

OM NAMO
VENKATESAYA



09-03-2026
Total pilgrims: 72,526
Tonsures: 26,664
Hundi kanukalu: 4.41CR
Waiting Compartments..22

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam
(with out SSD Tokens) - 12-15 H

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99484 80279, 73307 78889

TERRORIST KILLED AS
ARMY FOILS INFILTRATION
BID IN J&K'S RAJOURI



IRAN MISSILE
ATTACKS DOWN 90
PER CENT, SAYS
PENTAGON



ARSHDEEP SINGH
FINED FOR CODE OF
CONDUCT BREACH
AFTER T20 WC
FINAL WIN



IN BRIFS

AIR INDIA, AIR INDIA EXPRESS
TO LEVY FUEL SURCHARGE ON
TICKETS; AIRFARES TO RISE



NEW DELHI: (Mar 10) Airfares are set to rise with Air India and Air India Express deciding to levy a fuel surcharge of Rs 399 on each domestic flight ticket from March 12 and also hike the charge for international bookings due to a steep rise in jet fuel prices amid the Middle East conflict. The new fuel surcharges will be implemented in a phased manner. Regretting the need for fuel surcharges, Air India on Tuesday said that without such surcharges, "it is likely that some flights would be unable to cover operating costs and would have to be cancelled".

INDIA SUPPLYING DIESEL TO
BANGLADESH AS PART OF
ONGOING AGREEMENT



New Delhi, March 10 : India is continuing to supply diesel to Bangladesh via pipeline from the Numaligarh refinery in Assam as part of the long-term agreement that is in place with the neighbouring country. The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline was operationalised in 2017. It has been supplying diesel to Bangladesh on a commercial basis from the Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. This diesel supply is part of regular ongoing energy trade between the two countries, a senior official said. Meanwhile, fuel availability in India is being closely monitored, he added. "We have started receiving diesel from Monday afternoon at Parbatipur depot in Dinajpur from Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) in Assam through the Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline," a Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) spokesman said. He said it could take nearly 45 hours to pump the 5,000 tonnes of diesel, which is expected to continue until Wednesday evening.

LPG SHORTAGE PUTS HYDERABAD
RESTAURANTS ON BRINK OF SHUTDOWN



Hyderabad (TSIT): Hyderabad's hospitality sector has reported a sharp decline in the availability of commercial LPG cylinders, with several restaurants warning that the situation could lead to many temporarily shutting operations. With Israel and the US attacking Iran and the widening conflict in West Asia, coupled with the shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz, the situation has significantly disrupted LPG supply in India. Restaurant associations in Bengaluru and Mumbai have already declared an emergency, announcing the closure of kitchen operations by the end of the week. Hyderabad is likely to follow suit, with many restaurant owners warning the shortage could soon become a reality if the government fails to address the issue. Cloud kitchens under stress Cloud kitchens in Hyderabad are also facing the strain. These delivery-only restaurants operate without a physical dining area or storefront, focusing entirely on preparing food for online orders. Muhammad Yusuf, owner of Biryani Souq - Take Away Kitchen, a famous cloud kitchen in Film Nagar in Jubilee Hills, said that LPG supply has decreased to less than 50 per cent. "We would get 10 cylinders. Today, we just got three. We do not know what tomorrow holds. Things are very uncertain," Yusuf has a team of 55 members, all natives from other states. Many have resonated the same sentiment that no government official has reached out to them. "No representative from the government has reached out to us. We have no clarity or update on how long this situation will last," said a restaurant owner. Several small hotels and roadside eateries serving a broader segment of the city's population are feeling the brunt as supplies of commercial LPG cylinders dwindle. The situation has only worsened during the ongoing festive month of Ramadan. REDIRECTING LPG FOR DOMESTIC USE Industry representatives said that dispatches have slowed significantly, forcing distributors to release existing stock cautiously. The government's prioritisation of domestic cooking gas supplies over commercial has led to a crunch for hotels and restaurants. YS Naveen, a domestic LPG supplier in BHEL, said commercial establishments have not received cylinders for the last three days. "Hotels and restaurants are facing strain. So far, there is no crisis as such, but if the situation in the Middle East prolongs, supplies will be affected," Telangana Gas Dealers Association President Jagan Mohan Reddy confirmed the demand and supply issue, following the outbreak of the war. "The supply of commercial LPG cylinders has stopped, although canteens in schools, colleges and hospitals, as well as orphanages, will continue receiving," he said. According to him, the bigger hotels, which have enough stocks, can manage for a week, but smaller ones could be forced to shut down in a couple of days. "In one or two days more than 60 per cent of the hotels may be shut down (temporarily)," Reddy said. The stoppage has prompted some restaurant association members to approach the government, he added. Twin Cities Gas Dealers Association Secretary Rajender Reddy said that the Union Ministry for Petroleum and Natural Gas has issued a government order (GO) under the Essential Commodities Act, and gas is diverted to domestic use only. "Restaurants cannot do anything. They will have to arrange other ways to procure cylinders," he said. A gas dealer, who wished to remain anonymous, warned that if the situation continues, there is likely to be a shortage in domestic cylinders as well. India consumes some 31.3 million tonnes of LPG annually. As much as 87 per cent of this is in the domestic sector, ie, household kitchens, and the rest in commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants. India imports 85 to 90 per cent of its oil and natural gas supply from the Middle East.

Rahul Gandhi 'only person who didn't bend' before govt, says Priyanka in LS



New Delhi, March 10 : Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday strongly defended Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, stating that he is the only person who has not bowed before the BJP-led government. She made the remarks while speaking during the discussion on the resolution seeking the removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was presiding over the House at the time, allowed Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to address the House during the debate. In her speech, Priyanka Gandhi took a swipe at the ruling party and said she found it ironic that leaders who frequently criticise former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru were now quoting him. "I was laughing today, because

strongest was Nehru ji," she said, drawing loud thumping from the Opposition benches in support of her remarks. She then defended Rahul Gandhi and said that he had remained firm despite sustained attacks from the government. "There is only one person in this country who did not bend in front of these people (government) in these past 12 years - that is the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi. This is because the LoP does not shy away from speaking the truth. They (government) cannot digest the truth," Priyanka Gandhi said. Her remarks came amid a broader debate in the House over the motion against Speaker Om Birla. Earlier in the discussion, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, replying to the motion

Jaishankar discusses West Asia crisis with German, South Korean counterparts; focus on energy security



NEW DELHI (TSIT) External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday spoke to his German and South Korean counterparts as New Delhi ramps up diplomatic efforts to navigate the fallout of the West Asia crisis, especially on the energy supplies. Global oil and gas prices have surged after Iran virtually blocked the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow shipping lane between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, that handles roughly 20 per cent of global oil and LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas). Following his conversation with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl, Jaishankar said the ongoing conflict in West Asia was discussed. "Exchanged views with FM @JoWadepuhl of Germany on the ongoing conflict in West Asia," he said on social media. Jaishankar said he and South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun discussed the situation in West Asia, including its implications on the energy sector. "Discussed advancing our bilateral agenda. As also the situation in West Asia, including its energy implications," the external affairs minister said. In a post on X, Cho hoped that this year's high-level exchanges would elevate Korea-India relations to a new level. South Korean President Lee Jae-Myung is expected to visit India within next two months. "Minister Jaishankar agreed and said we should work together to expand strategic economic cooperation between Korea and India, which has significant potential and strong complementarity," Cho said. "We also discussed the situation in the Middle East, which is having a major impact on global security and the economy, and agreed to maintain close communication on measures to ensure the safety of our nationals as the situation develops," he said.

