

INDONESIA INKS PACT TO BUY BRAHMOS MISSILE FROM INDIA



RBI INJECTS RS 50,000 CRORE INTO BANKING SYSTEM THROUGH OMO PURCHASES



FOUR INDIANS, ONE PAKISTAN STAR IN ICC 'TEAM OF T20 WORLD CUP



IN BRIFS

GOVT INCREASES BOOKING PERIOD FOR LPG CYLINDER TO CHECK HOARDING

New Delhi (TSIT) : The government has increased the minimum waiting period for booking a domestic LPG cylinder refill from 21 days to 25 days to prevent hoarding...

BALEN SHAH'S RSP SWEEPS NEPAL POLLS, WINNING 125 OF 165 SEATS UNDER FPTP



Kathmandu (TSIT): As counting of votes concluded in 163 electoral constituencies out of 165 under the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system in Nepal's parliamentary elections by Monday evening, the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) secured nearly 76 per cent of the seats in the House of Representatives...

UPGRADE POLICING SYSTEMS TO TACKLE EMERGING CHALLENGES: CM REVANTH



Hyderabad (TSIT) A. Revanth Reddy called for modernising policing systems and strengthening the capabilities of law enforcement while addressing the Telangana Police Officers Retreat 2026 held in Hyderabad. Appreciating the efforts of police officers in delivering better public service, the Chief Minister said the retreat was organised to assess current challenges within the police department and identify practical solutions...

He revealed plans to treat the 2,100 km area within the Outer Ring Road Hyderabad as the Core Urban Region to attract investments and accelerate economic growth, with the goal of transforming Telangana into a \$3 trillion economy by 2047. Highlighting the evolving nature of crime, the Chief Minister noted that while earlier systems focused on tackling terrorism and corruption, the current challenge lies in addressing the rapid rise in cybercrime. He emphasized the need to recruit technically skilled personnel and upgrade the capabilities of existing officers...

No immediate hike in petrol, diesel prices; adequate stock to meet any contingency: Sources

NEW DELHI (TSIT): Petrol and diesel prices will not be increased for now despite international crude oil rates crossing USD 100 per barrel, government sources said on Monday, even as authorities stepped up efforts to maintain uninterrupted fuel supply lines across the country. As the conflict in West Asia entered the tenth day, world markets plummeted, and Brent crude oil, the international standard, surged to nearly USD 120 a barrel, about 65 per cent higher than when the war started, before retreating. Top government sources said the government is closely monitoring global oil markets, but there is no immediate plan to raise retail fuel prices. Oil marketing companies are expected to absorb the current cost pressure for the time being. While the country has adequate stocks of both raw material (crude oil) and finished products (fuels) to meet requirements for the next 6-8 weeks, the government has tweaked the policy for ordering a cooking gas LPG refill. The minimum gap for booking a domestic LPG refill has been increased to 25 days from the current 21 days, a move aimed at preventing hoarding and ensuring equitable distribution of cylinders. Sources said the minimum waiting period for booking a domestic LPG cylinder refill increased from 21 days to 25 days to prevent



hoarding. Average households consume 7-8 LPG cylinders of 14.2 kg in a year and should normally not need a refill in less than 6 weeks, they said, adding the refill booking period has been increased to prevent hoarding and creation of artificial scarcity in the market. The oil companies have an adequate stock of LPG, they added. Sources said the government is closely monitoring the evolving global energy situation and has taken steps to ensure that supply chains remain stable. The widening conflict in the Middle East, which began on February 28 when the United States and Israel carried out strikes on Iran, followed by retaliatory attacks from Tehran, has disrupted energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz. The narrow shipping corridor is a crucial artery for India's energy supplies, with about 40-50 per cent of the country's crude oil imports and nearly 85-90 per cent of its LPG shipments from Gulf nations passing through the route. Sources said that

while there is enough crude oil available from alternative sources, such as Russia, replacing any loss of LPG supplies is more time-consuming, as other alternative sources are largely located in the United States and Canada. To ensure uninterrupted supplies, the government has ordered refineries to maximise LPG production and not use any of its streams for making petrochemicals. On petrol and diesel, the situation is "very comfortable", one of the sources said. "Every petrol pump in the country is functioning, every piped natural gas (to household kitchens) is operational, every CNG station is open," he said. "There is no cause for panic." For India, which imports 88 per cent of its requirement of crude oil, which is turned into fuels like petrol and diesel at refineries, higher global prices translate into a larger import bill and potential inflationary pressures. However, retail fuel prices are not expected to be raised immediately, as the government continues to follow a calibrated policy of allowing companies to build margins when international prices are low and cushioning consumers when rates rise, sources said. Retail petrol and diesel prices have been on a freeze since April 2022, with fuel retailers like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) absorbing losses when crude prices are high and making profits when rates are low.

Mojtaba Khamenei named Iran's new Supreme Leader



Tehran (TSIT): Iran on Monday named Mojtaba Khamenei as the new Supreme Leader, succeeding his father Ali Khamenei, in a move that signals the continued dominance of hardliners in Tehran even as the country remains locked in an escalating conflict with the United States and Israel. Mojtaba Khamenei, a mid-ranking cleric believed to wield significant influence within Iran's security establishment and the vast economic networks built under his father's leadership, had long been viewed as a leading contender for the position. The decision was made by the Assembly of Experts, an 88-member body of clerics responsible for selecting the Supreme Leader after the death of Ali Khamenei. Confirming the decision, the assembly issued a statement shortly after midnight Tehran time. "By a decisive vote, the Assembly of Experts appointed Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei as the third Leader of the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran," the statement said. The post of Supreme Leader gives Mojtaba Khamenei ultimate authority over all matters of state in the Islamic Republic, including control over the military, judiciary and key political institutions.

We are correcting mistakes of previous govt, says CM Naidu

Amaravati (TSIT): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Monday that the coalition government is correcting the mistakes made by the previous government. He accused the YSR Congress Party of disrupting the revenue department during its rule. He was speaking at a public meeting after distributing 'pattadar' passbooks among farmers at Kotha Buruju village in Nandyal district. He alleged that the leaders under the previous government tried to snatch the land of farmers and the poor under the Land Titling Act. The Chief Minister said the previous government included 1.95 crore acres in the prohibited list under Section 22A of the Registration Act for political vendettas and illegal seizures. "We abolished the Land Titling Act as soon as we came to power. We are correcting the mistakes



in the land records," he said. Chandrababu Naidu said the previous rulers placed their own photographs on pattadar passbooks. They even printed photos on survey stones and spent Rs 750 crore on this. "It took 20 months to rectify one of their misdeeds. We are taking land measurements in the presence of the farmers and issuing books with land details with the farmers' approval." He claimed that with the new pattadar passbooks issued by the coalition govern-

ment, no one can tamper with land records. "We have introduced the QR code system. Whoever tampers with the records will be known. Even if MROs and VROs make mistakes, it will be known through blockchain technology," he said. The Chief Minister claimed that new pattadar passbooks were being issued without any corruption. He stated that out of 16,816 villages, a survey was conducted in 6,860 villages during the previous government, and 19.93 lakh passbooks were issued with tampered records. CM Naidu reiterated that Rayalaseema will be turned into a horticulture hub. For this, the Centre will give Rs 30,000 crore under the Purvodaya scheme. The Chief Minister once again accused YSR Congress of indulging in adulteration of sacred Tirupati laddu to tarnish the reputation of the temple. He also accused the opposition party of spreading false propaganda on the CBI report on the laddu issue.

'Rahul' has replaced 'Rythu Bandhu' in Telangana: KTR

Hyderabad (TSIT): Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao on Monday alleged that Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has effectively introduced a new scheme called "Rahul Bandhu" by diverting funds meant for farmers under the Rythu Bandhu scheme. Speaking at a felicitation programme organised for newly elected councillors in Sircilla, he said that the Congress government has been consistently delaying and denying the Rythu Bandhu assistance that farmers are entitled to receive. He accused the Chief Minister of diverting farmers' funds to please the Congress high command. KTR, as the BRS leader is popularly known, remarked that while farmers across the state are waiting for the promised Rythu Bandhu assistance — which the Congress had claimed it would enhance — the



state government has failed to release the funds. He alleged that the government has already defaulted on Rythu Bandhu payments multiple times and has once again delayed the scheme this season. Mocking the Congress leadership, KTR said that the Chief Minister appears to have introduced a new programme called "Rahul Bandhu," under which Telangana farmers' money is being diverted to benefit Rahul Gandhi and the Congress leadership. He alleged that nearly

Rs 1,000 crore annually is being effectively diverted for political appeasement instead of supporting farmers. KTR further accused the Chief Minister of trying to safeguard his political position by pleasing the Congress leadership in Delhi at the expense of Telangana's farmers. He alleged that whenever the Congress high command requires funds or political support, the Chief Minister attempts to divert public resources to maintain his position. The BRS working president also criticised the Congress government for failing to fulfill its electoral promises. He recalled that leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, had repeatedly assured the people of Telangana that the six guarantees promised by the Congress would be given legal backing within 100 days of coming to power.

No major impact on India due to rise in global oil price: FM Sitharaman



New Delhi (TSIT) : The impact of the rise in global crude oil prices on the rate of inflation in India is not estimated to be substantial at this point, as the country's inflation is near the "lower bound", Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Parliament on Monday. The price of crude oil that India imports has been on a declining trajectory for the past one year, till the geopolitical clashes commenced in West Asia on February 28, 2026, the Finance Minister said in an answer

to a question in the Lok Sabha. "Between the end of February and until March 2, 2026, the crude oil price (Indian basket) rose from \$69.01 per barrel to \$80.16 a barrel. Given that India's inflation is near the lower bound, the impact on inflation is not estimated to be substantial at this point," Sitharaman said. Global crude prices have been rising since February 28, when the US and Israel launched military strikes on Iran. The war has now spread to the Middle East region as Iran hit back with retaliatory drone and missile strikes on US bases in the region. Replying to the question, the minister said that the RBI's Monetary Policy Report in October 2025 had estimated that if crude oil prices are higher by 10 per cent than the baseline assumptions, and assuming full pass-through to domestic prices.

67,000 Indians Return Amid West Asia Crisis: Jaishankar

New Delhi (TSIT): S. Jaishankar informed the Rajya Sabha that around 67,000 Indian nationals have returned home from conflict-affected regions of West Asia as of March 8, amid ongoing tensions in the region. Making a statement in New Delhi, the minister said the government facilitated the return of citizens whenever there were brief openings in regional airspace by allowing commercial and special flights. The Indian Embassy in Tehran has also taken steps to assist Indian students and other nationals in Iran, including relocating several students to safer locations. Jaishankar added that



"Whenever there has been a partial opening of airspace, we have approved and undertaken commercial flights, including non-scheduled flights to enable the return of Indian citizens. Our estimate, as of yesterday, is that 67,000 of our nationals have done so," the External Affairs Minister said.

Indians who were in Iran for business were helped to cross into Armenia and return to India safely. He assured that the embassy in Tehran remains fully operational and on high alert to support the Indian community. The minister also said Narendra Modi has been closely monitoring the situ-

ation and has spoken with leaders of United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Qatar. In its fifth circular since the start of the US-Israel-Iran war, the board stated that it will review the situation again on March 14 and announce the new dates for the postponed examinations.

CBSE postpones Class 12 board exams from March 12 to 16 in Gulf countries

New Delhi (TSIT) Amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia, India's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday, March 9, postponed Class 12 exams scheduled from March 12 to 16 in multiple Gulf countries. Following a "critical review of the current situation," the board said it has decided to postpone the exams in parts of West Asia, including Kuwait, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Qatar. In its fifth circular since the start of the US-Israel-Iran war, the board stated that it will review the situation again on March 14 and announce the new dates for the postponed examinations.

