

PM MODI EXTENDS HOLI GREETINGS, HIGHLIGHTS SPIRIT OF JOY



US SUBMARINE SINKS IRANIAN WARSHIP IN FIRST TORPEDO STRIKE SINCE WORLD WAR II

Washington, March 4 (TSIT) A United States submarine has sunk an Iranian naval warship with a torpedo strike, marking the first time since World War II that an enemy vessel has been destroyed in this manner, Pete Hegseth said on Wednesday. Speaking at the Pentagon during a briefing on "Operation Epic Fury," US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said the strike was carried out in international waters by an American submarine.

NEW ZEALAND BEAT SOUTH AFRICA BY 9 WICKETS TO ENTER T20 WORLD CUP FINAL



T20 WORLD CUP

IN BRIFS

5 killed in car-truck collision in AP

Amaravati (TSIT): Five members of a family were killed when a car in which they were travelling rammed into a truck in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district on Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred on the Bengaluru-Chennai national highway near Dundapalli cross in Gangavaram mandal. According to police, the car rammed into a moving truck



from behind. All five occupants of the car died on the spot. The deceased, residents of the Rajaji Nagar area in Bengaluru, were on their way to Tirumala for darshan. The truck was heading to Kurnool after unloading cement at Palamaneru. The deceased have been identified as Mohan Das, 71, Nagaraja Rao, 61, Kusuma, 61, Jayanti, 59, and Puja, 33. Police shifted the bodies for a post-mortem examination. Gangavaram Circle Inspector Rambhupal said they have registered a case and are taking up the investigation.

CM Revanth Reddy Meets Amit Shah, Seeks More IPS Officers for Telangana

New Delhi (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday to discuss internal security and strengthening the state's police system.

The Chief Minister briefed him on measures taken to maintain law and order, highlighting the role of the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau and the Eagle Force in tackling cybercrime and ensuring security. He also informed that the Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Malkajgiri Commissionerates were reorganized and a new Future City Police Commissionerate was established to improve urban policing.

Emphasizing the city's rapid growth, Revanth Reddy sought an increase in IPS cadre strength for Telangana. He also



FILE PHOTO

apprised the Union Home Minister about Maoist surrenders, stating that 591 cadres laid down arms in the last two years and were being rehabilitated. The Chief Minister requested greater Central support for development in backward regions to ensure lasting peace and stability.

US sub sinks Iranian navy vessel near Sri Lanka, war edges closer to Indian waters

New Delhi (TSIT) US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on Wednesday confirmed that a US submarine fired a torpedo and has sunk Iranian Navy vessel IRIS Dena west of Sri Lanka. In a way the Iran and US-Israel conflict has reached close to Indian coast. The strike today at sea was almost 4000 kms away from Iran, significantly expanding the radius of war.

Already, fearing Iranian missile strikes, several US warships has moved eastward towards India. These ships are in international waters. The Iranian ship, hit today, was returning after participating in the international fleet review and exercise Milan hosted by India at Vishakhapatnam.

The Iranian ship went down with almost 140 sailors on board missing. The Sri Lankan Navy, acting on a distress call rescued 32 of the Iranian sailors.

Hegseth confirmed the act by the US forces saying the ship was hit in the Indian Ocean, saying "an Iranian warship that thought it was safe in international waters... Instead it was sunk by a tor-



pedo". Hegseth did not name the Iranian ship that was attacked. But earlier the Sri Lankan navy reported the distress call from IRIS Dena when it was some 40 kms west of Galle, located on the southwestern part of the Island country.

On February 16, the Iranian had sailed into the port of Visakhapatnam where Seventy-four nations participated. Warships from Australia, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and dozens of others were anchored alongside the now sunk Iranian vessel. Iran's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani held talks with India's Chief of Naval Staff on strengthening

maritime security cooperation. The theme was "United through Oceans."

Notably the US Navy was supposed to send the guided-missile destroyer USS Pinckney to the exercise Milan, how the ship was diverted to Singapore on Feb 15. US did not field its warship in Milan which had ships from Russia and Iran. The exercise ended February 25. Three days later, on February 28, the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury.

The IRIS Dena was transiting home. This morning at 5:08 a.m. local time, the IRIS Dena issued a distress call. Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath informed parliament that two navy vessels and an aircraft were deployed. Thirty crew members were rescued and admitted to Karapitiya Hospital in Galle. The Straits Times reported 32 critically wounded survivors. Reuters, reported 101 missing and 78 wounded. The Sri Lankan Navy spokesman said the operation was conducted in line with the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue.

Uttam Directs Fast-Track Safety Works for Singur Dam



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has directed officials to complete safety works at Singur Dam on a war footing, stressing that the dam's safety is a top priority for the government.

Along with Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha and Minister Vivek Venkataswamy, he reviewed the dam, which serves as a key drinking water source for Hyderabad. The ministers instructed officials to implement safety measures as per National Dam Safety Authority norms and to appoint a technical committee to oversee works. The State Dam Safety Review Panel had earlier warned of serious structural issues, including cracks in the earthen bund, and called for urgent repairs. Officials were also directed to complete canal lining works by June 26 and expedite DPRs for the Peddareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, with its foundation stone to be laid by Ugadi.

BARAMATI PLANE CRASH: ROHIT PAWAR ALLEGES ATTEMPTS TO SHIELD VSR VENTURES

MUMBAI (TSIT): NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar on Wednesday alleged that someone was trying to save VSR Ventures in connection with the plane crash that killed Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, and claimed that the AAIB preliminary probe vindicated the doubts earlier raised by him. He also accused VSR company of indulging in several grave lapses in the past. The Learjet 45 aircraft, operated by VSR Ventures, crashed near the Baramati air strip in Pune district on January 28, killing Pawar and four others. In its 22-page preliminary report on the VSR Venture's Learjet plane crash, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) said the visibility at the time of the crash was below the required level. It also flagged about fading marks on the runway and presence of loose gravels on the runway surface.

PM MODI WELCOMES ALEXANDER STUBB, says visit to boost India-Finland ties

New Delhi (TSIT) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday welcomed Finland's President Alexander Stubb to India, expressing confidence that the visit would elevate bilateral relations to "new heights" and strengthen cooperation across sectors. In a post on X, Modi wrote, "Welcome to India, President Alexander Stubb. I fully agree with you, your visit will take India-Finland relations to new heights. I eagerly look forward to our meeting tomorrow and to your keynote address at the Raisina Dialogue 2026."

President Stubb is on an official visit to India, during which he is scheduled



to hold talks with the Prime Minister and deliver the keynote address at the upcoming edition of the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics. The annual event, organised in New Delhi, brings together global leaders, policymakers and experts to deliberate on pressing international issues. India and

Finland share warm and friendly relations, underpinned by cooperation in areas such as trade, technology, renewable energy, education and innovation. Finnish companies have a notable presence in India, particularly in clean technologies, telecommunications and sustainable solutions, while Indian IT firms are active in the Nordic nation.

US downs over 20 vessels, oil tanker traffic dips

New Delhi (TSIT) Explosions were heard in Iran's capital city Tehran, on Wednesday, March 4, as its war with the US and Israel entered a fifth day following earlier strikes on an Iranian nuclear site and retaliatory strikes by the Islamic Republic across the Gulf region. Iranian state television reported explosions around Tehran at dawn. Meanwhile, Israel said its air defences were activated due to incoming missile fire from Iran. Five days into a war that US President Donald Trump suggested would last several weeks or longer, 1,045 people have been killed in Iran, including some whom Trump said he had considered as possible future leaders of the country.



A LITTLE SHEPARD BOY TRIES TO CLIMB AN UNEXPLODED PROJECTILE THAT LANDED IN AN OPEN FIELD IN EASTERN SYRIA.

CM Stalin slams BJP over use of Hindi names in Union Govt offices building

CHENNAI (TSIT): Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin on Wednesday criticised the BJP-led Union government on using Hindi names for public offices and facilities, alleging that it amounted to the imposition of Hindi. Referring to the naming of "Kartavya Dwar" at the zonal office of the Railways in Tiruchirappalli, Stalin said the Union government's attempts at Hindi imposition had crossed limits. He pointed out that even when displayed in English and Tamil, the words were essentially Hindi.

The Chief Minister termed the move "shameful" and cited examples where names of departments had been changed to Hindi. He said the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation had been referred to as "Bhavishya Nidhi Bhavan", while the Department of Water Resources had been renamed as "Jal Shakti".

Stalin alleged that such steps reflected the "arrogance" of the Bharatiya Janata Party and hurt the self-respect of Tamils. We must teach a befitting lesson to those who attempt to impose Hindi and undermine the self-respect of



WE MUST TEACH A BEFITTING LESSON TO THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE HINDI AND UNDERMINE THE SELF-RESPECT OF TAMIL PEOPLE. THE UNION GOVERNMENT SHOULD REMOVE SUCH NAMES AND RESTORE PROPER TAMIL NAMES IN ITS OFFICES IN THE STATE.

-MK STALIN, CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU

Tamil people. The Union government should remove such names and restore proper Tamil names in its offices in the State, Warning the Union government, Stalin said that unless the demand was addressed.

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CHIEF GUESTS

Dr. Dharmapuri Arvind, Member of Parliament (MP) in the Lok Sabha, Nizamabad, Telangana

Dr. Dhampal Suryanarayana Gupta, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Nizamabad Urban Assembly Constituency, Telangana

Dr. K Umarani Mudiraj, Mayor, Nizamabad Municipal Corporation, Telangana

Dr. K Ramesh, Politician, Nizamabad, Telangana

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T'GANA TO PREPARE HEALTH PROFILES FOR 46 LAKH WOMEN SCREENING TO BEGIN ON MARCH 8



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana government has decided to prepare comprehensive health profiles for about 46 lakh women belonging to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across the state. The large-scale screening programme will be launched on March 8, on the occasion of International Women's Day, Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha announced.

Director General Shanawaz Qasim, DME Narendra Kumar, TVVP Commissioner Ajay Kumar, Director of Health Ravinder Naik, and other senior officials. During the review, the minister directed officials to ensure that the 99-day action plan, scheduled from March 6 to June 12, is implemented effectively without disrupting regular medical services in hospitals. The plan, with minor modifications, was approved and will be implemented in four phases.

Field-level activities will include anaemia control initiatives and health check-ups for children in schools and Anganwadi centres. As part of International Women's Day celebrations on March 8, the government will launch the Health Profile Programme for SHG women. With the support of Telangana Diagnostics, each woman will undergo around 30 different medical tests. The screening will cover about 46 lakh women in three stages. Initially, the programme will begin in five mandals in each district, followed by ten additional mandals in the second phase, and later expand to all remaining mandals. The minister directed officials to complete the entire screening process within six months.

Central Bank of India E-Auction Sale Notice (Under SARFAESI Act 2002) Regional Office Bank Street, Koti, Hyderabad, 500095

APPENDIX- IV A (See proviso to rule 8 (6)) Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No, Name of the Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagees and Contact Details of Branch, Description of Immovable Properties/Type of possession, Authorized Officer name & Contact number, Demand Notice Date & Amount, Reserve Price 10% EMD Increase amount.

E-AUCTION DATE: 11.03.2026 TIME: 02.00 PM TO 05.00 PM WITH AUTO EXTENSION OF TIME 10 MINUTE The auction will be conducted through the Bank's approved service provider https://baanet.com (PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd.). Bidder to register on e-Auction Platform https://baanet.com/ using his mobile number and e-mail id.

STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) & 6(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002 Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagees are hereby notified to pay the sum mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/sold and the balance dues if any will be recovered with interest and cost from borrower and guarantor.

Telangana

Complaints from people should be resolved: Collector Adarsh Surabhi

Wanaparthy: District Collector Adarsh Surabhi ordered to solve the complaints received from the people quickly. District Additional Collector Khimya Naik, JDP CEO Yadaiah, RDO Subrahmanyam along with local organizations attended the public address program organized in the meeting hall of the integrated district office complex on Monday and received applications and requests from the people.

Bank of Baroda ROSARB : # 3-5-822/5, 1st Floor, Hyderabad Main Road, Hyderabad-500 029. E-AUCTION - SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

KARIMNAGAR BRANCH # 3-5-335, Gandhi Road, Karimnagar-505001. NOTICE OF SALE

Notice of sale under Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 Under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002. Borrower: Mrs. Gangula Krishnaveni W/o Vemula Kankaraju H-No-3-7-693, Flat No.504, RR Enclave, Vavilapally, Karimnagar-505001.

Table with 4 columns: Details/Description of Mortgaged Assets, Reserve Price, EMD, Date, Time for e-auction and Property ID No., Prior Encumbrance.

Bidders are advised to visit the website (https://baanet.com) of our e auction service provider PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. Helpline No. 8291220220, email ID - support.baanet@psballiance.com.

BAJAJ FINANCE Demand Notice Under Section 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. Loan Account No./Name of the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) & Addresses.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT OR Collector/Additional Collector/RDO Suryapet. FORM - VII (See Sub-Rule (1) of Rule-25 and Section -19(1) of the Act-30/2013)

Table with 12 columns: S.No., Survey No., Type of Land, Name of the Paddar / Enjoyer, Boundaries, Tress/Structures, and other details for land acquisition.

### Telanga BC Commission Urges Inclusion of 40 Castes in Central OBC List



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana Commission for Backward Classes on Wednesday said that the Census in Telangana should be initiated only after the Central government includes 40 castes in the Central OBC list.

Commission Chairman G. Niranjan has written a letter to Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao requesting necessary action to include the 40 Backward Class castes of Telangana State in the Central OBC list. As part of the Central Census programme in Telangana, house listing will be conducted from May 11 to June 9, 2026. Thereafter, population enumeration will be conducted from February 9 to February 28, 2027.

The Commission Chairman stated that in this Census, only the 90 castes of Telangana will be included as the Central Government's OBC list is having only 90 Backward Class castes of Telangana. As a result, there is a danger of under-reporting the number of Backward Class castes in Telangana.

Niranjan mentioned that 130 castes in Telangana have been recognized as Backward Classes. However, the Central Government has included only 90 castes in the OBC list and has not included 40 castes. Consequently, there is a possibility that the number of Backward Classes in Telangana will be recorded as lower than the actual figure.

### MEPA Extends Support to Bereaved Family

Hanamkonda: Members of the Mudhiraj Employees and Professionals Association (MEPA) expressed deep condolences and extended their support to the family of Warangal district MEPA President Thalla Ravinder Mudhiraj, whose mother Suguna recently passed away following a road accident. Upon learning about the tragic incident, MEPA Founding State President Puli Devender Mudhiraj, along with members of the state committee and representatives



from various district committees, visited Ravinder Mudhiraj to offer their condolences and moral support. In a gesture of solidarity, the MEPA leaders also visited Chandrayyapalli village in Duggondi mandal of Warangal district, the native place of Ravinder Mudhiraj, to personally console the grieving family and assure them that the association stands firmly with them during this difficult time. Speaking on the occasion, Puli Devender Mudhiraj said that even though Ravinder Mudhiraj has lost his mother, the MEPA family will always stand by him like a motherly support and provide strength whenever needed. MEPA State Vice President Ponnampati Raju Mudhiraj stated that the association.

### Mega Plastic Waste Awareness Fair Held



Hyderabad: YIPee conducted a Mega Plastic Waste Awareness Fair in Hyderabad as part of its Plastic Waste Management initiative under the ITC YIPee! Better World CSR programme. The event was organised at Akshara Vidyamandir & Tagore Convent School, RC Puram, in Sangareddy district in collaboration with Agastya International Foundation to promote environmental awareness among students and the local community. The fair was inaugurated by Dr. A. Ramchandra Rao, DRDO Scientist, who highlighted the importance of reducing plastic usage and adopting sustainable habits from a young age.

### Bhongir MP Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy Slams BJP, Highlights Congress Legacy

Hyderabad: Bhongir MP Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy strongly criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing its leadership of weakening democratic institutions and failing to match the historical contributions of the Congress party. Referring to national politics, he mentioned leaders such as Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, and Rahul Gandhi, highlighting Rahul Gandhi's decisions to decline key positions in 2004 and 2009. He said the choice of Prime Minister ultimately rests with the



people. The MP credited Congress stalwarts including Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P. V. Narasimha Rao, and Manmohan Singh for shaping India's development path. On Telangana issues,

he questioned the role of Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and raised concerns over alleged irregularities in projects like Kaleshwaram. He also alleged that BJP and BRS hindered key development works such as the Regional Ring Road, Metro Rail Phase-2, and Musi River rejuvenation.

