's ballistic missile programme. In February 2025, Beijing supplied Tehran with 1,000 tonnes of sodium perchlorate, a solid rocket fuel component. That was sufficient to power between 200 and 300 Haj Qasem and Kheibar Shekan missiles, according to experts. Shahed Drones Iran has developed its powerful Shahed drones over the past ten years.

CHANGING IDENTITIES, CHANGING SOCIETY



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(Seeking balance between gender, science and humanity)

Recent discussions in India on the changing relationship between gender identity, science, and society have sparked a new debate. Anaya Bangar, daughter of former Indian cricketer Sanjay Bangar, embarking on a new life after undergoing gender-affirming surgery has become not just a personal event but a subject of social, scientific, and ethical debate. This story is not only about one person's courage and self-acceptance, but also about the questions facing a society trying to find a balance between traditional beliefs and modern science in a rapidly changing world.

Understanding gender identity is a prerequisite for this entire discussion. It is not limited to the biological sex assigned at birth, but is also linked to a person's inner feelings, mental structure, and social identity. For many, their mind and body do not align, causing deep discomfort and mental stress. In such situations, steps like gender-affirming surgery, hormone therapy, and social transition provide a means of relief and balance. This is not a quick decision, but the result of years of self-discovery, psychological counseling, and therapeutic practice.

Anaya Bangar's journey exemplifies this complex process. She demonstrated the courage to understand, accept, and resolve her inner conflict over a long period of time. Her family's support during this journey is particularly noteworthy. In Indian society, where hesitation and shyness still persist regarding issues like gender and identity, a father's support of his child in this way signals a positive change. Sanjay Bangar's support is

not only significant on a personal level, but also sends a message on a societal level: acceptance and understanding can facilitate any change.

An important aspect of this entire issue is the role of modern medical science. The possibility of sperm freezing before surgery and future childbearing through IVF and surrogacy has further complicated the issue. A trans woman's ability to achieve motherhood through her own biological resources appears to challenge traditional biological and social definitions. Some see this as a scientific achievement, while others consider it an interference with the laws of nature.

In fact, the concepts of "natural" and "unnatural" themselves have

evolved over time.

Throughout history, whenever a new technology or social change emerged, it was initially rejected, then gradually accepted. Technologies like IVF, surrogacy, and organ transplantation were once viewed with suspicion, but today they have become a source of hope and solace for millions.

Similarly, gender-affirming medicine is a means of improving the quality of life for those struggling with their own identities.

It's also important to question whether people are truly happy after such changes. Various studies and experiences show that most people experience improved mental health after gender transition. Self-satisfaction increases, levels of depression and anxiety decrease, and individuals develop a more positive outlook on life. However, it's also true that not everyone's experience is the same. Lack of social acceptance, discrimination, and prejudice often make this

journey difficult. In such cases, the problem lies not only in the individual's decision, but also in society's thinking.

The transgender community still faces struggles on many levels in Indian society. Opportunities for education, employment, and social respect are limited, and they often face prejudice. In this context, Anaya Bangar's story is not only an individual achievement, but also a social signal that change is possible, provided society broadens its perspective.

This debate isn't just about science versus nature, but also about the balance between individual freedom and social responsibility.

Every individual should have the right to make decisions about their lives, but society must also ensure that such decisions are made with understanding, medical advice, and ethical responsibility. Gender-affirming procedures are not imposed on anyone; rather, they are a choice for those who want to improve their lives.

Ultimately, it's important to understand that there's no single standard for "happiness." Each individual determines the direction of their life based on their circumstances, experiences, and desires. Some find satisfaction in a traditional life, while others redefine life by embracing a new identity. It's important that society provides them with the opportunity to live their lives with dignity and respect.

Anaya Bangar's journey is not just a story of personal transformation, but a mirror for society. It forces us to consider whether we are ready to adapt to the changing world, or whether we will remain stuck in our old beliefs. This is a time for understanding, empathy, and dialogue, as the progress of any society depends

RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN INDIA ON THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER IDENTITY, SCIENCE, AND SOCIETY HAVE SPARKED A NEW DEBATE.

THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

(Iran's Tariff Proposal and the Global Crisis)

The move to impose tariffs on the Strait of Hormuz poses a growing threat to international law, energy security, and the global balance of power.

The Strait of Hormuz is a vital hub for global energy supply and global trade. It is a narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf to the open ocean. Approximately one-quarter of the world's oil and gas is transported through it. Iran's proposal to impose tariffs on ships transiting this strait is seen not just as an economic decision, but as a serious challenge to global politics, international law, and energy security.

This move comes at a time when the world is already grappling with energy crises, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical tensions. Countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Iraq are highly dependent on this route. Oil and gas from these countries travel through this narrow channel to reach global markets. Any disruption or additional cost to this route directly impacts the global economy. Iran argues that it maintains security in the region and should have the right to charge fees to ensure the safety of ships. However, this argument contradicts the spirit of international law. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), ships from all countries have the right to pass unhindered through international straits. No country can restrict this right or impose fees on it. If any country does so, it would be considered a direct violation of international law.

The history of Iran and the region demonstrates that the Strait of Hormuz has consistently been a focus of tension and strategic pressure. Over the past several decades, Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the waterway, particularly when tensions between Iran and the West have escalated. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) has repeatedly monitored, inspected, and sometimes intercepted ships in the region. But the current situation is different from before. It's no longer just a matter of military pressure, but rather appears to be an attempt to establish control in the form of a systematic economic structure. If this plan succeeds, it could give Iran a kind of "economic power" over this waterway, allowing it to indirectly influence international trade. The global consequences of this potential arrangement could be severe. First, energy prices would see a sharp increase. Oil and gas prices are directly linked to the stability of this route. If ships are forced to pay tariffs or face obstacles along the route, transportation costs will increase. The impact will not be limited to energy, but will affect every commodity that is part of the global supply chain. Food, fertilizers, industrial raw materials, and other essential commodities could also become more expensive. This will exacerbate inflation, with a greater impact on developing countries. This situation will be particularly challenging for those already facing economic pressure and import dependence. On the other hand, this move could also escalate regional tensions. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have expressed their concerns about this proposal. For them, this is not just an economic issue, but also a question of sovereignty and security. If Iran attempts to establish unilateral control over this waterway, it could lead to regional conflict. In this context, the role of global powers also becomes crucial. The United States has long maintained a naval presence in the region to ensure freedom of navigation. If Iran implements its proposal, the international response could be swift and decisive. This situation could have implications at many levels, from diplomacy

to military strategy. This entire incident raises a big question—will the international system still be based on rules and cooperation, or will powerful countries use their strategic position and power to change the rules to suit themselves? A key pillar of the global order established after World War II has been the principle that the seas and international waterways remain open to all countries. This principle has promoted global trade and peace. However, if any country challenges this principle and is not stopped, the entire system could be undermined. Furthermore, this incident highlights the fact that geographical position has become a major source of power today. Places like the Strait of Hormuz are not just points on a map, but have become crucial hubs of global politics and economics. Countries that control such locations can influence global trade and energy flows.

However, this strategy is fraught with risks for Iran. If it violates international law, it could face severe economic sanctions. This move could further isolate Iran, already grappling with sanctions and economic hardship. This could further weaken its economy. It is time for the international community to unite and find a solution to this challenge. Mere rhetoric and condemnation will not suffice. All countries must work together to ensure the freedom of this waterway. International organizations must also play an active role in this issue to preserve the rules-based order. At the same time, it is essential to keep channels of dialogue and negotiation open to reduce tensions. Any military conflict will only further complicate the situation, and the entire world will suffer the consequences.

Ultimately, this proposal to impose tariffs on the Strait of Hormuz is not just a regional policy, but a test of the global order. It will determine whether the world will move forward based on cooperation and rules or return to an era of power and control. If this challenge is not taken seriously in time, the Strait of Hormuz will cease to be just a trade route but will become a symbol of global instability and conflict.

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Chhattisgarh Assembly Budget Session Concludes Successfully, Chief Minister Thanks All Stakeholders

AGENCY Raipur: Following the successful conclusion of the Assembly Budget Session, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed his gratitude to all public representatives, officials, and staff for their collective efforts. Ministers and MLAs met the Chief Minister at his Assembly office to congratulate him on the smooth and productive conduct of the session. The Chief Minister stated that the session's success was the result of coordinated teamwork and cooperation. Describing the Assembly as a sacred temple of democracy, he emphasized that strengthening democratic values remains its core responsibility. He informed that a total of 15 sittings were held during the session, making it both significant



and outcome-oriented. The House expressed its gratitude on the Governor's address and passed the state budget for the financial year 2026-27. Several key legislative measures were also approved during the session. Among the major bills passed were the Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Bill 2026, the Chhattisgarh Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Bill 2026, and

the Chhattisgarh Housing Board (Amendment) Bill 2026. Additionally, bills aimed at preventing malpractice in recruitment examinations and establishing the Chhattisgarh Staff Selection Board were unanimously approved, marking an important step toward ensuring transparency and safeguarding the future of youth. Highlighting a unique initiative, the Chief Minister noted that around

585 surrendered Naxalites observed the Assembly proceedings during the session. He termed this as an encouraging development, reflecting the government's commitment to reintegrating misguided youth into the mainstream, thereby contributing to peace, security, and development in the state. He further stated that members actively participated in discussions, raised important issues, and effectively represented the concerns of their constituencies, which is a strong indicator of a healthy democracy. The Chief Minister expressed happiness over the recovery of Assembly Speaker Dr. Raman Singh, noting that although he could not attend the session due to health reasons, he closely monitored proceedings through digital means. He wished him good health and a long life. He extended special thanks to Leader of Opposition Dr. Charandas Mahant, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kedar Kashyap, members of the Council of Ministers, all MLAs, Assembly Secretary Dinesh Sharma, security personnel, and all officers and staff for ensuring the smooth conduct of the session.