Parties seek one or two-phase Bengal polls; CEC warns of zero tolerance for violence

KOLKATA: Several political parties in West Bengal on Monday suggested that the upcoming assembly polls be held in one or two phases, as the Election Commission warned of strict action against any lapse in law and order and asserted zero tolerance towards poll-related violence. The suggestion on the phases was made during a meeting between the full bench of the Election Commission and representatives of political parties in Kolkata as part of the poll panel's review of preparedness for the forthcoming assembly polls likely to be held in April. Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, accompanied by Election Com-

missioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, met representatives of the TMC, BJP, CPI(M), Congress, AAP, National People's Party and the Forward Bloc, among others. "A wide range of issues concerning the conduct of elections in the state were discussed. Several parties suggested that the elections be held in one or two phases and assured their cooperation in ensuring that the polls remain peaceful," a senior EC official said. The parties urged the Commission to take stringent measures to curb intimidation of voters and activities of anti-social elements during the polls. "They emphasised the need



for strong security arrangements, including deployment of Central Armed Police Forces in adequate numbers, to curb violence and ensure that voters can cast their ballots without fear," the official said. Some parties also raised concerns about the possible use of crude bombs, illegal firearms and the influence of money and muscle power during the elections. Responding to the concerns,

Kumar assured them that elections in India are conducted strictly in accordance with the law and that all necessary steps would be taken to ensure a free, fair and transparent poll in the state. "The Election Commission has zero tolerance towards violence and intimidation of either electors or election staff. We will not leave any stone unturned in ensuring impartial, transparent and peaceful

elections," he said. Kumar also reiterated that the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls had been conducted in a transparent manner and said Forms 6, 7 and 8 can still be filed for inclusion, deletion or correction of entries. Later, the Commission held a detailed review meeting with divisional commissioners, commissioners of police, district election officers, su-

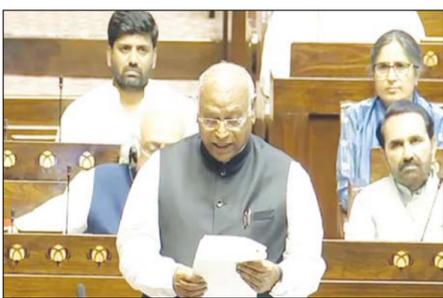
perintendents of police and nodal officers of enforcement agencies on various aspects of election preparedness, including law and order, election logistics, EVM management, voter awareness and seizure of illegal inducements. The Commission directed enforcement agencies to act with complete impartiality and clamp down firmly on all inducement-related activities. During the review meeting, the CEC warned that any negligence in maintaining law and order or monitoring illegal activities in the run-up to the polls would invite strict action, officials said. According to officials, Kumar also questioned the absence

of a Narcotics Advisory Committee in West Bengal and sought an explanation from the state police. When Director General (Law and Order) Vineet Goyal attempted to respond, he was asked to ensure immediate corrective steps, they said. The Commission also pulled up several enforcement agencies, including the excise department, the narcotics authorities, the Airports Authority of India and the Reserve Bank of India, over alleged lapses. Officials said the excise department was asked to ensure that the production and distribution of intoxicants do not increase in the run-up to the polls and to prevent illegal liquor production in border

areas. The RBI was also asked to keep a strict vigil on financial transactions across districts to ensure that unaccounted cash is not used to influence voters during the election period. District election officers and superintendents of police from various districts also made presentations on election preparedness and challenges in their jurisdictions, particularly in districts sharing borders with other states and neighbouring countries. The Commission also directed officials to ensure assured minimum facilities such as ramps, wheelchairs and drinking water at all polling stations for the convenience of voters.

Kharge demands discussion on India's energy security

NEW DELHI: Congress President and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday demanded a short-duration discussion in the Upper House on emerging challenges to India's energy security amid the West Asia conflict. When the House met for the day, Kharge mentioned the Rs 60 per cylinder hike in domestic cooking gas LPG prices and the Rs 115 increase in commercial gas rates, among the justifications he gave for admission of his notice under rule 176. The cooking gas price increase has burdened the poor, he said. "Therefore, I urge you to please allow a short-duration discussion on this important



subject." Chairman CP Radhakrishnan said he will come back after giving due consideration to the notice. Kharge said the fast-evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia is no longer confined to the region, and its impact is clearly visible on India's energy security

as well. The conflict is now impacting India's image and prestige, he said, adding that the country imports about 55 per cent of its crude oil needs from the region. "The conflict is now directly impacting the country's economic stability," he

said. Importantly, about 1 crore Indians work in the region, and there are reports of some Indians being killed or missing in the ongoing conflict, he said. "India received about USD 51 billion in remittances from Gulf countries." Kharge made the submission just before External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made a suo motu statement on the evolving situation in West Asia. The Congress and other opposition parties protested against him making the statement, saying a short-duration discussion should precede such a move. They shouted slogans during Jaishankar's statement before staging a walkout at the fag end of the statement.

'First Announce, Subsequently Think': Cong's swipe at govt on VB G RAM G Act

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Monday took a swipe at the government over the implementation of the new VB G RAM G Act, saying details were still being worked out and this was a perfect example of the Modi government's 'FAST' approach to governance -- 'First Announce, Subsequently Think'. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared on X a media report which claimed that the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 -- passed by Parliament within two days of its introduction on December 16 last year -- has several steps to clear before it can be implemented. The new rural employment legislation replaces the Congress-led UPA government's flagship scheme, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA).

In a post on X, Ramesh said, "In December, 2025, in just two days, the Modi government bulldozed the repeal of MGNREGA through the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. No consultations with states took place. No legislative scrutiny by the Standing Committee concerned took place." "It was said that extreme urgency for the repeal and its substitution by the Viksit Bharat Grameen Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission Guarantee Act was because the new law was to be implemented from April 1, 2026," he said. It turns out that the consultations that should have happened earlier are taking place now, Ramesh said, adding that details are still being worked out. "A perfect example of the Modi Government's FAST approach to governance -- First Announce, Subsequently Think!" Ramesh said.

'Saffron crowd' wants to swallow TN, DMK won't allow it: Stalin



TIRUCHIRAPPALLI: Ruling DMK president and Chief Minister M K Stalin on Monday alleged that a "saffron crowd" wanted to "swallow" the southern state, but asserted his party would not allow that. Addressing a mega party conference here, he also launched a scathing attack against his rival, AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami, accusing him of becoming a "slave" to the BJP in order to become CM. Further, with Bihar CM Nitish Kumar set to step down, he said that state never had a BJP CM, and that after winning polls by showcasing the JD (U) veteran, "now they have sidelined him". A 'Saffron crowd,' an obvious reference to the BJP, wants to "swallow Tamil Nadu". DMK will not allow it to happen, the CM asserted. To win over the state, BJP was gradually "swallowing" AIADMK, he alleged.

No framework or parameter to designate any city as 'heritage city' in India: Govt

NEW DELHI: There is "no framework or parameter" to designate any city as a 'heritage city' in India, the government informed the Parliament on Monday. Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said this in a written response to a query in Lok Sabha. Jhunjhunu MP Brijendra Singh Ola asked him whether the government has designated any 'town/city in Jhunjhunu parliamentary constituency of Rajasthan as a heritage city. Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district is located in the Shekhawati region, known for its old havelis, carrying murals and frescoes which attract a lot of tourists. The Union culture minister in his response further said the Archaeological Survey of India is mandated to protect and maintain the monuments and archaeological sites of national importance as per the AMSAR (Ancient Monuments and

Archaeological Sites and Remains) Act, 1958. "Government of India has not designated any town/city in Jhunjhunu Parliamentary Constituency as a heritage city," he said. Shekhawat was also asked whether the government, UNESCO or any other international organisation has laid down any criteria or parameters for designating a city as a heritage city. "No, sir. There are no criteria/parameters for designating a city as a heritage city, either by the government or by UNESCO," he said. Shekhawat added, "There is no framework/parameters to designate any city as Heritage City in India." However, the historic city of Ahmadabad (in 2017) and Walled City of Jaipur in Rajasthan (in 2019) have been inscribed on the List of World Heritage Sites, under the UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, 1972, he said.

Tech, policy, human behaviour to shape India's mobility future: NITI Aayog member V K Saraswat

BENGALURU: NITI Aayog member V K Saraswat on Monday emphasised that India's future mobility landscape will be shaped by a combination of technology, policy, economics, environmental considerations, and human behaviour. He also highlighted the role of digital innovation in India's mobility transformation. Speaking at the Japan-India Mobility Summit 2026 here, Saraswat said India and Japan bring deeply complementary strengths to the future of mobility. While India offers scale, market growth and expanding capabilities in software and AI, Japan contributes advanced technological depth, engineering excellence and global leadership in safety and mobility systems. "The next phase of our partnership should move beyond infrastructure towards technology co-creation - from hydrogen mobility and smart transport systems to next-generation vehicles and integrated mobility plat-

forms," he said. Saraswat stressed that mobility transformation today is not merely a sectoral reform; it represents a structural redesign of energy, infrastructure, data and industry. "Through pragmatic pathways and sustained collaboration, India and Japan can together build scalable solutions that accelerate decarbonisation while setting a global benchmark for sustainable mobility," he said. Saraswat also underscored that India's mobility transition must address the needs of 1.4 billion people, while reducing logistics costs--which currently account for 13-14 per cent of GDP--and supporting rapid urbanisation. He stressed that no single technology or fuel can meet the mobility needs of a country on India's scale. "India has therefore adopted a diversified and technology-neutral strategy that includes battery electric vehicles, strong and plug-in hybrids, ethanol blending, compressed biogas, LNG, green



hydrogen for heavy mobility, and sustainable aviation fuels," Saraswat said. He noted that electrification is already gaining momentum in India, with electric vehicles accounting for approximately 8 per cent of total vehicle sales in 2025. Electric three-wheelers represent about 16 per cent of the segment, while electric buses account for around 7 per cent of annual bus sales. Saraswat said that initiatives such as intelligent transport systems, digital traffic management, unified digital payment systems,

and the FASTag electronic toll collection system--which has achieved nearly 98 per cent penetration--are enabling seamless and efficient mobility across the country. According to an official statement, the summit brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and technology innovators to advance collaboration in building the future of sustainable mobility. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), in close collaboration with NITI Aayog and key industry players underscored how the two countries' complementary strengths - India's scale, growing digital capabilities and manufacturing ambition, and Japan's technological depth and engineering excellence, can accelerate innovation across mobility systems. Speaking at the summit, Keisuke

Hosonuma, Director for Automotive International Trade Policy, METI said, The transition to carbon neutrality in mobility will not follow a single pathway. Different markets require different solutions based on their economic realities, policy environments and consumer preferences. "Japan's multipathway strategy therefore, combines electrification, hybrid technologies and next-generation energy solutions while strengthening international collaboration. India is a critical partner in this journey, offering immense opportunities for innovation, scale and sustainable mobility development," he added. The summit focused on strengthening cooperation across advanced mobility technologies, energy transition pathways, intelligent transport systems, and next-generation mobility while exploring new opportunities in hydrogen mobility, smart urban transport networks, and integrated multimodal infrastructure, the statement said.

BJP claims it helps OBCs but its govt has given nothing to backward classes: Rahul

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said the BJP claims that it helps the OBCs but in reality, their government has given nothing to the backward classes, urging women workers of his party's OBC Department to take this message to the people. Gandhi also said the caste census is a critical issue and has to be done in the right manner. Addressing the OBC Congress Women's National Wing Convention at the party's Indira Bhawan headquarters here, Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 100 per cent "compromised" and he is being "blackmailed" by the US. "Modi has struck a deal with America and opened up India's market for them. America has large farms where work is done on a massive scale with machines. "In such a scenario, will India's farmers be able to compete with America's farmers? It is the government's job to protect the country's farmers, but Modi promised Trump that we will buy American goods worth 9 lakh crore rupees every year," he said. If this happens, what will become of India's farmers and traders, Gandhi asked. "Narendra Modi is being blackmailed, which is why he has surrendered before Trump. Cases are



running against Anil Ambani, but he is not being arrested, because he has all the information. "If Anil Ambani opens his mouth, it will spell trouble for Modi ji. In such a situation, Narendra Modi is very troubled -- he is surrounded by Trump, Hardeep Puri, Anil Ambani, Epstein, Netanyahu," Gandhi said. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's speech was held in Parliament House on Monday but he did not even use the word Iran, Gandhi said. Making a suo motu statement in Parliament, Jaishankar told Parliament that New Delhi stood for maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states in the region. He defended allowing the Iranian ship to dock at an Indian port as the right decision taken on humanitarian grounds. Attacking the prime minister, Gandhi said, "America told Narendra

Modi -- we will tell you where to buy your oil from, and Modi said 'Yes, Sir' and agreed." He alleged that a trade deal happened with America but India got nothing out of it. "Meanwhile, America told Bangladesh -- if you buy cotton from us, we'll make the tax zero... This decision will destroy India's textile industry. Narendra Modi gives lots of speeches here, but he can't speak up in front of Trump," he alleged. In his remarks to the women workers, Gandhi said the BJP claims that it helps the OBCs, but in reality, their government has given nothing to the backward classes. "Therefore, you must take this message to the people. You must work together and organise to raise your voice," he told the women workers. Further, Gandhi said Artificial Intelligence's fuel is 'data' and "if we want to run AI, it will run on data alone". He said the most essential thing today is 'data'. If America wants to compete with China, it is not possible without India's data, because India's population is very large. "This data is your capital, your future, which Narendra Modi has given away to America for free. So much has happened, but the media has not said a word," he said. "Narendra Modi talks about AI, but he has handed over all the data to America. He is just fooling the country," he said.

Rohit Shetty house firing case: Accused seeks bail for attending his marriage



MUMBAI: One of the 12 accused arrested in the filmmaker Rohit Shetty's house firing case on Monday sought temporary bail for attending his marriage in Agra, scheduled for March 11. The accused, Ritik Yadav, requested interim relief after he was remanded to judicial custody by Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court judge Satyanarayan Navandar. The plea, filed through advocate Dilip Shukla, stated that Yadav's wedding is scheduled on March 11 at his native place, Agra. "The matter will be heard on Tuesday," Shukla said. All 12 accused arrested in connection with the firing incident are currently in judicial custody. Yadav was among the seven accused, including



shooter Deepak Sharma, arrested on February 14 from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. At least five rounds were fired at the first floor of Shetty's nine-storey building in Juhu on February 1. One bullet struck the glass of a gym inside the building. Lawrence Bishnoi gang member Shubham Lonkar has claimed responsibility for the incident in a social media post. Besides this case, he is also wanted in the NCP leader Baba Siddique murder case and the firing at Bollywood actor Salman Khan's residence in Bandra. Police had invoked the stringent MCOCA against the accused involved in firing at Shetty's house, with the preliminary investigation suggesting that they intended to create terror in the city.