Amaravati should showcase glory of Telugu culture: CM Naidu



Amaravati, March 10 : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday said that the state capital, Amaravati, should showcase the glory of Telugu culture to the world. He was presiding over the 59th meeting of Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA), which gave approval for the construction of the Telugu Cultural Centre with an estimated cost of Rs 119 crore. The meeting discussed land allocations to various institutions in the capital region and the provision of infrastructure in the Secretariat and HOD buildings. The Chief Minister also suggested selecting a suitable name for the proposed Telugu Cultural Centre in Amaravati. He also directed officials to establish a large convention centre in the capital to conduct government and other major events. The Chief Minister said that the tourism project planned at Neerukonda within the capital region should be implemented as a prestigious project. Steps should be taken to develop tourism across 167 acres of land in the area. He directed officials to prepare plans that would attract tourists while also showcasing Telugu heritage. The Neerukonda project should be designed as a beautiful and vibrant destination, he said.

Tehran threatens Oil blockade as US intensifies strikes



Washington/Tehran, March 10 (UNI) On the 11th day of the escalating conflict, the United States signalled a major intensification of its military campaign against Iran, with Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth warning that Washington was preparing for its "most intense day of airstrikes" yet. He also cautioned that the attacks could escalate further if Tehran continues efforts to disrupt oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz. Iran swiftly responded with a stark warning of its own, declaring that it would not allow "even one litre of oil" to leave the Middle East as long as US and Israeli strikes continue. Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf echoed similar narrative of not coming to table with US as it always attacks Iran whenever they are in negotiations. The Speaker said that Iran will not agree to a ceasefire until it teaches the attackers a lesson so that they no longer think about repeated military actions against Tehran. "We categorically do not seek a ceasefire. We are convinced that the aggressor should be slapped in the face so that he learns his lesson and never thinks about aggression against dear Iran again," Ghalibaf wrote on X. Iran intends to break the circle of "war-negotiations-truce and then war again," he said. Terming Iran's experience of negotiating with the United States as "bitter," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday ruled out the possibility of renewed diplomatic negotiations with Washington, accusing the US of repeated betrayals and military aggression. In an interview with PBS, Araghchi said Iran no longer considers dialogue with the US a viable option. "I don't think the question of talking with Americans or negotiating with them will be on the table anymore," he said. "We have a very bitter experience of talking with the Americans." Reflecting on earlier diplomatic engagements, Araghchi claimed that Tehran had negotiated in good faith but was met with renewed hostility. According to him, Iran had entered talks last June but faced military action during the negotiation process. "We negotiated with them last year, and they attacked us in the middle of negotiations," he said. "Again this year they tried to convince us that things would be different, promising they had no intention to attack and wanted a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear issue." On February 28, the United States and Israel launched strikes on targets in Iran, including in Tehran, causing damage and civilian casualties. Iran responded by striking Israeli territory and US military facilities in the Middle East. The warning came as oil prices surged and then fell sharply amid growing tensions. President Donald Trump threatened Iran with "death, fire and fury" if it disrupts the critical oil route. A senior Iranian security official, Ali Larjani, issued a thinly veiled threat to Trump, saying the Iranian people do not fear US threats and cautioning Washington to "beware, lest you are the ones who are eliminated." Hegseth said US operations would reach a new level of intensity. "Today will once again be our most intense day of strikes inside Iran - the most fighters, the most bombers and the most strikes," he said, adding that U.S. intelligence targeting is now more precise than ever. He also claimed Iran's retaliation has weakened, noting that Tehran fired fewer missiles in the past

No genuine voter to be axed; zero tolerance for violence, intimidation: CEC on Bengal polls

KOLKATA: Asserting that no eligible voter's name would be removed from the electoral rolls in West Bengal, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Tuesday said the EC's priority was to ensure free, fair and peaceful polls in the state as it stepped up preparations for the upcoming assembly polls, amid a charged political atmosphere.

Addressing a press conference here after the commission's full bench held a series of meetings with political parties and senior administrative officials to review Bengal's poll preparedness, Kumar said the EC will finalise the state's election schedule, including the number of phases it would vote in, after

the panel returns to Delhi. Kumar said the commission has instructed officers in the state to enforce rule of law strictly without fear or favour.

"We have reviewed the law and order condition in the state and the entire government, led by its chief secretary, the DGP, the CPs and SPs, has assured the commission that the election will remain free of violence and intimidation," the CEC said. Kumar was unambiguous on the operational boundaries within which the commission expected the state officials to work during the poll process.

"All officials must work within the purview of law, constitutional provisions and EC's

instructions. Any slackness in that regard will result in strict disciplinary action," he said.

Speaking about the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR), a politically sensitive exercise that has triggered sharp exchanges between the TMC and the BJP, Kumar said the process was being carried out across the country in accordance with constitutional norms.

"Logical Discrepancy (LD) cases were flagged off in all 12 states where the SIR exercise was held. The cases where voters remained unmapped with the 2002 rolls, whether deliberate or by mistake, were scanned by BLOs with the help of documents provided," the CEC stated,



rejecting claims that LD cases were introduced only for Bengal.

Explaining the data patterns that emerged during the SIR in the state, Kumar revealed that around 4-5 per cent of electors failed to map themselves with the 2002 rolls

post submission of enumeration forms, while an additional 7-8 per cent of voters were found to have mapped themselves incorrectly, either deliberately or by inadvertent errors.

According to EC data released on February 28,

around 63.66 lakh names, about 8.3 per cent of the electorate, were deleted since the revision began in November last year, bringing down the voter base from about 7.66 crore to a little over 7.04 crore.

To a question on the engagement of micro-observers to dispose of LD cases, Kumar said, "In Bengal, a lot of cases remained undecided at the level of EROs and AEROs before the publication of final rolls because of which micro-observers had to be appointed for document verification, which had to be carried out stringently."

The CEC avoided a direct answer on the fate of the voters who continue to remain in the 'under adjudication' list

and whether polls would be announced before the publication of supplementary rolls.

"People whose names have been deleted have the option of filling Form 6 for re-inclusion. Those under adjudication are being scrutinised by the learned judicial officers appointed by the Calcutta High Court in accordance with a Supreme Court order," he said.

Kumar's remarks came amid allegations by the ruling TMC that the poll panel had unfairly deleted nearly 64 lakh voters from the state's electoral rolls following the SIR and kept some 60 lakh more names under scrutiny.