Drawing a comparison with the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, he said Hyderabad's Musi River project could similarly boost tourism and urban growth if implemented effectively.

### TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud Meets Rajya Sabha MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi



Hyderabad: Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President and MLC Mahesh

Kumar Goud met senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi during a courtesy visit at Taj Krishna Hotel in Hyderabad. Abhishek Manu Singhvi arrived in Hyderabad along with his spouse to attend the wedding ceremony of Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka's son, scheduled to be held in the city on Thursday. During the meeting, Mahesh Kumar Goud warmly welcomed Singhvi and held brief discussions with him.

FORM - VII (See Sub-Rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30/2013)														
GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT Or Collector/Joint Collector / Special Collector (LA) / SDC (LA)														
DECLARATION														
Gazette No. GHMC-21 Dated: 00.02.2026 No. C/644/2025 Dated: 00.02.2026														
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Special Collector, LA & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad that a total of 9627.21 Sq. Yards of land is required in Kukatpally Village & Mandal, Medchal Malkajigiri District for public purpose, namely Construction of three lane flyover on LHS of NH 65 (towards Amerpet) and three lane flyover on RHS of NH 65 (towards Miyapur) at Kukatpally "Y" Junction under EPC mode under H-CITI.														
Therefore, it is notified that for the above said project in the Kukatpally Village & Mandal, Medchal Malkajigiri District, land measuring more or less of 9627.21 Sq.Yards of Standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition:														
Sl. No.	Survey No	Type of Title	Extent in Sq.Yds.	Name & Address of person interested	Boundaries				Trees/Structures	Variety	Type	Area in Sq.Yds.	Remarks	Remarks
					North	South	East	West						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Circle- Moosapet														
1	301	Patta	9.00	Owner 11-5-150/ B/NR	11-5-149/ B/NR	Neigh- bours	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	301	Patta	16.71	Mohammed Farooq 11-5-149	11-5-148/1/ 150/B/	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	301	Patta	28.4	Syed Mazhar 11-5-148/1	Open Land	11-5-149	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	302	Patta	92.02	Sulochana Devi Somani & Anita Devi Kakani 11-5-148	11-5-148/1	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	302	Patta	31.97	Ram Nivas Karwa 11-5-147/1	11-5-147/1/ 147/NR	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	302	Patta	35.45	Smt. Shoba Devi 11-5-147/NR	Nala	11-5-147/1	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	303	Govt	581.05	Grave Yard Grave Yard	Nala	Nala	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	702	Wakf	416.46	Gaus- E- Azam Masjid Masjid	Kukatpally Bus Depot	Kukatpally Bus Depot	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	701	TSRTC	1273.58	Kukatpally Bus Depot	11-6-33/ 1B/NR & 11-6-33/1/ 82/NR	Nala	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	701	Patta	122.5	Sreesai Raghu & M. Bhuvaneshwari 11-6-33/1B/NR & 11-6-33/1/82/NR	11-6-33/ 1C/NR & 11-6-33/ 1E/NR	Kukatpally Bus Depot	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	701	Patta	179.68	T Meka Sujatha & Praveen Kumar 11-6-33/1C/NR & 11-6-33/1E/NR	11-6-33/ 1B/NR & 11-6-33/ 1E/NR	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	700	Patta	132.38	G. Rajya Laxmi 11-6-35/NR	11-6-33/ 1C/NR & 11-6-33/ 1E/NR	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	700	Patta	36.78	K. Anuradha & K. Indrani 11-06-53	11-6-35 /NR	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	700	Patta	28.52	BABU RAO 11-06-35	Road	11-6-53	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	700	Patta	183.6	K. Aruna Kumari 11-6-61/3NR	Road	11-6-61/1	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	700	Patta	93.93	K. Annapurma 11-6-61/1	11-6-61/2 /3NR	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	700	Patta	293.73	Slate Homes 11-61/1/2, Plot No 2	11-6-61/1	Part of Owner's land	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	699	Patta	2066.89	P. Narsimha Reddy 11-6-27	Road	11-6-61/2	Road	Road	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	700	Patta	177.37	P. Vinay Babu 12-6-54/2	Road	Part of Owner's land	11-6-34 & 11-6-54/4	11-6-54/1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total 9627.21														

This Declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested and due enquiry as provided U/s 15 of the Act No. 30/2013. The number of families likely be resettled due to Land Acquisition is - Nil  
Mines of coal, iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed.  
Sd/- Spl. Dy. Collector, LA, GHMC, Hyderabad. Sd/- Special Collector (L.A.) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad.  
DIPR No. 1256/LA/PP-Adv/Agency/2025-26

## Indian Overseas Bank

5-9-305A, Adarsh Nagar Branch, Paigah Plaza Building, Basheer Bagh, Hyderabad Telangana PIN: 500029  
E-mail: iob1301@iob.bank.in, IFSC: IOBA0001301, Tele: 89259-51301

**Demand notice to Borrowers / Mortgagees/Guarantors**  
Under Sub-section (2) of section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002

To	Borrower
Sl.No	1
	PATNAMSHETTY SHIVA KUMAR S/o PATNAMSHETTY MALLAIAH - H No. 3-1-118, Flat No. 402, Surya Azab Singh Complex, Kakatiya Colony, Hanamkonda, Warangal, Telangana - 506001 - Pharmacist Grade II in Govt Maternity Hospital (Govt of Telangana) Regalia, Bhadradi Kolhagudem, Telangana Pin: 507117 PATNAMSHETTY SAI SHASHANK S/o PATNAMSHETTY SHIVA KUMAR - H No. 3-1-118, Flat No. 402, Surya Azab Singh Complex, Kakatiya Colony, Hanamkonda, Warangal, Telangana - 506001

**Dear Sirs**  
Re: Your Credit facilities with Indian Overseas Bank, HYDERABAD-ADARSH NAGAR Branch  
1. You, the above-named borrowers of our bank have availed the following credit facilities from our Hyderabad-Adarsh Nagar Branch:  
**The details of credit facilities with outstanding dues are as under:**

Sl. No	Nature of Facility	Limit	Rates of Interest (including overdue interest) & rests	Last Interest Debit Date(Mandatory)	Total dues* as on 25/02/2026 (in Rs.)
1	RSUBH	58,00,000.00	10.40%	27-01-2026	56,48,664.13
2	RSUBH-TOPUP Loan	10,00,000.00	10.50%	19-02-2026	9,35,554.40
	Total	68,00,000.00			65,84,218.53

\* With further interest from last interest debit date at contractual rates/rests will become payable from the date mentioned above till date of payment.  
The Above-named guarantors referred under Sl. Nos have executed guarantee and thereby guaranteed payment on demand of all moneys and discharge all obligations and liabilities then or at any time thereafter owing or incurred to Indian Overseas Bank by the borrowers for the aggregate credit limits of Rs 68,00,000.00 together with agreed interest, charges etc.  
The credit facilities were secured by the assets mentioned below by way of mortgage/ hypothecation/ hire purchase/ lease (as applicable) standing in the name of the borrowers. They were also secured by mortgage of properties in the name of borrower/ mortgagor mentioned in Sl. No 1. They were also secured by mortgage of properties in the name of mortgagor/ guarantor Nos herein above.  
The guarantors mentioned under Sl. Nos of you have given personal guarantee for the credit facilities as given above.  
You have acknowledged from time to time the liabilities mentioned herein above through various documents executed by you.  
2. The details of securities in favour of the Bank for the aforesaid credit facilities are:

Nature of security	Particulars of securities
1. Mortgage	All that the Residential House No: 2-184/63P on Plot No. 63 and 64 parts, Sy No. 756, 756/A, 756/AA/A, 756/AA/B, 756/AA/C, 756/AA/D, 756/AA/E, 756/AA/F, measuring 123 Sq. yds or 102.8 Sq. Mtrs having Ground Floor plinth area 624 Sqft and First Floor plinth area 624 Sq Ft. Total plinth area 1248 Sq Ft with RCC situated at Korumula Village, Chowdriyada Gram Panchayat, Ghatkesar Mandal, Medchal- Malkajigiri District under SRO Narapally and bounded by: North: Plot No. 63 Part South: 30' Wide Road. East: Neighbors Land West: 30' Wide Road In the name of PATNAMSHETTY SHIVA KUMAR and PATNAMSHETTY SAI SHASHANK

\*\* The Bank reserves its right to proceed against the agricultural land security Nos. 6 above through other available legal course of action.  
3. Consequent upon defaults committed by the above-named borrowers in payment of the principal debt/ interest as per agreed terms, loan account mentioned above have been classified as Non-Performing Asset on 25/02/2026 (date of classification as NPA) as per Reserve Bank of India guidelines and directives. Despite our reminders for regularization of your account, you have not repaid the overdue loans including interest thereon.  
4. Since you the above named borrowers referred under Sl. Nos. 1, have failed to meet the liabilities in respect of the credit facilities duly secured by various securities mentioned above and upon classification of your account as a Non-Performing Asset, we hereby recall our advances to Sl.Nos 1, of you and give you notice under sub-section (2) of section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and call upon you to pay in full and discharge your liabilities to the bank aggregating to Rs 65,84,218.53, as detailed in para 1 above, with further interest @ 10.40% & 10.50% compounded with monthly/ half yearly as agreed, from the date mentioned above, within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice.  
5. The above-named mortgagor / guarantor Nos have undertaken for repayment / guarantee for the credit facilities taken by the borrowers and have also mortgaged the properties herein mentioned to secure the above said credit facilities. Since the borrowers have committed defaults in repayment, the mortgagors/guarantors have become liable to pay to us in terms of the guarantee, the amounts due to the Bank as per the loan / credit facilities aggregating to Rs 65,84,218.53 together with further interest @ 10.40% & 10.50% compounded with monthly/ half yearly as agreed and we hereby invoke the guarantee against the mortgagors / guarantors who have given non-agri securities enforceable under the SARFAESI Act namely of you and call upon you to pay the said amount within sixty days from the date of receipt of this notice. Please be advised that the Guarantors liability is co-extensive with the liability of the borrowers.  
6. We further give notice to the borrowers namely S No 1, and mortgagors / guarantors who have given non-agri securities enforceable under the SARFAESI Act namely that failing payment of the above amount in full with interest and charges etc till the date of payment, we shall be exercising all or any of the rights vested on us, under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act.  
7. Please note that in law the borrowers and guarantors are jointly and severally liable to repay the dues with further interest and charges etc.  
8. Please note that interest will continue to accrue at the rates and rests as agreed for each credit facility until full repayment.  
9. Your attention is also invited to sub-section (13) of section 13 of the said Act in terms of which you are restrained from transferring/ alienating/shifting any of the secured assets referred to above by way of sale, lease or otherwise, without obtaining our prior written consent. Please also note that non-compliance / contravention of the provisions contained in the said Act or Rules made thereunder, is an offence which is punishable with imprisonment and/or fine as provided under section 29 of the said Act.  
10. The guarantors referred under Sl. Nos. have given personal guarantee to secure the loans of the said borrowers and as such we advise you to prevail upon the borrowers to repay the dues as per our demand since we have the right to initiate action against you simultaneously in accordance with law, for recovery of our dues based on your personal guarantee.  
11. We also put all of you on notice that if the account is not regularized/ repaid within the stipulated time and in case of the Bank classifying you as a willful defaulter as per RBI Guidelines, the Bank reserves its rights to publish your photograph in newspaper(s) with your name, address, details of default, dues etc., in accordance with RBI Guidelines besides initiating all recourses available to the Bank for recovery.  
12. We also advise you that this demand notice is without prejudice to and shall not be construed as waiver of any other rights or remedies which we have for recovery of the above said dues as well as our right to make further demands in respect of sums due and payable by you.  
13. Further, your attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to you, to redeem the secured assets.

Place: Hyderabad Date: 26-02-2026  
Authorised Officer Indian Overseas Bank

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### Exemplary Act by Waltair Division Ticket Checking Staff: Minor Rescued



**THE SOUTHINDIA TIMES, VISAKHAPATNAM:** The ticket checking staff of Waltair Division have earned widespread appreciation for their prompt and responsible action in ensuring the safety of a minor boy traveling alone. On March 03, 2026, while performing his duties on Train No. 17015, N. Mohan Raju, Chief Ticket Inspector-II, noticed a young boy traveling without a guardian on Berth No. 49 of the S-2 coach. Recognizing the potential risk, Sri Mohan Raju immediately alerted the Waltair Commercial Control. Through swift coordination, the boy was deboarded at Vizianagaram station and handed over to the Child Helpline in the presence of RPF officials for further care. Divisional Railway Manager Shri Lalit Bohra and Senior DCM K. Pavan Kumar commended the team for their alertness and sensitivity. This compassionate intervention has been hailed by all quarters as a testament to the railway's commitment to passenger safety.

### GRAND CHAKRASNAMAM OF SRI LAKSHMI NARASIMHA SWAMY

ANNUAL BRAHMOTSAVAMS CONCLUDE WITH DHWAJAVAROHANAM



**Tirupati:** The sacred Chakrasnamam was performed with religious fervour on Wednesday as part of the annual Brahmotsavams of Tarigonda Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple. The rituals began with Vasanthotsavam at 7:00 a.m. Later at 10:00 a.m., Snapana Tirumanjanam was conducted, followed by the grand Chakrasnamam. The deity was ceremonially offered holy bath (abhishekam) with milk, curd, honey, coconut water, turmeric and sandalwood paste. Amidst chanting of Vedic hymns, the priests performed the Chakrasnamam as per Agama traditions. In the evening, Tiruchi Utsavam will be observed at 7:00 p.m., followed by Dhvajavarohanam at 8:00 p.m., marking the conclusion of the annual Brahmotsavams. Several officials, priests and a large number of devotees participated in the event.

### GRAND RATHOTSAVAM OF SRI KALYANA VENKATARAMANA SWAMY

ANNUAL BRAHMOTSAVAMS CONCLUDE WITH DHWAJAVAROHANAM



**Tirupati:** As part of the annual Brahmotsavams of Punganur Sri Kalyana Venkataramana Swamy Temple, the grand Rathotsavam was conducted with religious fervour on Wednesday morning. At 5:00 a.m., in Mesha Lagnam, the Lord mounted the temple chariot. Later at 9:00 a.m., Sri Kalyana Venkataramana Swamy blessed devotees from atop the beautifully decorated ratham. Amid the sounds of traditional mangala vadyams, devotional bhajans and kolatam performances, the chariot procession was taken out ceremoniously along the temple Mada streets. The philosophical significance of the Rathotsavam was also highlighted. The soul (Atma) is regarded as the charioteer, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the driver, the mind as the reins, the senses as the horses and worldly objects as the paths. This symbolic comparison imparts Atma-Anatma Viveka, the spiritual wisdom that distinguishes the soul from the physical body. Subsequently, Chakrasnamam was performed at 12:45 p.m. in Mithuna Lagnam. The deity was offered sacred bath with milk, curd, honey, sandalwood paste, turmeric and coconut water. In the evening, Dhvajavarohanam will be observed at 6:00 p.m., marking the conclusion of the annual Brahmotsavams. Temple priests, officials and a large number of devotees participated in the festivities.

### HOLI CELEBRATIONS PAINT VISAKHAPATNAM IN VIBRANT HUES

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Holi festivities were celebrated with great enthusiasm across Visakhapatnam, beginning with Holika Dahan on March 3 and peaking on March 4. Popular spots like RK Beach, Rishikonda, and Bheemili Beach Road witnessed massive gatherings of tourists and locals enjoying colors and festive cheer. Major hotels and resorts hosted grand events, including



“Holi High – Season 16” at The Park Hotel with rain dances and DJ performances. A unique tomato-themed celebration

inspired by Spain's La Tomatina at Bheemili Resort drew special attention, while MGM Grounds on Beach Road hosted one of the city's largest Holi parties. Many residents preferred organic colors, and children enjoyed the trending dinosaur water guns. Police ensured tight security and conducted checks to prevent drunk driving, making the celebrations safe and vibrant.