Patna to get Rs 296-crore ULTraPOD transit system for govt buildings

PATNA: A ULTraPOD Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system will be constructed at a cost of Rs 296 crore to improve connectivity among major government and administrative buildings in Patna, officials said on Monday. The ULTraPOD (urban light transit pod) is an automated transit network that aims to provide seamless connectivity on a designated route. According to a statement by the cabinet secretariat department of the Bihar government, Chief Secretary Pratyaya Amrit held a key meeting with a team from Larsen & Toubro (L&T), which made a detailed presentation on the proposed system. "The project will cost around Rs 296 crore, and the ULTraPOD track will stretch nearly 5 km, starting from Visvesvaraya Bhawan, passing through Vikas Bhawan and the Legislative Assembly building, and finally reaching the old Secretariat," it added. The department aims to complete the construction of the ULTraPODs PRT within 15 months of administrative approval. As part of the PRT system, the pods will operate without unscheduled halts and carry passengers directly to their destination stations, officials said. "Under the plan, 59 pods will operate along the track, with each pod accommodating up to six passengers. Pods will be available at stations at an interval of seven seconds," the statement read. In the initial phase, nine stations will be constructed, two of which will include parking facilities.

I CAN'T DISCLOSE WHO I MEET IN DELHI: DCM DK SHIVAKUMAR

Delhi : Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar today said he can't publicly disclose details of his meetings in Delhi. Speaking to reporters at Karnataka Bhawan, he quipped, "I meet everyone when I come to Delhi. You (media) report that I was made to wait by the Delhi leaders. So, I must be waiting." "There was a wedding in a friend's family, hence I came to Delhi yesterday. I met the Assam Pradesh Congress President today. There are many programmes today including induction of many leaders to the party," he said. He was replying to a question on his meeting with leaders in Delhi. Asked about him completing 6 years as KPCC President tomorrow, he said, "I am hosting a dinner party for the MLAs and MLCs. I will organise a dinner for the defeated candidates, district presidents and block presidents on some other day. Asked about discussions around his Delhi visits even if they are personal, he said, "No discussions needed on that. There is a dinner meet tomorrow and a CLP meeting the day after." Asked about the release of first list of 43 candidates for Assam, he said, "A list of 43 candidates is released already. There is screening committee meeting today, but I am not part of it."



BJP—JDS UNITE TO CHALLENGE KARNATAKA BUDGET IN UPPER HOUSE

Bengaluru, March 9: The opposition in Karnataka intensified its attack on the state government's 2026-27 budget, with members of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (Secular) closing ranks and holding a joint strategy meeting to prepare an expert-backed critique to be raised in the Legislative Council.

The consultation meeting was held at the office of the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council at Vidhana Soudha on Monday afternoon. Legislators from both parties discussed alleged shortcomings in the budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and finalised a coordinated strategy to challenge the government during the ongoing session.

Experts from PRS Legislative Research participated in the meeting and presented a detailed analysis of the budget figures, department-wise allocations and the state's fiscal position. Legislators were also given guidance on how to highlight technical aspects of the budget and raise issues concerning public interest during debates in the House.

Opposition leaders have been sharply critical of the budget in recent days, alleging that the Congress government is pushing the state toward mounting debt while relying heavily on borrowings to fund its welfare guarantees. BJP leaders claimed the state's borrowings could rise significantly in 2026-27, raising concerns about the long-term fiscal health of the state.

Several opposition leaders also alleged that the budget failed to adequately address issues affecting marginalised communities and key sectors, describing it as disappointing and lacking clear long-term development priorities.

During Monday's meeting, members from both parties reportedly decided to jointly raise their voice against what they termed "anti-people policies" in the budget and disparities in fund allocation across sectors. They also discussed ways to present data-backed arguments during the budget debate to challenge the government's claims.

The consultation is expected to shape the opposition's coordinated approach in the Legislative Council in the coming days, as both parties seek to mount a stronger and more structured challenge to the government's fiscal policies and budget priorities.

D.K. SHIVAKUMAR COMPLETES SIX YEARS AS KPCC PRESIDENT



Bengaluru (TSIT) D. K. Shivakumar has completed six successful years as the President of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, marking a significant milestone in his four-decade-long political journey.

A senior leader of the Indian National Congress, Shivakumar currently serves as the Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka and has been elected eight times as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). Over the years, he has handled several key portfolios including Energy, Major Irrigation, Urban Development,

Medical Education, and Prisons and Home Guards.

Beginning his political career as a student leader in the Indian Youth Congress in 1980, Shivakumar first contested elections from Sathanur in 1985 and was elected as an MLA in 1989. He credits former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi for giving him his first opportunity in public life.

As KPCC President since 2020, Shivakumar played a key role in leading the Congress to victory in the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections. His tenure has also focused on strengthening party unity and grassroots organisa-

tion. Among his major initiatives are the development of the Pavagada Solar Park, expansion of irrigation projects, digital governance reforms such as E-Khata and Nambike Nakshe, and infrastructure development in Bengaluru.

Shivakumar said his vision is to build a progressive and inclusive Karnataka, focusing on transparent governance, sustainable development, improved infrastructure, and opportunities for youth while ensuring balanced growth between rural and urban regions.

BDA ANNOUNCES LOGO AND TAGLINE DESIGN CONTEST; WINNER TO GET RS. 1 LAKH PRIZE

Bangalore : Bangalore Development Authority has announced a Logo and Tagline Design Contest as part of its initiatives to encourage creativity and innovation while reflecting the spirit of the city's development. The authority, which has played a major role in shaping Bengaluru through the development of layouts, housing complexes, and infrastructure, stated that the winning logo and tagline will be used across BDA layouts, housing projects, official websites, signage, and communication materials. The winners of the best logo and tagline will receive a cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh (subject to TDS). The contest is open to Kannadigas aged 18 years and above, including design students, amateur designers, professional designers, and creative agencies. Each participant can submit one logo and one tagline, with taglines allowed in Kannada, English, or both. The logo must be submitted in high-resolution JPEG, PNG, or PDF format and should reflect planned urban development and the vision of a smart city. The tagline should be original, concise, and limited to eight words, highlighting BDA's mission of transparent governance, sustainable development, reliability, and public trust. Entries created using AI tools or copied from other sources will be disqualified. Participants can submit entries online through the official website: <https://bdakarnataka.in/>. The last date for submission is March 24, 2026, at 11:59 PM.

UPA COMPROMISED INDIA'S SOVEREIGNTY UNDER US PRESSURE: VIJAYENDRA

Bengaluru, Mar 9 : Karnataka BJP President Vijayendra Yediyurappa has taken a sharp dig at the Congress-led UPA government, alleging it repeatedly compromised India's sovereign interests under pressure from foreign powers, particularly the United States. In a social media post addressed to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Vijayendra recalled incidents from the UPA era, citing former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's public confirmation that India had reduced oil imports from Iran under American pressure. He described the episode as one of the most humiliating moments in India's diplomatic history, noting it occurred in the presence of

the UPA government's own External Affairs Minister. Contrasting the UPA with the current administration, Vijayendra asserted that the Modi-led government has maintained India's autonomy in matters of energy security. He pointed out that despite threats of sanctions, tariffs, and persistent diplomatic pressure from the United States and the European Union, India continued and even increased its purchase of Russian crude oil. He highlighted that before 2022, Russian oil accounted for virtually zero share in India's imports, but the share expanded dramatically in subsequent years, demonstrating India's independent decision-making.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED WITH ENTHUSIASM AT EUROKIDS SCHOOL IN BENGALURU



Bengaluru : EuroKids Pre-School in J. P. Nagar celebrated International Women's Day with great enthusiasm, bringing together children and parents for a vibrant and memorable event. The program was inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp by EuroKids Founder Dr. Sundar Raj, actress Kavyashree Gowda, TV artist K. Kamala, Regional Academic Operations Manager Aarti Karmakar, and Academic Operations Manager Smita Rebello. More than 400 children and parents actively participated in the celebrations. A variety of cultural activities were organised to mark the occasion, including a fashion show, singing performances, and other entertainment programs, which added colour and excitement to the event. Competitions were conducted in 22 different categories, and winners were awarded prizes in recognition of their talent and participation. Teachers Khushbu, Vaishali, Sarita, Spoorthi, Swapna, and Shilpa, along with school staff and parents, were present at the event and played a key role in making the Women's Day celebration a grand success.

Bengaluru : Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R. Ashoka today said that the Congress government has been forced to withdraw its controversial proposal to construct a stadium on the 5-acre land of the historic KSIC Filature Factory at T. Narasipura in Mysuru district, a unit established in 1912 under the visionary leadership of Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar. Responding to the statement made in the Assembly by the State Silk Minister Venkatesh, Ashoka said that the government's decision to drop the proposal is a victory for the workers, farmers and all those who stood up to protect the iconic Mysore Silk institution. He said the BJP had strongly opposed the move from the very beginning, calling it a dangerous and suspicious attempt by the Congress government to weaken and eventually dismantle a historic public enterprise that represents Karnataka's pride.

Attempt to Destroy a Historic Institution

Ashoka alleged that under the pretext of constructing a stadium, the Congress government had attempted to appropriate



land belonging to the KSIC filature factory, which is crucial for the functioning and future expansion of the unit. "The Mysore Silk brand is not just a commercial enterprise; it is a symbol of Karnataka's cultural identity and heritage. The attempt to take away its land raised serious concerns about the government's intentions," he said. He pointed out that the proposed move would have resulted in the cutting of more than 500 trees that are over a century old, destruction of valuable green cover and severe damage to the ecological environment surrounding the factory.

Technical Report Ignored by Government Ashoka also recalled that he had earlier

exposed the issue through a public statement and social media post highlighting the technical report submitted by the Managing Director of KSIC, which clearly stated that the 5-acre land is essential for the future operations and expansion of the filature unit. According to the technical report:

"Despite such a detailed technical report from its own officials, the Congress government appeared determined to grab the land. This raised serious questions about whose interests the government was trying to serve," Ashoka said. Ashoka Visited Factory, Supported Workers' Protest Ashoka said that when the workers of the KSIC filature factory and local stakeholders began protesting against the decision, the BJP stood firmly with them.

He personally visited the T. Narasipura factory, met the workers and assured them that the BJP would fight to protect the historic institution from what he termed a "land grab attempt disguised as a development project." "The workers feared that taking away the land would eventually lead to the closure of the unit, affecting hundreds of employees and thou-

sands of silk farmers who depend on the industry for their livelihood," he said.

Congress Government Forced to Retreat

Ashoka said that the government's decision to withdraw the proposal clearly shows that public pressure and sustained opposition forced the Congress government to retreat. "For decades, KSIC Mysore Silk has remained a profitable and globally respected brand known for its superior quality silk sarees. Instead of strengthening such an institution, the Congress government was trying to dismantle its foundation," he said. He added that the decision to step back is welcome, but it also exposes the poor judgment and questionable priorities of the state government.

Warning to Government

Ashoka warned that the BJP will not allow any attempt to weaken Karnataka's heritage institutions. "The Mysore Silk brand is the pride of Karnataka and a legacy built over more than a century. Any attempt to undermine such institutions for short-term political or commercial interests will be strongly resisted," he said.

FLOATING SOLAR PLANTS ON LAKES: MINISTER N.S. BOSERAJU SEEKS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BASED ON BHEL REPORT

N. S. Boseraju has directed officials to finalise an implementation framework for installing floating solar power plants on lakes based on the feasibility report submitted by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited. The directions were issued during a review meeting held at Vikas Soudha, attended by senior officials including the Secretary of the Minor Irrigation Department and the Managing Directors of Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited and Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited. As part of the state government's initiative to reduce the rising electricity costs of lift irrigation



projects and promote green energy, BHEL conducted a six-month feasibility study on installing floating solar plants on water bodies. The report proposes a pilot project at Somabudi Agrahara Lake in Kolar district,

capable of generating around 100 MW of clean energy. Speaking at the meeting, Minister Boseraju noted that hundreds of lift irrigation schemes under the Minor Irrigation Department consume significant elec-

tricity, creating a financial burden on the department. He emphasized that adopting sustainable and alternative energy sources like floating solar plants can help reduce operational costs while advancing the state's renewable energy goals. The Minister instructed officials from the Minor Irrigation Department, BESCOM, and KREDL to conduct a technical re-evaluation of the BHEL report and prepare a comprehensive roadmap for implementing the project.

The meeting was attended by Minor Irrigation Secretary B.K. Pavitra, BESCOM Managing Director Shivshankar, KREDL Managing Director Rudrapaiah, and other senior officials.