Following the February 28 publication of the post-SIR

electoral rolls, the EC will also upload supplementary voter lists on its website in due course and keep updating them, he added.

Calling pure electoral rolls "a bedrock of democracy", Kumar said the EC aimed to ensure all genuine voters retain their right to vote while making certain that no ineligible voters got included in the list.

The EC chief said the number of phases for the assembly polls would depend on the final assessment of the law-and-order preparedness of the state machinery.

"We will take a decision on the number of phases of polls after reaching Delhi and discussing the outcome of meetings held during the last two days," he said.

Chapter on 'judicial graft': NCERT issues public apology, says book withdrawn

NEW DELHI: The NCERT issued a public apology on Tuesday for including a chapter on judicial corruption in a recent book that had earned the Supreme Court's ire, and said the entire textbook has been withdrawn.

The social science textbook for Class 8 stated that corruption, a massive backlog of cases and the lack of an adequate number of judges are among the challenges faced by the judicial system.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the NCERT said, "The National Council of Educational Research and Training has recently published a social science textbook, 'Exploring Society: India and Beyond' Grade 8 (Part 2), which contained

Chapter 4 titled 'The Role of Judiciary in our Society'."

"The director and members of NCERT hereby tender an unconditional and unqualified apology for the said chapter four. The entire book has been withdrawn and is not available," it added.

A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi had taken suo motu cognisance of the "objectionable" statements about the judiciary in NCERT textbooks after senior advocate Kapil Sibal, alongside Abhishek Singhvi, mentioned the matter for urgent consideration.

CJI Kant strongly objected to a chapter on judicial corruption in the

NCERT's Class 8 curriculum, saying nobody on earth would be allowed to defame the judiciary and taint its integrity.

The Supreme Court imposed a "complete blanket ban" on any further publication, reprinting or digital dissemination of the NCERT's Class 8 social science book as it contains "offending" content on corruption in the judiciary, saying a gunshot has been fired and the institution is bleeding.

The government, on its part, expressed anguish over the inclusion of the controversial section in the book, with Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan promising to fix accountability and take action against those involved in drafting it.

Rijiju slams Cong for bringing no-confidence motion against 'impartial' Birla

NEW DELHI: Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday lashed out at the Congress for the no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, saying he always remained impartial and gave more opportunities to opposition members to express their views in the House.

Participating in the debate on the resolution for removal of Birla from the Speaker's post, Rijiju accused the Congress of attacking constitutional institutions since 2014, when it was ousted from power, and said this time the target is the post of Speaker which is "akin to an attack on democracy itself".

During his hour-long intervention, the Minister strongly defended Birla's actions and quoted former prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi to reiterate that the decision of the speaker is final on matters in the Lok Sabha and should be

accepted by all.

The minister claimed that 50 opposition members told him personally that they were not happy with the resolution against Birla but had to support it because of political compulsion.

Rijiju also took a dig at the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, claiming he has shown immaturity in his conduct, often skipping the proceedings to go abroad and leaving after his speech, disregarding the rules of the House.

The minister went on to say that Congress member Priyanka Gandhi Vadra could be a better Leader of Opposition than Rahul Gandhi.

Rijiju said that everyone, including the prime minister and other ministers, needs the permission of the speaker to address the Lok Sabha as the speaker is the custodian of the House.

"If somebody believes that he is above the speaker, then

there is no remedy," he said, referring to Rahul Gandhi's remark that it is his right to speak in the House and does not need anyone's permission.

Without taking the name of Rahul Gandhi, Rijiju said that the Congress leader has shown immaturity by hugging Prime Minister Modi in the House and also winking at his party colleagues during a serious debate.

Rijiju said he used to go on overseas visits during the session and often leaves the House after his speech, disregarding the rules.

The minister cited statistics to rebut the opposition's charge of favouritism against the speaker and said that Birla has always remained impartial, giving more opportunity to opposition members to ask Supplementary Questions and to raise matters of public importance.

Birla, in his tenure as Speaker, took several decisions to reform



the House proceedings, like making Parliament paperless and giving opportunities to young members to speak, Rijiju said.

"I say with pride that I am a member of the Lok Sabha of which Om Birla is the Speaker. He has helped strengthen Parliamentary democracy," the minister said.

He said the NDA members have never torn papers or climbed on the secretary general's table, unlike the Congress MPs.

He said that despite all the good work done by Birla, the Congress party, "instead of being thankful to the speaker, brought a no-confidence motion against him".

"You should not harbour so much hatred against Birla that you forget the good work done by him," Rijiju said. The minister also asserted that the mud-slinging against Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not yield any result as he is "as pure as a lotus".

Organ transplantation: 217 registered hospitals fail to report data on National Registry Portal



NEW DELHI: Out of 804 registered hospitals performing organ transplantation, 217 hospitals failed to report data on the National Registry Portal in 2025 and action will be initiated against them by the respective state governments, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

The registration of hospitals for performing organ transplantation is carried out by the appropriate authority of the states and UTs concerned where the hospital is located, Jadhav said in a written reply to a query.

"Against 804 registered hospitals performing organ transplantation, 217 hospitals failed to report data on

the National Registry Portal during the year 2025.

"As per the provisions of the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA), 1994 and the Rules framed thereunder, regulatory action against such hospitals is to be taken by the state governments concerned," Jadhav said.

The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Registry Portal has been functional since 2015 and is accessible to authorised users, including hospitals and organisations, through the website of the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization.

As on March 3, 2026, according to the data reported by hospitals and transplant centres on the National Registry Portal of the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO), the waitlist for major organs in

the country stands at 89,839.

During the year 2025, the number of organ transplants performed in the country was 20,019, Jadhav said in his written reply.

The Centre is implementing the National Organ Transplant Programme (NOTP) aimed at augmenting infrastructure and related services for organ transplantation and increasing awareness about organ donation in the country.

Under the programme, Regional Organ and Tissue Transplant Organizations (ROTTOs) and State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organizations (SOTTOs) have been established in the states and Union Territories of the northern region (except the UT of Ladakh), eastern region, and north-eastern region (except Manipur and Nagaland).

INS expresses concern over domestic newsprint quality

NEW DELHI: The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) on Tuesday expressed concern over the domestic newsprint quality and standards, and said that until domestic manufacturing capabilities are upgraded to meet international benchmarks, imports of newsprint will remain essential for ensuring quality, efficiency and timely newspaper production in India.

In a statement, INS president Vivek Gupta said the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, in its report for 2024-25, has indicated that the domestic newsprint industry claims the existence of 123 newsprint mills with an installed capacity of approximately 2.2 million tonnes per annum.

However, actual production figures reveal that capacity utilisation remains significantly below these claims,



thereby challenging assertions of adequate domestic availability of newsprint, the INS said, adding that beyond quantity, quality remains an important concern for the print media industry.

The INS said the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), under newsprint specification (second revision) published in December 2022, classifies newsprint in Grade 1 and Grade 2, based on physical,

optical, mechanical and surface parameters.