Cable Theft Gang Busted in Kanker, Five Accused and Scrap Dealers Arrested

AGENCY Kanker: In a major breakthrough, Pakhanjore police have busted an organized gang involved in stealing cable wires from borewell machines in agricultural fields, causing significant losses to farmers. A total of five accused, including two juveniles, have been apprehended, along with two scrap dealers who were allegedly purchasing the stolen materials. The case came to light on March 19 when several farmers lodged complaints at Pakhanjore police station regarding repeated theft of cable wires from their borewell installations. Taking the matter seriously, a special team was formed under the direction of Superintendent of Police Nikhil Ashok Rakhecha. During the investigation,



police detained a juvenile based on a tip-off. Upon interrogation, he revealed details of the entire network. The accused reportedly traveled from village to village on motorcycles, targeting borewell cables in farms. After stealing the wires, they would burn them to extract copper, which was then sold to scrap dealers, while the remaining materials were hidden at their residences. The probe also revealed that the gang had stolen a

Pulsar motorcycle from the Bhanupratappur area around 7-8 months ago, which has now been recovered. The arrested accused have been identified as Rahul Das (20), Rahul Kshetri (19), and Rakesh Mandal (20), while two juveniles have been taken into custody as per legal provisions. Additionally, scrap dealers Kaling Mahant (58) and Paritosh Bar (38) have also been arrested for allegedly purchasing the stolen goods.

YOUTH-LED CAMPAIGN TO MARK MARTYRS' DAY ACROSS 33 DISTRICTS OF CHHATTISGARH

AGENCY Raipur: On the occasion of Martyrs' Day, a large-scale youth-driven campaign will be events across all 33 districts of Chhattisgarh under the "My Bharat" platform of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. The initiative aims to inspire patriotism and promote civic responsibility among young citizens. Martyrs' Day, observed on March 23, commemorates the sacrifice of legendary freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar, who laid down their lives for the nation in 1931. The cam-



campaign seeks to honor their legacy by encouraging youth participation in nation-building activities. This year's theme, "My Bharat, My Responsibility," will feature a massive statewide padyatra on March 23, with thousands of young

participants paying tribute to the martyrs and taking a pledge to serve the nation. The series of events began on March 19 with digital initiatives such as quizzes and reel-making competitions. On March 22, activities under the "My Bharat Civic Sense Challenge" will focus on public awareness regarding cleanliness, road safety, and voluntary service, reinforcing the importance of social responsibility. State Director of My Bharat, Arpit Tiwari, stated that the sacrifices of the martyrs are not just to be remembered but to serve as a source of inspiration for fulfilling civic duties.

MAN ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO SELL FRAUDULENTLY ACQUIRED CAMERA ON OLX

AGENCY Gariaband: In a case highlighting misuse of online platforms for fraud, Gariaband police have arrested a youth who allegedly cheated a friend and attempted to sell expensive camera equipment on OLX. The matter came to light on March 19 when the complainant lodged a report at Chhura police station. He stated that on March 14, the accused, Satish Kumar Banjare, had taken two high-end cameras and other photography equipment from his farm on the pretext



of returning them by March 17. However, instead of returning the items, the accused allegedly listed them for sale on OLX with the intention of selling them. Acting swiftly on the complaint, police registered a case and launched an investigation. Based on a tip-off, the accused was traced and taken into custody. During interrogation, he confessed to the crime. Police recovered both cameras, along with accessories including flashlights, batteries, chargers, and a camera bag.

Under-20 Inter-District Football Championship Kicks Off at NTPC Lara



AGENCY Raipur: With the aim of nurturing sporting talent and promoting a spirit of sportsmanship among youth, the "Chhattisgarh Under-20 Inter-District State Football Championship 2025-26" commenced on Friday at NTPC Lara. The tournament was inaugurated by Project Head Subhash Thakur at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in Maitri Nagar. Addressing the players, he emphasized that sports are not just about competition but also play a crucial role in personality development. He highlighted that discipline, dedication, and teamwork are key to achieving success and encouraged participants to perform with enthusiasm and true sportsmanship. Senior officials, including General Manager (Operations & Maintenance) Keshav Chandra Singh Roy and CISF Deputy Commandant Mahavir Singh, along with other

NTPC officials, were present at the event. The opening match featured an exciting contest between the District Football Association teams of Balod and Korba, where players from both sides displayed impressive coordination and skill. A total of 11 districts—Korba, Balod, Dantewada, Raigarh, Bilaspur, Durg, Surajpur, Raipur, Kondagaon, Korea, and Narayanpur—are participating in the championship. A significant number of players from rural and remote areas are taking part, eager to showcase their talent. Outstanding performers in the tournament will get an opportunity to be selected for the upcoming National Under-20 Football Championship, offering them a pathway to advance their sporting careers. The championship will continue until March 26, featuring competitive and thrilling matches among participating districts.

South East Central Railway Sets New Record, Achieves 250 Million Ton Freight Loading 9 Days Ahead of Schedule



AGENCY Bilaspur/ Raipur: As India's economy accelerates, the railways are matching that pace with remarkable performance on the tracks. The South East Central Railway (SECR) has set a significant benchmark in freight transportation, strengthening its position within Indian Railways and showcasing its operational efficiency. On March 19, 2026, SECR surpassed the milestone of 250 million tonnes of freight loading—achieving this feat nine days earlier than the previous year. This accomplishment reflects not just a numerical milestone but also highlights improved planning, strong management, and swift execution. Reaching this target ahead of schedule in the financial year 2025-26 demonstrates SECR's growing capability to not only meet but exceed

its goals. The railway's performance has a direct impact on key sectors such as industry and energy, as the timely transportation of coal, iron ore, and other essential commodities strengthens the production cycle and supports the nation's economic momentum. This success is attributed to the adoption of modern loading systems, digital initiatives, and customer-centric policies. Enhanced coordination among various departments has also played a crucial role in achieving this milestone. Simultaneously, infrastructure development is progressing rapidly. Projects such as the fourth line between Bilaspur and Jharsuguda, the third line between Rajnandgaon and Nagpur, and the fourth line between Bilaspur and Nagpur are nearing completion.

MAJOR CRACKDOWN ON ONLINE BETTING RACKET IN BILASPUR, THREE ARRESTED

AGENCY Bilaspur: In a major action against online gaming and betting, Bilaspur Police has busted an organized betting network under its "Prahara" campaign. A joint team of ACCU (Cyber Cell) and Civil Lines Police Station arrested key accused involved in the racket. The operation was carried out under the direction of DIG and Senior Superintendent of Police Rajnesh Singh (IPS). During the raid, police seized a large quantity of electronic devices, bank-related documents, and cash from the accused. Investigations revealed that the accused were operating betting activities through an online panel, linking customers across the country to platforms such as Aviator,



Wingo, and other casino-based games. Users were encouraged to place bets digitally through these channels. The main accused, Rajesh alias Raja Bajaj, had been hiding in Raipur to evade arrest but was apprehended by the police after a targeted raid. Authorities recovered Rs 6.90 lakh in cash from his possession along with evidence of transactions worth several lakhs conducted online. He was previously carrying a

reward of Rs 5,000. In total, three accused, including Pradeep Khatri, have been arrested in connection with the case. Police have seized laptops, high-end mobile phones, bank passbooks, cheque books, vehicles, and registers related to betting transactions. The total value of seized items is estimated to be around Rs 45 lakh. According to police, the racket operated by adding customers through Telegram and WhatsApp, sharing betting links, and conducting transactions using fake SIM cards and bank accounts. The profits were allegedly distributed with 65 percent going to the head operators and 35 percent to branch handlers. Further investigation is underway to trace the movable and immovable assets of the accused and identify the sources of illegal income. Police officials indicated that more revelations are likely as the probe continues.

Highlights
In a major action against online gaming and betting, Bilaspur Police has busted an organized betting network under its "Prahara" campaign.

Traffic Chaos Near SS Plaza Raises Accident Concerns in Korba



AGENCY Korba: Traffic management near SS Plaza, one of the city's busiest areas, has significantly deteriorated, causing inconvenience to commuters and raising concerns over potential accidents. According to local residents, the main road frequently witnesses heavy congestion throughout the day, with long queues of vehicles leading to persistent

traffic jams. The situation has been worsened by roadside encroachments, including carts and temporary stalls, which occupy a substantial portion of the road. Due to the narrowing of the roadway, drivers are facing difficulties in navigating through the area, increasing the risk of mishaps. The unregulated presence of vendors has further aggravated the traffic flow.

Media Workshop on "VB G-RAM-G: Transformative Change in Rural India" in Kawardha

AGENCY Raipur: The Press Information Bureau under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, organized a one-day media workshop in Kawardha focusing on the theme "VB G-RAM-G: Transformative Change in Rural India." The event was attended by Vice Chairman of the Chhattisgarh State Policy Commission, Ganesh Shankar Mishra, as the chief guest, while Kawardha District Collector Gopal Verma was present as the guest



of honour. Addressing the gathering, Mishra emphasized that VB G-RAM-G is not merely an employment-generating scheme but a comprehensive initiative aimed at transforming

the rural livelihood ecosystem. He highlighted that a dedicated 60-day block has been incorporated into the scheme to ensure that agricultural activities are not disrupted, particularly during the harvesting season. He further noted that with over 73 percent of India's population residing in rural areas, the scheme is expected to play a crucial role in strengthening the rural economy. Mishra also described Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a visionary leader and stated that the initiative aligns with the broader vision of "Developed India 2047." During the session, District Collector Gopal Verma shared detailed insights into the ground-level implementation of the scheme.

Providing Employment and Self-Employment Opportunities to Youth is Government's Top Priority: Dr. Santosh Kumar Suman

AGENCY Patna: Dr. Santosh Kumar Suman, National President of We (Se), emphasized that providing broad employment and self-employment opportunities to the youth is among the government's highest priorities. He stated that concrete and long-term initiatives are being implemented across the country and in Bihar to promote skill development, support startups, and generate employment for young people. Dr. Suman highlighted

that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, central government initiatives such as Skill India, Startup India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat are motivating youth to become self-reliant.

These programs are directly benefiting the youth of Bihar, enabling them to transition from job seekers to job creators. He further noted that under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the state government is also opening new avenues of



employment for young people. Through transparent recruitment processes across departments, technical training, entrepreneurship

promotion, and self-employment schemes, youth are being empowered to seize opportunities beyond traditional government jobs.

Dr. Suman said that in today's era, options extend beyond government employment, with unlimited potential in self-employment, startups, and innovation sectors.