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Branch Office : 1st Floor, Sundar Tower, 24/86B(3), Opp. Nissann Pinnacle , Kunnothurmedu Post, Palakkadu - 678013 Notice for sale of immovable assets through Private Treaty

Sole Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets through Private Treaty under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8(B) r/w Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

ICI CI Home Finance Company Limited (ICI CI HFC) conducted several e-Auctions for the sale of the mortgaged property mentioned below, however, all such e-Auctions failed. Now, an interested buyer has approached ICI CI HFC with an offer to purchase the said property for an amount of Rs. 22,00,000/-. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below-described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICI CI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", by way of Private Treaty as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs. Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	Sarfaesi Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Praveesh P (Borrower) Haritha N (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHPGT00001504563, LHPGT00001518289	Re Sy No. 2227/ Sreekrishnapuram- 1 Village Ottappalam, Taluk Palakkad Kerala- 678010	Rs. 014/-	Rs. 000/-	March 20, 2026 11:00 AM To 04:00 PM	March 25, 2026 11:00 AM To 04:00 PM	March 25, 2026 04:00 PM	Physical Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- <https://BidDeal.in/>) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICI CI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address Mentioned on top of the article or before March 25, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit a signed copy of the Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICI CI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before March 25, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICI CI Home Finance Company Ltd.- Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article. The general public is requested to submit their bids higher than the amount being offered by the interested buyer mentioned above. It is hereby informed that in case no bids higher than the amount being offered by the aforementioned interested buyer is received by ICI CI HFC, the mortgaged property shall be sold to the said interested buyer as per Rule 8(B) r/w Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the sale or submission of bids, kindly contact ICI CI Home Finance Company Limited on 952087300. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icicifhc.com/> Date : March 10, 2026 Authorized Officer, "ICI CI Home Finance Company Limited" Place : Palakkad CIN Number:- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

Viral Sensations to First-Timers: Meet Nepal's Gen Z Poll Stars - Beyond Balen Shah

From rapper-turned-politician to social activist viral on social media, and promoter of education and scientific inventions to the hard-working mayor of a small town, Nepal election has them all. Not just former Kathmandu mayor Balendra Shah, or his Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) colleague former TV show host Rabi Lamichhane, Nepal's post Gen Z revolt election has seen all kinds of candidates, a lot of them political novices, representing diverse backgrounds. With the RSP having created history with a near-clean sweep, rapper-mayor Balen Shah is all set to become Nepal's new prime minister. But Balen Shah is not the only unusual face in this election. Meet some of the other interesting ones:

ASHIKA TAMANG, 33, RSP

Ashika Tamang is a well-known name in Nepal thanks to her viral videos. In recent years, she's shown herself in action in her videos calling out men peeing at public places, or folks throwing garbage at river banks. She became popular after her videos with social messages went viral on social media platforms like Facebook Reels, Instagram and TikTok. At times, the "Nepali Angelina Jolie" also faced the wrath of Nepal Police and the law of land for allegedly failing to honour public decency. The former nurse-cum-actress is endearingly called Didi (sister) for her social work and campaign against corruption and wrong-doing. She won many hearts and minds during last year's Gen Z revolt after collecting funds to help protesters injured or dead during the violent protests. Prior to election, she courted some controversy as she spent some time in Germany working as a staff nurse. She has won the parliamentary seat from Dhading-1 as an RSP candidate, securing an impressive 39,000-plus votes, and beating old-time political heavyweights like Rajendra Pandey of the Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML).

MAHABIR PUN, 71, INDEPENDENT

Mahabir Pun is a well-known Nepali scientist and an activist. He founded Nepal Wireless Networking Project in the 2000s which helped connect western Nepal's remote mountain villages and schools to the worldwide web. Until last summer, he was busy touring Nepali towns and villages, selling his autobiography to raise funds for various social work projects, including the National Invention Centre that he founded in 2012. Prior to that he was engaged in community development initiatives such as setting up self-sustainable, community-run schools and projects like yak and rabbit farming to support rural education. In 2007, he was honoured with the Ramon Magsaysay Award. Later, he earned an honorary doctorate from University of Nebraska, USA, from where he had completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees decades earlier. Despite the distinctions he achieved, he continued to live an austere life, serving Nepali communities. After last September's #GenZRevolt he was appointed Minister for Education, Science and Technology in the interim government, but he quit in January to fight the election. This week, he won the House of Representatives election from Myagdi-1 with nearly 23,000 votes, defeating his rival by a huge margin. Harka Sampang Rai, 43, Shram Sanskriti Party (SSP) Harka Sampang Rai is a famous face in Nepali political and social media landscape. Son of a British Gurkha soldier, he holds a Bachelor's degree and worked as an English teacher before turning into a social activist.

A \$10 Billion Threat: How Exposed India Really May Be To Middle East's Oil Crisis

As the stock market bleeds, trade's stopped in major routes, interlinked businesses collapse, each nation's macroeconomic resilience is under a severe stress test, especially, when a country's energy system is deeply embedded in fragile global networks. The rapidly escalating conflict in West Asia triggered by the US-Israel power axis and the rising instability surrounding Iran's response, its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz in a few days, illustrates how quickly such disruptions travel from tanker routes to macroeconomic fundamentals. For a major energy-importing economy like India, the macroeconomic shock does not remain limited to oil prices. It moves almost immediately through the balance of payments, financial markets, and corporate balance sheets. The most immediate transmission mechanism is the balance of payments. India relies on imports for over 85% of its crude oil requirements, making energy prices one of the most powerful external determinants of macroeconomic stability. Empirical estimates suggest that every ten-dollar increase in the price of Brent crude widens India's current account deficit by roughly 0.3 to 0.4% of GDP, translating into over USD 10 billion in additional import expenditure. What History Suggests Energy shocks rarely occur in isolation. Periods of geopolitical uncertainty often trigger broader commodity movements and precautionary import behaviour. In early 2026, India's gold imports surged sharply as households and investors sought a hedge against global volatility. Combined with higher fertilizer imports and rising energy costs, this pushed the country's merchandise trade deficit to unusually elevated levels. Before drawing parallels with earlier oil shocks, however, an important distinction must be made. The current disruption does not yet resemble the systemic energy crises of the past. It's Different This Time The scale of the price increase remains modest. Brent crude is trading around the eighty-dollar range, well below the levels reached during the Russia-Ukraine energy shock in 2022, when prices surged above USD 130 per barrel. Even in historical perspective, current prices fall within ranges that global markets have previously absorbed without triggering a full macroeconomic break-



REUTERS

down. Equally important is the narrow scope of the disturbance. Earlier crises were marked by simultaneous surges across multiple energy markets. The inflationary spiral of 2021 and 2022 was driven by the simultaneous rise in oil, natural gas, coal, and electricity prices. Today's volatility is concentrated largely in crude oil and liquefied natural gas markets, preventing the broad-based energy inflation that defined previous crises. The structure of global energy consumption has also evolved dramatically since the 1970s. At the time of the Arab oil embargo, petroleum accounted for nearly 25% of global electricity generation. Today, that share has fallen to less than 3%. The Import Vulnerability Yet the absence of a full energy crisis does not mean the macroeconomic consequences are mild. For energy-importing economies, even moderate oil shocks propagate quickly through domestic inflation dynamics. Higher oil prices feed directly into retail inflation through transportation costs, energy inputs, and fertilizer-linked agricultural prices. A sustained increase of USD 10 to 15 dollars per barrel can add roughly thirty basis points to consumer price inflation, while shaving roughly twenty basis points off real GDP growth. This creates a textbook stagflation drag, importing infla-

tionary pressures while suffocating domestic expansion. This widening deficit places immediate depreciation pressure on the Rupee. To prevent a currency freefall and limit imported inflation, the Reserve Bank of India is forced to aggressively intervene using its foreign exchange reserves to mop up Rupees. This massive intervention sucks immense amounts of Rupee liquidity out of the domestic banking system. Consequently, domestic borrowing costs spike for businesses and consumers alike. The dynamic creates a shadow tightening of monetary policy that chokes off credit growth, even if the central bank officially holds the repo rate steady. Persistent inflation driven by these supply-side shocks also forces households to dip into their savings to maintain basic consumption levels. This reduces the pool of domestic capital available for investment, further constraining long-term economic growth. The Point India May Be Missing The narrative that India's economy resides in a resilient sweet spot relies heavily on the assumption of frictionless global trade. A prolonged paralysis of the Strait of Hormuz shatters that premise, exposing the structural limits of the nation's energy architecture. The Strait itself carries around one-fifth of global oil supplies and over 20 mil-

lion barrels per day of petroleum flows, making it one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints. India's profound dependence on Gulf suppliers reveals that aggregate macroeconomic buffers are highly asymmetrical. While strategic petroleum reserves offer a temporary cushion for crude, the lack of strategic storage for refined products leaves the domestic economy dangerously exposed to localized shocks. However, the core threat remains macroeconomic stabilization. The true cost of an extended Hormuz closure is the sudden obsolescence of India's current strategic reserves and subsidy frameworks. Moving forward, policymakers must urgently rethink their strategic response to these vulnerabilities. This requires expanding the size and scope of strategic reserves to include essential fuels like LPG, aggressively diversifying toward Atlantic Basin crude, and building robust maritime security coordination with Gulf partners. A logistical freeze in the Middle East does not merely slow Indian economic growth. It destabilizes the country's balance of payments and amplifies its external vulnerability, which demands a complete recalibration of how the nation insulates its macroeconomic stability from external geopolitical decay when uncertainty rises.

Life is bigger than one exam: Questioning the mindset surrounding the UPSC



(UPSC is not the only measure of success, there is a world of success beyond UPSC)

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) results were recently announced. Like every year, the stories of successful candidates are making headlines. The interviews of the toppers, their strategies, their hard work, and their struggles are being discussed across the country. This is natural. The achievements of the young people who succeed in this exam after years of rigorous preparation are certainly worthy of praise. But amidst all this celebration, there's another aspect that's less frequently discussed. It's the mindset that's forming in our society around the UPSC, which has transformed this exam into not just an opportunity but the ultimate measure of success. Gradually, the belief that the ultimate goal of education is the UPSC has become deeply ingrained in our social environment. In homes, among relatives, and even in school and college settings, the message often echoes: true success lies in passing this exam. If a young man or woman in a household is selected for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or Indian Police Service (IPS), it becomes a matter of pride for the entire family and neighborhood. This pride is natural, but it also carries an unspoken message: those who fail to clear this exam are perhaps not as successful. This mindset often creates unnecessary pressure on the minds of millions of young people. At the age of

18 or 19, when a student is contemplating their future, the UPSC is often presented as the ultimate goal. Interestingly, very few of these young people actually pursue this path, understanding the complexities of governance, policymaking, or public service. Often, this decision is driven more by the desire for social prestige than by motivation. This trend has intensified in the age of social media. Short video clips, images of officers in uniform, and popular portrayals like "Collector Sahib" or "Supercop" create an attractive image in the minds of young people. But the reality behind these images—long working hours, administrative complexities, constant responsibility during natural disasters, political pressure, and the difficulties of decision-making—is rarely mentioned. Another important issue related to this exam is that of language. Over the past few years, the representation of Hindi-medium candidates in UPSC results has been steadily declining. This is not just a language issue, but also an issue of equality of opportunity. Many students from smaller cities and towns across the country prepare for this exam with limited resources. They face challenges with the English language, a lack of study materials, and expensive coaching facilities. Ironically, the officials who must work with the country's diverse population often think and speak in their local languages. Hindi, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Awadhi, or other Indian languages are not just a medium of communication but also an expression of social experiences. If the experience of linguistic inequality increases in the selection process, it should be a matter of concern. At the same time, we must recognize that a nation isn't built solely by administrative services. Today, the contributions of scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, teachers, doctors, and technical experts are equally important to India's progress. Thousands of young people working in information technology are strengthening the country's digital infrastructure. New ideas in the startup world are finding solutions to the problems of

farmers, small businesses, and ordinary citizens. Yet these professions rarely enjoy the social prestige that civil service commands. This imbalance also impacts young people's career choices. Many talented students, simply due to societal expectations, spend years preparing for the UPSC, even though their potential could contribute significantly in other fields. It's also a harsh reality that out of millions of candidates, only a few hundred ultimately succeed in this exam. For the remaining candidates, the process can often prove lengthy and mentally demanding. Some students persevere for five or six years, during which their age, financial resources, and sometimes even personal relationships are compromised. In the event of failure, they are left feeling as if their struggle was in vain. In fact, this attitude is the biggest problem. Success or failure in an exam cannot determine a person's full potential or worth. The UPSC is certainly an important exam, but it is not the door to life's possibilities. As a society, we must understand that there are many paths to success. If we encourage young people to pursue only one path as supreme, we will inadvertently limit their potential. The need today is that while we respect exams like the UPSC, we shouldn't let them become the sole goal of life. Young people must be assured that their hard work, their talent, and their contributions are not diminished by any single result. Every profession has its own dignity, and every responsibility has its own importance in society. If we can develop this balanced approach, it will not only reduce unnecessary pressure on young people but also provide the country with talented and dedicated citizens in diverse fields. Ultimately, it's important to remember that the result of any exam determines only an opportunity, not a person's worth. Life's possibilities are much broader than that—and it is these possibilities that are the true strength of a society. (Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

The extremes of political hatred and the prestige of the country



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(What will those people say now who did not hesitate to call the Prime Minister a "curse" using the stadium name as an excuse?)