While both grades are BIS compliant, the INS said, they are not operationally equivalent and a comparison of technical specifications of Grade 1 and 2 shows that Grade 2 is significantly inferior in quality to Grade 1.

The INS highlighted a statement of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who had said that "our

standards should not be less than the global standards and if they are below those standards, then they should be upgraded".

"Harmonising global standards not only enhances product quality but also facilitates free trade, open markets, and such initiatives will help expand open markets, and provide a level playing field for businesses," the INS statement quoted Goyal as saying recently.

The newspaper society said that these statements reaffirm the concerns of the print media industry, that the existing quality and standards of domestic newsprint do not meet the requirements of the Indian publishers by and large.

"The issue confronting Indian publishers is not merely capacity, but of availability of globally acceptable, press-compatible, quality newsprint.

Civil services exam topper Anuj Agnihotri cores 52.88 pc; UPSC discloses final marks

NEW DELHI: Anuj Agnihotri, a graduate from AIIMS Jodhpur who topped UPSC's civil services examination 2025, secured 1,071 marks with a percentage of 52.88, according to the details of marks disclosed by the commission on Tuesday.

A total of 958 candidates -- 659 men and 299 women -- qualified the examination, results of which were declared on Friday.

The civil services examination is conducted annually by the UPSC in three stages -- preliminary, main and personality test (or interview) -- to select officers for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

Topper Agnihotri got a total of 1,071 marks -- 867 in the main written exam and 204 in the personality test, according to the details.

The merit is determined out of the total of 2,025 marks -- the written or main exam is of 1,750 marks and the interview is of 275 marks.

Agnihotri (26 years) has done MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

Second-rank holder Rajeshwari Suve M has got 52.69 per cent. She scored 1,067 marks -- 865 in written part and 202 in interview.

Rajeshwari (28), who has a Bachelor of Engineering (BE) degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Anna University, Chennai, got the sec-



ond rank with sociology as her optional subject in her fifth attempt Akansh Dhull, who secured third rank, scored 52.19 per cent. He got a total of 1,057 marks -- 864 in written and 193 in interview.

Fourth and fifth rank achievers-- Raghav Jhunjhunwala and Ishan Bhatnagar -- have got 51.45 per cent and 51.25 per cent respectively.

Jhunjhunwala, who has a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Economics from University of Delhi, got 1,042 marks (847 in written and 195 in interview).

Bhatnagar, who holds BA LLB (Hons) from National Law University, Delhi, scored 1,038 (823 in main exam and 215 in interview).

The civil services (preliminary) examination, 2025 was conducted on May 25, last year. A total of 9,37,876 candidates applied for this examination, out of which 5,76,793 actually appeared in the test.

Cabinet clears revised cost of Rs 3,630.77 cr for developing connectivity to Jewar airport

NEW DELHI: The Cabinet on Tuesday approved the revised total capital cost of Rs 3,630.77 crore for developing road connectivity to the upcoming Jewar international airport in Uttar Pradesh.

The proposed 31.42 kilometres-long project corridor will provide direct and high-speed connectivity from South Delhi, Faridabad and Gurugram to the airport, thereby promoting economic growth and logistics efficiency across the National Capital Region (NCR), an official release said.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the revised total capital cost of Rs 3,630.77 crore for the construction of greenfield connectivity to the airport from Delhi-Faridabad-Ballabgarh-Sohna Spur of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on Hybrid Annuity Mode in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The airport, which has received an aerodrome license from the aviation regulator DGCA, is expected to start operations



soon.

According to the release, the proposed corridor intersects the Eastern Peripheral Expressway, the Yamuna Expressway, and the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), enabling multimodal transport convergence.

"About 11 km of this project is to be developed as an elevated highway, which forms a critical segment of the greenfield connectivity between DND-Ballabgarh Bypass and Jewar In-

ternational Airport, linking it to the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.

"This corridor traverses the area earmarked for high-density urban development and future infrastructure expansion under the Faridabad Master Plan, 2031. The additional cost of the proposed elevated corridor is Rs 689.24 crore, and the government of Haryana has agreed to bear Rs 450 crore for the elevated corridor," the release said.

Over 57,000 cases of atrocities against SCs listed in 2023: Govt

NEW DELHI: More than 57,000 cases of alleged atrocities and crimes against Scheduled Castes were registered across the country in 2023, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

It said there is no proposal to amend the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, as changes have already been carried out in 2016 and 2018 to make its provisions more stringent in the interest of victims and witnesses.

Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said that 57,789 cases of crime/atrocities against Scheduled Castes were registered in 2023, compared to 57,582 in 2022 and 50,900 in 2021, as per data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

The minister, in his written reply, said that increased awareness, wider publicity and sensitisation of police personnel through capacity building are among the reasons for more cases being registered under the Act.

The minister said there is no proposal to amend the SC and ST (POA) Act, 1989, as it has already been amended in 2016 and 2018 to make its provisions more stringent in the interest of victims and witnesses.

Over 8 crore women screened for cervical cancer as of Feb 17, 2026: Health Minister

NEW DELHI: The nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign targeting eligible girls aged 14 is underway at designated government facilities, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

According to the National Non-Communicable Diseases Portal, 8.73 crore women have been screened for cervical cancer as of February 17, 2026, Jadhav said in a written reply.

"The nationwide HPV vaccination campaign is running, targeting eligible girls aged 14 at designated government facilities such as Ayushman Aarogya Mandir (AAM), primary health centres (PHCs), community health centres (CHCs), sub-district hospitals (SDHs), district hospitals (DHs) and government medical colleges and hospitals (GMCHs)," the minister added.

According to the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) - National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP), the estimated incidence of cervical cancer cases in the country in 2025 was 79,239.

RMZ AND KARNATAKA VINTAGE & CLASSIC CAR CLUB HOST A VINTAGE MOTOR VEHICLE RALLY AT THE MILLENIA

Bengaluru : The Millenia, a premium Grade A commercial campus by RMZ, Asia's leading privately owned integrated alternative assets platform, in collaboration with Karnataka Vintage and Classic Car Club (KVCCC), hosted a Vintage Motor Vehicle Rally and showcase in Bengaluru. The event saw participation of 71 heritage vehicles, including 44 vintage and classic cars, and 27 vintage motorcycles and scooters, representing a remarkable cross-section of global automotive history. Spanning nearly six decades of motoring evolution, the lineup ranged from a 1930 Ford Model A, the oldest car in the rally, to several modern classics from the early 1990s. The rally commenced from The Millenia, with the participating vehicles taking a ceremonial drive around Ulsoor Lake before returning to the campus. Among the standout motor vehicles were a 1939 Chevrolet Limousine, a 1947 Humber Pullman Limousine, a 1949 Buick Eight, as well as celebrated sports cars such as the MG TC (1946), the MGA Roadster (1958) and two Fiat Sports Spiders. Notable highlight from the two wheeler lineup was the BSA M20 and the Triumph 3HW, both widely used military motorcycles of World War II.