The government is providing youth with necessary training, financial support, and guidance to excel in these areas.

He expressed confidence that the coordinated efforts of the central and state governments will not only make Bihar's youth self-reliant but also enable them to play a vital role in the state's economic development. Concluding, he stated that the government is committed to ensuring that every young person receives opportunities aligned with their talent and capabilities, helping them realize their dreams and actively contribute to nation-building.

Additional Chief Secretary Reviews Prosecution Work Across Districts

AGENCY Patna: Under the chairmanship of the Additional Chief Secretary of the Home Department, a virtual review of prosecution activities was conducted on Friday for all districts in the Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, and Kosi divisions. The review focused on the progress of summons, warrants, attachment, and seizure cases in the respective districts. According to the report, in February, the districts executed 7,320 summons, 4,802 bailable warrants, 5,202 non-bailable warrants, 1,082 public

notices, and 396 attachments. Court proceedings recorded testimonies from 5,285 witnesses, and 4,439 First Information Reports (FIRs) were filed on the CCTNS portal, leading to the disposal of 6,464 cases.

The Additional Chief Secretary directed an increase in the execution rate of pending cases and emphasized the speedy disposal of pending cases under the Arms Act.

The meeting included senior officials from the Prohibition and Excise Department, including

Joint Commissioner Krishna Kumar; Special Secretary-cum-In-Charge Director of Prosecution Sudhanshu Kumar Chaubey; and officers from the Home Department's Legal Cell, including Ranjit Shankar Prasad, Chandrashekhar Prasad Vidyarthi, and Rajiv Kumar. Also present virtually were all district SSPs, Senior Deputy Collectors (Law), Public Prosecutors, Additional Chief Prosecutors, Special Public Prosecutors, and Product Supervisors from the Directorate of Prosecution.

Youth 'Digitally Arrested' Under Threat of Money Laundering Charges; Samastipur Police Intervene to Secure His Release

AGENCY Samastipur: A case has come to light in which cyber fraudsters attempted to swindle a young man by holding him under "digital arrest" for several hours. However, thanks to the prompt action of the cyber police, the individual was saved from falling victim to the fraud. According to reports, Manaranjan Trivedi, a resident of Malinagar within the Chakmehsi police station area, received a WhatsApp video call from an unidentified individual. Posing as an official from the TRAI and the ED, the caller threatened to implicate Trivedi in a money laundering case and intimidated him with the threat of "digital arrest." During this ordeal, the fraudster exerted immense psychological pressure on him in an attempt to coerce him into transferring money. Upon



receiving information about the incident from the family members, police teams from both the Cyber Police Station and the Chakmehsi Police Station immediately mobilized; they rushed to the scene and successfully disconnected Manaranjan Trivedi from the video call. Furthermore, his mobile phone was disconnected to prevent any potential financial transactions. Subsequently, the police freed him from the digital

arrest hoax and provided him with counseling. In this regard, Cyber DSP Durgesh Deepak stated that there is no provision for "digital arrest" under any Indian law. He advised that if any individual receives such a call or video call wherein someone poses as an official to intimidate them or demand money, they should immediately report it to their nearest police station or the Cyber Police Station. Additionally, complaints can be regis-

tered via the cyber helpline number, 1930. He appealed to the general public to remain vigilant against such fraudulent calls and to refrain from sharing money or personal information under pressure from any unknown individual. Elderly Man Swindled Out of ₹31.74 Lakhs Through 'Digital Arrest': This is not the first instance of a "digital arrest" scam reported in the Samastipur district. Similar cases have surfaced previously, in which individuals have lost their life savings—amounting to lakhs of rupees—to such fraudsters. In January of this year, fraudsters subjected an elderly man to a "digital arrest"—intimidating and threatening him—to perpetrate a cyber fraud amounting to ₹31.74 lakh; however, thanks to the promptness of bank staff, the funds were successfully frozen.

SAMASTIPUR DISTRICT WELFARE OFFICER SUSPENDED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT; SYSTEMIC FLAWS EXPOSED DURING MINISTER'S SURPRISE INSPECTION

AGENCY Samastipur: Taking stern action, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department of the Government of Bihar has suspended Prason Parimal, the District Welfare Officer of Samastipur, with immediate effect. He has been charged with gross negligence, arbitrariness, and indiscipline in the discharge of his official duties. This action was initiated based on a report detailing serious irregularities that came to light following a surprise inspection conducted on Wednesday by the departmental Minister, Lakhendra Kumar Roshan. The Minister inspected the Dr. Ambedkar Welfare Hostel located in Sarairanjan, the Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar 10+2 Residential Girls' School in Harpur Aloth, and Hostel No. 02 situated in Kashipur. Several serious deficiencies were exposed during the inspection. Student attendance in the schools and hostels was found to be extremely low. Instances of security guards being paid less than the prescribed minimum wage



also came to light. Furthermore, complaints were received regarding the failure to provide uniforms to students in a timely manner. The state of the educational infrastructure and management was also found to be concerning; during the inspection, Class 3 students were unable to answer simple mathematical questions. Additionally, the abysmal state of sanitation within the hostels and negligence regarding maintenance and repair works were

also revealed. In light of these serious irregularities and the blatant disregard for departmental directives, the Department has decided to suspend him and initiate departmental proceedings under Rule 9(1)(a) of the Bihar Government Servants (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 2005. During the period of suspension, Prason Parimal's headquarters has been designated as the Office of the Deputy Director of Welfare, Darbhanga Division.

Mortal Remains of Martyr Sitaram Rai Received Amid Emotional Farewell in Samastipur



AGENCY Samastipur: The mortal remains of Soldier Sitaram Rai—a resident of Lodipur village in the district's Morwa block, who was martyred during an encounter with terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir—arrived at his ancestral village on Friday morning. As the tricolor-draped coffin reached the village, the entire region plunged into mourning, and a massive crowd of people surged forward to pay their final respects. Upon seeing the soldier's mortal remains, his family members were overcome with grief and wept inconsolably. His wife, Suman Rai, repeatedly fainted and, while sobbing bitterly, cried out, "Who will be the support for our children now?" Witnessing her plight, the eyes of everyone present were moved to tears. When District Magistrate Roshan Kushwaha arrived, she clung to him and broke down in uncontrollable weeping. Differently-abled Son Lights the Funeral Pyre: The soldier's 14-year-old differently-abled son performed the ritual of lighting his father's funeral pyre, making the atmosphere even more poignant. A massive crowd of people stretched for nearly a kilometer during the funeral procession. The entire vil-

lage reverberated with slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" (Victory to Mother India) and "Vande Mataram." Many people arrived carrying photographs of the soldier to offer their tributes. Several public representatives and officials—including local MLA Ranvijay Sahu—visited the village to pay their homage. The District Magistrate stated that the nation would forever remember Sitaram Rai's sacrifice and assured the family that the administration stands firmly by their side in every circumstance. Last Conversation Before Reporting for Duty: It is reported that the soldier had spoken to his wife via video call on Wednesday morning before leaving to report for duty. A few hours later, the Army received information that he had sustained a gunshot wound, followed subsequently by the news of his martyrdom. According to his family members, Sitaram Rai had joined the Indian Army in the year 2002. He had recently received a promotion and attained the rank of Havildar. His father, Suraj Rai, recounted that he had educated and raised his son under extremely difficult circumstances; he had supported his family by pulling a handcart in Kolkata and had ensured his son's recruitment into the Army.

Potato Farming Without Plowing: New Mantra for Higher Yield at Lower Cost

AGENCY Patna: At a one-day farmer training program held on Friday at the Central Potato Research Institute, Regional Center, Patna, the Agriculture Minister highlighted zero-tillage technology as the future of farming. The program, organized by the International Potato Center, focused on seed production using zero-tillage and apical root cutting techniques combined with straw mulching. During the session, the minister personally visited the field to observe potato



cultivation using zero-tillage and compared traditional and modern methods by manually harvesting potatoes. He emphasized that the technique is highly beneficial for farmers, reducing production

costs, saving water and fertilizers, and promoting environmental sustainability. The minister noted that adopting sustainable and modern agricultural practices is crucial in the context of changing climate

conditions. In zero-tillage technology, crop residue is used as mulch instead of being burned, improving soil fertility and enabling potato sowing immediately after rice harvest without plowing. Experts said this method can increase yields by 14–28%, reduce costs by around 35%, and save up to 50% of water compared to traditional practices, while significantly improving soil and crop quality. Over 150 women associated with livelihood programs from various districts actively participated in the training.

WOMAN DEFRAUDED OF RS 50,000 AT SBI PALIGANJ BRANCH; SUSPECT ON THE RUN



AGENCY Paliganj: Ignoring security protocols at the State Bank of India's Paliganj branch, a fraudster tricked a woman and escaped with Rs 50,000 on Saturday. The victim, identified as Gudiya Devi (wife of Umashankar Prasad) from Koriyam village in Arwal district, told Paliganj police that she had withdrawn Rs 2 lakh from the bank and was counting the cash when a young man nearby approached her under the pretext of offering help. Claiming he could assist with counting, he grabbed some of the money

in his hands. According to the woman, the suspect cleverly took Rs 50,000 while she was counting and fled the scene. She immediately reported the incident to the police. Branch Manager Shailendra Kumar Sharma confirmed the incident, adding that the woman informed the branch about 20 minutes after the theft, and had she reported it immediately, the suspect might have been caught. Police are investigating the case and attempting to identify the suspect using CCTV footage installed in the bank premises.

WhatsApp Number Launched for Monitoring Development Works; Review Meeting on Monsoon 2026 Preparations

AGENCY Patna: Deputy Chief Minister and Urban Development Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha on Friday held a review meeting at Vikas Bhavan with departmental officials to ensure effective preparations for the upcoming 2026 monsoon season. He directed officials to complete all necessary measures in urban areas, particularly in Patna and surrounding regions, to tackle waterlogging issues in a timely and efficient manner. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Vinay Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Animesh Parasar, Patna Municipal Commissioner Yashpal Meena, and other senior officials. The minister emphasized that all pre-monsoon work must be completed by May 15 under all circumstances.