Dissent and criticism are considered a healthy tradition in a democracy. Questioning the government in power, its decisions, and its leadership is both a citizen's right and a testament to the strength of democracy. However, when criticism crosses the line and reaches the level of personal sarcasm, ridicule, and insults, it ceases to be merely political disagreement but takes the form of a mindset that undermines democratic discourse. In recent years, bitterness and hatred have increasingly replaced ideological differences in Indian politics. There is a growing tendency to judge any event, achievement, or national event through a political lens. This is why some people often view national achievements or events with disdain simply because they are linked to a leadership or government with which they ideologically disagree. The playing field is generally considered separate from politics. Sports involve competition, wins and losses, but ultimately, the spirit of sportsmanship reigns supreme. However, when the sporting arena is turned into a medium for political sarcasm and personal comments, it undermines both the dignity of the sport and national sentiment. When a sport like cricket, which is deeply connected to the sentiments of millions of people in India, is made the

subject of political taunts, this trend appears worrying. Ironically, India made history by winning the World Cup on the same stadium whose name has been subjected to sarcasm and satire by some. This event speaks volumes not only from a sporting perspective but also symbolically. It demonstrates that fleeting political commentary and negative rhetoric ultimately fail to match real achievements. In a vast and diverse democracy like India, it's natural that not everyone will share the same political ideology. No leader or government is beyond criticism. However, it's equally essential that criticism be based on facts, logic, and decorum. When criticism degenerates into mere sarcasm, insults, and ridicule, it undermines the dignity of democratic discourse. The proliferation of social media has further complicated this problem. Today, everyone has a platform to express their opinions. This is positive from a democratic perspective, as it has expanded freedom of expression. However, it is also evident that sometimes, without fact-checking or thinking seriously, people make comments that spark unnecessary controversy and bitterness. Sometimes, simply to please a particular group or to fit in, people use language that is inappropriate in any way. The decorum of language is of particular importance in political discourse. Words not only express ideas but also influence the social environment. When the language used in public life becomes increasingly harsh and offensive, it impacts general social behavior. Gradually, the tendency to perceive disagreement as hostility and criticism as insult begins to grow. Satire and sarcasm have always had their place in the Indian political tradition, but they were also accompanied by a certain balance and decorum. Today, the situation often appears to be one where the intensity of words and harsh language eliminate the possibility of dialogue. This creates unnecessary tension and division in society. In this context, it's also important to

understand that healthy criticism is essential in any democracy. If the government or leadership makes a mistake, criticism is natural. It's the responsibility of the media, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens to question those in power. But criticism should aim for reform, not merely insult or ridicule. The biggest challenge facing society today is to understand the difference between healthy criticism and unnecessary hatred. Political differences are a natural feature of democracy, but if these differences become a source of social division, it becomes a matter of concern. Therefore, it is essential that we embrace disagreement as a form of respectful dialogue, rather than turning it into a means of personal attack. Conscious sections of society—such as writers, journalists, academics, and intellectuals—can play a crucial role in this direction. They must ensure that the level of public discourse does not decline. Strengthening the tradition of expressing one's views with logic, facts, and decorum can be the greatest contribution to democracy. It should also be kept in mind that political power is not permanent. Over time, governments change, leaders come and go, and circumstances evolve. But a nation's reputation and dignity are permanent. Therefore, in any political dispute or disagreement, we must not forget the fundamental fact that, ultimately, we are all citizens of the same country, and its reputation is a shared responsibility. Today, we need to make political debate more mature and responsible. Instead of turning disagreement into hostility, we should make it a medium for a healthy exchange of ideas. Criticize, but based on logic and facts. Use satire, but maintain its decorum. And most importantly, under all circumstances, we should put the nation's reputation and dignity above all else. The true strength of democracy lies not just in elections, but in the ongoing dialogue within society. If this dialogue is restrained, rational, and respectful, democracy will be strengthened.

Crude oil prices spike near USD 120 a barrel as Iran war impedes production, shipping

Chicago: Oil prices spiked near USD 120 per barrel before falling back on Monday, March 9, as the Iran war intensified, threatening production and shipping in the Middle East and pummeling financial markets. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, surged to \$119.50 per barrel early in the day but later was trading at USD 107.80 per barrel. West Texas Intermediate, the light, sweet crude oil produced in the United States, spiked at \$119.48 per barrel but fell back to USD 103 per barrel. The war's toll on civilian targets grew as Bahrain accused Iran of striking a desalination plant vital to drinking water supplies, and oil depots in Tehran smoldered following overnight strikes by Israel. Oil prices have surged as the war, now in its second week, ensnares countries and places that are critical to the production and movement of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf. Prices moderated after the Financial Times reported that some members of the Group of Seven industrial nations were considering releases of strategic oil reserves to alleviate pressure on the markets. The unconfirmed report cited unnamed people



familiar with the talks. On Saturday, President Donald Trump downplayed the idea of turning to America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, saying US supplies would soon fall. Roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil — about 20 per cent of the world's oil — typically are shipped every day through the Strait of Hormuz, according to independent research firm Rystad Energy. The threat of Iranian missile and drone attacks has all but stopped tankers from traveling through the strait, which is bordered in the north by Iran, carry oil and gas from

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Iran. Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE have cut their oil production as storage tanks fill due to the reduced ability to export crude. Iran, Israel and the United States also have attacked oil and gas facilities since the war started, exacerbating supply concerns. The surge in costs for oil and natural gas is pushing fuel prices higher, cascading through other industries and jolting Asian economies that are especially vulnerable due to the region's heavy reliance on imports from the Middle East. The last time Brent

and US crude futures traded near the current level was in 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine. Higher energy costs push inflation higher, straining household budgets and denting the consumer spending that is a main driver of many big economies. Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 index shed 5.2 per cent on Monday while other markets also foundered. US futures were down more than 1.5 per cent. On Friday, the S&P 500 dropped 1.3 per cent and the Dow plunged as many as 945 points before finishing with a loss of roughly 450. The Nasdaq composite sank 1.6 per cent. In the US, a gallon of regular

gasoline rose to USD 3.45 on Sunday, about 47 cents more than a week earlier, according to AAA motor club. Diesel was selling for about USD 4.60 a gallon, a weekly increase of about 83 cents. Energy Secretary Chris Wright, speaking on CNN's "State of the Union," said US gas prices would be back under USD 3 a gallon "before too long." "Look, you never know exactly the time frame of this, but, in the worst case, this is a weeks, this is not a months thing," Wright added. If oil prices stay above USD 100 per barrel, some analysts and investors say it could be too much for the global economy to withstand. Iranian authorities said strikes by Israel on oil depots in Tehran and a petroleum transfer terminal early Sunday killed four people. Israel's military said the depots were being used by Iran's military for fuel to launch missiles. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, the speaker of Iran's parliament, warned that the war's impact on the oil industry would spiral. Iran exports roughly 1.6 million barrels of oil a day, mostly to China, which may need to look elsewhere for supply if Iran's exports are disrupted, another factor that could increase energy prices.

PURE Energy Private Limited Wins Defamation Case; Court Orders Rs.50 Lakh Damages Against Influencer Aditya Prabhakar

Hyderabad 2026: On January 29, 2026, the Court of the III Additional District and Sessions Judge at Sangareddy delivered a significant judgment in the case of PUR Energy Private Limited vs. M. Prabhakar Aditya (O.S. No. 78 of 2024). The court decreed a recovery of Rs. 50,00,000 (INR 50 Lakhs) in damages in favor of PURE Energy, marking a decisive victory for emerging startup brands against the rising tide of digital extortion and malicious misinformation campaigns orchestrated by social media influencers. **Judicial Findings: Protecting the Right to Reputation** Presiding Judge Smt. G. Sunitha Ravindra Reddy emphasized that the right to reputation is a fundamental right protected under the Constitution of India. The court found that the defendant's, Mr Aditya Prabhakar (known as "EV TraxelXP"), resident of Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, actions caused "immense loss of reputation" and "irreparable loss which cannot be compensated." The court observed that the defendant, preying on the assumption that the legal system is slow, remained ex-parte (absent) during the proceedings, failing to contest the evidence provided by PURE Energy. This evidence included snapshots of defamatory comments, copies of emails, and the deceptive videos themselves. **The Verdict: Financial and Legal Redress** The court ruled entirely in favor of PURE Energy, granting the following reliefs: **Relief Granted** Description Damages Rs. 50,00,000/- for defamation and loss of reputation.



Legal Costs Rs. 73,383/- to be paid by the defendant to the plaintiff. **Permanent Injunction** Restraining the defendant from using or defaming the plaintiff's trademark. **Mandatory Injunction** Requiring the removal of all defamatory material/comments/videos from the internet. Beyond the financial penalty, the court issued a mandatory injunction requiring: The immediate takedown of all scandalous and derogatory content. A public apology in both national newspapers and across the defendant's social media platforms. A permanent restraint on the misuse or dilution of the PURE EV trademark and designs. **The Calculated Defamation Campaign** The court's findings highlighted a deliberate attempt to tarnish PURE Energy's reputation through a YouTube video titled "One Company Destroyed the EV Industry! Poor EV! Real Face." The defendant's tactics included: **Trademark Infringement:** Shrewdly replacing the registered trademark "PURE EV" with "POOR EV" to escape liability while ensuring the audience identified the target.

Stock markets nosedive amid ongoing Middle East conflict

Mumbai: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 3 per cent in early trade on Monday, March 9, as boiling crude oil prices and bearish trend in global equities weighed heavily on investors' sentiment. Besides, relentless foreign fund outflows also made investors jittery. The 30-share BSE Sensex crashed 2,345.89 points or 2.97 per cent to 76,573.01 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 708.75 points or 2.89 per cent to 23,741.70. All the 30-Sensex firms were trading lower. InterGlobe Aviation traded nearly 8 per cent lower. Tata Steel, Maruti, State Bank of India, EteThe 30-share BSE Sensex crashed 2,345.89 points or 2.97 per cent to 76,573.01 in early trade. rnal, Asian Paints and ICICI Bank were also among the major laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 23.63 per cent to USD 114.59 per barrel. "Brent crude has spiked above \$115 delivering a big oil shock to economies and markets. Big oil importers like India will be



hit hard if the West Asian conflict lingers long and crude price remains high," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi tumbled over 7 per cent and Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 6.5 per cent. Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were also quoting lower. The US market ended lower on Friday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 6,030.38 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought

stocks worth Rs 6,971.51 crore in the previous trade. On Friday, the Sensex tumbled 1,097 points or 1.37 per cent to settle at 78,918.90. The Nifty dropped 315.45 points or 1.27 per cent to end at 24,450.45. Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 2,368.29 points or 2.91 per cent, and the Nifty declined 728.2 points or 2.89 per cent. The 30-share BSE Sensex crashed 2,345.89 points or 2.97 per cent to 76,573.01 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 708.75 points or 2.89 per cent to 23,741.70. All the 30-Sensex firms were trading lower. InterGlobe Aviation traded nearly 8 percent lower. Tata

Steel, Maruti, State Bank of India, Eternal, Asian Paints and ICICI Bank were also among the major laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 23.63 percent to USD 114.59 per barrel. "Brent crude has spiked above \$115 delivering a big oil shock to economies and markets. Big oil importers like India will be hit hard if the West Asian conflict lingers long and crude price remains high," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi tumbled over 7 percent and Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 6.5 percent. Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were also quoting lower. The US market ended lower on Friday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 6,030.38 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 6,971.51 crore in the previous trade.

Royal Stag BoomBox creates a spell-binding experience in Vizag: Electrifying Line-Up Featuring Badshah, Nikhita Gandhi, Sreerama Chandra, DJ Sahil Gulati and Payal Dhare

Visakhapatnam, 9th March 2026: Celebrating its philosophy of 'Living It Large', Seagram's Royal Stag brought the much-anticipated fourth edition of Royal Stag BoomBox to Vizag at Indira Priyadarshini Stadium on March 7th. Building on the phenomenal success of previous editions, this year's Royal Stag BoomBox raises the bar by seamlessly blending the best of music and gaming entertainment into one immersive experience. The electrifying evening drew thousands of fans who came together to witness performances by some of India's most celebrated artists. From high-energy sets to unforgettable on-stage moments, the night delivered a powerful showcase of sound, spectacle and the unmistakable spirit of this generation - Generation Large. The Indira Priyadarshini Stadium, in Vizag transformed into a multisensory playground, featuring vibrant installations, immersive art displays, curated food experiences



and interactive zones — going far beyond just music. The evening began with an electric face-off between gaming sensation Payal Dhare & a fan who battled through the gaming rounds at the event, clinched the win, and earned the chance to play alongside her. This was fol-

lowed by a dynamic opening set by DJ Sahil Gulati, who instantly set the tone with his irresistible beats. The momentum continued with an energetic performance by Nikhita Gandhi, known for her versatile pop style and contemporary Bollywood hits that brought a fresh, modern vibe to the

stage. Carrying the pulse of the night forward, Sreerama Chandra followed with his powerful vocals and emotive performance style, delivering timeless melodies that created a heartfelt and memorable moment for the audience. Closing the night on a massive high, Badshah brought his signature larger-than-life swagger to the stage, delivering back-to-back anthems that turned the stadium into a roaring celebration seamlessly reflecting the festival's unique fusion of musical styles and leaving Generation Large with an unforgettable live experience. Royal Stag Boombox has evolved into far more than a music festival, it's a cultural platform that captures the pulse of contemporary India and the unmistakable energy of Generation Large," said Debasree Dasgupta, Chief Marketing Officer, Pernod Ricard India. "Music and live experiences are powerful engines of connection; they create shared moments and enable true conviviality.