### TPCC WORKING PRESIDENT JAGGA REDDY CELEBRATES HOLI WITH PARTY WORKERS



**Hyderabad (TSIT):** Holi celebrations were held with great enthusiasm at Ramnagar in Sangareddy where TPCC Working President T. Jagga Reddy joined party leaders, workers, and supporters in colorful festivities. Jagga Reddy became the center of attraction during the celebrations as he enthusiastically danced to popular songs, including the classic “I Am a Disco Dancer.” His energetic participation filled party cadres and supporters with excitement and festive spirit. The celebrations began at around 10 a.m. and continued for nearly three hours until 1 p.m., creating a lively and joyful atmosphere among Congress workers. With the beats of drums, film songs, and folk music playing in the background, leaders and workers danced together, marking the festival with great enthusiasm. Jagga Reddy's energetic dance performance near the Ramnagar Kaman drew cheers from the gathered crowd and turned the event into a memorable celebration for party supporters. Among those who participated in the celebrations were TPCC State General Secretary Thopaji Anantha Kishan, Sangareddy Congress Constituency In-charge Julakanti Anjaneyulu, senior Congress leader Kuna Santosh, Sangareddy Town Congress President George Mathews, Kiran Goud, several councillors, party leaders, and a large number of Congress workers.



TPCC BOARD MEMBER SHANTARAM EXPRESSED HIS HAPPINESS THAT HE WAS HAPPY TO PROVIDE VIP DARSHAN TO HIS FELLOW NAYI BRAHMINS WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS BOARD CHAIRMAN AND GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS.



JWALA VEERABHADRASWAMY POOJA HELD IN SRISAILAM

### ‘Kanuvippu’ Awareness Program Held at Akkannapet to Promote Crime-Free Society

**Husnabad, March 4:** With an objective to create greater public awareness on crime prevention and social responsibility, the local police organized the ‘Kanuvippu’ awareness programme at Ambedkar Chowrasta in Akkannapet mandal centre of Siddipet district. The event witnessed an encouraging response from the public. Sub-Inspector Prashanth attended the programme as the chief guest and addressed



the gathering. He urged citizens to remain vigilant against various forms of crime, particularly cyber frauds and other emerging social issues. Emphasizing

the importance of legal awareness, he stated that only through understanding the law and staying alert can society move towards becoming crime-free.

On the occasion, SI Prashanth called upon the people to cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order in villages. He assured that the police department remains committed and accessible to the public at all times to ensure safety and security. The programme was conducted under the supervision of the local police machinery as part of ongoing community outreach initiatives in the region.

### Ponnam Prabhakar Responde a Bandi Sanjay Kumar Defiende Liderazgo de Rahul Gandhi

**Hyderabad:** El ministro Ponnam Prabhakar respondió con firmeza a las declaraciones del ministro central Bandi Sanjay, afirmando que desear ver a Rahul Gandhi como Primer Ministro es un derecho legítimo del partido.

Señaló que en una democracia no es Bandi Sanjay ni ninguna otra persona quien decide quien debe asumir el liderazgo, sino el pueblo. “Los cargos no son permanentes; dependen de la confianza popular”, subrayó. Prabhakar criticó al gobierno central, acusándolo de haber debilitado los sistemas de gobernanza en los últimos años, privatizar empresas del sector público a precios bajos y permitir un aumento descontrolado de los precios.

### Sri Ranganatha Swamy Rathotsavam Celebrated with Grandeur; Rs 32 Crore Development Plan Announced



**Wanaparthy:** The annual Rathotsavam of Lord Sri Ranganatha Swamy was celebrated with religious fervour and grandeur at the historic Sri Ranganayaka Swamy Temple in Srirangapuram mandal of Wanaparthy district. Wanaparthy MLA Thudi Megha Reddy par-

ticipated in the celebrations and announced that the Congress government has taken up comprehensive development works worth Rs 32 crore for the temple and surrounding areas. Members of the Wanaparthy royal family, including Raja Krishna Deva Rao, offered special prayers to the presiding

deity. The ceremonial idol of the Lord was later taken in a traditional palanquin procession from the temple to the temple chariot amid devotional chants. The MLA stated that Srirangapuram village, known for its rich history, will be developed into a tourism hub with an allocation of Rs 5 crore. The main temple road will be repaired at a cost of Rs 2 crore, while guest houses will be constructed with an outlay of Rs 1.50 crore to facilitate pilgrims. Additionally, Rs 24 crore has been sanctioned under the Irrigation Department to strengthen canals in the crop fields behind Ranganayaka Samudram and prevent flood damage. Several public representatives and local leaders attended the programme.

### Postal Department to Deliver Bhadradi Sita Ramachandra Kalyana Talambas at Devotees' Doorsteps

**Karimnagar, March 4:** In view of the upcoming Sri Rama Navami celebrations, the Department of Posts has announced doorstep delivery of the sacred “Bhadradi Sri Sita Ramachandra Kalyana Talambas” to devotees. The initiative is being undertaken in coordination with the Endowment Department, enabling devotees to receive the holy talambas without traveling to Bhadrachalam Temple. The sacred talambas relate to the annual Sri Sita Ramachandra Kalyana Kalyanotsavam scheduled to be held on March 27. Karimnagar Division Postal Superintendent K. Shivaji stated that booking facilities are available

at all post offices under the Karimnagar Division. Two types of services are being offered for devotees. The Antaralaya Archana Kalyana Talambas package, priced at Rs 450, includes pearl, saffron, misri, and cashew. Additionally, pearl talambas can be booked separately for Rs 151. Devotees who are unable to visit Bhadrachalam can avail themselves of this facility and receive the prasadam at their homes. Bookings will be accepted until March 20. The Postal Superintendent urged devotees to make use of this opportunity and participate in the sacred celebrations from their homes.

### TalentMetrix Mentor Development Program Inaugurated at GITAM Hyderabad, 210 Faculty Participate

A three-day Mentor Development Program (MDP) for faculty mentors was inaugurated at the Hyderabad campus of GITAM Deemed to be University on February 4, 2026. The initiative, organized by the Career Counselling & Mentoring (CC&M) division, aims to strengthen the university's mentoring ecosystem and enhance faculty capabilities as certified mentors. This marks the sixth batch of faculty members undergoing training and accreditation through the MDP. In collaboration with TalentMetrix, the university has successfully trained and accredited over 1,400 faculty members across five previous batches. In the current phase, around 210 faculty members from all three campuses are participating in the program. TalentMetrix, a management consulting and talent



transformation firm with over 25 years of expertise, has partnered with leading corporates nationwide in leadership and capability development initiatives. The present program is facilitated by seasoned experts Ravindranath Mokshagundam and Srinivas Gottumukkala, who bring more than three decades of cross-industry experience in mentoring

and organizational transformation. Conducted in a blended learning format, the program combines structured in-person sessions with interactive methodologies. Each batch includes around 25 faculty participants, ensuring focused engagement and personalized guidance. The MDP is organized by the CC&M wing under the

Directorate of Training, Mentoring and Career Guidance (TMCG), and supervised by the GITAM Career Guidance Center (GCGC). Through such structured initiatives, GITAM continues to reinforce its commitment to holistic student development by empowering faculty members to serve as impactful mentors and guides.

### ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Launches Dividend Leaders 50 Index Fund for Long-Term Wealth Creation

**Mumbai, 2026:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has announced the launch of the Dividend Leaders 50 Index Fund under its Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs), offering customers an opportunity to build long-term wealth by investing in fundamentally strong companies with a consistent dividend payout history. The fund follows a disciplined, rule-based investment strategy and mirrors the BSE 500 Dividend Leaders 50 Index, which tracks 50 companies selected from the broader BSE 500 universe that have consistently paid dividends over the past decade. The index is rebalanced annually and adopts a passive approach, with the fund tracking index stocks rather than actively selecting them. Commenting on the launch, Manish Kumar, Chief Investment Officer, said the fund offers a trans-

parent and structured way for customers to participate in equity markets through financially sound, time-tested companies. The strategy is built on four pillars — dividend-focused stock selection, strong financial and cash flow quality checks, sectoral diversification for stability, and periodic review with disciplined rebalancing. Historically, the index has delivered annualised total returns of 33.63% over three years, 30.96% over five years and 20.40% over ten years as of January 30, 2026, reflecting its long-term growth potential. The new fund is available across select ULIP products including ICICI Pru Signature Assure, ICICI Pru SmartKid Assure, and ICICI Pru Smart Insurance Plan Plus (SIP+), among others, combining life cover with structured equity participation.



# EDITORIAL

## How Anthropic's Claude AI Helped US Bomb Iran

The same artificial-intelligence model that can help you draft a marketing email or a quick dinner recipe has also been used to attack Iran. US Central Command used Anthropic's Claude AI for "intelligence assessments, target identification and simulating battle scenarios" during the strikes on the country, according to a report in the Wall Street Journal.

Hours earlier, US President Donald Trump had ordered federal agencies to stop using Claude after a dispute with its maker, but the tool was so deeply baked into the Pentagon's systems that it would take months to untangle in favor of a more compliant rival. It was used, too, in the January operation that led to the capture of Nicolas Maduro.

But what does "intelligence assessments" and "target identification" mean in practice? Was Claude flagging locations to strike or making casualty estimates? Nobody has made that disclosure and, alarmingly, no one has an obligation to.

Artificial intelligence has long been used in warfare for things like analyzing satellite imagery, detecting cyber threats and guiding missile-defense systems. But the use of chatbots - the same underlying technology that billions use for mundane tasks like writing emails - is now being used on the battlefield.

Last November, Anthropic partnered with Palantir Technologies Inc., a data-analytics company that does a lot of work for the Pentagon, turning its large language model Claude into the reasoning engine inside a decision-support system for the military. Then, in January, Anthropic submitted a \$100 million proposal to the Pentagon to develop voice-controlled autonomous drone swarming technology, Bloomberg News reported. The company's pitch: Use Claude to translate a commander's intent into digital instructions to coordinate a fleet of drones.

Its bid was rejected, but the contest called for much more than just summarizing intelligence reports, as you might expect a chatbot to do. This contract was to develop "target-related awareness and sharing," and "launch to termination" for potentially lethal drone swarms.

Remarkably, all of this has been happening in a regulatory vacuum and with technology that is known to make errors. Hallucinations by large language models are a result of their training, when they are rewarded for grasping for an answer instead of admitting uncertainty. Some scientists say the persistent challenge of AI confabulation may never be fixed.

This would not be the first time unreliable AI systems have been used in warfare. Lavender was an AI-driven database used to help identify military targets associated with Hamas in Gaza. It was not a large language model but analyzed vast amounts of surveillance data, such as social connections and location history, to assign each individual a score from 1 to 100. When someone's score passed a certain threshold, Lavender flagged them as a military target.

The problem was that Lavender was wrong 10% of the time, according to an investigative report published by the Israeli-Palestinian outlet +972. "Around 3,600 people were targeted by mistake," Mariarosaria Taddeo, a professor of digital ethics and defense technology at the Oxford Internet Institute, tells me.

"There are such incredible vulnerabilities in these systems and such extreme unreliability... for something so dynamic, sensitive and human as warfare," says Elke Schwarz, a professor in political theory at Queen Mary University London and author of *Death Machines: The Ethics of Violent Technologies*.

Schwarz points out that AI is often used in war to speed things up, a recipe for unwanted outcomes. Faster decisions are made at a greater scale and with less human scrutiny. The last decade and a half has seen military use of AI become even more opaque, she says. And secrecy is baked into how AI labs operate even before the warfare applications.

## GASPING IN 4 DAYS?

# How Iran Humbled US-Israel's Million-Dollar War Inventory

Israel claimed Iran to be an 'existential threat', while the US claimed Iran to pose an 'imminent threat' to its mainland through the latter's rapidly growing capability in ballistic missiles. Both launched a pre-emptive air campaign on February 28, targeting key infrastructure in Iran and also taking out its top leadership in a well-timed and executed intelligence operation. Obviously, the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, was the top prize for both the US and Israel. The campaign was expected to pulverise Iran in a matter of days, decapitate its entire political and military leadership and orchestrate a change of regime in Iran in no time. However, what has been witnessed in the four days has shocked the world and has gone well beyond the wildest calculations of American and Israeli generals. The Iranian counterattack has been focused and ferocious, unmindful of the mighty armies that it is opposing. The death of its Supreme Leader and over 40 top generals has not deterred it but has, on the contrary, strengthened its resolve to fight back. The inadequacy of the American security umbrella in the Gulf region has been exposed as the American defensive systems get overwhelmed and outnumbered. US bases and embassies are being vacated, energy supplies across the Persian Gulf have come to a halt, and there is fear that if the conflict prolongs, the costs that it imposes will soon become untenable for Israel and the US.

### Low-Cost For The Win?

Iran is fighting an uneven battle against Israel-US. There is no military matchup when Iran is up against the most modern and lethal militaries in the world. However, military superiority comes at a cost. This war is about fighting with stand-off weapon platforms such as missiles, drones and fighter jets. A comparison in costs is revealing. Some estimates suggest that the US may have incurred a cost of around USD 779 million in the first 24 hours of Operation Epic Fury. The cost estimates suggest an overall expense of around USD 1.24 billion in the first



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three days. It may not seem too much given that the US military budget is around USD 1 trillion. But the figures give an idea about the cost of a military campaign of this size. Even so, it is not the overall expense that matters as much as the cost of each weapon platform pitched against what Iran is firing and paying for. The American Patriot and Tomahawk missiles cost between USD 1.3 million apiece, whereas an average Iranian ballistic missile is priced at merely USD 800,000 to 1 million. Similarly, the MQ-9 Reaper drone costs a staggering USD 30 million compared to the Shahed drone of Iran costing merely USD 30-50K. This huge disparity in costs is resulting in double trouble for Israel and the US. First is the heavy costs, and second is the shorter numbers being produced annually, as a result of which replacement in battlefields, where large numbers are required, becomes problematic.

### Will US Run Out Of Inventory?

In the ongoing war, in just four days of battle, there are fears that the inventory of Patriot and Tomahawk missiles may run out soon. The availability of Patriot missiles in the war zone is estimated to be around 600-800 only. Also, for any incoming

missile from Iran, four to six interceptors are fired. With an estimate of 150-200 missile interceptors already fired, it is feared that Israel and the US may run out of interceptors in the next four to seven days. There are reports that the US is contemplating shifting some Patriot missiles from Japan and Korea to augment the inventory. Similarly, the Tomahawk missiles, too, may start facing criticality, especially if the battle intensifies in the seas. The production rate of around 600-650 Patriot missiles annually cannot keep pace with the requirements of a war where almost 250-400 missiles are required every week. Iran knows it and has prepared for it. It has huge missiles and drone inventories, many of them safely kept in underground silos deep inside mountains where American air or missile strikes cannot reach. As per some estimates, Iran's inventory of missiles of various types ranges from 20,000 to 50,000; its drones, too, are in thousands. Knowing the asymmetric advantage it has, Iran is steadily firing a combination of old and new missiles and drones, keeping the Israeli and American defences occupied, knowing fully well that its inventory could last months, if not longer. Plus, it is

producing dozens of missiles every month, enough to keep replenishing stocks for months to come. The costs that it is imposing both in terms of expenditure and availability of numbers for critical missiles is becoming a challenge for Israel and the US.

### The Human Cost

The cost of body bags is yet another key determinant in the outcome of war. Although President Trump hinted at a number of casualties in the ongoing conflict, the return of body bags in 'away wars' is a big 'No' in America. The early signs of despair are already to be seen as President Trump as well as the Secretary of War counted in their address on March 2 the three lives lost. This was just the third day of war, and they promised to honour their sacrifice with a medal of honour. With many more casualties expected, especially as Iranian missiles are successfully hitting US embassies, bases, ammunition depots and even hotels where evacuated soldiers are staying, this could soon become a cost that President Trump will not be able to bear much longer. Similar is the case with Israel, although it can claim to have a higher threshold, especially as it is fighting an 'existential threat'.