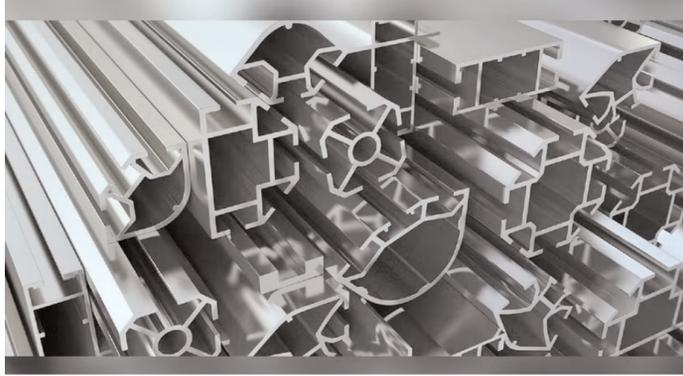
He specifically highlighted the need to improve drainage systems, clean drains, ensure proper functioning of pumping stations, and take swift action in identified waterlogged areas, ensuring citizens do not face flooding issues. Development and construction works in municipal areas were also reviewed. The minister instructed officials to

maintain quality and transparency in all projects and warned of strict action against any irregularities. He further directed regular monitoring of all ongoing projects to ensure timely completion. To promote public participation, the minister announced a new initiative: a dedicated WhatsApp number, 9264291339, has been launched for citizens

and representatives to report any discrepancies or irregularities in ongoing development works. People can share photos and videos of on-ground activities, enabling prompt inspection and necessary action. The minister stressed that transparency, accountability, and citizen involvement are key to effective urban governance and development.

Fuel crisis from West Asia shuts aluminium units, halves output in India

Aluminium extrusion units across India have begun shutting operations as a fuel supply shock triggered by the West Asia crisis ripples through the sector, leaving factories idle, workers without work, and output slashed by nearly half. "Our factory has been shut for the last seven days because there is zero LPG supply," said Gaurav Mittal, chief financial officer at Delhi-based RAC Extrusion Ltd, underscoring the severity of the disruption at the plant level. "We have 300-500 workers sitting idle with no work," Mittal added. His company produces 12,000 tonnes of aluminium extruded products annually. The crisis has occurred due to a sharp disruption in the availability of key fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and piped natural gas (PNG). These are critical for aluminium extrusion, an energy-intensive process that relies on continuous heating and melting. Hindalco Industries has clarified that the report suggest the halt in production of extruded aluminium was a routine business intimation due to a gas shortage following the escalation of the West Asia crisis. The Aditya Birla Group-owned company declared



force majeure to all its extruded aluminium customers on March 11. In the notice, Hindalco said the decision followed a force majeure declaration by certain gas suppliers and described it as a "routine business intimation regarding a potential supply disruption in a segment of the extrusions business." The company clarified that aluminium extrusions account for only a small portion of its overall production capacity, and the potential impact is expected to be limited to less than 0.1% of its total operations. Extruded aluminium is widely used in sectors such as construction, electric vehicles, electronics, and solar panels.

Any disruption in supply could therefore affect downstream manufacturing segments that rely on aluminium components. The gas shortage comes amid rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Following drone and missile attacks on its facilities, Qatar has halted production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) at state-owned QatarEnergy. India imports roughly 40-47% of its LNG requirements from Qatar, making the disruption particularly significant for energy-intensive industries. "Hindalco has taken and continues to take all reasonable steps to mitigate the impact of the force majeure event," the company said in the notice.

However, its aluminium smelters continue to operate normally, the Reuters report added. India is currently grappling with one of its most severe gas supply disruptions in decades after the closure of the Strait of Hormuz following military strikes on Iran by the US and Israel. The shipping route is a critical energy corridor for global oil and gas trade. Amid tightening supplies, the Indian government has cut gas allocations for commercial and industrial use while prioritising household consumption to prevent shortages of cooking gas. The curbs are expected to put pressure on several industries that depend heavily on natural gas for their operations, including

metals, fertilisers, and petrochemicals. The fuel crisis and supply chain disruptions coupled with increase in packaging and raw material costs over the past week due to the raging conflict in West Asia have hit the industry in Haryana across all sectors. A large number of textile, food processing, pharmaceutical and agricultural implements units in Panipat, Sonapat, and Karnal rely on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to run industrial boilers for dyeing, heating, and sterilisation. Most of these units are on the verge of shutting down operations, Manoj Arora, secretary, Haryana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI), told The Hindu. "The cost of commercial LPG cylinders rose by around 20% over the past few days. It is not available since yesterday [Tuesday]," Mr. Arora said. He recalled making several frantic calls to arrange a few commercial LPG cylinders for his industrialist friend in urgent need of the fuel to meet the deadline for an export assignment, but failed to get any. He expressed apprehension about most industrial units in the National Capital Region (NCR) that run on LPG being forced to shut down in case supply does not improve over the next two-three days.

GOVT LIKELY TO CONSIDER OFS OPTION FOR RAISING PUBLIC FLOAT IN IDBI BANK

The government may consider selling a stake in IDBI Bank through the Offer-for-Sale (OFS) route to increase public shareholding, after the unsuccessful attempt to divest stake in the LIC-controlled lender, sources said. Currently, the public float in IDBI Bank is only 5.29 per cent, limiting the scope of fair valuation. The remaining shares are with insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), with a controlling stake at 49.24 per cent, while the Government of India (GoI) holding stood at 45.48 per cent. Earlier this month, the proposed sale of a 60.72 per cent majority stake, held jointly by the government and the LIC, was scrapped after financial bids from two potential buyers reportedly fell short of the reserve price. Low free float restricts the scope for fair market valuation, and expanding this by 10 per cent or 15 per cent would make price discovery more reliable, sources said. It can provide a reliable benchmark for valuation and further make the price discovery process transparent, they said, adding, strategic sale in IDBI Bank for approximately Rs 21,624 crore to rescue the lender from heavy



the government and LIC were to offload 30.48 per cent and 30.24 per cent stake, respectively. This is the second time that the government wanted to privatise IDBI Bank since the first announcement made in 2016. The idea was first officially flagged in the Union Budget speech by then-Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in February 2016. The first attempt to privatise the then state-owned IDBI Bank failed due to valuation concerns. However, the government later sold the controlling stake to LIC, which had been eyeing acquiring a stake in a bank to expand its bancassurance business model. Subsequently, in January 2019, LIC acquired a 51 per cent controlling stake in IDBI Bank for approximately Rs 21,624 crore to rescue the lender from heavy

bad loans as part of the disinvestment process. As a result, the bank was categorised as a private-sector bank by the Reserve Bank of India. In December 2020, the lender was reclassified as an associate company following the reduction of LIC's stake in the bank to 49.24 per cent. The process for privatisation gained formal momentum when the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its in-principle approval in May 2021 for strategic disinvestment along with transfer of management control in IDBI Bank. In October 2022, KPMG India was appointed as Transaction Advisor and the intent to sell 60.72 per cent stake in the bank was announced. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) invited Expressions of Interest (EOI) in October 2022.

Kotak Mahindra Capital divests nearly 31% stake in Infina Finance

Kotak Mahindra Bank's wholly-owned subsidiary, Kotak Mahindra Capital Company (KMCC), has entered into definitive agreements to divest a part of its stake in Infina Finance for an aggregate consideration of about Rs 1,293.91 crore. The transaction involves the sale of a cumulative 30.99 per cent stake in Infina, an associate company of the bank, to multiple investors, the bank said in a regulatory filing. As part of the deal, KMCC will sell a 9.90 per cent stake to Derive Trading and Resorts and Bright Star Investments for Rs 413.35 crore. It will also transfer a 12.10 per cent stake to the estate of late investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala through its trusts for Rs 505.21 crore. In addition, KMCC will divest an 8.99 per cent stake to KF Trust, an existing shareholder, for Rs 375.36 crore. KF Trust is Uday Kotak's family trust. Uday Kotak is the founder and promoter of Kotak Mahindra Bank, and owns nearly a 26 per cent stake in



the bank. Following the completion of these transactions, KMCC's holding in Infina will reduce to 19 per cent, resulting in Infina ceasing to be an associate company of the bank. As of March 31, 2025, the Kotak Mahindra Group held a 49.99 per cent stake in Infina Finance. The transactions are subject to customary conditions precedent and are expected to be completed on or before March 31, 2026. Founded in 1996, Infina Finance offers serv-

ices such as lending against securities, lending against property, commercial real estate, and insurance corporate agency. Infina Finance reported a turnover of Rs 532.66 crore and a net worth of Rs 2,727.99 crore for the financial year ended March 31, 2025. However, its contribution to the bank's consolidated financials remains limited, accounting for 0.50 per cent of total income and 1.73 per cent of net worth. While the stake sales to Derive Trading, Bright Star

Investments, and the Jhunjhunwala trusts do not qualify as related-party transactions, the sale to KF Trust — whose beneficiaries belong to the promoter group — has been classified as a related-party transaction, though conducted at arm's length, the bank said. The divestment is part of the group's ongoing portfolio rationalisation, with the move expected to streamline its investment structure while unlocking value from its associate holdings.

DID AUSTRALIA'S UNDER-16S SOCIAL MEDIA BAN WORK?

Under-16s in Australia have been banned from using major social media services including Tiktok, X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Threads. They cannot set up new accounts and their existing profiles were deactivated. The ban is the first of its kind and has been watched closely by other countries. Why has the Australian government banned social media for under-16s? Australia's government said the ban would reduce the negative impact of social media's "design features that encourage [young people] to spend more time on screens, while also serving up content that can harm their health and wellbeing". A study it commissioned in 2025 found that 96% of children aged 10-15 used social media, and that seven out of 10 of them had been exposed to harmful content. This included misogynistic and violent material as well as content promoting eating disorders and suicide. One in seven also reported experiencing grooming-type



behaviour from adults or older children, and more than half said they had been the victim of cyberbullying. Ten platforms are currently included: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Threads, Tiktok, X, YouTube, Reddit and streaming platforms Kick and Twitch. The government assesses potential sites against three main criteria: whether the platform's sole or "significant purpose" is to enable online social interaction between two or more

users; whether it allows users to interact with some or all other users; and whether it allows users to post material YouTube Kids, Google Classroom and WhatsApp have not been included as they were not deemed to meet those criteria. Under-16s are also still able to view most content on online platforms that do not require an account. Critics have called on the government to extend the ban to cover online gaming sites like Roblox and Discord,

which are not currently included. In November 2025, Roblox said it would introduce age checks on some features. Children and parents are not punished for infringing the ban. Instead, social media companies face fines of up to \$49.5m (US\$32m, £25m) for serious or repeated breaches. The government says firms must take "reasonable steps" to keep kids off their platforms, and should use multiple age assurance technologies. These could include government IDs, face or voice recognition, or so-called "age inference", which analyses online behaviour and interactions to estimate a person's age. Platforms cannot rely on users self-certifying or parents vouching for their children. Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and Threads, began closing teen accounts from 4 December last year. It said anyone mistakenly kicked off could use government ID or provide a video selfie to prove their age. Meta said it blocked approximately 550,000 accounts during the first days of the ban.