SANGEETHA BAR AND RESTAURANT SHOOTING COMPLETED

Bengaluru: The shooting of the film Sangeetha Bar and Restaurant, starring Komal Kumar, Meghana Raj and Anusha Rai in lead roles, has been successfully completed. The film is directed by Sandesh Shetty Ajri and produced by Vikas Shetty. According to the film team, the movie was shot over 75 days in two schedules. Major portions of the film were filmed in the coastal and Malnad



regions, including Kundapur, Shivamogga and Thirthahalli. A special highlight of the production is that seven different sets with unique designs were constructed in Walthur village near Kundapur. Spread across nearly two acres, about 90 percent of the film was shot on these specially built sets. Director Sandesh Shetty Ajri revealed that the film has two thematic titles based on its storyline. The first half of the movie revolves around a bar and is titled Sangeetha Bar and Restaurant, while the second half is set around a spiritual location called Place of God. However, due to censor regulations requiring a single title, the film will be released under the name Sangeetha Bar and Restaurant.

WHY AREN'T BJP MPS, WHO RAISE SO MANY WEIRD ISSUES, NOT TALKING ABOUT LPG CYLINDER PRICE HIKE: DCM DK SHIVAKUMAR

DON'T WANT TO HURT DEVE GOWDA

Bengaluru : Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar lashed out at the BJP MPs for not raising their voice against price hike of LPG cylinders. "The Centre has increased the price of LPG cylinders by Rs 60 on the International Women's Day. Why aren't BJP MPs talking about this? They are eager to raise all kinds of weird issues, let them talk on this too," he said while speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence. When asked about LPG price hike, he said, "Why is the Centre scared of allowing a debate on LPG price hike in the



Parliament? The lapse on the part of the Centre is clearly visible. The India bloc members are protesting as the Centre is not allowing a discussion in the Parliament." "Hotel industry and other industries are under severe stress due to this. It is our duty to raise this issue. This is affecting crores of women. The war has impacted Indian industrialists operating in the Middle East," he added. Don't want to hurt Deve Gowda

"Deve Gowda is talking about Mekedatu and Yettinahole projects. Let him direct his party MPs to talk about this in the Parliament. It is not right for me to launch a verbal attack on him considering his age. Let him suggest solutions for Mekedatu and Yettinahole.

Airport for three districts to be decided after consultation

Bengaluru: The Karnataka government is considering establishing an airport at a suitable location that can serve the people of Ballari, Vijayanagara and Koppala districts. However, a final decision on the location will be taken only after consultations with public representatives from the three districts and a meeting with the Chief Minister, Infrastructure Development Minister M. B. Patil informed the Legislative Council on Tuesday. Replying to a starred question raised by BJP member Y. M. Satish, the minister said that the proposal to construct an airport in Ballari dates back to 2010. At that time,



about 900 acres of land were acquired for the project and handed over to M/s Marg Sri Krishnadevaraya Airport Private Limited of Chennai to begin construction. However, the company failed to commence work within the two-year period stipulated in the agreement, forcing the government to cancel the contract. Patil said that tenders were invited in October last year to appoint consultants for preparing a Detailed Project Report

HOTELS IN BENGALURU FACE SHUTDOWN THREAT AS COMMERCIAL LPG SUPPLY HALTED



Bengaluru, Mar 10: Hotels across Bengaluru face the threat of shutdown from Tuesday, March 10, after the supply of commercial LPG cylinders was abruptly stopped, the Bangalore Hotels Association warned, saying the disruption could affect thousands of people who depend on hotels for their daily meals. The association said commercial gas cylinders are not being supplied on time and that supply for commercial use has been halted from Monday, March 9, without prior warning, triggering concern across the hospitality sector.

Honorary president of the association, P C Rao, said the hotel industry would face serious difficulties if the situation continues. "Commercial cylinders are not being received on time. From today, the supply of gas cylinders for commercial use has been stopped," he said. The association noted that the hotel industry is classified as an

essential service and supports a large section of the population.

"Since the hotel industry comes under essential services, common people, senior citizens, students and many others working in medical and other sectors who depend on hotels for their daily meals will face difficulties," the association said.

It added that the disruption would severely affect hotel businesses that rely on uninterrupted cooking operations. "In addition, our hotel industry will also have to face difficulties until the gas supply returns to normal," the notice stated. The association warned that if the supply is not restored immediately, hotels across the city may be forced to shut from March 10. "Hotels will be closed from March 10 due to the gas supply being cut off," it said.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: PUBLIC AWARENESS ON "HEALTH PROTECTION"

Bengaluru: On the occasion of International Women's Day, public awareness was created about quality health and financial literacy. The celebration of World Women's Day was organized under the leadership of KAMS Karnataka South -1 and 2 and Greens Innovator at Kuvempu Rangamandira in Avalahalli. The program was inaugurated by Smt. Girijamma, the Block Education Officer of Bengaluru South -2. Speaking on the occasion, Smt. Girijamma said that girls should become financially independent by acquiring quality education. For this, they must receive proper financial education also. Dr. Nalini, in her address, advised that girls should give more importance to protecting their health and focus on nutritious food and healthy activities.



Canara Bank Manager Smt. Lavanya provided information about financial savings schemes. Women enthusiastically participated and enjoyed the laughter yoga dance along with Guinness World Record holder Rangelakshmi Srinivas, celebrating the occasion with great joy.

GOVERNMENT TAKES STEPS TO PREVENT RURAL DRINKING WATER SHORTAGE

Bengaluru: The state government has initiated several proactive measures to prevent drinking water shortages in rural areas during the upcoming summer season, said Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, and IT & BT Minister Priyank Kharge.

The minister stated that district administrations have been instructed to closely monitor the situation and take immediate steps wherever shortages arise. These measures include hiring private borewells on a rental basis and supplying drinking water through tankers to affected villages.

To strengthen water availability, dried borewells will be restored through flushing and deepening. In unavoidable cases, new borewells will also be drilled based on technical recommendations from geologists. Gram Panchayats have also been directed to conduct water quality testing and ensure proper cleaning of overhead tanks to provide safe drinking water to rural communities.



ties. According to official data, drinking water shortages have already been reported in 183 villages across 144 taluks in 21 districts. Among them, 31 villages are currently receiving water through 96 tankers, while 152 villages are being supplied water through 154 rented private borewells.

Officials said around 1,053 borewells are expected to be repaired through flushing and deepening during March 2026. Funds for emergency works will be mobilized from the Central and State Drought Relief Funds as well as departmental task force funds to ensure uninterrupted water supply during summer.

Nurses can now renew registration online from anywhere

Bengaluru: Nurses registered with the Karnataka State Nursing Council can now renew their professional registration online from anywhere in India through the Aadhaar-DigiLocker platform, eliminating the need to visit the council office in Bengaluru. The new digital system is aimed at making the process easier and more accessible for lakhs of nursing professionals.