## Nepal Elections: New Beginnings Or Same Old, Same Old?

Nepal is all set to vote tomorrow for its first election since the September 2025 'Gen Z' protests and the third after the promulgation of the 2015 constitution. The candidates will compete for 275 parliamentary seats, of which 165 members will be selected through the direct first past the post system (FPTP), whereas 110 will be selected through the proportional representation system. Of the 120 parties which had initially registered, 68 fielded their candidates, with a total of 3,406 candidates contesting in the direct FPTP election. The elections are happening almost two years before their previously scheduled date of November/December 2027 owing to the Gen Z protests which led to the resignation of the then Prime Minister, K.P. Sharma Oli from the helm and spearheaded an overarching overhaul in how politics is practiced in the country. As the 18,903,689 voters prepare to vote tomorrow, expectations abound about the extent to which these elections will change the trajectory of Nepal's politics. What's At Stake? Politics in Nepal has generally been characterised as a 'game of musical chairs', a reflection of power switching hands amongst the three major parties and their leaders: the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) [CPN (MC)], led by Pusp Kamal Dahal Prachanda, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) [CPN (UML)] and its leader K.P. Sharma Oli and the Nepali Congress (NC) led by Sher Bahadur Deuba. Over the last three and a half decades, these parties and their leaders have hatched fragile coalitions with each other, hinged on flimsy and self-aggrandizing power-sharing arrangements in order to retain their control on the government. In 2017, the CPN (UML) emerged as the biggest party whereas 2022 saw the NC rising to the top. Ultimately by July 2024, the CPN (UML) and the NC were leading a coalition government with Oli as the Prime Minister. It was this government which was overthrown after the Gen Z protests. Previously, much of the dis-



cussions preceding the elections would focus on the formation of pre-poll alliances which would quickly dismantle once a particular party gained the highest votes. These making and breaking of coalitions has led to a situation where no one Prime Minister has successfully completed their five-year term in office. This saturation with the same set of leaders and their failure to bring in any reforms in the country also led to the emergence of certain new actors in the last elections in 2022. The Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) under Rabi Lamichhane emerged as the fourth-largest party. But the mood before the elections this year is different. The political battlefield is now starkly different yet distinctly similar to how it used to be in previous elections. Of the established parties, only the CPN (UML) has failed to bring in a fresh change in leadership, with Oli retaining his position as the chair of the party and its prime-ministerial face. He is contesting from his home constituency Jhapa-5, where he has previously won six times. When the protests broke out last year, Oli had framed them as an external attempt to destabilise his government and threaten Nepal's sovereignty and integrity. He maintained his strong rhetoric and refused to take responsibility for the violent crackdown on the protestors

which led to the death of 19 people on day 1 of the protests. He subsequently resigned, but in the period between his resignation and the elections, he kept his tempo high about the ulterior motive of the conspirators who conducted the protests. He rejected the dissolution of the House of Representatives and urged the Supreme Court to restore it while calling the interim government illegal. Despite this, he is now contesting the elections in hopes of retaining the prime ministerial seat even as the anti-incumbency sentiment in the country is at its peak. The NC on the other hand has seen some degree of change, with the party's leader, Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is no longer contesting from his home constituency of Dadeldhura being pushed to the back-seat and the emergence of Gagan Thapa as the party chair. The senior Deuba, and his wife, Arzoo Rana Deuba who was the foreign minister in the previous government came under the ire of the protesting groups last year. The acrimony between Deuba and Thapa had been going on for a while, particularly since the NC's decision to align with the CPN (UML). Deuba's reticence to hold a special convention despite support from his party members and Thapa's decision to organise a special convention despite that.

## The Middle East Inferno, And Why India Can Play Mediator

In the shadow of perennially shifting alliances, the recent eruption of hostilities between Iran and a coalition led by Israel and the United States marks a pivotal moment in the geopolitics of the Middle East. With the targeted assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the region stands at a crucial crossroads where retaliation and survival intersect, creating a tumultuous environment that threatens to engulf much of the Gulf. Though Iran has long been viewed as a formidable leader in shaping regional politics, its ambitions now wield a dangerous, double-edged sword. Perceived by Iran as the vassal states of the US, the six Gulf Arab monarchies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) find themselves ensnared in the conflagration, suffering immensely in the face of Iranian vengeance. Diversification Of Hydrocarbon Sector Having spent over a decade as an Editor of various media groups in the Gulf region, I witnessed the massive diversification out of the hydrocarbon sector and the transformation of some of these Gulf states from close quarters. During the first Gulf War of the 1990s, the Middle East practically lived off hydrocarbons: oil and gas. In sharp contrast today, about 77 per cent of the UAE's economy is based on non-hydrocarbon sectors: finance, technology, tourism, real estate, sports and education. The corresponding figures for Oman are 73 per cent, 66 per cent for Qatar and 57 per cent for Saudi Arabia. In the Global Financial Centre Index (GFCI) 38 Rank, for 2025, Dubai was ranked 11th out of 38 leading financial hubs globally, ahead of Frankfurt, Washington DC, Geneva, Tokyo, Zurich, Boston, Paris and others. To achieve such a remarkable structural transformation, all the Gulf countries have projected an image of safety and stability, as champions of "soft power." The days of relative stability, stretching from the 1990s to 2020, appear as a utopia of the past. In sharp contrast, today the Gulf countries, pounded by Iranian drones and missiles, appear as a desert inferno,



wherein each missile and drone strike sends ripples through the global energy supply and shakes the very foundations of regional economies. Iran's Fight For Survival Iran's response to the unprovoked aggression has been vehement and uncompromising. The drone strikes - targeting oil refineries, embassies, and even iconic landmarks - serve not only as acts of defiance but as desperate measures in a fight for survival. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for global oil transport, sends shockwaves through international markets, driving gas prices to unprecedented heights. The earth beneath the rich sands of the Gulf no longer feels stable; instead, it reverberates with the cries of economies on the brink, as investment flees and the prospect for growth dims. The Spectre Of War The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, once a beacon of energy wealth, finds its giant oil refining facility at Ras Tanura under siege, its economic backbone threatened by Iranian hostility. With every attack on US embassies across the region - be it in Riyadh or Kuwait - the landscape of safety and security that Gulf states had long cultivated crumbles. The closures of strategic sites are akin to death knells, resonating through the halls of power and striking fear into the hearts of investors. Half of Dubai, once a flour-

ishing hub of tourism and commerce, is scrambling for exits, as the spectre of a protracted war looms large. Ironically, the Gulf monarchies - despite their relative wealth, sovereign wealth funds and modernised economies - possess much more to lose in this newly minted chaos. Over the past quarter-century, they have diversified their economies away from a sole reliance on fossil fuels, yet the very infrastructure that allows this transformation is now vulnerable to threat. UAE's economy, for instance, is now predominantly non-hydrocarbon, driven by finance, tourism, and technology. Yet, when drones strike AWS facilities and disrupt critical services, the progress they made appears ephemeral, caught in the crossfire of escalating conflict. Psychological Toll On Gulf Monarchies The psychological toll on these nations is profound. The attacks sow seeds of doubt about safety and stability - qualities that were once a bedrock of their relationship with the United States. The image of the Gulf as a sanctuary for expatriates and tourists disintegrates under the weight of a sullied reputation. Faced with an uncertain horizon, nations like Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE and Oman must urgently advocate for peace, seeking to quell the flames of unrest that threaten their very existence.

### New genetic study finds unique DNA changes in oral cancer patients from Southwest Karnataka

Mangaluru, Mar 4: A new genetic study led by Dr Ranajit Das, Dr Riaz Abdulla and Dr Hafeeda Kunhabdulla from Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) has uncovered distinctive DNA changes in people with oral cancer from the southwest coast of Karnataka, offering fresh clues about how the disease develops in this local population. The work, published recently in frontiers in genetics (https://doi.org/10.3389/fgene.2026.1739925), shows that the genetic makeup of oral cancers in this region is surprisingly different from patterns seen in global reference datasets, with some mutations appearing far more often, or almost exclusively, in people from Southwest coast of Karnataka. Oral cancer is a major health challenge in India, but most genetic research so far has focused on people from Europe, North America, and other regions. In this first-of-its-kind genetic study from coastal Karnataka, researchers sequenced the DNA in both tumor and normal tissues from patients to look for



changes that might be linked to cancer. What makes this study different Unique mutation patterns: The team found several genetic changes that are rare or absent in global cancer databases, meaning they haven't been widely seen in oral cancer studies around the world. Tumor-specific changes: Some mutations were found only in tumor tissue and not in the patients' normal tissues. These changes were present in a large proportion

of the study participants, suggesting they may play a role in how the cancer develops locally. Likely distinct from global cancer profiles: When compared with international data, including large global cancer reference projects, these mutations are much more common in the Karnataka group and are not typical of oral cancers studied in other populations. Possible region-specific signatures: The findings suggest that the interaction of genetic background, environ-

ment, lifestyle, and local risk factors may lead to a distinct genetic fingerprint of disease in people from this region. Why it matters This discovery highlights the importance of studying diverse populations. Many global cancer studies have under-represented people from India and South Asia, so region-specific variations may have been missed. The unique mutation patterns uncovered in this study underscore that the pathogenicity and clinical progress of oral cancer may not be genetically the same everywhere in the world. By identifying these locally enriched genetic changes, scientists hope to develop better methods for early detection, risk assessment, and personalized treatment tailored to people in this high-burden region. It also opens the door to further research into how these unique changes influence the disease, which could ultimately benefit cancer care both locally and beyond.

### Hi Life Exhibition Brings Dazzling Summer Couture Edit to Bangalore

Bangalore: Fashion enthusiasts in Bangalore are set for a stylish summer as the renowned Hi Life Exhibition unveils its much-awaited Summer Edit. The exhibition promises a curated showcase of celebrated designers, fluid silhouettes, opulent fine jewellery, and striking statement accessories that define the season's most coveted trends. The Summer Edit highlights sun-kissed colour palettes, exquisite craftsmanship, and versatile collections designed to transition seamlessly from elevated daywear to glamorous evening ensembles. Blending



contemporary high fashion with timeless elegance, the showcase is tailored for the city's discerning style connoisseurs. With an emphasis on quality, detail, and trend-forward design, the exhibition offers shoppers an exclusive opportunity to explore premium couture and luxury accessories under one roof. As temperatures rise, the Hi Life Exhibition ensures that Bangalore's fashion scene stays effortlessly chic and ahead of the curve.



MEI Chairman S. Manohar has requested MEI to provide complete 11KV switchgear required by KPTCL and all switchgear repair work. He met KPTCL Managing Director Dr. Ram Prasat Manohar and submitted a request in this regard.

### FARMERS GET REAL-TIME UPDATES ON POWER CONNECTIONS VIA GANGA KALYANA PORTAL - ENERGY MINISTER K.J. GEORGE

Bengaluru : Energy Minister K.J. George today announced that a new feature has been introduced by BESCOM on the Ganga Kalyana portal, enabling farmers to track the status of their applications online under the Ganga Kalyana scheme. After unveiling the new feature, the Minister stated, "This new option has been introduced to improve transparency, ensure easy access to information, and enhance public convenience under the scheme." He further explained, "Under the Karnataka Government's flagship irrigation scheme 'Ganga Kalyana,' borewells are drilled, pump sets are installed, and free electricity connections are provided to small and marginal farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and backward classes. Earlier, beneficiaries were unable to know the stage of their application during the process of providing electricity infrastructure

Applicants Can Track the Status of Electricity Connections to Borewells



after borewell drilling. Now, this information is available directly on the portal. Farmers should make full use of this service." The Minister added that the feature is available on the Ganga Kalyana portal homepage under the 'Track Application Status' option. By entering the required details, beneficiaries can access their appli-

cation information. Key Features Applicants/farmers can now check the status of the electricity infrastructure process without visiting government offices. Beneficiaries need to enter any one of the following: Ganga Kalyana Application ID, registered mobile number, or Aadhaar number. CAPTCHA verification ensures secure access. Once the details are submitted, applicants can view their personal information, stage-wise progress of the application, current status (Completed/In Progress), processing dates, and order number details. Quote "The portal has been upgraded to prevent delays in providing electricity connections to borewells of Ganga Kalyana beneficiaries. This will eliminate the need for repeated office visits and ensure timely access to application status updates," said Dr. N. Shivashankara, Managing Director, BESCOM.

### EXPEDITE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT WORKS - D.S. RAMESH

Bengaluru: The Commissioner of Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S.Ramesh, inspected the ongoing road and infrastructure development works being undertaken under various government grants within the corporation limits and issued strict instructions to officials to accelerate the works and complete them within the stipulated timelines. Yemalur Junction - Outer Ring Road Junction Comprehensive road development work covering approximately 1.8 km from Yemalur Junction on Doddanekkundi Main Road to Outer Ring Road Junction is being undertaken under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Programme (CMIDP). Currently, de-silting and milling works are in progress. The Commissioner directed the concerned officials to ensure quality execution and timely completion. Amruth Nagarothana



Scheme - White Topping White topping work is being carried out in Doddanekkundi village under the Amruth Nagarothana grant. About 50% of the work has already been completed. The contractor has been instructed to complete the remaining work by March 15. Gopalan School -Goshala Road Under CMIDP funding, road development work is being undertaken for approximately 1.2 km from Gopalan School to Goshala Road in Doddanekkundi village. De-silting and coping concrete works are currently in progress, and instructions have been issued to expedite the work.

### 3,282 SQ. METRES OF RD PROPERTY TAKEN INTO CORPORATION CUSTODY - D.S. RAMESH

Bengaluru: The Commissioner of Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S.Ramesh, stated that properties reserved for the widening of ITPL Main Road under the Revised Master Plan -2015, and relinquished through registered deeds, have been taken into the custody of the City Corporation. The properties have been taken over for road development as per RMP-2015 for the proposed 150-foot-wide road widening project along ITPL Main Road, stretching from Hoodi Circle to Prestige Shantiniketan. In total, approximately 3,282 square metres of RD properties have been taken into possession for the ITPL 150-foot road widening and development project. An enforcement team comprising the concerned Divisional Executive Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Assistant Director (Town Planning), and officials from the



TDR division formally took possession of the RD lands and installed notice boards at the respective sites, the Commissioner stated. He further clarified that the lands reserved for road widening will be utilized strictly

for public purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Master Plan. This step is considered a significant milestone in easing traffic congestion and improving mobility in the ITPL-Whitefield corridor.

### Complete Nayandahalli Junction Comprehensive Development at the Earliest: Dr. Rajendra K.V

Bengaluru : West City Corporation Commissioner Dr. Rajendra K.V instructed officials to expedite and complete the comprehensive development works at Nayandahalli Junction under the West City Corporation jurisdiction. While inspecting various ongoing development works and identified sites within the Rajarajeshwari Nagar Zone today, he stated that development work at Nayandahalli Junction is being undertaken under the Suraksha 75 project. Officials were directed to carry out the works in a manner that would effectively ease traffic congestion at the junction. Junction Development to Reduce Traffic Congestion: He noted that comprehensive development of Nayandahalli Junction, including the removal of existing traffic islands and redesigning the junction to ensure unobstructed vehi-

cle movement, would significantly reduce traffic congestion. Develop Hosakerehalli Service Road: An inspection was conducted at the Hosakerehalli flyover and the adjoining service roads. Officials were instructed to scientifically complete the service road works to ease traffic congestion in the area. They were also directed to immediately rectify the identified "black spot." Site Inspection for Transfer Station: A vacant site near the Indira Canteen at Deepanjali Nagar was inspected for the proposed construction of a transfer station. The Zonal Joint Commissioner and ADLR officials were instructed to conduct a detailed survey and submit a report within two days. Subsequently, another site near Pattanagere, Survey No. 8, was inspected for the construction of a transfer station. The Joint

Commissioner was directed to verify land ownership and extent through a detailed survey and submit a report. Inspection of CRCP Site: The CRCP site near the Malagala Corporation office was inspected, and officials were instructed to verify land records and submit details regarding feasibility for implementation. Following the inspection, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure effective execution of development works. Officials were also directed to coordinate between departments to resolve pending issues promptly and ensure smooth progress of works. During the inspection, Additional Commissioner (Development) Digvijay Bodke, Joint Commissioner Aarthi Anand, Chief Engineers Swayamprabha and Vishwanath, Superintendent Engineer, Executive Engineers, and other concerned officials were present.

### Auction of 81 Properties in Zone-1 & Zone-2 on March 06: Pommala Sunil Kumar

Bengaluru : The Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Sri Pommala Sunil Kumar, stated that auction proceedings will be conducted on Friday, March 6 at 3:00 PM due to pending property tax arrears. In Zone-1 of the Corporation limits, property tax arrears amounting to 1,32,18,421 are pending from 47 properties, and in Zone-2, 62,18,279 is pending from 34 properties. In total, property tax arrears of 1,94,36,700 are pending from 82 properties within the jurisdiction of the North City Corporation. Property tax collected from properties within the Corporation limits is utilized for the development and maintenance of essential civic infrastructure and public amenities. As per the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act 2025, all property owners within the Corporation limits are required to pay property tax every financial year. In cases where property tax has not been paid, action will be taken in accordance with the Property Tax Assessment, Collection and Administration Rules, 2024. As per the relevant laws and regulations, show-cause notices and demand notices have already been issued to the property tax

defaulters. The list of defaulters can be viewed on the Corporation's official website https://bbmp.gov.in, where property tax payments can also be made. Even after providing sufficient opportunities, notices have been served to defaulting property owners through mobile messages, personal visits, and by affixing notices at the respective properties. Despite several opportunities, properties with unpaid property tax dues will be subjected to distress sale (auction) as per the applicable laws and regulations. The list of defaulters is attached. The auction of the listed properties will be conducted on 06/03/2026 at 3:00 PM in the 3rd Floor Hall of Yelahanka Mini Vidhana Soudha near N.E.S., Bengaluru - 560064, in the presence of the Joint Commissioners of Zone-1 and Zone-2. Members of the public and interested bidders are invited to participate in the auction process. If the property owners clear their pending property tax before the auction, the respective property will be removed from the auction list. Property owners are also given an opportunity to submit their objections to the concerned Joint Commissioner's office before the auction process.