Air India impacted by West Asia war, effects yet to be fully felt: CEO

The Air India Group has been significantly impacted by the Middle East conflict and the financial impact is "yet to be fully felt", according to Air India chief Campbell Wilson, who has also stressed the need for having a tighter-than-ever control of unnecessary expenditure. Loss-making Air India and Air India Express have been grappling with operational disruptions like other airlines since the start of the conflict involving the US, Israel, and Iran on February 28. "In the three weeks since the conflict started, we have had to cancel around 2,500 flights to the region. As of today, we can operate only around 30 per cent of our normal Middle East schedule because airports and/or airspace are closed, or are assessed to be beyond our safety threshold," Wilson said in a message to the staff on Friday. The airline's flights to the UK, Europe, and North America, are also taking longer flight paths due to airspace restrictions in the region, resulting in more fuel consumption. Wilson said the impact on Air India Group is significant given the usual scale of its operations to, and through, the Middle East. According to Wilson, the financial impact of this crisis is yet to be fully felt, as although the spot price of jet fuel has more than doubled, most of the impact will only hit the group from next month. Given economic uncertainties, he said it was not certain that customers or companies would be as willing to travel as they were prior to the conflict,



and may choose to stay put for a while. "For now, though, we should continue to focus on safe operations, keep tighter-than-ever control of non-urgent or unnecessary expenditure, support each other and keep delivering great Air India service to our customers," Air India's MD and CEO said in the message. Air India, Air India Express, IndiGo, and Akasa Air have imposed fuel surcharge and charge on tickets amid rising jet fuel costs due to the conflict. Mentioning the imposition of fuel surcharge, Wilson also said not every customer is willing to pay higher airfares "so there is a limit to how high we can price before demand drops".

FPI FLOWS INTO FAR SECURITIES TURN NEGATIVE AMID GLOBAL RISKS, OIL SURGE

Highlights

- Foreign portfolio investor (FPI) flows into government securities under the fully accessible route (FAR) turned negative in March 2026, reversing the inflow trend seen earlier this year as global risk sentiment weakened. Foreign investors have been net sellers of Rs 13,027 crore worth of FAR securities so far in March, according to data from the Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL).

AGENCY
New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investor (FPI) flows into government securities under the fully accessible route (FAR) turned negative in March 2026, reversing the inflow trend seen earlier this year as global risk sentiment weakened. Foreign investors have been net sellers of Rs 13,027 crore worth of FAR securities so far in March, according to data from the Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL). Market participants said the reversal was main-

ly due to deterioration in global risk appetite. Rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia pushed crude oil prices above \$100 per barrel, raising concerns over imported inflation and India's current account deficit. Higher oil prices also pressured the rupee, reducing returns for foreign investors. "From an FPI perspective, equities are clearly in negative territory, and even on the debt side, the perceived weakness in the rupee is weighing on sentiment. As a result, bonds are not



particularly attractive to foreign investors right now," said the treasury head at a private bank. At the same time, rising US Treasury yields made emerging market debt less attractive, leading to a shift in global capital away from markets such as India. Traders said currency volatility, along with higher global yields, reduced the appeal of hedged returns on FAR bonds. Despite the outflows, the impact on bond yields remained limited due to the Reserve Bank of India's interven-

tion through bond purchases and liquidity measures. Analysts said these steps helped keep the sovereign yield curve stable even as foreign demand weakened. "I do not see yields (on the benchmark 10-year government bond) falling sharply below 6.50 per cent, nor do I expect an immediate spike to 7 per cent. At this stage, the market is likely to remain range-bound, with yields broadly moving between 6.55 per cent and 6.75 per cent in the near term," said a dealer at a private bank.

Iran threatens US-linked Gulf energy sites after Trump gives deadline to reopen Strait of Hormuz

Naram Zaid is a paramedic who was called to the scene of the missile strike on the Israeli town of Arad at 22:00 local time (20:00 GMT) on Saturday. "When I arrived I saw a building on fire," she says, telling me her main worry was that people would be trapped inside. Naram, who works for the Israeli emergency services, Magen David Adom, says she saw "a lot of children with head and chest injuries" after being crushed by objects inside the building. "We saw tonnes of people bleeding," she tells me. "I was trying to reassure a ten-year-old girl with head injuries, with blood on her face from broken glass," as she was carried out of the destroyed building by a police officer. "She was refusing to get into the ambulance as her parents were still inside the building. We waited for them to be evacuated from the destroyed apartment block and then we sent them all to hospital." The speaker of the Iranian parliament,



Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, has threatened to destroy vital infrastructure across the Gulf region in an "irreversible manner" if the US and Israel target the country's power plants. In a post on X, Ghalibaf says vital infrastructure, energy and oil facilities throughout the region will be considered "legitimate targets". The speaker goes on to warn that the price of oil will rise "for a long time". Israeli emergency services Magen David Adom says 15 people have been injured following strikes targeting Israel. A spokeswoman says a 53-year-old man is in "moderate condition", while the 14 others are in a "mild condition." The 15 injured are being treated in hospital, it says, while adding an update will follow. "We've been talking to people on the ground in the southern Israeli town of Arad, where an Iranian mis-

sion hit last night - injuring 84 people. Aubrey Isaacs, a teacher and tour guide - originally from Glasgow - says the walls of his house shook when a missile hit a building which is five minutes' walk away. "We heard a massive loud boom sound and the house shook. We realised that it had been a missile hit, because we normally hear the booms of the interceptions. But this time it was very different sound." He

ermment and the people and not to go after what belongs to the people," a thirty-something man in Karaj - a city near Tehran - tells BBC Persian. "I'm terribly worried, because without electricity Iran will be destroyed and will become everyone's nightmare," a woman in her twenties in Tehran says. "Anyone inside Iran also knew that when the Islamic Republic is drawn into conflict, it will block the strait, fire missiles at its neighbours and even their infrastructure," a man in his twenties in Tehran says. "[Iran] won't surrender, instead it will continue to fire every last missile and bullet it has; so did the US not know this or expect it?" Here in Arad, the outside walls of two residential apartment buildings have been gouged out by the impact on Saturday night. Crowds of dark-suited men are staring at the damage in this ultra-orthodox town in the Negev Desert.

BTS MAKE LIVE RETURN IN FRONT OF HUGE CROWD



Fans poured into the historic heart of South Korea's capital for the return of the world's most successful band in recent years, BTS. According to entertainment company HYBE, about 104,000 people attended the concert on Saturday at Gwanghwamun Square, where the seven K-pop stars - RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V and Jung Kook - performed together for the first time since October 2022. Set against the backdrop of a 14th Century gateway to the royal palace, the band's one-hour set included songs from their long-awaited new album, Arirang, which was

released on Friday afternoon. Entering Seoul's central Gwanghwamun square was like stepping into a temple dedicated to the boy-band. It was covered in purple, the signature colour of BTS. The stage itself resembled a triumphal arch. It is a rare honour paid to the seven idols who have become the face of Korea's cultural success. The fans are sure to follow the band through its world tour which begins next month. The band is expected to rake in \$1bn (£747m) in revenue, but the government has said its contribution to South Korea goes far beyond money.

Robert Mueller, ex-FBI chief who led Trump-Russia investigation, dies at 81



Robert Mueller, the former special counsel whose investigation into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US election defined much of Donald Trump's first term in office, has died aged 81. The cause of his death was not immediately clear. CBS News, the BBC US partner, confirmed his death. "With deep sadness, we are sharing the news that Bob passed away" on Friday night, his family told the AP in a statement. "His family asks that their privacy be respected." Mueller previously led the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from 2001 to 2013, taking the office just days before the 11 September 2001 terror attacks. He is credited with reshaping it into a modern counterterrorism agency. Mueller is survived by his wife of nearly 60 years, Ann Cabell Standish, their two daughters, and three grandchildren. Mueller's special counsel inquiry put Donald Trump's 2016 campaign under a microscope, drawing harsh criticism from the US president. The president wrote on Truth Social on Saturday: "I'm glad he's dead. He can no longer hurt innocent people!" Mueller's former employers and colleagues

praised him as a longtime public servant. Both of the presidents he served under as FBI director - George W Bush and Barack Obama - paid tribute. Bush, who appointed Mueller to lead the FBI, said he was "deeply saddened" by his death. "In 2001, only one week into the job as the sixth director of the FBI, Bob transitioned the agency mission to protecting the homeland after September 11," he said. "He led the agency effectively, helping prevent another terrorist attack on US soil." Obama called him "one of the finest directors in the history of the FBI" and commended his "relentless commitment to the rule of law and his unwavering belief in our bedrock values". Former FBI director James Comey, who succeeded Mueller at the agency and whose abrupt firing by Trump led to the Mueller investigation said: "A great American died today, one I was lucky enough to learn from and stand beside." A spokesman for Mueller's former law firm, WilmerHale, called him an "extraordinary leader and public servant and a person of the greatest integrity" in a statement. Mueller was born in 1944.

PENTAGON RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS VIOLATE FIRST AMENDMENT, JUDGE RULES



A federal judge has blocked the Department of Defense's policy on how journalists access the Pentagon, finding that it violates the First and Fifth Amendments of the US Constitution. District Judge Paul L Friedman ruled in favour of The New York Times, which had sued the department after it enacted strict controls limiting information reporters can gather and

publish from the Pentagon. Many media outlets - including CBS News, ABC News, NBC News, CNN, Fox News and BBC News - with a regular reporting presence had their access revoked. The ruling halts parts of the policy, but keeps some restrictions in place. The Pentagon said it disagreed with the ruling and would pursue an appeal.