Earlier, nurses who completed their training in Karnataka had to visit the council office in Gandhinagar once every five years to renew their registration. The area is known for heavy congestion, making travel and parking difficult for applicants. Under the new system, nurses can apply for renewal online through DigiLocker. After the application is reviewed and approved by the council registrar, Dr. K. Mallu, the renewed certificate is

BUDGET THAT TRAPPED PEOPLE IN DEBT VORTEX, INJUSTICE TO BACKWARD CLASSES AND DALITS: OPPOSITION LEADER R. ASHOK

Cut in Funding to Corporations, No Medicines in Hospitals, Funds Not Spent in Departments, Garbage Not Disposed, Yet Mentioned as 11G

Bengaluru :The budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has trapped the people of the state in a debt vortex. This budget has done grave injustice to the backward classes, scheduled castes, and people from all sections. The fiscal deficit and the amount of debt have exceeded limits, alleged Opposition Leader R. Ashok.

Speaking during the discussion on the budget in the Legislative Assembly, he said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has taken new loans to repay old ones. He has only taken loans without mentioning the progress of previous schemes. In 1995-96, former Prime Minister Deve Gowda made Siddaramaiah the Finance Minister for the first time. At that time, there were criticisms that someone who couldn't even herd sheep couldn't present a budget. Siddaramaiah was eager to give a fitting reply to that. When he presented the budget then, members thumped the desks in welcome. This time, when the budget was presented, there were only 60 members present. Opposition parties criticize the budget. But even the ruling party members are



dissatisfied with the budget. That budget had no essence or rot; it had 66 pages and 181 items, while this time it has 171 pages and 532 items. Yet, this budget received no applause.

CM Siddaramaiah initially said he would present the next budget himself. Now, there is no certainty about that. He says he is with D.K. Shivakumar like milk and honey. Whether it's milk and honey or poison will be known later. You can't clap with one hand. Criticizing the central government is the usual mindset of Congress leaders. When P.V. Narasimha Rao was Prime Minister, Siddaramaiah, presenting the 1995-96 budget, insisted that 29% of taxes should not be transferred to the state; at least 40% should be given. He said the situation was not good when our government took over. Even then, Siddaramaiah had objected to the center. When he was CM in 2015-16, he again said the Finance Commission had continued to do injustice in allocation. At the same time, he appreciated the increase in the

state's share in 2015. That means the demand he made during Narasimha Rao's time was implemented later by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Yet, he hasn't thanked PM Modi.

The Story of 'G' In this budget, it mentions 'G' and claims to be at the forefront in urban development. But Andhra CM Revanth Reddy has criticized Bengaluru. No road in Bengaluru is garbage-free. They are making e-khata by taking a bribe of Rs. 10,000. They are transferring people's khata back to people's names. This has benefited officials. Many people have come to my office and told me about this problem. If there is no money, e-khata is not made; if that's the case, the government can take action against me. Now, there is no funding in five corporations. There is no money even to collect garbage in the West Zone. The government has instructed to raise money through bonds. Previously, bonds were issued only to build reservoirs. Even though it mentions 'Good Health to All',

ICI Home Finance

Corporate Office: IICI Home Finance Company Limited IICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office : 1st Floor, Prasad Arcade, Building No. 28 / 127 / 5, Pattarakall Junction, Shornur Road, Thrissur - 680022
Notice for sale of immovable assets through Private Treaty
Sale 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 Home Finance Company Limited (ICI 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 IICI HFC with an offer to purchase the said property for an amount of Rs. 13,00,000/- . 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 IICI 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.	Rahul Krishna P (Borrower) Diya Raj Machingal (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHPGT00001464207	Re. Sy. No. 639/2-9, Village- Thekkumkara, Taluk- Thalappilly, Dist.- Thrissur, Kerala	Rs. 34,67, 193/- March 06, 2026	Rs. 13,00, 000/- To Rs. 1,30, 000/- March 03, 2026	March 20, 2026 11:00 AM To 11:00 AM	March 27, 2026 11:00 AM To 04:00 PM	March 25, 2026 before 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 IICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address Mentioned on top of the article on 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 IICI Home Finance Company Limited, Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on 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 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 IICI 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 IICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300.
The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icihfc.com/>
Date : March 11, 2026
Place : Thrissur

Authorized Officer, "ICI Home Finance Company Limited"
CIN Number:- U65922MH1999PLC120106

ICI Home Finance

Corporate Office: IICI Home Finance Company Limited IICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office : Shop No. 2/30, 1st Floor, T.C. VII/673/1-4/2 M G Corporate Centre, Medical College PO, Ulloor, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695011
Notice for sale of immovable assets through Private Treaty
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(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Baiju (Borrower) Thara Chandran Q (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHTVM00001419316 & LHTVM00001419322	Re Sy No 191/24 Ottasekharanangalam Village Kattakada Taluk Trivandrum Kerala- 695125	Rs. 13,08, 193/- March 06, 2026	Rs. 10,00, 000/- To Rs. 1,00, 000/- March 03, 2026	March 20, 2026 11:00 AM To 11:00 AM	March 27, 2026 11:00 AM To 04:00 PM	March 25, 2026 before 04:00 PM	Physical Possession

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For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icihfc.com/>
Date : March 11, 2026
Place : Trivandrum

Authorized Officer, "ICI Home Finance Company Limited"
CIN Number:- U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

How India Should Navigate A 'New' Nepal

On March 5, 2026, Nepal went to the polls in a snap general election for its 275-member House of Representatives, the first electoral test after the tumultuous protests of September 2025 that forced the resignation of then Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. The vote, held amid intense political ferment, drew roughly 60% turnout from over 18.9 million registered voters, including nearly one million first-time Gen Z voters. The verdict has been nothing short of transformative. The four-year-old Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah - widely known as Balen - delivered a stunning performance, capturing 120 of the 165 first-past-the-post seats and emerging as the largest force in proportional representation with 49.14% of the vote. This places the party on course to command around 180 seats overall, a decisive majority. The election simultaneously marked the collapse of Nepal's traditional political order. The once-dominant Nepali Congress was reduced to 17 seats, a fall of seventy-two from 2022, while the Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) secured only seven seats, down seventy-one. The Nepal Communist Party (NCP) also slipped to seven seats. Smaller formations such as the Shram Sanskriti Party managed three seats, while the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and a handful of independents secured single victories. The symbolism of the moment was underlined in Jhapa-5, where Shah defeated Oli himself-an outcome widely read as the electorate's repudiation of the entrenched political elite. Finalised by 8 March, the results effectively clear the path for an RSP-led government, most likely under Shah's leadership, bringing to an end a prolonged cycle of instability that has produced fourteen governments in seventeen years. Several factors converged to produce this dramatic political shift. At the heart of the upheaval lay the Gen Z protests of 2025, triggered by Oli's controversial decision to ban 26 social media platforms, a move widely perceived as an attempt to silence youthful dissent. The ban collided with mounting frustrations over youth unemployment - exceeding 20 per cent among those aged 15-24 - and a steady exodus of talent, with roughly 1,500 Nepalis leaving the country daily. What began as online activism under hashtags such as #NepoKid, targeting corruption and dynastic politics, quickly spilled onto the streets. The "Day of Rage" protests of September 8-9 in 2025 left 76 people dead and more than 2,000 injured, precipitating Oli's resignation and the dissolution of parliament on 12 September 2025. An interim administration led by Sushila Karki-Nepal's first female prime minister-oversaw the transition to elections. The broader political context amplified the revolt. Since the democratic opening of the 1990s, Nepali politics has largely revolved around the Congress-UML axis, but persistent factionalism and corruption scandals have steadily eroded public confidence. Against this backdrop, the RSP successfully projected itself as a vehicle of generational change. Shah's profile -cultivated during his tenure as mayor of Kathmandu - combined anti-corruption rhetoric with a populist appeal rooted in digital mobilisation. The party's centrist-liberal platform, promising transparency, institutional reform and economic revitalisation, resonated strongly in youth-heavy constituencies such as Jhapa-5, where turnout surged. The fragmentation of the political field-143 parties and over 3,400 candidates-further advantaged the RSP, whose social media-driven campaign proved adept at aggregating protest sentiment, even absorbing smaller reformist groups such as the Bibeksheel Sajha Party. For Nepal, the implications of this verdict are both promising and uncertain. The RSP's dominance signals a generational reset in a political system long criticised for stagnation. Its manifesto promises anti-corruption commissions, greater transparency and youth representation in governance, reflecting the aspirations of the protest movement that propelled it to power.