### First 10 minutes crucial in heart attack survival say cardiologists

67 GVP Eliminations / Blackspot Beautification Drives - Total 87 Tonnes of Waste Cleared

New Delhi, Mar 4: In the high-stakes world of cardiac emergencies, medical experts have underlined a narrow but life-saving window — the first 10 minutes of a heart attack. According to leading cardiologists, actions taken during this brief period largely determine survival chances and the extent of long-term heart damage. Dr Amit Bhushan Sharma, director and unit head of cardiology at Paras Hospitals, Gurugram, said a heart attack — particularly a STEMI (ST-elevation myocardial infarction) — is a race against time. "The first 10 minutes of a heart attack are critical and can mean the difference between life and death. Most heart attacks occur when a blood clot suddenly blocks a coronary artery, cutting off oxygen supply to the heart muscle. Early recognition of symptoms is essential. Time is muscle — the sooner blood flow is restored, the better the survival and recovery outcomes," he explained. Doctors caution that symptoms are not always dramatic. While popular portrayals often show sudden



chest clutching, real-life warning signs can be subtle. Common symptoms include: Chest pain or pressure that may radiate to the arm, neck, jaw or back Shortness of breath and cold sweats Nausea and lightheadedness Atypical symptoms — more common in women, older adults and diabetics — may include unusual fatigue, mild discomfort resembling indigestion and unexplained anxiety. Dr Venkat Rayudu Nekkanti of Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, warned against

dismissing early signs. "Many people ignore these warning signals and lose precious time. Immediate medical attention is vital. Do not attempt to drive yourself; call emergency services and chew an aspirin if not contraindicated. Early intervention can significantly reduce heart muscle damage and improve survival. Recognising the signs quickly and acting without delay is the strongest defence against irreversible cardiac injury," he said. Experts recommend the following immediate steps:

## 364 stranded passengers arrive in Chennai from Dubai on second Emirates flight

CHENNAI: The second Emirates flight from Dubai carrying 364 passengers stranded due to the closure of Middle East airspace amid escalating tensions arrived in Chennai on Wednesday morning. Emotional scenes were witnessed outside the airport as families and relatives welcomed the passengers with tears after days of uncertainty. The first Emirates flight from Dubai resumed services on Tuesday morning, bringing 217 passengers to Chennai, while the second flight arrived on Wednesday with 364 passengers.

After completing immigration and customs checks, the passengers were received by anxious relatives waiting outside the airport.

Janani from Cuddalore, who arrived on the flight, said she frequently heard explosions and fighter jets while in Dubai.

"We kept hearing explosions and military aircraft flying. Even when we were at the airport yesterday, an attack was launched on the US embassy building. However, these attacks are targeting only US and Israeli facilities and military bases. Civilian areas are not being targeted, so the pub-



lic is not affected," she said.

She added that daily life in Dubai continued normally and that authorities were providing security to tourists while advising people to remain cautious. Saravanakumar from Salem, who was returning from the United

States via Dubai, said he had been stranded at the airport for four days and that the Dubai government and Indian embassy officials provided food and other facilities for passengers.

Another passenger, Peter from Chennai, said the situation in

Dubai appeared calmer than portrayed in television reports and that people were continuing their normal routines.

Darshini from Chennai said the sounds of explosions and military aircraft were frightening, though civilians were not directly affected.

Another passenger, requesting anonymity, said they stayed inside a hotel for safety while waiting for flights to resume.

Flight services between Chennai and several Middle Eastern destinations had been suspended since last Saturday following military escalation in the region. Israel and the United States launched attacks on Iran last week, following which Iran began retaliatory strikes targeting US and Israeli military facilities across the Middle East. As tensions intensified, several countries in the region temporarily closed their airspace, leading to the suspension of flights from Dubai, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Qatar, Kuwait and Muscat. Consequently, no flights from these destinations had landed in Chennai for four days.

## Tamil Nadu: Startup Tamil Nadu launches training initiative for women

CHENNAI: State government-backed women-focused entrepreneurship initiative, Empower Her 1.0, was launched in the city on Tuesday, with 160 aspiring entrepreneurs joining the first batch. The programme, rolled out by the Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission (StartupTN) in collaboration with the TNWeSafe project, seeks to build entrepreneurial capacity among women across the state, with a larger plan to train more than 6,000 women within a year through similar training cycles.

The first batch comprises participants from Chennai, Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, and Tiruvallur selected through an application process. As part of the launch, the cohort began with a two-day bootcamp designed to help participants convert business ideas into structured, actionable plans.

The training curriculum includes sessions on



refining business concepts, developing viable business blueprints, strengthening pitch communication, identifying risks through structured exercises, and improving leadership and decision-making capabilities. Participants are expected to receive continued mentorship support and a structured post-programme roadmap to guide further progression.

The event, held at

Ethiraj College for Women, also saw the signing of a memorandum of understanding to establish a "Campus Circle" at the institution to promote entrepreneurship engagement. A StartupTN incubation Centre was also inaugurated on campus to provide early-stage support, including idea validation, mentoring and guided venture development for students and women entrepreneurs.

## 5 youths meet with accidents while chasing Vijay's convoy; DMK MP says 'not mark of true leadership'

Visuals showed more than 100 cars and two-wheelers following Vijay's convoy from Tiruchy towards Thanjavur, where he was to deliver a speech to party administrators.

CHENNAI: Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay's public meeting in Thanjavur on Wednesday (March 4) made headlines for the wrong reasons yet again, with fans continuing to display risky and unruly behaviour. Three supporters who were trying to follow the actor-politician's convoy in their vehicles rammied into each other, while another, a college student, rammied his bike into a car, and was hospitalised with head injuries. Visuals showed more than 100 cars and two-wheelers following Vijay's convoy from Tiruchy towards Thanjavur, where he was to deliver a speech to party administrators.



dent. Police have registered a case and are investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, three others, who were also following the TVK chief's vehicle, on their respective two-wheelers, were attempting to speed in order to get a closer look at Vijay, according to a Thanthi TV bulletin. However, they ended up colliding with each other. The trio - Kalaimani (26), Muthu (28), and Durgasree (26) - have been admitted to a private hospital in Thanjavur with hand and leg fractures, following the accident. In another development, the father of the

injured college student Vignesh, told reporters that he was not aware that his son had bunked college to attend Vijay's rally in Thanjavur. Neither his son nor his college had informed him, he claimed. 'Sad to see young supporters being misguided': DMK MPDMK MP P Wilson has vehemently criticised Vijay after news of the accidents broke out. "A true leader should guide his followers in the right path," he said in a tweet on social media platform X.

Wilson said it was saddening to see young supporters being misguided and led astray. Listing what

he termed basic responsibilities, Wilson said leaders must instruct supporters not to drive recklessly while following their vehicles, not to ride without helmets, not to create a nuisance on public roads, not to skip school or college, to remain law-abiding citizens, and not to damage public property. He further remarked that enjoying 'mass' adulation without instilling discipline and values among followers was not the mark of true leadership. Expressing concern for the injured youth, the MP said youngsters are the future of Tamil Nadu and wished them a speedy recovery.

## Kamal Haasan-led MNM holds seat-sharing talks with DMK

The party's general secretary A Arunachalam, flanked by senior party colleagues, including former IPS officer AG Mourya, said he had given the details to the DMK committee led by its treasurer T R Baalu on how MNM would be able to strengthen the alliance in the state.

CHENNAI: Actor-Politician Kamal Haasan-led MNM on Wednesday held seat-sharing talks with the DMK for the forthcoming Assembly polls. The party's general secretary A Arunachalam, flanked by senior party colleagues, including former IPS officer A G Mourya, said he had given the details to the DMK committee led by its treasurer T R Baalu on how MNM would be able to strengthen the alliance in the state. "Today, discussions were held between the DMK seat sharing



committee and the panel formed by Makkal Needhi Maiam. The discussion was around how MNM would be able to strength-

en this alliance. We provided some data on that," Arunachalam told reporters at Anna Arivalayam, the DMK headquarters.

The DMK leaders informed us that the details would be presented to Chief Minister MK Stalin, he added. "As per the guidance of our leader (Kamal Haasan), we have submitted our data to them (DMK). We will be able to know about the next course of action during the coming days," he said.

Asked about how many seats was MNM planning to contest, Arunachalam said, "Primary level talks have taken place today. We cannot share those details (seat sharing) in public".

## Namakkal: Egg prices drop 110 paise in 12 days as exports due to West Asia conflict

CHENNAI: Egg procurement prices in Namakkal have fallen by 110 paise per egg over the past 12 days, following successive price cuts announced by the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC).

The procurement price, which was 540 paise earlier, was first reduced to 460 paise earlier this week. On Wednesday, the NECC announced a further cut of 30 paise, bringing the current price down to 430 paise per egg, as per a Maalaimalar report.

This brings the total decline over the past 12 days to 110 paise.

Why has egg demand dropped?

Industry representatives said egg consumption has fallen by nearly 20 per cent due to seasonal and religious factors, including the summer

period, the ongoing Ramzan fasting and the Christian Lent season. In response to the weakening demand, the NECC decided to lower procurement prices to boost sales.

How has the US-Iran conflict affected egg exports?

Adding to the situation, exports to Gulf countries such as Dubai, Qatar and Oman have come to a standstill over the past three days due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia. Around 80 lakh eggs were exported daily from the Namakkal zone. With shipments disrupted, nearly 2.4 crore eggs meant for export have remained unsent in just three days, traders said.

As a result of the export disruption and weaker domestic demand, more than 15 crore eggs have accumulated in cold stor-

age, forcing poultry farmers to hold excess stock.

Why is Namakkal important for India's egg supply?

Namakkal zone, which has over 1,000 poultry farms, produces more than 7 crore eggs daily. These are supplied across Tamil Nadu, to the government's noon meal scheme, and to several other States. Approximately 80 lakh eggs were exported daily to international markets.

The NECC fixes egg procurement prices on a daily basis.

When did egg prices hit record highs?

On November 16 last year, egg procurement prices touched 600 paise for the first time in the history of the poultry industry. Prices later climbed to a record 640 paise, before declining gradually in recent weeks.

## Both DMK and AIADMK conspire against TVK to curb its popularity among people: Vijay

TIRUCHY: Both the DMK and the AIADMK together conspire against the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) to cripple the party activities and the enemies can stop me but not every Vijay and Viji in every household in Tamil Nadu who had already started their aggressive political campaign and so our enemies would certainly fall as the people are with us, said the TVK president Vijay on Wednesday. Addressing the party functionaries at Ayyasampatti branch road near Sengipatti in Thanjavur, Vijay said that the election is for state assembly and why the Chief Minister has claimed the election, between Tamil Nadu and Delhi. But actually, Tamil Nadu is Vijay and Vijay is Tamil Nadu.

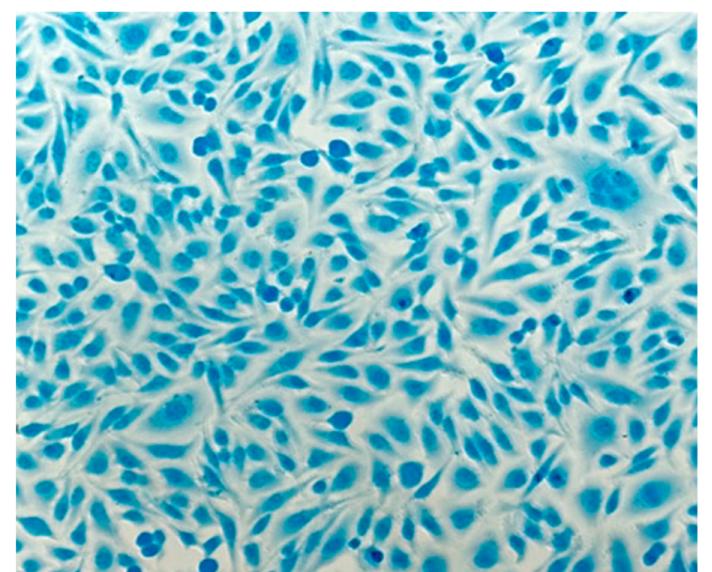
## Women with HIV face higher age-linked cervical cancer risk; study informs WHO screening norms

Geneva, Mar 4: Women living with HIV face a significantly higher risk of cervical cancer and recurrent human papillomavirus (HPV) infections compared to women without HIV, according to a large systematic review that has helped shape global screening recommendations. The review analysed more than 300 studies published between January 1, 2012 and October 13, 2019, focusing on original data related to cervical precancer and cancer outcomes in women living with HIV.

Researchers compiled data from over 72,300 women across seven countries — Burkina Faso, Cameroon, India, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand and the United States — including more than 12,500 women living with HIV.

Using random-effects models, scientists calculated predicted probabilities of cervical cancer screening outcomes by age, HIV status and anti-retroviral therapy status.

Among girls and young women aged 15-19, the pooled predicted probability of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia grade 2 or 3 (CIN2/CIN3) was approximately 6%. However, the risk rose sharply in women living with HIV aged 20-24, reaching about 32.4%. The upward trend continued with age: around 42.1% in women



aged 25-29, 50.3% in 30-34-year-olds, 47% in 35-39-year-olds, 49% in 40-44-year-olds, 58.1% in 45-49-year-olds and 55.3% among women aged 50 and above.

Invasive cervical cancer was found to be relatively uncommon before the age of 30, but researchers observed a clear age-related rise in high-grade precancerous lesions (CIN2 and CIN3) among women living with HIV.

The findings contributed to updated recommen-

dations by the World Health Organization (WHO), advising that cervical cancer screening for women living with HIV should begin at age 25, with repeat screening every three to five years.

In November 2020, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus launched a global strategy aimed at eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem.

The strategy set ambitious 2030 targets: 90% of girls to be fully vaccinated

with the HPV vaccine by age 15, 70% of women to be screened using a high-performance test by ages 35 and again by 45, and 90% of women diagnosed with cervical disease to receive appropriate treatment. Health experts say early screening, HPV vaccination and timely treatment remain crucial pillars in reducing the burden of cervical cancer, particularly among women living with HIV who face disproportionately higher risks.

# UK stock market calms but oil prices rise over fears Iran war may drag on

UK stock markets rose on Wednesday despite continuing energy price volatility over fears the US-Israel war with Iran may drag on. In London, the FTSE 100 index edged up alongside rises on markets in Germany and France, contrasting with Asian shares which fell for a third day. Oil prices increased by more than 1% to about \$83.50 a barrel, as Saudi Arabia's defence ministry reported an attempted drone attack on the Ras Tanura oil refinery - the second time this week it has been targeted. David Miles, committee member at the Office for Budget Responsibility, the government's independent forecaster, said if oil and gas prices remain elevated, it would add to inflation in the UK. However, he said it was important to note the increases were "nowhere near as large" as those seen after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine four years ago. "If prices stayed where they were at the moment, probably we're talking about an impact on the level of prices in the UK maybe of 1% or so," Miles said. Brent crude prices have jumped by 15% since Israel and the US began bombing Iran on



Saturday and Tehran responded by attacking neighbouring Arab countries. At the same time, one of the biggest producers in the world state-run QatarEnergy suspended production of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Gas prices continued to be volatile on Wednesday, hovering around 127p per therm by midday, below Tuesday's high of 170p. Around a fifth of the world's oil and gas usually flows through the Strait of Hormuz - a narrow waterway between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). But traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has almost entirely

halted following Iran's threats to "set fire" to ships. According to Lloyd's List Intelligence, about 200 tankers have been effectively stranded, while insurance premiums - particularly on vessels considered American, British or Israeli - have risen significantly. "On Tuesday, President Donald Trump said the US would provide risk insurance "at a very reasonable price" and use the Navy to protect oil tankers "if necessary". However, experts warned his assurances might not be enough to ease companies' concerns, and the president did not detail how an escort through the

strait would work. Lindsay James, investment strategist at wealth management firm Quilter, told the BBC she believed markets had taken an "optimistic view" of the situation, because in reality Iran was well equipped to repel any ships using the strait. "Shipping companies, insurers, crew members, potentially, are probably going to be reluctant to do this... It's not really feasible to think that that is going to be the solution to reopening energy supplies," she said. "The solution is going to be a peace agreement, and it feels like we're some way away from that." US Treasury Secretary Scott

Bessent said on Wednesday that crude oil markets "are very well supplied". Stock markets have fallen sharply since the US and Israel attacked Iran over the weekend, and many Asian stock markets have been hit particularly hard as the region imports large amounts of energy from the Middle East. South Korea and Thailand stock markets were forced to temporarily halt trading after plunging by more than 8% and triggering so-called circuit breakers, which aim to avoid panic-selling. James Hosie, oil and gas equity analyst at Shore Capital said roughly 80% of Qatar's LNG goes to Asian markets. "Those consumers will now be bidding up the price of LNG cargoes to secure alternative supplies, as is now being seen with the spike in Asian LNG prices," he said. "There obviously is a knock-on effect to the price of gas elsewhere, including the UK, where LNG helps balance demand with supply." Risk to UK inflation and interest rates in the UK, Chancellor Rachel Reeves is set to meet with North Sea energy bosses on Wednesday afternoon to discuss the implications of the Middle East conflict "and work with them to manage this uncertain period".