SOCIALISTS BATTLE TO HOLD PARIS AS FRANCE HOLDS MAYORAL ELECTIONS

Polls have opened in France for mayoral elections across its cities and major towns, in the last vote before next year's presidential election. Excitement is especially high in the capital Paris and the city of Nice on the Riviera. The capital could shift to the right after 25 years under a Socialist-led coalition, if Rachida Dati comes from behind in the opinion polls to defeat Emmanuel Grégoire. And in Nice, a hard-right ally of Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN), Eric Ciotti, seems on course for victory. But in this second round of municipal elections, the biggest focus across the country is on the hard-left party France Unbowed (LFI). In many of these places, it has now formed alliances with other left-wing lists - mainly from the Socialist Party (PS) or



Greens - in order to concentrate the anti-right vote. But the key test in these elections - of big importance ahead of 2027 - is whether voters favour or shun these alliances, given the growing criticisms aimed at LFI and its leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon for alleged anti-Semitism and pursuing a "sectional", i.e. Muslim, vote. Emblematic of this is

Toulouse in the south-west, home of France's aeronautics industry as well as a big student population and a classic French banlieue of high-rise estates. The city's centre-right mayor Jean-Luc Moudenc came first in round one, with 37% of the vote. But he was followed by two left-wingers, François Piquemal (27.5%) of LFI, and the Socialist François Briançon (25%).

These two have now merged their lists, giving them a clear lead over Moudenc on paper. If they win it will be the hard-left Piquemal who becomes Toulouse mayor. The test is to see whether the left/hard-left alliance acts as a clarion call to Toulouse voters or a turn-off. Similar left-wing pacts have been made in 26 big towns and cities, including Nantes, Grenoble, Lyons, Limoges, Clermont-Ferrand, Brest and Tours - earning the fury of right-wing politicians who call them "alliances of shame". The fact of the matter is that these alliances have been forged just weeks after the Socialists led the rest of the mainstream left in a chorus of condemnation of LFI, vowing to forego any future nationwide all-left coalition unless it changed its ways.

Russian attacks kill six in Ukraine, officials say

Six people have been killed in Russian attacks on four Ukrainian regions in the past 24 hours, local authorities say. They say that in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia two people died when a drone hit a residential house on Saturday. Eight people, including two children, were injured. In the nearby Dnipropetrovsk region, two people were killed and five injured. Authorities in the eastern Donetsk and southern Kherson regions each reported one death. This comes as Ukrainian and US teams are continuing their talks on how to end Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine - the first such negotiations since Israel and America launched



wide-ranging strikes on Iran last month. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wants his negotiators to discuss the US decision to ease sanctions on Russian oil - implemented by Washington to help keep down global energy prices. On Saturday, the first day of the talks in Florida, Ukrainian negotiators met

Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and the US president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. "It is important for all of us across the world that diplomacy continues and we're trying to stop this war," Zelensky said in his late-night video address. "The most important thing is to understand how prepared

Russia is for moving towards really ending the war and how prepared they are to do this honestly and decently. This is particularly important given that because of the Iran situation geopolitical problems have only got worse." The talks will resume later on Sunday. Several rounds of talks mediated by the US have so far failed to stop the fighting in Ukraine or change Russia's maximalist demands, and there is little hope of a breakthrough. A friend of one of the victims of the drone attack in Zaporizhzhia told the Reuters news agency: "I stopped believing long ago. When will this all just end? When will they finally reach an agreement?"

NATIONAL BLACKOUT HITS CUBA FOR SECOND TIME IN A WEEK



More than 10 million people have had power cut to their homes and businesses across Cuba after the country's national electrical grid collapsed for the second time in a week. Cuba's energy ministry said "a total disconnection of the National Electrical System has occurred", in a statement posted on social media. "Protocols for restoration are already beginning to be implemented." Cuba's grid operator UNE said it was gradually recovering electricity, prioritising "vital" centres including hospitals and water systems. The Caribbean country has suffered three major blackouts this month as a US fuel blockade cuts off foreign oil imports, required to keep power stations running. The Communist-run country has an ageing electricity infrastructure and chronic fuel shortages. A coalition of international socialist groups arrived in Havana over the weekend to show their support for the Cuban government, bringing with them aid donations of solar panels, basic food kits and medicines. The "Nuestra America" convoy, a flotilla of aid leaving Mexico, was delayed because of rough

sea conditions but is expected to arrive in Havana's port on Monday. Rare public dissent sparked by the recent crisis and national power cuts saw locals banging pots and pans in central Havana on Monday. Protesters in central Cuba's town of Morón also attacked and set fire to the Communist Party headquarters on the same day. Unauthorised demonstrations are illegal in Cuba and those who defy the ban risk being jailed. Since US soldiers seized former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on 3 January, Donald Trump has been repeatedly asked about similar mooted plans for Cuba. President Trump is reported to want the removal of Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel, a regional ally of Venezuela, as a condition of lifting the fuel embargo. Last week, Trump suggested there could be a "friendly takeover" of Cuba, later remarking it would be an "honour". Speaking to campaigners delivering humanitarian supplies this weekend, the Cuban president said the island has a "preparation plan to raise our people's readiness for defence" against any US military aggression.



Iranian missiles injure 160 in towns near Israeli nuclear site

Trump threatens to send ICE into airports unless funding deal reached



US President Donald Trump has threatened to send agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to provide security at airports, unless a deal is reached to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). "I will move our brilliant and patriotic ICE Agents to the Airports where they will do Security like no one has ever seen before," Trump posted on Truth

Social on Saturday. The DHS has gone without funding since mid-February, after Congress failed to reach a funding agreement - leaving normal airport security without pay. A bill that would fund DHS and provide payments for Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents at airports failed to advance in the Senate on Friday.

JAMES SETS NBA APPEARANCE RECORD IN LATE LAKERS WIN

LeBron James set the record for the most regular-season games played in NBA history as he helped the Los Angeles Lakers to a dramatic buzzer-beating 105-104 victory against the Orlando Magic in his 1,612th outing. James, 41, moved one clear of Robert Parish's 1997 record of 1,611 appearances, in a game the Lakers won when Luke Kennard scored a three-pointer with 0.6 seconds left. "It just kind of happened. It was not on the list of things that I wanted to accomplish," said four-time NBA champion James. "I wanted to be the best player in this league at some point. I wanted to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, to ever play this game. I wanted to be an NBA champion. I wanted to possibly win rookie of the year, make All-Star appearances, win a gold medal, win some MVPs - those were some of my goals. "But some of the



stuff that's just been happening over the course of the last few years has been super-duper cool." James - who is the first player to take part in 23 consecutive NBA seasons and is also the NBA's record points scorer - contributed 12 points, six rebounds, four assists and three steals as the Lakers beat Orlando for a ninth straight win.

The Lakers are third in the Western Conference, while Magic are eighth in the Eastern Conference. "Availability, I've always wanted to be available to my team-mates," added James. "It's a mental toll, trying to play a lot and being out there. I just give a lot of praise to the man above and [it's about] just loving the game and appre-

ciating the game." James was not the only player to achieve a milestone as Kevin Durant passed NBA legend Michael Jordan to go fifth in the all-time scoring list in regular-season games. Durant moved to 32,294 - two ahead of Jordan - courtesy of a 27-point display for the Houston Rockets, who are fourth in the Western

Conference, in their last gasp 123-122 win against the Miami Heat, who are ninth in the Eastern Conference. "It means a lot," said Durant, who passed Jordan with a three-pointer in the fourth quarter. "I'm grateful to be here and for this incredible journey it's been. I'm looking forward to continuing." Elsewhere, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 40 points for the Oklahoma City Thunder as four players were ejected in his side's fiery 132-111 win against the Washington Wizards. The Thunder's Ajay Mitchell, Jaylin Williams and Cason Wallace were ejected, along with Washington's Justin Champagnie, following a mass brawl near the end of the second quarter. Reigning NBA champions Thunder remain top of the Western Conference, while the Wizards are one place off the bottom in 14th place.

INDIA-BANGLADESH SERIES BACK ON? BANGLADESH CRICKET BOARD TAKES MAJOR STEP

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has postponed their tour of Ireland in September in hope of playing India in a white-ball series in that window, according to a report by Cricbuzz. The report added that Cricket Ireland informed the BCB that rescheduling their series within 2026 was not possible. While the series was originally planned for September, BCB decided to prioritise the series against India. The two boards decided to defer the series after being unable to fit it into the September window. According to the BCB press release, Indai will now arrive on August 28 for a three-match ODI series followed by a three-match T20I series. The ODIs are set for September 1, 3 and 6 while T20Is will take place on 9, 12 and 13. "When the India series was moved from last year to this September, we asked them (Cricket Ireland) if they could accommodate us at another time in 2026, but they said they were



unable to do so. So the tour has been postponed," a BCB official said. "They also had some other issues, so we decided to work together to find a new window for the Ireland tour, hopefully sometime next year (2027)," the source added. However, the ODIs are set for September 1, 3 and 6 while T20Is will take place on 9, 12 and 13. "When the India series was moved from last year to this September, we asked them (Cricket Ireland) if they could accommodate us at another time in 2026, but they said they were

taking part in the competition. The decision came after pacer Mustafizur Rahman was released by KKR ahead of IPL 2026. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) released a statement recently claiming "informal" talks with the International Cricket Council (ICC) over "external interference in the affairs of an elected cricket board." In a press release, the BCB said the initiative stems from a recently published gazette by the National Sports Council regarding the formation of an inquiry committee to examine the election process.