Meesho gets about Rs 1,500 cr income tax demand notice

New Delhi: E-commerce firm Meesho has received an income tax demand notice of around Rs 1,500 crore, including interest, which the company plans to contest, a recent company filing said. Meesho received the notice on March 6 for assessment year 2023-24. "The Assessment Unit of Income Tax Department has raised a tax demand aggregating to Rs 14,99,73,82,840, including applicable interest," the filing said. The filing said that the demand order is based on certain additions and adjustments to the income reported by the company. "The company is currently evaluating the Assessment Order and does not concur with the observations and adjustments made in the Assessment Order. The company believes that it has adequate legal and factual grounds to contest the same and is taking necessary steps to protect its interest," Meesho said. The e-commerce firm said that a similar demand order was



issued for the assessment year 2022-23 as well, which it disclosed in detail in the prospectus filed on December 5, 2025. "As indicated therein, the High Court of Karnataka, by an order dated April 17, 2025, granted an interim stay on such demand notice and the matter is currently pending. "The Assessment Order along with the Demand Notice does not have any major adverse impact on the company's financial position, operations, or other activities," the filing said. The company has reported a widening of loss to Rs 490.6 crore for the third quarter ended

December 2025, mainly due to a significant jump in expenses during the festive season. The company had posted a loss of Rs 37.43 crore in the year-ago period. Meesho's expenses increased by about 44 per cent during the quarter, especially in the category of "other expense", which has been a significant portion of the total spending across the reported period. The e-commerce firm posted expenses of close to Rs 4,071 crore during the quarter, out of which "other expenses" stood at Rs 3,821.3 crore, or about 94 per cent of the total during the reported quarter.

Central Electricity Authority Recognizes Power Sector Frontline Workforce at 6th Lineman Diwas on March 2026

New Delhi, 9th March 2026: The sixth edition of 'Lineman Diwas' was celebrated in New Delhi today by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power, in collaboration with Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd. The observance of Lineman Diwas is aimed at acknowledging the tireless dedication and invaluable services of linemen and ground maintenance staff, whose contributions are critical to ensuring the reliable delivery of electricity services across the country. The event was graced by Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy of India. Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary(Power) delivered the keynote address. Shri Ghanshyam Prasad, Chairperson, and Members of CEA, Mr. Dwijadas Basak, CEO, Tata Power-DDL along with senior leaders and distinguished stakeholders from across the power sector. Around 250 linemen and



supervisors from over 66 State and private power distribution and generation companies, along with transmission licensees across India, participated in the event. The gathering provided a platform to share experiences, discuss operational challenges in maintaining uninterrupted power supply, and exchange insights on safety practices while promoting collaborative learning among partici-

pants. The programme commenced with the administration of a safety pledge and participants affirmed their commitment to follow safety practices and remain vigilant in order to protect themselves, their families, and society at large. Addressing the gathering, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik said that Lineman Diwas, observed during National Safety Week, acknowledges the dedication of frontline

power sector workers who ensure uninterrupted electricity supply across the country. He emphasised the need to strengthen safety culture at the workplace through consistent use of personal protective equipment, proper shutdown confirmation before undertaking maintenance work, and regular capacity-building and training. He further highlighted that the adoption of modern technologies

such as smart grids, real-time monitoring systems, AI-enabled predictive maintenance, and drone-based inspections can help identify potential faults in advance and minimise risk to field personnel. Referring to the theme of the sixth edition of Lineman Diwas — "Seva, Suraksha, Swabhiman" — he said it reflects the spirit of service, safety, and dignity of the power sector's frontline workforce. Referring to linemen as the warriors of the power sector, Sh. Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary(Power) observed that during harsh weather or natural disasters, when people remain indoors, linemen step out to restore electricity and ensure continuity of power supply. He noted that despite increasing automation in the sector, it is the linemen on the ground who ultimately restore systems and keep the network running. He emphasised that all field personnel should be equipped with standardised safety kits and tools.

Iranian missiles intercepted over Turkey, UAE and Qatar, as oil price passes \$100 a barrel

Friedrich Merz has called for a speedy change of government Iran, saying: "The sooner the mullah regime stops, the sooner this war will be over." The German chancellor says: "Iran is the centre of international terrorism and this centre must be shut down and the Americans and Israelis are doing that in their own way." He also says the war could have "repercussions" on the German economy, the largest in Europe, and says his government is "doing everything we can to increase our independence in energy policy". Air activity has increased significantly in the last 72 hours here at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, south-west of England, with the United States putting in some of its heavy-duty bomber forces. On Monday, three B-52 bombers landed - the first time B-52s have been seen in the UK during this current conflict. These old, subsonic, warhorse staples of the American Air Force came



into service in the 1950s and have seen action everywhere from Vietnam to Afghanistan. Some B-52s form part of the United States Strategic Command, meaning they can carry nuclear weapons. But they can also be used to deliver conventional air-to-ground munitions. Four B-1 bombers have also landed here since Friday. These supersonic aircraft are capable of flying long distances and can carry

up to 24 cruise missiles. Fairford has a 10,000ft (3,000m) runway, making it ideal for these giant aircraft. These arrivals have attracted dozens of journalists and local people, who've dotted themselves around the perimeter fence to catch a glimpse of this impressive American firepower. Two members of the United Arab Emirates armed forces have been killed in a helicopter crash caused by a technical

malfunction, according to the country's defence ministry. It's not clear whether the incident is related to the US-Israel war with Iran. The UAE's Ministry of Defence says the two people killed were "performing their national duty" at the time of the incident on Monday, and that it "extends its deepest condolences and sympathies to the families of the two martyrs". Earlier we reported that an explosion had been heard in the Qatari

capital of Doha. Qatar's defence ministry now reports that it has been attacked by 17 ballistic missiles and six drones from Iran. It says that its armed forces have successfully intercepted all of the attacks without any casualties. One of the key reasons oil prices have surged to a new four-year high above \$100 (£75) is the absence of shipping traffic passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the only route for tankers carrying oil and gas out of the Gulf. Publicly available tracking data from MarineTraffic shows only one vessel, sailing under a Belize flag, crossing the strait and heading east into the Indian Ocean in the past 24 hours. Another Comoros-flagged vessel can be seen approaching, but has not transmitted its location for over 10 hours. TankerTrackers.com, which monitors global energy shipments, tells BBC Verify that they have identified 57 vessels in the region that are "dark" - meaning they are not

transmitting AIS tracking signals. War-risk insurance premiums for vessels in the area have increased and Iran has threatened to "set ablaze" vessels using the route. BBC Verify has identified 11 reported incidents of damage to commercial ships in the area. Neil Roberts, head of marine and aviation at the Lloyd's Market Association which represents insurance firms, says many vessels remain at anchor because of safety concerns rather than the issue of obtaining insurance cover. On Friday, the US announced a plan for a government-backed reinsurance scheme to help maintain coverage for ships transiting the strait. Like Europe and Asia, US stock markets have also fallen after being spooked by oil prices. Within minutes of opening, the Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbled 1.1% - or more than 550 points, while the S&P 500 index fell by 1%. The Nasdaq also began Monday in the red, down 1%.

POLICE RELEASE IMAGES OF OSLO US EMBASSY EXPLOSION SUSPECT



Police in Norway have released pictures of a suspect linked to an explosion outside the US's embassy in Norway's capital Oslo on Sunday. Two heavily pixelated images taken from surveillance footage show a person with their face concealed, dressed in dark clothing and carrying a backpack. Police said in a statement on Monday that their investigation had so far showed the explosion was caused by an improvised device that was placed at the building's entrance. The blast caused minor damage and no injuries were reported. Police previously said it was possible the explosion was an act of ter-

rorism. They said in their latest update that they had no developments on the attacker's motive. As well as the images, investigators were also examining a video published on Google Maps around the time of the incident, police said. The now-deleted video featured Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, local media reported. He was assassinated last month during joint US-Israeli strikes on Tehran. Police said the investigation into the embassy blast was being treated as high priority and that dogs, drones and helicopters had been used to carry out investigations at the scene of the explosion.

WHO IS MOJTABA KHAMENEI, IRAN'S NEW SUPREME LEADER?



Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in US-Israeli strikes, has been chosen as his successor. Unlike his father, the 56-year-old has largely kept a low profile. He has never held government office, nor given public speeches or interviews, and only a limited number of photos and videos of him have ever been published. But for years there have been rumours that he held considerable influence behind the scenes in Iran. US diplomatic cables, which were published by WikiLeaks in the late 2000s, described him as "the power behind the robes" who was widely regarded as a "capable and forceful" figure within the regime, according to news agency AP. Yet his selection could still prove controversial. The Islamic Republic was founded in 1979 after the monarchy was overthrown and its ideology is based on the principle that the supreme leader should be chosen for his religious standing and proven leadership, not through hereditary succession. During his reign, Ali Khamenei spoke only in general terms about the future leadership of the Islamic Republic. One member of Iran's Assembly of

Experts - the clerical body that selects the supreme leader - said two years ago that Ali Khamenei opposed the idea of his son being a candidate for future leadership. But he had never publicly addressed such speculation. So, who is Mojtaba Khamenei? Born on 8 September 1969 in the north-eastern city of Mashhad, Mojtaba is the second of Ali Khamenei's six children. He received his secondary education at the religious Alavi School in Tehran. At 17, Mojtaba served in the military for several short periods during the Iran-Iraq War, according to Iranian media. The eight-year bloody conflict made the regime even more suspicious of the US and the West, which supported Iraq. In 1999, Mojtaba went to Qom, a holy city which is considered an important centre of Shia theology, to continue his religious studies. It is notable that he did not wear clerical clothing until this time, and it is unclear why he decided to attend a seminary at 30, as it is more usual to do so in one's younger years. Mojtaba remains a mid-ranking cleric, which could pose an obstacle to his acceptance as the new supreme leader.

GUINEA OPPOSITION LEADER URGES 'DIRECT RESISTANCE' AFTER 40 PARTIES DISSOLVED

Guinea's main opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo has said that "direct resistance" to the country's coup leader-turned-president is now the only remaining path to change, after the authorities dissolved 40 political parties. The authorities accused the parties of not complying with the law - a charge they have rejected. The move comes two months after former junta head Mamady Doumbouya was sworn-in as president, following an election that saw some key challengers barred from running. Doumbouya, who came to power in 2021 after overthrowing Condé, has been accused of cracking down on democratic freedoms. Among the parties dissolved were the Rally



of the People of Guinea of former President Alpha Condé and Diallo's Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea. Diallo is currently in exile. Late last Friday, Guinea's ministry of territorial administration and decentralisation announced in a decree that the headquarters and local offices of 40 political parties would be closed, and their logos, acronyms and other symbols banned from use.

Istanbul's ex-mayor on trial for corruption charges

The former mayor of Istanbul has appeared in court as the central defendant in a mass corruption trial that his opposition party and rights groups say is politically motivated. Ekrem Imamoglu, 55, faces more than 140 charges including corruption and running a criminal organisation. Prosecutors are seeking a jail term of up to 2,430 years. He and his Republican People's Party (CHP) deny any wrongdoing. They accuse Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his allies of launching a crackdown over the leader's decline in popularity. Prior to the trial, which got off to a chaotic start on Monday, Imamoglu was widely seen as one of the few politicians capable of defeating Erdogan, who has been at the top of Turkish politics since 2003. Another 407 of



Imamoglu's supporters have also been put on trial, accused of running a criminal corruption network headed by the opposition figure, who prosecutors describe as its "founder and leader". Imamoglu was greeted by his supporters with cheers and whistles as he entered the courtroom in the Marmara prison on Monday. But it was not long before proceedings were brought to a halt by the judge after the politician contested the judge's

country's largest street protests in more than a decade, followed by hundreds of arrests and a police crackdown. Apart from the corruption case, prosecutors have accused him of a raft of other offences including espionage and forging his university degree, a qualification he would need to become president and that has since been annulled. Turkish authorities deny that the judiciary is being used as a political tool. But the trial has been strongly criticised by rights groups. "The trial of Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu follows more than a year of weaponising the criminal justice system against his party and other CHP elected officials while he sits in jail," Benjamin Ward, deputy Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement last week.