# WEST ASIA TURMOIL DRAGS STOCK MARKETS, SENSEX TUMBLES 1,123 POINTS

**Mumbai:** Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed more than 1 per cent lower on Wednesday, March 4, in tandem with a weak trend in Asian markets as the conflict in West Asia intensified, driving oil prices higher. Falling for the fourth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,122.66 points or 1.40 per cent to settle at 79,116.19. During the day, it crashed 1,795.65 points or 2.23 per cent to 78,443.20 but recovered some of the losses in the second half of the session. The 50-share NSE Nifty dived 385.20 points or 1.55 per cent to end at 24,460.50, marking its third straight session of losses and logging the lowest closing level in the past six months. During the day, it dropped 560.3 points or 2.25 per cent to 24,305.40. From the Sensex pack, Tata Steel tanked 6.76 per cent, followed by Larsen & Toubro (4.53 per cent). Bajaj Finance, UltraTech Cement, NTPC, InterGlobe Aviation, Bajaj Finserv and Kotak Mahindra Bank were also among the laggards. Bharti Airtel, Infosys and Tech Mahindra were the gainers. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 3.08 per cent to USD 83.91 per barrel. "Global risk sentiment remained fragile



amid ongoing tensions in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which kept oil prices volatile. Indian equities mirrored the broader risk-off environment due to the impact of inflation and the potential for higher CAD. "The continued depreciation of the INR also remains a key concern, while incremental foreign outflows lead to near-term volatility in the market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. The rupee slumped to an all-time low of 92.35 against US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by spiking crude oil prices. The BSE smallcap select index tumbled 2.42 per cent and midcap

select index dropped 2.10 per cent. Among sectoral indices, metal plunged 4 per cent, BSE PSU Bank (3.50 per cent), industrials (3.29 per cent), realty (3.16 per cent), commodities (3.12 per cent), capital goods (2.64 per cent), power (2.59 per cent), services (2.25 per cent) and energy (2.23 per cent). A total of 3,245 stocks declined, while 1,053 advanced and 135 remained unchanged on the BSE. Asian markets ended with deep cuts. South Korea's Kospi tumbled 12 per cent. Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index also ended significantly lower. European markets were trading in positive territory.

# TikTok won't protect DMs with controversial privacy tech, saying it would put users at risk

TikTok will not introduce end-to-end encryption (E2EE) - the controversial privacy feature used by nearly all its rivals - arguing it makes users less safe. E2EE means only the sender and recipient of a direct message can view its contents, making it the most secure form of communication available to the general public. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and X have embraced it because they say their priority is maximising user privacy. But critics have said E2EE makes it harder to stop harmful content spreading online, because it means tech firms and law enforcement have no way of viewing any material sent in direct messages. The situation is made more complex because TikTok has long faced accusations that ties to the Chinese state may put users' data at risk. TikTok has consistently denied this, but earlier this year the social media firm's US operations were separated from its global business on the orders of US lawmakers. TikTok has not commented before on why it chooses not to use E2EE. But



the company has now told the BBC it believes the technology prevents police and safety teams from being able to read direct messages if they needed to. It confirmed its approach in a briefing to the BBC about security at its London office - saying it wanted to protect users, especially young people, from harm. It described this stance as a deliberate decision to set itself apart from rivals. TikTok, which claims to have 30 million monthly users in the UK and more than a billion worldwide, has faced scrutiny over its data protection practices. The social video platform is headquartered in Los Angeles and Singapore, but owned by Chinese tech giant

ByteDance. Social media industry analyst Matt Navarra said TikTok's decision to "swim against the tide" is a savvy one - but comes with "pretty combustible optics". "Grooming and harassment risks are very real in DMs (direct messages) so TikTok now can credibly argue that it's prioritising 'proactive safety' over 'privacy absolutism' which is a pretty powerful soundbite," he told the BBC. But Navarra said the move also "puts TikTok out of step with global privacy expectations" and might reinforce wariness for some about its ownership. E2EE has been hailed by privacy experts as the best way to protect conversations from hackers, corporations and

even repressive authorities trying to snoop on users. Which apps use end-to-end encryption? E2EE is the default technology used in Signal, WhatsApp, Facebook DMs/ Messenger, Apple's iMessage and Google Messages. Instagram is in the process of making it default for DMs X (formerly Twitter) DMs are E2EE-like but some critics argue the platform's system is not as secure as the industry standard. It is offered as a choice on Telegram but not as default. Snapchat uses it for DM pictures and videos. Snap previously said it plans to roll out more widely to include text content too. On Monday, Discord announced that voice and video calls will soon be E2EE as default. End-to-end encryption has been criticised by governments, police forces and child protection charities. They warn it allows criminals to harm users and share illegal content without authorities or platforms being able to investigate the content exchanged. TikTok insists all direct messages are still secured using standard encryption, similar to services like Gmail.

# TARGET TO PULL CEREALS WITH SYNTHETIC COLOURS FROM ITS SHELVES

Target has said it will stop selling breakfast cereals that are made with synthetic colours by the end of May, marking the latest response by a retailer to backlash against ultra-processed foods. The US retail giant's announcement on Friday follows commitments from several food companies to gradually phase out artificial dyes amid pressure from the Trump administration. Artificial dyes have become a key target in a broader crackdown on processed foods under US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr and his Make America Healthy Again movement. But shifting consumer preferences, as shoppers scrutinise ingredients in packaged foods, have encouraged food makers and retailers to reassess products. "We know consumers are increasingly prioritizing healthier lifestyles, and we're moving quickly to evolve our offerings to meet their needs," Cara Sylvester, Target's chief merchandising officer, said in a statement. Other retailers have taken steps in recent months to phase out synthetic colours. Walmart



last year announced plans to stop using synthetic dyes and dozens of other ingredients in its private-label food products by January 2027. Retailers are adjusting the products on their shelves at the same time that food manufacturers are rethinking their ingredients. Political pressure has contributed to commitments from packaged food companies, including General Mills, Kraft Heinz and Conagra Brands, to remove artificial dyes in the years ahead. But Target's deadline to change its cereal offerings - by this spring - puts it ahead of some rivals and

ahead of some food companies' multi-year timelines. As of now, cereals made without synthetic dyes already account for 85% of Target's cereal sales, the company said. Target declined to say whether cereal brands will adjust their formulas to accommodate Target's policy. A spokesperson for General Mills, whose cereal brands include Cheerios and Lucky Charms, said the company remains committed to removing certified synthetic colours from all US cereals by this summer. WK Kellogg, the company behind Froot Loops and Rice

Krispies, did not immediately respond to a BBC inquiry. The food maker has previously said it plans to remove artificial dyes from its cereals by the end of 2027. Last April, Kennedy announced that the US would ban eight commonly used artificial food dyes. The US health secretary and his Make America Healthy Again movement have also called for companies to remove ingredients such as corn syrup, seed oils and artificial dyes from their products, linking them to health problems. Coca-Cola last summer agreed to use real cane sugar in its drinks sold in the US.

# Rupee slumps to all-time low of 92.16 against US dollar

**Mumbai:** The rupee slumped 67 paise to close at an all-time low of 92.16 against US dollar on Wednesday, March 4, weighed down by spiking crude oil prices in the wake of the Iran crisis. Forex traders said the dollar index crossed 98 levels on the risk-off situation prevailing all around the globe amid the US-Iran crisis, further pressuring the rupee. Moreover, massive selling in domestic equity markets and withdrawal of foreign funds further dragged the Indian currency down, they said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 92.05 and touched an all-time intraday low of 92.35 against the greenback. The currency ended the session at an all-time low of 92.16 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a steep loss of 67 paise from the previous closing level. On Monday, March 2, the rupee saw a steep loss of 41 paise to settle at 91.49 against the US dollar. The



forex Market was closed on Tuesday on account of Holi. "A sharp escalation in Middle East conflict and the consequent spike in oil prices have reduced investor risk appetite. Higher oil prices increase inflation concerns and fiscal pressure on India (a major oil importer), leading to selling in bonds and rising yields," Anil Kumar Bhansali, head of treasury and executive director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six cur-

rencies, was trading 0.23 per cent lower at 98.82. "The dollar index crossed 98 levels comfortably on the risk-off situation prevailing all around the globe with stocks and bond markets getting hit badly, along with gold and silver, with predominance of the dollar, Bhansali said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was up 1.29 per cent at 82.46 per barrel in futures trade, after the US attacks on Iran and Iran's retaliatory measures as threats to energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz continued to underpin disruption worries.

# Remote work, offices shut: Tech giants scramble to respond as Middle East tensions escalate

Some of the world's largest companies are moving to protect employees and facilities in the Middle East during the US-Israel war with Iran. Amazon, Google, Snap and Nvidia are among the firms to have implemented emergency protocols as the safety of thousands of their workers across the region is brought into sharp focus. The conflict has also raised fears of global tech shortages, but chip leader Nvidia says it is "not currently experiencing any supply chain disruptions". Francisco Jeronimo, a specialist covering the Middle Eastern and European markets for data firm IDC, said the escalation raised "red flags" for technology companies which have committed "billions of dollars" to the region. Since the US-Israeli attacks began on Saturday, Iran has launched a series of strikes on US bases and its allies across the region. Images authenticated by BBC Verify show the US consulate building in Dubai in flames after being hit by a drone on



Tuesday evening. Nvidia said in a statement it was keeping a close watch on its operational footprint, but would not confirm reports that it had temporarily shut its Dubai office. The company, best known for making computer chips for AI companies, said it was "managing our supply chain to address changing conditions". A spokesperson for the company said: "regarding our operations in Israel

and the Middle East, our primary concern is for the safety of our employees, their families, and all those affected during this difficult time". Amazon, meanwhile, has begun an assessment of its regional sites, which spans corporate offices, fulfilment centres, delivery stations, and quick commerce outlets. "We are adjusting operations in response to the evolving situation, including temporary

pauses where necessary," an Amazon spokesperson confirmed, noting that the safety of employees and partners is the company's "top priority". On Monday Amazon Web Services (AWS) confirmed drones hit three of its facilities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain. The incidents happened on Sunday morning, with the cloud computing business saying at the time that "objects" had hit a

data centre in the UAE, creating "sparks and fire". Also on Sunday, AWS said it was investigating power and connectivity issues at a facility in Bahrain. Amazon has also asked its corporate workforce in the region to work remotely - a move mirrored by social media company Snap. Snap told the BBC that it is urging staff to follow advice from both local authorities and foreign embassies, including specific instructions for shelter-in-place orders and departure recommendations. Google said it has activated security and safety protocols and remains in contact with its Middle East teams. Like its industry peers, the search giant is advising staff to rely on official government channels as the conflict continues. For now, tech's biggest players are adopting a "wait and see" attitude as the situation unfolds. Francisco Jeronimo said that while it was likely we would see "companies slow or temporarily pause new investments" to see how the situation evolves.

# US submarine sinks Iranian warship with torpedo in Indian Ocean, as Pentagon releases footage of strike

The bodies of 80 people on board the Iranian ship that was sunk in the Indian Ocean have been found, Defence Ministry Secretary Air Vice Marshal Sampath Thuyyakontha tells BBC Sinhala. US allies hoping for a quick end to the war with Iran will be dismayed by the latest update on Operation Epic Fury from senior administration and military officials. The war is "far from over," Gen Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters on Wednesday at a briefing alongside Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. Caine didn't lay out a specific timeline for exactly how long the military campaign might continue. But he also said that the US planned to strike "progressively deeper into Iranian territory." The comments followed statements from President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier this week that the US has not delivered its hardest blow to the Iranian regime. The president and



other advisers have offered a wide range of reasons for attacking Iran. But they have consistently signaled the war won't be short, and their updates this week suggest nothing has changed. What the administration hasn't addressed is how a protracted conflict will impact the rest of the region — and its potential political fallout back home. Polls show the war is broadly unpopular in the US. The longer it continues, the more

damaging it might be to the White House and Republicans heading into the midterm elections. Ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is continuing to reduce, with many gas and oil tankers reluctant to risk coming under Iranian attack while transiting the vital waterway. Claire Jungman, from energy intelligence company Vortexa, says an average of 24 tankers a day transited the waterway between January and the war

breaking out. Maritime intelligence firm Kpler has told BBC Verify that vessel movements through the strait dropped by around 90% between 2 and 3 March, compared with the average for 21 to 27 Feb. The sharp decline comes as major maritime insurers have pulled back or cancelled the war-risk coverage for ships operating in the Gulf, making passage through the narrow strait — which carries roughly a fifth of the

world's traded oil — significantly more hazardous. In the past 24 hours, BBC Verify has identified at least two cargo vessels whose tracking data indicates they travelled east to west through the Strait of Hormuz into the Gulf. Recently, the signal of onboard trackers for a number of vessels — including one flagged to India — have disappeared or have shown evidence of being jammed. Hegseth said the US military had sunk "an Iranian warship" in the Indian Ocean, with a torpedo. He didn't name the ship, but it follows earlier confirmation from the Sri Lankan navy that it rescued 32 people after a distress call from the Iranian IRIS Dena, with around 140 people on board currently missing. The Iranian regime "are toast", declared Hegseth, who said that the US was "winning, decisively, devastatingly and without mercy" He suggested more military action was imminent, stating that "more and larger waves are coming" — this was echoed by Caine

who announced that the military would "now begin to expand inland, striking progressively deeper into Iranian territory" Hegseth also says Iran tried "to kill" Donald Trump, telling reporters that the US "hunted down and killed" the "leader of the unit who attempted to assassinate" the president. Asked about the bombing of a girls school in Minab in Iran, Hegseth said that the US was "investigating" and refused to be drawn on if there was intelligence about which country's munition had hit the school. HMS Dragon, a UK warship, is expected to sail from Portsmouth next week. It has just come out of maintenance and was earmarked to carry out a different mission before yesterday's decision to send her to the eastern Mediterranean. Dragon is currently being loaded with ammunition in Portsmouth but is not expected to sail towards Cyprus this week. Two Royal Navy Wildcat helicopters.

## South Africa's long-serving former defence minister and former Robben Island prisoner dies



South Africa's former defence minister and anti-apartheid campaigner Mosisoa Lekota has died at the age of 77. He played a key role in the struggle against the racist system of apartheid and was imprisoned on Robben Island alongside former President Nelson Mandela. Lekota went on to become chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC) but broke away to form a rival party, the Congress of the People (Cope), citing allegations of corruption in the party which has led South Africa since 1994. He died after a "period of illness", Cope said in a statement. President Cyril

Ramaphosa paid tribute to the "freedom fighter and a servant of the people". "His life was one of resilience, courage, and steadfast belief in justice," Ramaphosa said in a statement. Lekota was one of South Africa's longest-serving ministers, heading the defence ministry for a decade between 1998-2008. He also served as the chairperson of the ANC for a decade and was the first premier of the newly-established Free State province after 1994, when South Africa entered the democratic era. Lekota, nicknamed "Terror" due to his prowess on the football field, left the ANC in 2008 shortly after former South African President Thabo Mbeki was removed by the party. Among his reasons for leaving was disillusionment with how the ANC was governing and mounting allegations of corruption against some of its senior leaders. He founded Cope in 2008 alongside another former ANC leader Mbhazima Shilowa.