Jannik Sinner, Defending Champ Jakub Mensik Advance To Third Round At Miami Open

World number two Jannik Sinner made a smooth start Saturday at the Miami Open, where defending champion Jakub Mensik shook off a "horrible" first set to win his opening match. Six days after he lifted the Indian Wells trophy, Sinner launched his pursuit of tennis' "Sunshine Double" in confident style with a 63, 63 victory over 76th-ranked Damiir Dzumhur. "First-round matches are never easy," said the 24-year-old Italian, who won the 2024 Miami crown. After beating Daniil Medvedev for his first Indian Wells title, Sinner is trying to become the first to sweep the Indian Wells and Miami ATP Masters 1000 titles since Roger Federer in 2017. He pocketed the first set against



Dzumhur in 34 minutes and broke the Bosnian for a 2-1 lead in the second set before breaking again on match point with a backhand winner. "Starting off with a break straight away, I tried to be a bit aggressive," said Sinner, who dropped just eight points on his serve. "At times it worked very well, at times I

made couple of unforced errors. But I didn't have a lot of time to adjust here. It's very different than in Indian Wells." Former number one Medvedev also had little time to adjust, but he managed to fight back for a 6-7 (10/12), 6-3, 6-1 victory over 19-year-old Japanese wildcard Rei Sakamoto. Medvedev needed

two hours and four minutes to subdue Sakamoto, who was playing only his seventh tour-level match and facing his first top-10 opponent. Mensik, who fell in the third round at Indian Wells, was feeling the after-effects of illness as well as the pressure of defending his title in a rocky first set but righted the ship to beat Australian Adam Walton 3-6, 6-2, 6-4. "The first set it was horrible from my side," the Czech said. After surrendering his serve twice in the first set Mensik regrouped to break Walton in the opening game of the second set on the way to forcing a third and with a break in hand for a 3-1 lead rolled home. "It was really difficult to come back to the match rhythm," Mensik said.

'They Bully Me, I Bully Them Back': India's F1 Hopeful Atiq Mir Bossing Boys On Race Track

India's 11-year-old Formula 1 hopeful, Atiq Mir, has surpassed expectations in her first year of karting in the age 12-14 category on the highly competitive European circuit, said a release. Racing remains a male-dominated sport, and boys older than Atiq often try to "bully" her on the track. With special talent and ability on her side, the first Indian to be backed by the Formula 1 Academy doesn't shy away from "bullying" them back in a wheel-to-wheel battle. Fast-tracked into the OKN-J (Junior) category (age 12-14) from mini (8-12), considering her special talent, Atiq has attracted plenty of attention in the paddock with her sizzling speed. Not only is she the best-performing Indian



karter on the global stage, but Atiq is also leaving the majority of the male pack behind in a heavily populated grid comprising up to 40 karts. She began the season with a scorching P2 in qualifying of the WSK Super Masters before bagging a podium finish (classified third) in the European leg of the Champions of the

Future Academy series in Valencia earlier this month. While she is busy collecting laurels in the world of karting, the ultimate aim is to reach the pinnacle of motorsport - Formula 1 - where no woman has raced since 1992. The Dubai-based racer from Jammu and Kashmir idolises four-time world champion Max

Verstappen, and perhaps that is the source of her fiery approach on track. "Motorsport being a mixed-gender sport and being male-dominated, that's why many females are not in Formula 1 but belief and confidence will take me there one day," said Atiq, who is currently racing in Italy. The on-track bullying from the boys doesn't bother Atiq anymore. For her, gender has never been an issue in racing, and her focus firmly remains on improving as a driver with every opportunity she gets in her blossoming career. "Well, sometimes they (boys) turn on me. Sometimes they brake check me, which is normal for everyone, I guess nowadays, because there's no penalty in karting for a brake check.

Outrun and in decline - are Rosenior's Chelsea near crisis point?

Chelsea are in freefall after their latest defeat - 3-0 at Everton - and now have a two-week international break during which to stew on 10 damaging days. After suffering an 8-2 aggregate loss to Paris St-Germain in the Champions League last 16, Chelsea's defeat at the hands of Beto and Ilman Ndiaye on Saturday means back-to-back Premier League losses and no wins in four in all competitions. This has led to increasing scrutiny of head coach Liam Rosenior and the club as a whole, not least from vice-captain Enzo Fernandez, who said Chelsea had lost "identity, structure and direction" since former boss Enzo Maresca left the club in January, adding the play-



ers did not understand why he left. Although Fernandez went closest to scoring and embraced Rosenior after the match, his comments paint a worrying picture. Once again on Saturday, Chelsea were outrun, error-prone and tactically open, as Everton played through them for a comfortable win at the Hill Dickinson Stadium. The

result leaves Chelsea sixth in the Premier League, still just one point behind fifth-placed Liverpool in the race for Champions League qualification. However, Everton are now seventh and only two points behind Chelsea, part of a group of sides capable of leapfrogging the struggling giants with seven matches left to play this season.

GREEN LIFTS AUSTRALIAN WPGA FOR THIRD WIN IN A ROW

World number seven Hannah Green became the first Australian women's golfer to win three successive international tournaments when she claimed victory at the Australian WPGA Championship on Sunday. The 29-year-old went into the Ladies European Tour (LET) event after back-to-back victories at the Australian Open and the LPGA's Women's World Championship in Singapore. Green carded a two-under-par final round of 69 to finish on 16 under - four shots clear of the field at the Sanctuary Cove Golf and Country Club on the Gold Coast. "It feels really amazing - it's been a really crazy month and really special to be able to do this in Australia," said the one-time major champion, who had



never won on the LET before her Australian Open title in Adelaide at the start of February. Green, whose only major title came at the Women's PGA Championship in 2019, started the day two shots clear and finished ahead of Germany's Alexandra Forsterling (68) and

South African Casandra Alexander (71), who were tied for second place on 12 under. Green's husband, professional golfer Jarryd Felton, once again acted as caddie after also carrying her bag for two previous victories.

GB'S KERR RECLAIMS WORLD INDOOR 3,000M TITLE



Josh Kerr said his post-injury return to the top of a global podium was a "family win" after he reclaimed his 3,000m title in thrilling fashion to secure Britain's first medal at the World Athletics Indoor Championships in Poland. Kerr, who won gold in the event on home soil in Glasgow two years ago, had his world 1500m title defence ruined by injury in Tokyo in September. But, six months after sustaining a calf tear during that final, Kerr demonstrated his return to full fitness by overpowering world-class opposition as the complete line-up of Olympic 1500m medallists went head to head. The 28-year-old, now a three-time world champion, made his move on the final lap and would not be denied as he distanced his rivals before crossing the line in seven minutes 35.56 seconds. Kerr's comeback from crutches to re-establishing himself at the top of the sport was aided significantly by his mum, who doubles as his physiotherapist. "From where we were in Tokyo to right now, having another world gold medal,

that's all down to coaching, it's all down to my physio and my mum," Kerr told BBC Sport. "That's a family win right there." American Cole Hocker, who denied Kerr Olympic 1500m gold in 2024 and won the world 5,000m title last year, had out-kicked the Briton in their only previous meeting this season over two miles at the Millrose Games. But Hocker had no response to Kerr's dash for gold and had to settle for silver, with Frenchman Yann Schrub taking bronze. However, Kerr was still not entirely pleased with how he managed the race. "I think I created the problems myself tonight. For people watching, that is not how you win a gold medal!" said Kerr. "I knew that I had to get that close right or else I would be having a pretty tough conversation with my coach tonight. "I got in my own head about trying to not waste energy and there were some moves in there that made me have to show my hand a little bit. "I was just trying to relax in the chaos and trust that I'm fitter and better than the other guys."

Punjab Kings' Ownership War Exposed, Ex-India Star Reveals How Franchise Was Held Back By A 'Big Issue'

Punjab Kings' (PBKS) have been through several problems through its history as an Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise. While they did reach the final in IPL 2025, they have managed to enter the playoffs only three times over 18 years. Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan, who played for the franchise in the first three seasons of the IPL (when it used to be known as Kings XI Punjab), gave a sneak peek into the problems holding the team back, even hinting at owner interference when it came to team selection. The Punjab franchise, under the leadership of Yuvraj

Singh, reached the semi-finals in the inaugural season of the IPL in 2008. But things went downhill thereafter. "There was a clear lack of coordination (during) the second year (2009), the IPL moved to South Africa, where we didn't perform well. The first year (2008), we played the semi-final, so the leadership should have continued, but by the third year, the leadership had changed," Pathan said on Star Sports. "In that, there was a big issue between the coaches, what the coaches who don't come from a cricket background were saying, and what the owners, who don't have a cricket background,

were thinking. This has been the case with Punjab," he added. While popular actor Preity Zinta has been the face of the Punjab Kings ownership, she actually co-owns the franchise (23%) with businessmen Mohit Burman (48%), Ness Wadia (23%) and Karan Paul (6%). Pathan delved further into the approach of the franchise owners that could've caused chaos. "I feel that, initially, the owners seemed like good owners. If you talk about one-on-one interactions, they were very good there. But internally, what was visible from the start was a lack of coordination, which greatly impacted decision-mak-

ing. "For example, if one owner says, 'We need to field this specific team because we want results,' and another owner says, 'We want to play a specific combination,' and if things don't work out on the field, it creates a huge difference. I think, initially, that was the issue," he added. Pathan was a regular contributor for Punjab in his three spells at the team, taking 47 wickets in 42 games and also chipping in with a total of 603 runs. However, he also acknowledged that the situation may have improved of late. "Looking at the current situation, it seems things have changed a lot; they

have tried to provide much more stability.



Bichagadu Combo Is Back, Vijay Antony-Sasi Team Up Again For Vanda Devullu, Vishnu Manchu Unveiled First Look



The blockbuster Bichagadu combination is back with another intriguing film. Versatile star Vijay Antony reunites with critically acclaimed director Sasi for a new project titled Vanda Devullu. Swasika plays the female lead, while Ajay Dhishan, Karunaas, Lijmol, and Kavya Anil appear in key roles. The film is produced by Vijay Antony Film Corporation in association with Sarvanth Ram Creations by Ramanjaneyulu Javvaji Productions, with Fatima Vijay Antony presenting it.

Dynamic Star and MAA President Vishnu Manchu unveiled the film's first-look poster, which introduces an intense rural drama. Vijay Antony is seen in a rugged avatar, standing in cornfields, clad in a worn-out beige shirt and traditional headscarf. His stern, weathered expression hints at a man who has faced hardships, while the sickle in his hand reinforces his identity as a farmer. Beside him, Swasika appears in a traditional saree, her serious, contemplative look suggesting inner strength layered with emotional depth.