The One Big Reason This Indian T20i Team Is A Nightmare For The Rest

It was fitting in a way to see that the first two Indian cricketers being interviewed together on the field after India's mind-bogglingly one-sided thrashing of the Kiwis in the final of the T20 World Cup were Abhishek Sharma and Varun Chakravarty. Over the course of the two must-win knockout matches that India played in the tournament (the virtual quarter-final against the Windies and the semi-final vs England) before the final, the Indian T20 juggernaut that had struck fear in the hearts of the rest of the cricket playing world over the last two years was well and truly up and running again, finding that crucial element that fuels T20 teams more than any other - momentum. The only two big question marks that remained ahead of the summit clash were hanging heavy on Abhishek and Varun. Ironically, for many, the top-ranked T20i batter and bowler in the world didn't deserve a place in the playing XI for the final. Those of us who have followed Indian cricket for years knew that the team management would never tinker with a winning combination, regardless of form concerns for a couple of key players and that too just before the last match of the tournament. India went in with an unchanged XI, and Abhishek had a great day in the office, while Varun, though expensive, was amongst the wickets. And with that, almost every box was ticked for a national team that represents a country which became the first to win three men's T20 World Cup titles. The records that were made and broken, of course, don't just end there. India has also become the first team to successfully defend the title and also the first host nation (co-hosts this time with Sri Lanka) to win the cup. But these records will be merely of academic interest in the corridors of power of Indian cricket. The biggest takeaway of this World Cup win will be a crown that was not amongst the prizes that were handed out on Sunday night - that of being hands-down the best and most ruthless T20i machine in world cricket. One that is so far ahead of the others that a single blip, like the shock loss vs South Africa in the Super Eights, is viewed as a major catastrophe. India had absolutely dominated bilateral T20i cricket from after the 2024 edition of the World Cup (in which they were unbeaten) till before the beginning of this edition, winning eight consecu-

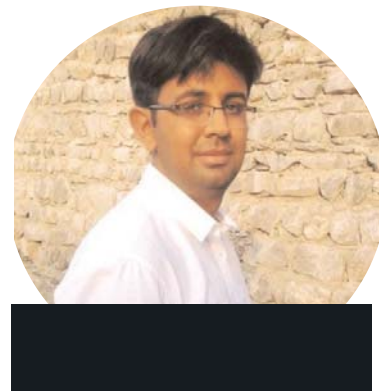


tive bilateral T20i series. Everyone knew what this team was capable of. But a World Cup title is the final, biggest seal of approval and stamp of authority. Suryakumar Yadav might have become the third Indian captain - after MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma - to win the title, but his team has become perhaps the first T20i set of players who are not just world champions, but the absolute bosses of the shortest format of the game on the international stage. The one thing that I fervently stressed on while doing a pre-match analysis was Team India's big-match temperament. In my mind, there is a gulf the size of the Antarctic Ocean between India and every other team when it comes to the mental toughness that is required to play a World Cup final, regardless of what happened just before that or how they got there. Remember how the men in blue struggled a bit in the initial stages of the tournament, even against "minnows" and were searching for that "complete game", that absolutely clinical performance that was expected of the top-ranked T20i team in the world that had blown away all opposition in its path? We didn't really see that happen consistently in the league stage as such (though the win against Pakistan was not a nerve-wracking one), and neither in the Super Eights (India lost to South Africa, and even

Zimbabwe made 184 against Surya and co.). Every Indian cricket fan had their hearts in their mouths in the second semi-final, where England, thanks to a blitzkrieg of a knock by Jacob Bethell (105 off 48), almost chased down a mammoth 254-run target. But in the final, facing a team they had never beaten before in the history of the tournament (NZ had a 3-0 win-loss record against India at the men's T20 World Cup before this final), we were served a performance that was so clinical - in both the batting and bowling departments (the fielding, especially catching needs to be worked on) - that the contest (if it can be called that) had lost all its sting inside the first 10 overs of the second innings and incredibly bordered on being "boring". The final result? A huge 96-run win for India that meant that the trophy that was won back in 2024 was not going anywhere. Who would have envisaged this almost complete performance and show of dominance when in their first match of the tournament India were reduced to 77/6 against the USA, or when Namibia, ranked 15th in the ICC T20i team rankings topped nine Indian wickets or when the Netherlands managed to get up to 176/7, with India winning that encounter by just 17 runs, or when South Africa shot out the overwhelming pre-tournament

favourites for just 111, handing them a 76 run loss? Even if India were to win, it wasn't going to be easy. South Africa had emerged as serious title contenders - just like they did in 2024. And just like in 2024, we knew that if India had to win the title, they would have to find a way to beat Aiden Markram and his team. An India vs South Africa final seemed almost destined to happen. And then the almost unthinkable happened. The Proteas were hit by the Allen-Seifert storm in the first semi-final. It was a play so much out of left field that it stunned even the staunchest of Kiwi supporters. An unbeaten 33-ball century - the first century ever in a T20 World Cup knockout match, and that too the fastest, a 117-run first wicket stand, a more than comfortable nine-wicket win inside 13 overs against a tournament favourite that had humbled the mighty Indian T20i cavalry! Let no one tell you any different - nobody saw this coming. And just like that, South Africa had been eliminated, and with that, India's biggest bogey team had been shown the door. Regardless of what the overall head-to-head statistics might have been against New Zealand before this final, if there was a poll run on who Indian fans would like to see on the opposite side in the final between South Africa and New Zealand, I can bet the majority of the fans would have voted for the latter choice.