## Spain's Pedro Sánchez hits back at Trump threat to sever trade saying 'no to war'



Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has delivered a strong rebuttal to US President Donald Trump's threat to end trade with Spain by restating his opposition to war and what he called the "breakdown of international law". In a 10-minute televised address, Sánchez reflected on the wars in Ukraine and Gaza as well as the Iraq War more than 20 years ago and said the Spanish government's position could be summed up as "no to war". Trump threatened to impose a full trade embargo on Spain in response to Madrid's refusal to allow the US to use the jointly-run bases at Morón and Rota for strikes on Iran. "Spain has been terrible," Trump said during a meeting with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday. "We're going to cut off all trade with Spain. We don't want anything to do with Spain," he added. Merz said later he had told Trump very clearly that he could not conclude a separate trade agreement with Germany or all of Europe but not with Spain. In response to the US economic threat, the Élysée Palace said French President

Emmanuel Macron had conveyed his "solidarity" with Spain, during a phone conversation with Sánchez on Wednesday. European Council President António Costa also said he had spoken to the Spanish leader "to express the EU's full solidarity". Trump accused Spain on Tuesday of being a "terrible partner" in Nato for failing to increase its defence budget in line with a target of 5% of economic output (GDP). Earlier this year Sánchez drew Trump's anger by speaking out against the US military incursion into Venezuela. In his televised address from the prime minister's Madrid residence at La Moncloa on Wednesday, Sánchez said the government was studying economic measures to counter the impact of the conflict on Spaniards, although he avoided directly referring to Trump's trade threat. "The question is not if we are on the side of the ayatollahs — nobody is. The question is whether we are in favour of peace and international legality." "You cannot answer one illegality with another, because that is how the great catastrophes of humanity begin."

## NIGERIAN DOCTORS SUSPENDED OVER DEATH OF ADICHIE'S SON



Nigeria's medical council has provisionally suspended the director of a private hospital and two other doctors following the death of the 21-month-old son of renowned author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Nkanu Adichie-Esege, one of twins, died on 7 January after complications arose during preparatory medical procedures at Euracare Hospital in Lagos. The Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) investigation panel established a prima facie case of

medical negligence against Euracare and Atlantis Hospital over the child's management. The three doctors have all been suspended from practising medicine pending the determination of their cases by a disciplinary tribunal. Dr Munir Bature, publicity secretary for the Nigeria Medical Association, confirmed the suspensions to the BBC. "What will ultimately happen to those affected will be determined after another panel sits on their case," he said. He added that they could permanently lose their licences. The doctors have not commented. Butare encouraged Nigerians to report any perceived wrongdoing by medical personnel so the council could intervene.

## Greek court upholds criminal organisation verdict on neo-Nazi Golden Dawn

An appeal court in Athens has upheld the 2020 convictions of 42 defendants linked to the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party. Founder Nikos Mihaloliakos and six other leading Golden Dawn officials were found guilty of "belonging to and running a criminal organisation" under the guise of a political party. Another 24 defendants, who included 11 former MPs, were found guilty of joining the organisation. Further convictions were upheld for the 2013 murder of left-wing musician and activist Pavlos Fyssas and the savage beating of a group of Egyptian fishermen in Athens. The defendants face sentences of up to 15 years in prison, although only two of the 42 involved



in the appeal were in court to hear the judges deliver their verdict. A crowd of more than 200 gathered outside the tribunal and welcomed the guilty verdicts. The appeals trial started in 2022 and last December prosecutor Kyriaki Stefanatou called on the court to uphold the original guilty verdicts. Golden Dawn, she said, was a "gen-

uine child of Nazi ideology and this is the motivation for their actions." Nazi ideology is the motivation for the criminal action that is carried out against political dissidents and immigrants," Stefanatou added. Golden Dawn entered the Greek parliament in 2012 at the height of Greece's economic crisis, when it came third in the election with 18

MPs elected. It took advantage of growing public discontent fuelled by corruption and mismanagement by the established political parties, as well as drastic cuts to spending enforced by international lenders and a rise in immigration to the EU. In 2013, MP Ilias Panagiotaros told the BBC that Greek society was "ready... [for] a new type of civil war. On one side will be nationalists like us, and Greeks who want our country to be as it used to be. On the other will be illegal immigrants and anarchists." Golden Dawn's popularity soon waned after Fyssas' murder, for which some 22 members were arrested, including six MPs and party leader Nikos Mihaloliakos.

## US AND ECUADOR FORCES LAUNCH OPERATION TO FIGHT DRUG TRAFFICKING

Ecuadorean and US forces have launched operations against what it said were designated terrorist organisations in the South American country, the US military's Southern Command said on Tuesday. The Southern Command said the action was aimed at tackling illicit drug trafficking, but did not provide more details in a statement on X. The announcement comes a day after Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa said the US was among "regional allies" taking part in a "new phase" of Ecuador's war on the drug cartels. Noboa says



around 70% of the world's cocaine now flows through Ecuador's huge ports, making it a lucrative location for drug-trafficking gangs. It also neighbours Colombia and Peru, the world's two largest producers of cocaine. The latest opera-

tions come four months after Ecuadoreans dashed US hopes of expanding its presence in the eastern Pacific region by voting against allowing the return of foreign military bases in the country. The referendum result was a blow to Noboa, a close ally of US President Donald Trump, who is trying to fight organised crime and reduce soaring violence. In recent years, the country has become one of the world's biggest drug-trafficking hotspots. On Monday, Noboa held talks in Quito with US Southern Command chief Francis Donovan and Mark Schafer, head of US Special Operations in Central and South America and the Caribbean. During the meeting, they discussed plans for information sharing and operational coordination at airports and seaports, Noboa's office said in a statement.

## What to know about the 'two sessions', China's biggest political meeting



The stage is set for China's biggest political gathering — carefully choreographed annual meetings of the political advisory body and the rubber-stamp national legislature. The "two sessions", which started on Wednesday and typically run for one to two weeks, signal the priorities of the world's second-largest economy. Observers will be watching if China aims for ambitious growth targets despite struggling to lift domestic consumption, and will pore over its new Five Year Plan to understand Xi Jinping's roadmap for the country. Looming over the event are the recent purges of high-level military officials who have been dismissed as part of Xi's long-running anti-corruption campaign. What are the 'two sessions'? The term refers to two different meetings. The first is that of the advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which begins on Wednesday. It's 2,000-plus members are drawn from various sectors, and not just the Communist Party. Its discussions offer insight into key policy debates, but it has no legislative power. That technically

rests with the National People's Congress or NPC, which will convene on Thursday. Although its extensive authority includes making laws, amending the constitution and approving state budgets, it functions as little more than a rubber-stamp parliament, approving decisions made behind closed doors by the Communist Party. Established in 1954, the NPC meets only once a year. Some 3,000 delegates from all provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities and branches of the government, including the armed forces, will be in Beijing to attend the NPC. Most of them are party members or government officials, and they each hold office for a term of five years. Real influence lies within a smaller standing committee elected from congress delegates, which meets every couple of months. The current standing committee comprises 175 members and is chaired by Zhao Leji, who is also part of the Communist Party's politburo standing committee — China's equivalent of a cabinet. But that does not mean it is not important to watch for those who want to understand where China is heading.

## MP says husband has not broken law, after arrests over China spying

Scottish Labour MP Joani Reid has said "I am not part of my husband's business activities" after three men were arrested on suspicion of spying for China along. Reid said she has "never seen anything" to make her suspect her spouse, David Taylor, has broken any law. Earlier, the Metropolitan Police said three men, aged 39, 43 and 68, were arrested in London and Wales as part of a counter-terrorism policing investigation under the National Security Act. There is no "imminent or direct threat to the public", the Met added, and all three suspects are being held in custody. Reid, who represents East Kilbride and Strathaven, said in a state-



ment: "I have never seen anything to make me suspect my husband has broken any law. I am not part of my husband's business activities and neither I nor my children are part of this investigation, and we should not be treated by media organisations as though we are." "Above all I expect media organisations

to respect my children's privacy." Reid added that she had never been to China nor had she ever spoken on any China-related matters in the House of Commons. "I have never asked a question on China-related matters. As far as I am aware I have never met any Chinese businesswhilst I have been an MP, any Chinese diplomats

or government employees, nor raised any concern with ministers or anyone else on behalf of, even coincidentally, Chinese interests. "I am a social democrat who believes in freedom of expression, free trade unions and free elections. I am not any sort of admirer or apologist for the Chinese Communist party's dictatorship." The Met Police said the 39-year-old man was arrested at an address in London; while the 68-year-old man was arrested in Powys, Wales and the 43-year-old man was arrested in Pontyclun, Wales. All three have been detained under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and remain in police custody, the Met added.

## Pregnant women's brains shed grey matter to prime them for motherhood, study suggests

"Baby brain" is a cliché long used to describe women becoming forgetful and feeling less capable during pregnancy. But a recent study — the largest to date — indicates that pregnancy has a profound structural impact on brains and offers new clues into the neurological changes in mums-to-be. It suggests that grey matter — the nerve-rich part of the brain involved in processing information, emotions and empathy — decreases by an average of nearly 5% during pregnancy. But rather than being a cause for concern, these changes may be beneficial when it comes to caring for newborns, say scientists working on the project in Spain. One of the dozens of women, now a new

mum, who took part in the study told us she welcomed the findings and was "tired of pregnant women being infantilised". "Rather than becoming dumber, we are becoming more specialised for the job," said Tania Esparza. The BBC was given exclusive access to the Be Mother project and those who have been taking part in it. The brains of 127 pregnant women were scanned — before, during and after pregnancy — and compared to scans from a smaller number of women who were not expecting. The greater the changes in the brain, the more likely women were to say they were relating to, and bonding well, with their babies — the team of scientists found.



"IT WAS SCARY, HAPPY TO BE BACK HOME"

## PV Sindhu On Two Days Of Horror In Dubai

In her glorious career, during which she became one of the most elite athletes in the world, PV Sindhu has seen and overcome many challenges. We are talking about a champion who has won two Olympic medals and five World Championship medals. Yet none of those experiences could prepare the 30-year-old badminton star for what she went through in the last 72 hours. Sindhu was travelling to Birmingham for the prestigious All England Championships, which started on Tuesday, with a

layover in Dubai. But the two-time Olympic medallist found herself stranded at Dubai Airport amid a major flight disruption triggered by the escalating conflict in the Middle East. What followed was a "scary" experience, as Sindhu described it. She returned home on Tuesday and spoke to NDTV about the ordeal. "I'm happy that I'm back home safe. I mean, it was scary, it was terrifying... it's an experience nobody expects - that you get stuck in a war and the airspace suddenly getting closed. I was just in transit at Dubai and all of a sudden, all flights were suspended," Sindhu said in the exclusive interview with NDTV's Padmaja Joshi. Sindhu landed in Dubai on February 28, and almost immediately, the airspace was shut. "When we landed on the 28th at around 1 p.m.,

within minutes they told us the airspace was shut. Then they said flights were delayed, which sounded normal. But soon after, they told us all flights were suspended because of what was happening... it was confusing. A few hours earlier, some of my colleagues flying to Birmingham had also transited through Dubai and reached safely. So I kept wondering what had changed so drastically for us to be stuck," Sindhu said. Airport authorities moved passengers to transit hotels, but thousands of people were stranded. "It was very crowded. At first, there was no place, and they were not allowing anyone to step out because immigration was shut. We waited for hours at the airport. Eventually, we were moved to a hotel." But that wasn't the end of the ordeal.

## HEATED DONCIC INTERACTION 'VERY NORMAL' - REDICK

Los Angeles Lakers coach JJ Redick says he and star player Luka Doncic have a "great relationship" despite a heated exchange between the pair that went viral. The Lakers were on a three-game losing streak going into Saturday's game at the Golden State Warriors but were leading comfortably when Doncic was replaced late in the first quarter. The Slovenian, 27, tried to avoid a fist bump from Redick as he walked to his seat on the bench, and the Lakers coach then followed Doncic down the sideline. The pair exchanged words as Doncic took his seat before Redick turned to walk back towards half court. As he did, Doncic got back to his feet and said more towards Redick while his team-mate Jarred Vanderbilt stood up, ostensibly to clap encouragement for the Lakers but also putting a barrier in front of Doncic, who sat back down moments later. Speaking before Tuesday's 110-101 win over the New Orleans Pelicans, Redick said: "I don't know why it went viral. It felt very normal to me. I didn't think



much of it at the time, to be honest with you. I don't think Luka did either." Doncic had claimed four points and three assists by that point, and returned on Saturday to finish with a game-high 26 points. The six-time All-Star scored another game-high 27 points as the Lakers won a third straight game on Tuesday to stay sixth in the Western Conference standings. "He and I have a great relationship," Redick added. "I really value our relationship. And I think those things happen. Not every game, but they happen very frequently. It's a competition. And

there's two guys here who, in this case, are trying to win a basketball game and be on the same page about stuff." The Western Conference leaders Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Chicago Bulls 116-108 on Tuesday while second-placed San Antonio Spurs thumped the Philadelphia 76ers 131-91. The Eastern Conference-leading Detroit Pistons suffered a 113-109 loss at the Cleveland Cavaliers, for whom Jaylon Tyson scored 22 points and new signing James Harden added 18, while the third-placed New York Knicks took advantage with a 111-95 win at the Toronto Raptors.

"CALLED ME THE 'C' WORD":

## Podcaster On Spat With Stuart MacGill Over Mention Of David Warner's Wife

Former Australia spinner Stuart MacGill wasn't happy seeing a 2018 controversy involving David Warner's wife, Candice being brought up again during a podcast. MacGill didn't hold back his frustration and decided to lash out at the podcaster while the video was being shot. The shoot ended abruptly as the host, Andrew Menner's Mencil decided to walk out. He has now opened up on the controversy, claiming that MacGill used even worse words for him off the camera when the shoot was stopped. "Show ends and then he goes off some more. Yells at me, calls me the 'C' word. Storm out the door, and I just say I'm going to



release the episode," Mencil said on the incident. "There's no way I'm going to sit on this apart from the fact that he was yelling at me to release the episode. And you think the way he was carrying on, he'd be begging me not to release it." "Then he was saying for me to bleep

out Sonny Bill Williams' name because no one can hear the ex-footballer's name. What an absolute muppet he is. "So he leaves, I release it and look, I was fine. I don't mind being called those things. I'm no shrinking violet." The confrontation escalated when the discus-

sion shifted towards the sexist treatment Candice endured during the 2018 tour of South Africa. While Mencil intended to criticise the crowd's behaviour as "low," MacGill took immediate offence, labelling the host a "f\*\*\*ing idiot" and "pig-headed" for revisiting the details. MacGill, who maintains a close personal friendship with the Warners, allegedly threatened to "jump across the mic" and warned the host that he would refuse to work with him again if the segment were edited out. Despite the explosive nature of the fallout, the former leg-spinner has yet to offer a public apology or a formal statement regarding his conduct.

## Jones' 'humbling' journey from the pinnacle to boxing

After bidding an emotional farewell to a sport that was her whole life, Jade Jones was in the perfect position to retire having reached the pinnacle in taekwondo. But taking the easy option quite simply isn't in the DNA of the Flint native - who is pursuing a boxing career less than a year after losing in the first round at the 2024 Olympics. "It was difficult because I am taekwondo, that's made my life and I'll forever be grateful to the sport," she said. "I still absolutely love taekwondo, I still train and throw a few kicks. "The way the Olympics went... I needed a fresh start. "Most people would have retired whereas I've still got the fire in my belly and I'm craving the challenge." Jones, 32, won Olympic gold at the 2012 Olympics in London and again in Rio de Janeiro four



years later. But having reached the ultimate high in one sport, Jones is now bidding to go from bottom to top in a whole new discipline. She takes on Egypt Criss - daughter of hip-hop stars Anthony 'Treach' Criss from Naughty by Nature and Sandra 'Pepe' Denton from Salt-N-Pepa - in her maiden boxing bout in Derby on 7

March, a crossover Jones herself labelled "crazy". Having trained for little more than a year, Jones swiftly became aware of the unforgiving nature of the sport. "I think one of the hardest challenges that people don't realise is going from being at the top of one sport and going to the complete bottom of another sport. It's very hum-

bling," Jones told BBC Sport Wales. "I remember first walking into this gym, I'd never thrown a punch before. "I said I was going to be a boxer and everyone laughed at me and looked at me as though I was crazy." Training under the guidance of former professional boxer Stephen 'Swifty' Smith at Liverpool's iconic 4 Corners Gym, Jones has made huge strides ahead of her boxing debut. "Bit by bit, the coaches have seen how quickly I've improved," she said. "I've been putting in the work, it's still only a short time to learn a completely new sport, but I learn really fast and I'm just excited to see the progress and how it's going to transition into the ring. "Swifty and the other Smith brothers have been amazing with me, and everybody here at 4 Corners Gym.