I wish the movie 'Pithapuramlo Ala Modalaindi' to become a hit in our 'Preyasirave' range: Srikanth at the trailer launch event

The movie 'Pithapuramlo' is directed by renowned director Mahesh Chandra and stars Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pathviraj, Kedar Shankar, Mani Chandana, Annapurnamma, Sunny Akhil, Virat, Sai Praneeth, Srilu, Pratyusha, and Rehana in the lead roles. The subtitle of this movie is 'Ala Modalaindi'. The movie was produced by Dundigalla Balakrishna, Akula Suresh Patel, and F.M. Murali (Godavari Kittayya) under the banner of Mahesh Chandra Cinema Team. The content released about this movie till now has captivated the audience. The trailer of this movie was released on Friday. The trailer launch event organized on this occasion was attended by the



'Preyasi Rave' team, Hero Srikanth, Prithvi, Shivaji Raja, and MM Srilekha as the chief guests. On this occasion, Hero Srikanth said, "Some of the films I did before

'Preyasi Rave' did not do well. 'Preyasi Rave', which Chandra Mahesh garu made with me, was a great success. Prithvi and Shivaji Raja acted wonderfully in it. The songs given by Srilekha for

that film are still heard today. Even though Chandra Mahesh was a newcomer at that time, he made a great film. Mahesh also told me about the story of this 'Pithapuramlo Ala

Modhalindi' film. It is understood that he made this movie wonderfully with three different stories. Children and parents should watch this film together. I believe that this film will be a great success. I wish that the movie 'Pithapuramlo Ala Modhalindi' will become a hit in our 'Preyasi Rave' range. If we find good content and concept, Chandra Mahesh and I will do a film together."

Shivaji Raja said .. "I am happy to be talking about 'Preyasi Rave' now. In that movie, Srikanth and my combo got a good name. Srilekha garu's music went very well with that movie. After that, she became very busy. Chandra Mahesh made wonderful films during that time. Pithapuram has a vibe

now. The same vibe will be in the movie as well," he said. *Actor Prithvi said* .. "Thanks to Chandra Mahesh garu for giving me a chance in 'Preyasi Rave'. I got an award with that movie. I became even busier after that movie. I wish Chandra Mahesh a big success with the movie 'Pithapuramlo Ala Modhalindi'. Along with the message, they are also going to provide entertainment. Everyone should definitely watch this movie," he said. *Music director M.M. Srilekha said* .. "When I think of our film 'Preyasi Rave', many memories come to mind. After a long gap, Chandra Mahesh is going to make a comeback with 'Pithapuramlo Ala Modhalindi'. The trailer is also amazing.

"Band Melam" trailer has been released by Padma Vibhushan Megastar Chiranjeevi; the film is set for a grand release on March 26

Presented by Mango Mass Media and produced under the Kona Film Corporation banner by Kona Venkat, "Band Melam" is directed by Satish Javvaji. The film stars Harsh Roshan and Sridevi as the lead pair, with Kavya and Sravya as producers. Megastar Chiranjeevi launched the trailer and extended his best wishes to the film's team. Going by the trailer, the movie appears to be a love story designed to connect with both youth and family audiences. It highlights the romance and playful moments between the lead

pair. The story seems to revolve around the hero, Harsh Roshan, wins the love of his cousin (maradalu), the challenges he faces, and how he overcomes them. The teaser, songs, and now the trailer of "Band Melam" have created good expectations for the film. Shiva Raju Pranav is the co-producer, while Sai Kumar plays a key role. The music is composed by Vijay Bulganin, and cinematography is handled by Satish Mutyala. Shiva Mupparaju has taken care of the screenplay and editing. The film is set for a grand release on March 26.



Grand Audio Launch of 'Diamond Decoit' Movie Held in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: The audio launch event of the upcoming emotional revenge drama Diamond Decoit, made with a unique concept for Telugu audiences, was held grandly at Prasad Labs in Hyderabad in the presence of several film personalities. The film stars Partha Gopal and Meghana in lead roles and is produced by Partha Gopal under the direction of Surya G. Yadav. The songs were released through Madhura Audio by chief guest V. N. Aditya, President of the Telugu Film Directors Association. On the occasion, the film team announced an innovative "Hook Step Challenge" for the song Maradalive. Participants can create reels performing the hook step and send the link via WhatsApp to 8074861661.



First Prize – 1,00,000
Second Prize – 50,000

The team stated that the challenge aims to encourage and promote new talent. Speaking at the event, chief

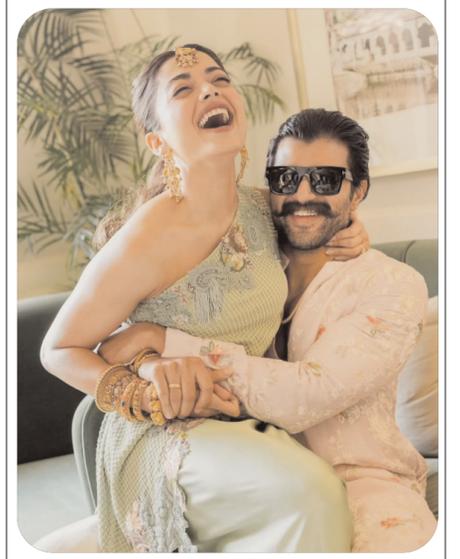
guest V. N. Aditya said the songs were impressive and appreciated the melodious music composed by Peddapalli Rohith. He added that the trailer and songs reflected rich production

values and expressed confidence that director Surya G. Yadav had done a commendable job despite being relatively new. He wished producer-actor Partha Gopal greater success in the future

and hoped the entire team would earn recognition with this film. He expressed confidence that the film's fresh concept would entertain audiences. Producer and hero Partha Gopal thanked V. N. Aditya for releasing the audio and appreciated director Surya G. Yadav for his dedication over the last three and a half years in bringing the film to life. He said the teaser and trailer had already received a positive response, and the songs were also being well appreciated. He described Diamond Decoit as a family emotional revenge drama and announced that the film is scheduled for release in April. Director Surya G. Yadav thanked the chief guest and said all five songs in the film had turned out exceptionally well. He praised music director Peddapalli Rohith

for delivering strong background music comparable to big-budget films. He also acknowledged the support of producer Partha Gopal for ensuring uncompromised production quality. He expressed confidence that the film's blend of family emotions and revenge drama would connect with audiences. Heroine Meghana said the entire team worked with great dedication and appreciated the support of the director and producer. She expressed hope that the film would be well received by viewers. Music director Peddapalli Rohith stated that audiences are increasingly encouraging content-driven small films and expressed confidence that Diamond Decoit would also achieve success. He added that the love song, title track, and other compositions had already received a good response.

RASHMIKA VIJAY'S THAILAND HONEYMOON PIC BREAKS INTERNET



Shambhala Makers Reunite for a Grand Pan-India Socio-Fantasy Spectacle with Sundeep Kishan

After delivering the blockbuster success Shambhala, the acclaimed production house Shining Pictures is once again joining hands with visionary filmmaker Ugandhar Muni for an even more ambitious cinematic venture. Produced by Mahidhar Reddy and Rajashekhar Annabhimoju, the banner earlier created a strong impact with Shambhala, starring Aadi Saikumar, which turned out to be a sensational hit. The makers also unveiled a striking concept poster to kickstart the film's announcement. The poster features a fierce face-off between a lion and a wolf, symbolizing an epic clash of power, destiny, and primal force. Between them stands an ancient sword glowing against the backdrop of a mystical battlefield. The poster is accompanied by the impactful tagline: "Some wars never end. Some kings never die." The artwork sets the tone for a massive fantasy adventure and hints at the grandeur the team is gearing up to deliver. For their next project, the makers have roped in talented actor Sundeep Kishan to play the lead.

Known for his energetic screen presence and versatility, Sundeep is said to be excited about stepping into a completely new space with this socio-fantasy thriller. The film is expected to showcase him in a powerful and never-seen-before avatar, further expanding his range as a performer. This marks the second collaboration between the director and the producers, and they are determined to raise the creative and technical bar even higher this time. The upcoming venture is being planned on a massive scale and is said to be one of the costliest films in Sundeep Kishan's career. The makers are leaving no stone unturned in terms of production design, visual effects, and storytelling to ensure a rich cinematic experience. Fueled by strong creative synergy, the team is developing a large-scale socio-fantasy drama aimed at captivating audiences across the country. With an eye on wider reach, the film is being strategically planned for a grand pan-India release, targeting viewers from multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds.



GRAND LAUNCH OF 'ARERE.. ARERE..' MUSIC VIDEO ALBUM IN HYDERABAD

The grand launch of the music video album 'Arere.. Arere..' featuring singer and actress Diya, took place at Prasad Labs, Hyderabad. Produced under the Butterfly Music banner, the event was graced by several prominent personalities from the Telugu film industry. The ceremony saw the participation of V.N. Aditya (President of the Telugu Film Directors Association), actor Puri Akash, actors Sameer and Sagar, renowned music director Raghu Kunche, and actor-mimicry artist Siva Reddy as chief guests. They officially released the audio and extended their best wishes to the entire team.



album is very heart-touching. Her prowess in both singing and acting is clearly visible. It is a great sign for the Telugu music industry when such new talent comes forward."

Highlights from the Event: V.N. Aditya (President, TFDA): "Diya is a wonderful talent. The 'Arere.. Arere..' music

Music Director Raghu Kunche: "In this digital era, talented individuals don't need to wait for opportunities; they can

us today. The love and support of the audience are my greatest strengths."

Actor Puri Akash: "I worked with Diya in the movie Mehbooba. I initially thought she only acted in this song, but I was surprised to learn she sang it herself. She is incredibly talented, and such young talent deserves everyone's encouragement."

Producer Nutan Chekuri & Director Kranthi Varma: The makers expressed their satisfaction with the final output, noting that the album was created with deep emotion and visual beauty. They thanked Diya for her exceptional cooperation throughout the project. The music video will soon be available on YouTube, as well as digital streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music.

Actress & Singer Diya: "I am deeply grateful to everyone who helped bring this album to life. My special thanks to the team for believing in me. I am indebted to the guests who came to bless