INDIA OFFERED SANCTUARY TO IRANIAN SHIP THREE DAYS BEFORE US SANK IT

The Iranian warship Iris Dena was given permission by India to dock three days before it was torpedoed by a US submarine, India has said. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar said Iran had sought permission for three of its ships to dock at Indian ports on 28 February - the day the US and Israel began a war on Iran - and permission was granted by India on 1 March. The ships' movements between 1 and 4 March are not clear and nor is why only one of them made it to India. The sinking of the Iris Dena, with 130 sailors on board, in international waters off Sri Lanka's southern coast on 4 March marked a dramatic widening



of the war - and raised questions about India's authority in its backyard. It was the first military strike outside the Middle East since the US and Israel launched their war on Iran. President Donald Trump has said destroying Iran's navy is one aim of the

assault. The three Iranian ships - Iris Dena, Iris Bushehr and Iris Lavan - had all participated in a military exercise hosted by India between 15 and 25 February in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam. They left Indian waters on 25 February and were likely to

have been in international waters on 28 February - when the US and Israel began attacking Iran. "The Iranian side had requested permission on 28 February for three ships in the region to dock at our ports. This was accorded on 1 March," Jaishankar told parliament on Monday. "Iris Lavan actually docked on 4 March in Kochi. The crew is currently in Indian naval facilities. We believe that this was the right thing to do." It was the first military strike outside the Middle East since the US and Israel launched their war on Iran. President Donald Trump has said destroying Iran's navy is one aim of the assault.

BAG OF CANNABIS AND CASH ACCIDENTALLY DONATED TO NZ CHARITY SHOP



Two teenagers have been arrested after accidentally leaving a backpack containing cannabis and thousands of dollars in cash outside a charity shop in New Zealand. After arresting the owners, officers also searched their vehicle, where they found an air pistol - possession of which requires a licence and supervision for under 18s - a police scanner, and more cash. Possession of a police scanner is not illegal in New Zealand, but distributing or acting on information heard on it is a crime. Police said two 16-year-olds - a male and a female - had been arrested. Officials have not released any details of charges or court appearances. New Zealand has strict rules about reporting details of cases before its Youth Court. In a 2020 referendum, voters in New Zealand narrowly rejected a measure to legalise recreational cannabis.

that this particular donation had a distinctive pungent aroma," a police spokesperson told the New Zealand Herald. "Once it was opened, it quickly emerged why." After arresting the owners, officers also searched their vehicle, where they found an air pistol - possession of which requires a licence and supervision for under 18s - a police scanner, and more cash. Possession of a police scanner is not illegal in New Zealand, but distributing or acting on information heard on it is a crime. Police said two 16-year-olds - a male and a female - had been arrested. Officials have not released any details of charges or court appearances. New Zealand has strict rules about reporting details of cases before its Youth Court. In a 2020 referendum, voters in New Zealand narrowly rejected a measure to legalise recreational cannabis.



N Korea cancels Pyongyang Marathon

Alleged Bondi gunman seeks order to suppress family's identity

Alleged Bondi Beach gunman Naveed Akram has sought a court order to prevent media from publishing details of his immediate family over concerns about their safety. The 24-year-old, who faces 59 charges including 15 counts of murder over the 14 December attack on a Jewish festival, did not appear in person at Monday's hearing. His lawyer applied to the court in Sydney on his behalf for a non-publication order on the names, addresses and places of work and school for his mother, brother and sister. Magistrate Greg Groggin granted a temporary order, citing global interest in the case - but noted that the name of Akram's mother had already been widely published. "Hasn't the horse



already bolted on that?" he asked. A lawyer for News Corp Australia - which owns Sky News Australia and numerous prominent newspapers - present at the hearing at the Downing Centre Local Court said the company would likely challenge the order. The matter is due to return to court briefly next week.

Four Indians, One Pakistan Star In ICC 'Team Of T20 World Cup'

India's T20 World Cup win had many superlative performances. Be it Sanju Samson, Jasprit Bumrah or Ishan Kishan, India had the right person at the right time to get the job done. The result was there for all to see in the 2026 T20 World Cup final - a clinical India crossing the finishing line and lifting the coveted trophy with a 96-run win over New Zealand. A day after the title clash in Ahmedabad, four members of the victorious Indian team were named in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Team of the Tournament. "Player of the Tournament Sanju Samson leads the winning quartet after the opener's 321 runs from just five innings. Samson started the tournament outside of the Indian XI but shone with Player of the Match performances against the West Indies and England before making the highest individual score in a Men's T20 World Cup final



with 89 against New Zealand on Sunday," the ICC said in a release. "He is joined by teammates Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah, as India's impressive victory on home soil is recognised." The top of the order, announced by the ICC, also includes Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan, who finished as the tournament's top run-scorer with an aggregate of 383. That came at an average of 76.60 and was headlined by a pair of centuries - against Sri Lanka and Namibia. Aiden Markram is one of two South Africans included in the side, with the Proteas captain scoring 286

runs - including three half-centuries - as his team reached the semi-finals. In fact, Markram was named the captain of the Team of the Tournament. Lungi Ngidi was also included, having taken 12 wickets at an average of 15.58. He took four wickets against Canada and three each

Gautam Gambhir's Reply To MS Dhoni's "Coach Sahab" Post Wins Internet

Over the years, much has been said about the relationship between MS Dhoni and Gautam Gambhir. The now-India coach's comments on Dhoni's iconic six that sealed the 2011 ODI World Cup final against Sri Lanka remain a subject of debate among fans even today. However, as Dhoni attended the T20 World Cup 2026 final between India and New Zealand in Ahmedabad on Sunday, a touch of camaraderie blossomed between the two former India stalwarts. Dhoni even shared a post on Instagram after India clinched a 96-run win in the final, urging Gambhir to smile a little more. "History gets created at Ahmedabad, big congratulations to the team and support staff and to all the fans of the Indian Cricket Team worldwide. Such a pleasure to see all of you play. Coach Sahab, smile looks great on you. Intensity with smile is a killer



combo, very well done. Enjoy guys (BUMRAH ke baare mein kuch na likhoo tou hi acha hai. CHAMPION BOWLER)," Dhoni captioned the post. Gambhir, basking in the glory of scripting history in the T20 World Cup, responded to Dhoni's comment, saying: "And what a reason to smile, great seeing you." Dhoni, who was present at the stadium for the blockbuster final and also walked out with the trophy alongside 2024 T20 World Cup-winning captain Rohit Sharma, shared a picture of the victorious Indian team on Instagram and praised the players, coach, support staff, and fans. India's victory was built on a dominant batting display led by Sanju Samson's 89 off 46 balls, supported by half-centuries from Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan. The bowlers then sealed the contest early, with Jasprit Bumrah and Axar Patel dismantling New Zealand's top order to secure a comprehensive 96-run win.

"Jabse Mahieka Aayi Hai": Hardik Pandya's Ultimate 'Life-Changing' Admission After T20 World Cup Win

Not many players can claim to be two-time T20 World Cup winners. Hardik Pandya is now one of those rare cricketers. The star all-rounder was a crucial member of the side that won the 2024 T20 World Cup, and now he has been a defining factor in the team defending the title. Speaking after the title win, Pandya said he still has many years of cricket left in him and wants to make the most of that period by helping India dominate global tournaments. Throughout the tournament, Pandya was accompanied by girlfriend Mahieka Sharma at all venues. Even during the final, Mahieka cheered on Pandya. After



the final, Pandya made a big admission: "Jab se Mahieka aayi hai, life mein bas jeet hi jeet hai (From the time Mahieka has come into my life, I am only winning)." Hardik Pandya has set a target for the future, saying he hopes to win 10 more ICC titles over the next decade

the people is amazing. The effort we have put in... From yesterday, I knew we are champions. The only self-belief I had was that there was no other result. Losing wasn't a thought," Pandya said. Pandya also reflected on a key moment earlier when he bowled the 19th over against England in the semi-final, recalling how memories from the 2024 T20 World Cup helped him stay composed in pressure situations. "I am thankful to God. When I was bowling the 19th over against England, I was thinking about the 2024 World Cup final. I told Kishan and Abhishek also that when you go out to bat, think of good memories," he said.

"Justice Mil Gaya": Arshdeep Singh Trolls Sanju Samson, Gautam Gambhir In Hilarious Videos

Sanju Samson and Gautam Gambhir - two stalwarts of the Indian cricket team who dominated social media chatter - were both rewarded for their resilient efforts as India defeated New Zealand to clinch the T20 World Cup 2026 title. Samson wasn't even a starter at the beginning of the tournament, but he seized his opportunities, delivering match-winning performances in the last three games. Gambhir, on the other hand, silenced speculation about his coaching future by guiding the team to back-to-back T20 World Cup triumphs. As Gambhir and Samson redeemed themselves on social media, putting the chatter around their performances to rest, India pacer Arshdeep Singh shared a couple of hilarious videos



trolling both. "Justice for Sanju Samson" often trended on social media whenever the wicketkeeper-batter was overlooked for a spot in the Indian team. It was only after Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's retirements that Samson became a permanent fixture. Named Player of the Series in the T20 World Cup, Samson was cheekily trolled

by Arshdeep, who said, "Justice mil gaya (finally got justice)," in reference to the popular trend. When Arshdeep turned the camera towards Gambhir, he teased him with, "Paaji, kade has vi leya karo yaar (brother, you should smile sometimes)," leaving the India coach in splits. The India coach also criticised the hate often directed at him online, stressing that his accountability lies with the team, not with trolls. "My accountability is not towards social media. It is for the team. The process was not to be shared. We wanted to play fearless cricket. We wanted to play high-risk, high-reward cricket - that's how this format works. The captain and I were on the same page. If I can work honestly with them, if we can put in the hard work honestly, my accountability was never before, nor will it be today or in the future, towards social media. Even if I win two ICC trophies as a coach, it really does not matter. In the future, those 30 people in the changing room will matter the most to me in my coaching tenure - no one else matters."

Mohammad Amir Tears Into Mitchell Santner Over Tactical Blunder As His India Prediction Backfires

Former Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir found himself under the spotlight again as another one of his India predictions backfired. Amir had backed New Zealand to go all the way in the tournament and beat India in the final, but Suryakumar Yadav's men turned the contest into a one-sided affair. Playing at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, the hosts emerged triumphant by 96 runs. The manner of India's win saw Amir question New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner's tactical calls at the start of the game. New Zealand won the toss and opted to field first, hoping to dismiss India for a chaseable score. But the Kiwis committed the biggest blunder of the game when they ignored the



option of an all-out off-spin attack against the under-fire Abhishek Sharma. "Credit to New Zealand bowlers. They were bowling wides and being hit for sixes from there. It's not like India doesn't deserve any credit. I just didn't understand the bowling changes. When you know Abhishek Sharma struggles against spinners, you bring in Jacob Duffy,"

Amir said during a discussion on the 'Haarna Mana Hai' show. "I have never seen New Zealand under such pressure. I have been following them since 2005, but I have never seen them under pressure," he added. India outmuscled New Zealand with the bat, piling up a whopping total of 255 runs. The likes of Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, and Ishan Kishan all contributed to the tally, leaving New Zealand with a monumental target to chase. Amir, who has often said that bowlers win you tournaments, admitted that India had busted the myth as they relied heavily on their explosive batting to get the job done time and again in this tournament. "I have to give credit to India.

VERSTAPPEN TO COMPETE IN 'BUCKET LIST' 24-HOUR RACE

Four-time Formula 1 world champion Max Verstappen will tick off one of his "bucket list" events to compete in the Nurburgring 24-Hours endurance race. The 28-year-old Red Bull F1 driver will get behind the wheel of a Mercedes AMG GT car at the event in May, when showroom-style cars take on the famous 15.8-mile circuit in the Eifel mountains in Germany. The Dutchman, who finished sixth in Sunday's season-opening Australian Grand Prix, said: "The Nurburgring Nordschleife is a special place. There's no other track like it. The 24-hours of Nurburgring is a race that's been on my bucket list for a long time, so I'm really thrilled we



can make it happen now." It is very rare for an F1 driver, especially of Verstappen's calibre, to take part in a lower-level motorsport event but he has long-enjoyed driving on motorsport simulator games and has a particular affinity with sportscar racing. It is widely considered

Verstappen could one day compete at the Le Mans 24-Hours, external an event which has exploded in popularity in recent years thanks to the introduction of new 'hypercar' regulations, which has seen the likes of Ferrari, Peugeot, Aston Martin and Ford return to the top level of sportscars. The revered Nurburgring 24-hours is a level below races such as Le Mans, which is part of the World Endurance Championship, which last week announced it will postpone the season-opening Qatar 1812km race because the US-Israeli war against Iran.

'A LONG WAY TO GO' - RADUCANU LOSES IN 52 MINUTES



Britain's Emma Raducanu says she needs to be "aggressive" if she is to compete against the world's best players after losing to Amanda Anisimova in only 52 minutes at Indian Wells. American sixth seed Anisimova, a runner-up at Wimbledon and the US Open last year, raced to a 6-1 6-1 victory to reach the fourth round in California. Raducanu lost her serve in the opening game, won only 11 points in the first set and was 3-0 down in the second before managing to hold serve. "When I'm playing someone who's at the top like that, I think they have an extra 10

miles an hour on their serve than me," Raducanu said. "If I'm not feeling it, that gap feels more evident in terms of weight of shot, in terms of power. "You just feel a little bit behind and your punches aren't landing as much as theirs are. "I need to obviously be aggressive when playing those players, but I think there's still a long way to go to be doing that and I need to use my strengths and probably mix it up a bit more." Having enlisted Mark Petchey as a temporary coach after parting with Francisco Roig in January, Raducanu said last week that she is hoping to rediscover her "natural way of playing" in an attempt to build towards the form that won her the 2021 US Open. Raducanu, who beat Anastasia Zakharova 6-1 6-3 in the second round, said: "It's difficult to read much into the game.