## TOP-RANKED TENNIS PLAYER ARYNA SABALENKA ANNOUNCES ENGAGEMENT TO GEORGIOS FRANGULIS



Top-ranked tennis player Aryna Sabalenka has announced her engagement to Brazilian businessman Georgios Frangulis. Sabalenka posted a video of the proposal on Instagram, accompanied with the words "You & me, forever" along with a ring and heart emoji. The news quickly drew congratulations from fellow tennis players, including Carlos Alcaraz, Novak Djokovic, and Amanda Anisimova, a possible opponent for Sabalenka in the quarter-finals at the forthcoming Indian Wells tournament in the Southern California desert. Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com The tournament that opens on Wednesday will be Sabalenka's first since she reached the final at the Australian Open, where she lost to Elena Rybakina

6-4, 4-6, 6-4 on Jan 31. World number one Aryna Sabalenka on Tuesday voiced her support for a proposal to make women's matches best-of-five sets during the later stages of Grand Slam tournaments. Speaking ahead of this week's ATP-WTA tournament in Indian Wells, the hard-hitting Sabalenka said she believed switching to five sets would benefit her game. "Yeah, let's do that," the four-time Grand Slam singles champion said when asked about the idea, which was floated by incoming US Tennis Association chief Craig Tiley at the Australian Open earlier this year. "I feel like I would have probably more Grand Slams," Sabalenka added. "Physically I'm really strong, and I'm pretty confident that my body can handle that. So let's do it."



MS Dhoni Fined For Violating Traffic Norm

## WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP:

## GRITTY INDIA CONCEDE GOAL IN INJURY TIME TO GO DOWN TO VIETNAM

A gritty India conceded a goal in the injury stoppage time to go down fighting against higher-ranked Vietnam 1-2 in their Women's AFC Asian Cup opening match on Wednesday. Debutant Sanfida Nongrum, a second half substitute, equalised in the 65th minute after Vietnam took the lead in the 30th minute through Ngan Thi Van Su. India were agonisingly close to grab one point from the match but conceded a goal in the fourth minute of second half added time with Ngan Thi Van Su (94th) scoring her second of the match. It was a heart-break for the Indians under new head coach Amelia Valverde from Costa Rica as there was just three minutes left in the match after seven minutes added for injury



stoppage. Despite the loss, India, lowest ranked in Group C at 67th, will hold their heads high against the 36th-ranked Vietnam, who though dominated throughout. Vietnam had made it to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup and had reached quarterfinals in the previous edition of the Asian Cup in 2022. Goalkeeper Panthoi Chanu was outstanding

under the bar, making as many as five saves, while captain Sweetie Devi Ngambam marshalled the Indian backline with aplomb. Forward Manisha Kalyan, who currently plies her trade in a top tier league in Peru, was a constant threat for the Vietnamese defence. Early in the second half, Vietnam thought they had scored but the goal was disal-

lowed by the Video Assistant Referee, ruling for a handball instead on the part of an attacker during a goal mouth melee. India were lacklustre in the first half, as they could not hold ball for a considerable period of time to construct attacking moves. They also lost possession easily. Vietnamese midfielder Nguyen Thi Bich Thu was the main threat for India and her shot in the 14th minute struck the crossbar. Next minute, goalkeeper Panthoi was called into action as she parried a Cu Thi Huynh Nhu shot from close range. She made another save in the 17th minute. Vietnam were, however, not to be denied in the half-hour mark as Ngan Thi Van Su sent a curling shot from the left side of the box to beat Panthoi after Nguyen Thi Bich Thu did the hard work. <

## Pressure On Lando Norris As Formula One Enters New Era In Melbourne



A new era in Formula One revs up this week with Lando Norris starting his world title defence and Cadillac making their debut at a wide-open Australian Grand Prix that will test the impact of sweeping rule changes. McLaren ace Norris began his drive to a maiden Formula One crown last year with victory at Melbourne's full-throttle Albert Park from pole, edging Red Bull's Max Verstappen. It was an incident-packed race in the rain with the safety car repeatedly forced into action after a slew of crashes on the wet circuit. Better weather is forecast this time but there will be as many, if not more, variables to deal with after a dramatic overhaul to both engine and chassis regulations. With hybrid power units now roughly 50 per cent thermal and 50 per cent electric, there is more focus

on battery management, prompting Max Verstappen to say driving felt like "Formula E on steroids". The uncertainty of what to expect makes Melbourne one of the most anticipated races in years as drivers grapple with finding maximum performance in what are vastly different cars. It also sees the grid expand from 20 cars to 22 with the debut of an 11th team in Cadillac, whose hopes rest on experienced pair Valtteri Bottas and Sergio Perez. Battery tests drivers Britain's Norris, who narrowly clinched the championship at the season finale in Abu Dhabi in December from Australian teammate Oscar Piastri, has reservations about the new cars "A lot of the driving is focused on just trying to get the battery to work properly and less focused on how can you as a driver get everything out of the car," he said.

**'SARASWATHY' IS A GRIPPING THRILLER THAT WILL CONNECT WITH EVERYONE**

### The film will be very engaging: Producer Pooja Sarath Kumar

Varalakshmi Sarathkumar, who is entertaining with versatile roles, is directing her own film 'Saraswathy', which is being produced by her sister Pooja Sarathkumar under the banner of Dosa Diaries. This film, which is being made as a high-concept thriller, has Varalakshmi Sarathkumar playing the lead role. The trailer that has already been released has increased the curiosity among the audience. The film will be released in theatres on March 6. On this occasion, producer Pooja Sarathkumar shared the details of the film in a press conference.



**WHAT WILL SARASWATHY BE LIKE?**  
Saraswathy is a one-package firecracker with good thrilling elements and twists. You all will enjoy it a lot. Let's make the film as gripping as possible for a two-hour film.

**WHAT ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF PRIYAMANI?**  
I shouldn't reveal too much about that character right now. Varalakshmi designed that character with a good vision. Priyamani is a perfect fit for that character. She gave a very good performance.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR BANNER DOSHA DIARIES?**

When we thought of giving the banner a good name, we thought that if my name had a connection with food, it would connect everyone. Dosa is Varalakshmi's favorite. Everyone liked the idea of Dosa Diaries.

**WERE YOU INTERESTED IN PRODUCTION FROM THE START?**

I am interested in production. I have done many music shows. Rahman's shows are also among them.

Later I worked for Radar for a few years. I like being behind the camera. I am not really good at acting.

**WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE MOVIE SARASWATHY?**

This is a crime thriller. It has a very good social message. There is a dialogue in this trailer that says that not every girl is like Saraswathy, but when the time comes, she will become like Kali.

### "THE ENTIRE FAMILY SHOULD COME TOGETHER AND ENJOY SAAMPRA DAYINI SUPPINI SUDDHAPUSANI IN THEATRES": GUESTS AT THE PRE-RELEASE EVENT

After classic entertainers like Missamma, Adirindaya Chandram, and Tata Birla Madhyalo Laila, the film Saampradayini Suppini Suddhapusani brings back the pair Shivaji and Laya. Following the successes of Little Hearts and Raju Weds Rambai, noted producers Bunny Vaas and Vamsi Nandipati are releasing this film in association with ETV Win. The recently released trailer has significantly raised expectations for the movie. Presented by Ricky under the banner of Sri Shivaji Productions in association with ETV Win, the film is produced by hero Shivaji himself and directed by Sudheer Sriram. The crime-comedy family thriller is set to hit theatres on March 6. The pre-release event was held grandly, with comedy legend Brahmanandam and Bandla Ganesh attending as chief guests. Brahmanandam said, "Shivaji is like a younger brother and a very dear person to me. The young team has made a wonderful film together. Ali invited me to attend Shivaji's film function, and I came immediately without a second thought. I have acted with Shivaji before and also been part of films he produced. It feels exciting to participate in such a festive event. Many talented comedians have acted in this film. It is rare to see so many talented artists together in one movie, and this film has



achieved that. I believe this movie, filled with a festive vibe, will entertain everyone with laughter. I wish the film great success and hope Shivaji succeeds as a producer." Bandla Ganesh said, "ETV Win has been encouraging many new talents. Shivaji is like a soul brother to me. I always wish the best for him. When I first heard the film was going to OTT, I was disappointed. I called Sai and Nithin and asked them to release it in theatres. With Anil Ravipudi's suggestion, the film is coming to theatres, which makes me happy. I hope this film becomes a super hit. I also wish ETV Win continues to encourage new talent." ETV Win Head Sai Krishna said, "Shivaji and Laya have

made this film with great responsibility and love. We want everyone to come with their families. To make it more accessible to family audiences, we have announced a Family Ticket Combo. In single-screen theatres, four tickets and one large popcorn will be available for ₹799. I request everyone to make use of this offer." Hero Shivaji said, "Whenever a film comes from ETV Win, there is curiosity among the audience. The same interest is seen for Saampradayini Suppini Suddhapusani. With the intention that the film should not become distant from the audience, ETV Win has announced

this family package for theatre viewing. The offer includes four tickets and popcorn for ₹499 in single screens and four tickets with a big popcorn for ₹799 in multiplexes. This offer is designed keeping families and friends in mind, helping the film reach more people. I can confidently say this movie will not disappoint the audience. Families can happily enjoy this film together in theatres. I thank Sai, Nithin, and Bapineedu from ETV Win. I am very happy that Brahmanandam garu attended the event. Bandla Ganesh garu came immediately when invited. Ali treated it like his own film. Everyone supported me, and that's why we achieved such a good output today.

My thanks to all." Producer Vamsi Nandipati said, "We are happy to release Shivaji garu's film. Seeing this event has given us great energy. The film has good fun and a crime element. The hero plays a common man, a role that will connect with everyone. With this film's success, Shivaji's hard work will bear fruit." ETV Win's Nithin Chakravarthy said, "This event is filled with superheroes. Whenever people face difficulties, comedians like Brahmanandam and Ali help them forget their worries with laughter. It feels like Sankranti is arriving again in March. We wish to continue this journey with Shivaji. There is no one who dislikes comedy."

### AYESHA KHAN OPENS UP ON BODY SHAMING AND GETTING RAPE THREATS

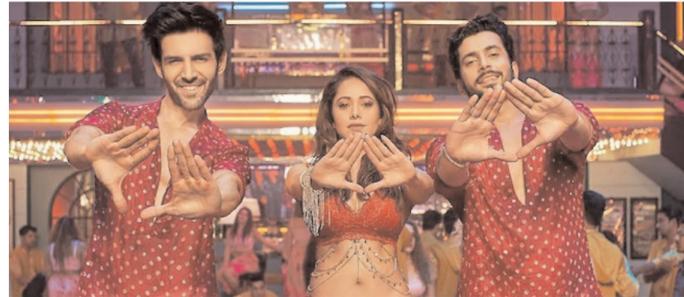


Mumbai: Fame may bring admiration and success, but it also exposes celebrities, especially female stars to harsh scrutiny and online abuse. While some actresses openly speak about the darker side of stardom, others remain silent due to fear of online backlash. Actress Ayesha Khan has chosen to speak out and recently opened up about the constant trolling and abuse she faces on social media. The 23-year-old actor, who appeared in Dhurandhar and featured alongside Krystle D'Souza in the song Shararat, has been receiving praise for her recent work. However, she revealed that success has not shielded her from online harassment. Here's what she revealed Speaking at the We The Women event, the Baalveer actor recalled a painful experience from her college days when she was

removed from a T-Series song because she was considered "fat." She said she was in Class 12 and had been selected as the second lead in the track but was replaced just a night before the shoot. Opening up about her daily struggles, Ayesha said, "I am almost every day sexualised for my body on Instagram. I wear a normal top; people have a problem, I wear skirts, people have a problem. I have to think before posting. If I have to think before wearing something or wanting to post something, just because someone else is going to sexualise me, it's, of course, a very sad space to be in. I don't know, there's a very thin line I keep struggling, sometimes I think I'll post whatever I want, but other times I am not in the mood to see any comments telling me whatever they would have done to me if they had a chance."

### KARTIK AARYAN-STARRER 'SONU KE TITU KI SWEETY' TO RE-RELEASE IN THEATRES

Mumbai: "Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety", featuring Kartik Aaryan, is all set to return to the big screens on March 6. The 2018 film, which was directed by Luv Ranjan, redefined the genre of bromance and was a blockbuster hit. Aaryan shared the announcement with a post on his Instagram handle on Tuesday. "This Friday... Relive the laughter and emotions once again on the big screen!"



#SonuKeTituKiSweety re-releases in theatres on 6th March." The 2018 film, which was directed by Luv Ranjan, redefined the genre of bromance and was a blockbuster hit. Aaryan wrote on Instagram. The romantic-comedy catapulted Aaryan to new

stardom and was a game-changer for lead actors Nushratt Bharucha and Sunny Singh. Following this film, Aaryan tasted success with movies like "Luka Chuppi", "Pati Patni Aur Woh", "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2", "Satyaprem Ki Katha", "Chandu Champion", and "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3". The 35-year-old actor was last seen in "Tu Meri Main

Tera Main Tera Tu Meri", which released in December 2025. Aaryan will next feature in Anurag Basu's romantic film and fantasy-comedy "Naagzilla", directed by Mrighdeep Singh Lamba of the "Fukrey" franchise. The 2018 film, which was directed by Luv Ranjan, redefined the genre of bromance and was a blockbuster hit.

### With Holi festive wishes, the first-look poster of Tharun Bhascker as BalRaj from the complete entertainer Crazy Kalyanam has been released

Crazy Kalyanam stars Naresh VK, Anupama Parameswaran, Tharun Bhascker, and Raju Weds Rambai fame Akhil Uddemari in the lead roles. The film is being produced as Production No. 2 under the Arrow Cinemas banner by passionate producer Boosam Jagan Mohan Reddy. It is directed by Badrappa Gajula. On the occasion of Holi, the makers unveiled the first-look poster of talented actor Tharun Bhascker as BalRaj. In the poster, Tharun Bhascker appears energetic and vibrant, striking a pose reminiscent of Superman. The film promises to be a complete entertainer revolving around an engaging story set against the backdrop of a wedding. Crazy



Kalyanam has been extensively shot across several rural locations in Telangana. The music for the film is composed by Suresh Bobbili.



### TOXIC RELEASE POSTPONED AMID RISING MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

Bangalore: The makers of director Geethu Mohandas's highly anticipated action-drama, 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups', featuring Yash in the lead, on Wednesday announced that the film's release was being postponed to June 4 this year in the wake of the current conflict going on in the Middle East. It may be recalled that the film was

originally slated for a worldwide premiere on March 19 this year. KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations announced the strategic rescheduling of the global theatrical release of the film based on the advise of one of their major distribution partner Phars Films. The makers' decision to reschedule the release was made in response to escalating tensions and the resulting disruptions to cinema operations across the Gulf region, a key market for the film's multi-language global roll-

out. The producers have been closely monitoring the rapidly evolving regional developments with the utmost caution. This announcement comes at a time when the makers were gearing up for a grand trailer launch on March 8 in Bangalore in the presence of mediapersons from across the country. The makers had already mapped out the film's final promotional schedule ahead of its earlier release date of March 19 this year. Even though the film's first single, 'Tabaahi', was ready for its scheduled debut on March 2, the makers chose to hold the music video and momentarily pause the promotional roll-out which was locked and to be activated within a day or two. In an official statement, KVN Productions and

Monster Mind Creations said, "Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups is a film we conceptualized with the vision to create cinema for a global audience. Filmed in Kannada and English. It is built with the conviction to connect with viewers both at home and across the world." The makers further said, "After years of dedicated labour, we were excited to share our film with you all on the 19th of March. However, the current uncertainty, especially in the Middle East, has created a situation that impacts our goal to reach and connect with the widest possible audience. Therefore, in the interest of our partners and our audience, we have made the difficult but carefully considered decision to reschedule our release."