Ngannou to make MMA return on Rousey v Carano card

Francis Ngannou will return to mixed martial arts after a 19-month absence when he faces Brazil's Philippe Lins on 16 May. The five-round heavyweight bout will be part of Most Valuable Promotions' (MVP) inaugural MMA fight card, headlined by Ronda Rousey and Gina Carano in Los Angeles. Former UFC champion Ngannou has not fought in MMA since October 2024, when the Cameroonian stopped Renan Ferreira in

the first round to win the PFL Super Fights heavyweight championship. "While the world was busy talking, I was busy evolving," said Ngannou. "Silence shouldn't be mistaken for absence - it's the sound of a predator closing the distance. "Stepping back into the cage isn't just a return - it's a reclamation. My return to MMA demanded a stage that matched the scale of my ambition, and partnering with MVP to bring this

event to Netflix ensures the entire world is watching." Ngannou's exit from the UFC in January 2023 was a massive moment in MMA as one of the sport's biggest stars opted to walk away from the world's biggest promotion. The 39-year-old joined the Professional Fighters League (PFL) in May 2023, but fought just once for the MMA promotion. His status rocketed when he came close to beating Tyson Fury in a boxing contest in

October 2023, and he went on to face Anthony Joshua in 2024, which ended in a knockout defeat. He parted ways with the PFL this week and it was announced on Monday that he had joined Jake Paul's MVP. "Francis Ngannou is unequivocally the best heavyweight MMA fighter in the world and his addition creates star power on one card like never before seen in the sport," said Paul and Nakisa Bidarian, the co-

founders of MVP.



'EPIC - FIRST SEMESTER' ~ First Single "Sancharam" Strikes a Soulful Note - A Hesham Abdul Wahab Musical



The makers of EPIC - FIRST SEMESTER have unveiled the film's first single "Sancharam," a soulful track that beautifully captures the emotional journey of the lead characters. Penned by renowned lyricist Goreti Venkanna, the song stands out for its pure Telugu poetry and heartfelt storytelling. The lyrics elegantly contrast the essence of desi roots and videshi life, perfectly aligning with the film's narrative. Adding more depth to the composition, the track is melodiously

sung by Hesham Abdul Wahab along with Goreti Venkanna, with music composed by Hesham Abdul Wahab. Visually, the song presents stunning glimpses of London, blending vibrant international landscapes with the soulful charm of Telugu vocals. The pairing of Anand Deverakonda and Vaishnavi Chaitanya, who reunite after the blockbuster Baby, adds a charming presence on screen. EPIC - FIRST SEMESTER marks the feature film directorial

debut of Aditya Haasan and brings together a promising cast and crew. The film is produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, and presented by Srikrara Studios. Co-Produced by Venkat Upputuri & VMR. The film promises to be a refreshing and emotionally rich soft love story that captures the innocence, conflicts, and unspoken emotions of young hearts. More updates about the film will be revealed soon.

Yash Raj Films announces July 10, 2026 as the theatrical release date of Alpha!



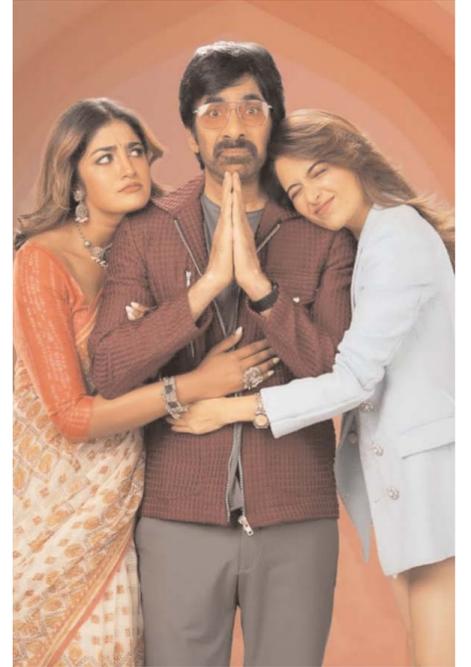
Yash Raj Films' has announced the theatrical release date of its highly awaited action entertainer, Alpha, headlined by Alia Bhatt, to be July 10, 2026! YRF, Alia and Sharvari posted about this development with a brand new teaser poster that showed a glimpse of Alia Bhatt's all new fierce action avatar in which she is shown all bruised and cut, clearly after a bloody showdown. Alpha pairs Alia Bhatt with the rising star of the Hindi film industry, Sharvari, in this relentless action thriller, that also has Anil Kapoor & Bobby Deol in pivotal

roles. Alia and Sharvari will go toe to toe against Bobby in this brutal showdown. Alpha marks Alia's first film with Yash Raj Films. It is also the first female-led out and out action film of India with Alia and Sharvari teaming up to pull off never seen a girl do before on screen. Alpha is directed by Shiv Rawail, who had previously directed YRF's global hit series The Railway Men. The film has been produced by Aditya Chopra.



'Bhartha Mahasayulaku Vignayapathi' set for its Digital Premiere on ZEE5 from March 13th, stream- ing in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam

ZEE5 is set to premiere the much-anticipated comedy-drama Bhartha Mahasayulaku Vignayapathi on March 13th, across all four South languages: Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. Written and directed by Kishore Tirumala and produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under SLV Cinemas, the film stars Ravi Teja, Ashika Ranganath, and Dimple Hayathi in lead roles. Blending humour, emotion and Kishore Tirumala's trademark slice-of-life storytelling, the film follows a man whose seemingly simple professional trip spirals into an unexpected personal maze. What begins as an attempt to fix a business setback slowly unfolds into a tangled web of relationships, choices and consequences, told with charm, warmth and sharp comedic timing. The Zee5 premiere aims to bring this layered entertainer to a wider audience across languages. Speaking about the film's digital release, Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja said, "This film has a very unique emotional core wrapped in humour. Kishore Tirumala has narrated it in a way that stays both entertaining and relatable. I'm glad it's coming to ZEE5 so audiences across South regions can experience it in their own language." Ashika Ranganath shared, "My character has shades that many women will instantly connect with. The situations are funny, chaotic and real at the same time. I'm excited to see how



audiences react to it on its digital release." Dimple Hayathi added, "This film deals with human relationships in an honest yet entertaining way. Each character has a purpose and a moment that stays with you. Looking forward to the audience discovering those layers on ZEE5." With its relatable conflicts, lively performances and Kishore Tirumala's grounded narrative style, Bhartha Mahasayulaku Vignayapathi promises to be an engaging watch for families and youth alike. The film premieres on March 13th on ZEE5 in Telugu, Tamil,

Kannada and Malayalam. *About ZEE5: ZEE5 is Bharat's largest home-grown video streaming platform and the multilingual storyteller for millions of entertainment seekers. ZEE5 stems from the stable of ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL), a Global Content Powerhouse. An undisputed choice of video on demand platform for consumers, it offers an expansive and diverse library comprising 4,071+ films, 1,800+ TV shows, 422+ web originals, 4,492+ music videos, and over 1.35 lakh hours of on-demand content.

"R" Movie Launched with Pooja Ceremony under GMAA Entertainments Banner

A new film titled "R" has been officially launched under the banner GMAA Entertainments, presented by Sireesha. The film is being directed and produced by Goli Ramakrishna, while Gali Bala Kiran Reddy is serving as the co-producer. Set against a village backdrop, the film was formally launched today with a pooja ceremony at Sri Prasanna Anjaneya Swamy Temple. The launch event was attended by the film's team and well-wishers. The movie features Santosh Krishnan, Bhagya Reddy, Brahmanandam Reddy, Durgam Naidu, Pawan, Siri, Sandhya,



Bhanu Chander, Swathi and others in important roles. The technical team includes Ashok Reddy Kankalla as the cinematographer, Munish as the editor, Shivaji as the choreographer,

Kadavakallu Ganesh as the Chief Associate Director, and Vedanth Raj Ande as the Assistant Director. The makers have announced that the shooting will commence from the 20th of this month, and

the film is scheduled for a grand release on October 17 this year. Speaking on the occasion, director-producer Goli Ramakrishna said that the film will be completed in two schedules with the support of the cast and crew. He added that the shooting will take place in and around Hyderabad, and the film will carry a meaningful message for the audience. He also mentioned that more details about the project will be revealed soon in a unique manner. Co-producer Gali Bala Kiran Reddy stated that the release date has already been announced because of the director's strong passion and confidence in the film.

HYDERABAD: CM REVANTH REDDY TO LAUNCH ALLU CINEMAS



"Miracle" movie Will Be the Best Film of My Career!! — Crazy Heroine Hebah Patel



A film that will make director Prabhas Nimmala's name resonate widely!! — Multi-talented Hero Sriram I will remain grateful for a lifetime to the people of Kondamadugu. "Miracle" is a unique story that has never before been portrayed on the Indian screen. — Director Prabhas Nimmala Despite having several blockbuster films in my career such as "Kumari 21F, Eedo Rakam - Aado Rakam, and Odela Railway Station", the film I am currently working on, "Miracle," will be the most memorable movie of my career. Thanks to director Prabhas Nimmala, said crazy heroine Hebah Patel. The unique story-based film "Miracle" is being jointly produced by Ramesh Eggidi, Srikanth Mogadasu, and Chander Goud under the Saida Family Entertainment banner. Hebah Patel plays the female lead in the film, while senior actors Suresh and Sriram play key roles. Randheer Beesu appears as the

hero. The film is being directed by Prabhas Nimmala, known for films like "Satya Gang and Fighter Shiva". On the occasion of completing the third shooting schedule in Kondamadugu, a village near Hyderabad, the team of Miracle held a press meet in the presence of village elders, local residents, and the film unit members. With Hebah Patel announcing that Miracle would be the best film of her career, expectations for the film have increased significantly. The press meet, held in the heart of Kondamadugu village and attended by a large gathering of villagers, was addressed by Hero Sriram, heroine Hebah Patel, director Prabhas Nimmala, hero Randheer Beesu, Naresh Naidu (who is debuting as the antagonist), cinematographer Suresh Reddy, second and third heroines Navya Sri and Akshara, executive producer Srikanth, and senior film journalist Dheeraj Appaji, who is playing a forensic officer in the film.

'Lechindi Mahilalokam' is not a movie that preaches women to commit crimes but a story that makes everyone laugh: Manchu Lakshmi

Sunstudio has partnered with UFO to release 'Lechindi Mahilalokam' in theatres. The film is jointly produced by Hyma Rajasekar, Shweta Mahi, and Nirosha Naveen under the banners of Brihaspati Entertainments, Apparently Cinema, and Story Factory. Directed by the duo Arjun and Carthyk Sreerama Chandra, this movie features actress Manchu Lakshmi, Sriram Chandra, Ananya Nagalla, Hariteja, Hema, Supriya, and Shraddha Das in the lead roles. These days a newly married couple has differences over petty issues. And neighbours keep adding fuel to these fights, and pollute to cause more harm. The developments in this sequence are thrilling on one hand and hilarious on the other side. This family entertainer is set to be released in the-



aters on March 26. The trailer of Lechindi Mahilalokam was grandly launched at Prasad Lab on Monday. Speaking at the event, the producers said, "The film industry is new to us. We were not aware of what's in store for newcomers in the industry. We made such a

good movie in our first attempt. If everyone watches our movie in theaters and blesses us, we will bring you many more such good stories." Director Arjun said, "The movie came out as expected because of the dedication every single individual in the film. All our

women co-operated with us very well. The DoP also put a lot of efforts. That is why the movie output came out so well. It is a completely fun movie that everyone will like. Everyone should definitely watch it." Another director Carthyk Sreerama Chandra said, "This is a film

of fun-riot. All the artistes supported us a lot. The movie came out quite good. If you have watched the trailer, I think everyone would like to watch the entire film. I think everyone will enjoy this movie in theaters. Everyone should definitely watch it on March 26," he said. AP, Telangana UFO Vice President Laxman said, "I saw the movie and felt it is good story that strikes chord with audiences. I came forward to release it. Everyone will like this movie. I want everyone to definitely watch it in theaters and enjoy it." Actress Hariteja said, "The vibe of the movie is understood from the trailer. We enjoyed a lot while making the movie. It starts with a small point and the movie goes as it engages audiences very well. It will be very entertaining. Everyone should definitely watch it on March 26." Actress Manchu

Lakshmi said, "Even though we made a small film, end of the day it feels a great achievement as we made a wonderful film. I got excited about the comedy in it. We made a lot of changes in the flow. Watch the film as a film. We will listen to a serious subject only if it is told comically. All women should watch it. I want the producers to get double the money they invested. I am very happy to be a part of the film with such good women. The blue drum shown in the promotions has nothing to do with our film. 'Lechindi Mahila Lokam' is not a film that tells people to commit murder. It is a film that makes everyone laugh. Everyone should definitely watch it on March 26," she said. Singer and actor Srirama Chandra said that he is happy to be a part of the film. "Happy Women's Day to all women.