THE HUNGER FOR FOLLOWERS AND THE AUCTION OF RELATIONSHIPS



The digital age has opened new doors to expression. The internet and social media have given everyone the opportunity to reach the world. While previously limited sources of information and entertainment, today anyone can create videos, write blogs, and reach millions of people using their mobile phones. This change is both democratic and inspiring. But with every change comes new challenges. Today, in the world of social media, popularity has a new definition—followers, likes, shares, and views. The higher these numbers, the more successful a person is considered. This competition has led many content creators to a path where even the confines of personal life are becoming part of their content. In the past few years, a new trend has rapidly emerged—bringing family feuds and personal conflicts to the camera and sharing them on social media. Husband-wife disputes, sibling conflicts, mother-in-law-daughter-in-law squabbles, or even small internal family arguments—things that were previously resolved within the confines of the home—are now being broadcast to millions of viewers in the form of videos and posts. Many YouTubers and bloggers call this "real life content." They argue that viewers want to see reality. But the question is: is it necessary to make every real event public? Is it appropriate to expose personal relationships to the curiosity of viewers? In fact, social media algorithms also encourage this trend. Content that evokes controversy, emotional reactions, or sensation-

alism tends to go viral faster. People comment more on such videos, offering their opinions, and sometimes even arguing for or against them. This is why some creators deliberately choose topics that can stir up emotions. Unfortunately, sometimes these conflicts are genuine, and the privacy of family members is at stake. A minor dispute can be blown out of proportion by being exposed to the cameras. This not only compromises the dignity of relationships but can also negatively impact other family members—especially children. In some cases, it's been observed that disputes are deliberately exaggerated or even completely scripted. This means that the conflict isn't real, but an attempt is made to appear real to attract audience attention. This blurs the line between entertainment and reality. In this age of social media, going "viral" has become synonymous with success. When a video receives millions of views and thousands of new followers, the creator feels they've chosen the right path. But this popularity is often fleeting. A controversy that captured audience attention one day is overshadowed by another controversy the next. There's also a social aspect to this trend. When viewers repeatedly see such content, they gradually begin to perceive it as normal to bring personal relationships into the public arena and make them a topic of discussion. This can undermine the sense of privacy and decorum in society. In our society, the family has always been considered a strong institution. Family is not just a living arrangement, but also a foundation of emotional security, trust, and mutual understanding. When internal family problems are made a public spectacle, it undermines the trust that is the foundation of relationships. Furthermore, young people and teenagers make up a significant portion of the social media audience. They are influenced by what they see. If they repeatedly see that it's normal to publicize personal conflicts in order to gain popularity, they may develop the impression that it's acceptable to

go to any lengths to achieve success in life. It's also true that not all content creators are like this. There are many YouTubers, bloggers, and digital creators who produce informative, creative, and positive content. Many people working in education, science, art, culture, travel, and social issues are using social media as a positive platform. Their efforts prove that controversy and drama aren't the only path to popularity. The real question is one of responsibility. When someone has the power to reach thousands or even millions of people, it also carries a social responsibility. Content creators must understand that their content not only entertains but also influences people's thinking and perspectives. Viewers also play a significant role in this. After all, they are the ones who decide what type of content gets watched and what gets ignored. If viewers only promote sensational and controversial videos, it's natural that such content will continue to grow. But if they give more support to constructive and positive content, the digital landscape could change. Today, there's a need for balance and understanding in the use of social media. We should set boundaries for our personal lives and understand that not everything needs to be made public. Popularity and followers are important, but the dignity of relationships and personal respect are far more important. Ultimately, it's important to remember that social media is a tool, not an end. It can be used to spread knowledge, communicate, and foster positive change. But when it becomes a mere pursuit of popularity, its negative consequences begin to emerge. If this hunger for followers and views continues to grow, it's possible that one day people may become popular but lose touch with their own relationships and values. Therefore, it's important to understand in time that true success is achieved with respect and sensitivity—not by auctioning off relationships.

(Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

Is The Gulf Now Questioning Its US Ties - And The American 'Guarantee'?

The war in Iran, unleashed through pre-emptive strikes by the US and Israel on February 28, is well into its second week, and there are no signs of either side giving up soon. Contrary to expectations, Iran has hit back hard and refused to buckle under the tremendous pressure exerted on it. The targeted assassination of its Supreme Leader and over 40 top military commanders has only strengthened its resolve to fight back. Over the past 12 days, not only has Iran hit back at Israel, but it has also successfully targeted a number of American military bases and assets across the region. These attacks, coupled with strikes on critical energy infrastructure like oil depots, oil fields, gas fields and perhaps the most critical, closure of the Strait of Hormuz, have sent the entire region into a spiral. People are asking tough questions, especially on the ineffectiveness of the regional security apparatus as well as the security guarantees of America that it has been promising the region for over decades. Many are questioning the whole logic of it, while others are already looking at alternative security options for the future. Why has it happened? Why are Gulf nations so helpless and unable to secure their land against Iranian attacks? What are the options to ensure foolproof security in the region, going forward? Tough questions that will be debated long after the war is over. For understanding the current security dynamics and why it has failed, there is a need to fully understand the Gulf Security Architecture. How It All Started The security arrangement in the Gulf goes back to the security umbrella provided by the British till the late 1960s. Thereafter, it was the US that took over the responsibility with the articulation of the Nixon Doctrine in 1969, which called on US allies to contribute to their own security with the aid of American security assistance. The "Twin Pillars policy" was a natural outgrowth of it. It incorporated twin pillars in the form of Saudi Arabia and Iran to ensure the security of the

Persian Gulf. This policy, however, fell apart after the Iranian revolution, which took away one critical pillar (Iran) of the policy. At his 1980 State of the Union Address, in reaction to the 1979 Iranian revolution, President Jimmy Carter had assured the region, stating, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the US, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." Also Read | Why Russia's Putin May Be The Biggest Winner Of Trump's Iran War Following it, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was created in 1981 to bring together countries of the region against the perceived threat from two enemies: Iran, an ideological enemy, and Iraq, a belligerent power. The birth of GCC was thus based on two major pillars - fear and exclusion (of Iran and Iraq). In its construct, however, the GCC chose to ignore the geographical and geopolitical realities of the region. Iran and Iraq, geographically, cover almost the entire northern coast of the Persian Gulf, are critical links towards the Levant, Central Asia and South Asia, and are huge reservoirs of natural resources. Post-Iraq World After the Iraq war in 1991, the US reinforced its military presence in the region through the establishment of permanent bases. The Fifth Fleet HQ moved to Bahrain in 1995, while the Al Udeida base in Qatar was set up in 1996; the US CENTCOM relocated to it in 2003. Continuing its security presence in the region, the US introduced the Cooperative Defense Initiative (CDI) in 1999, a plan for the integration of the defence forces of the GCC, Egypt, and Jordan, and to coordinate intelligence-sharing between them. In May 2006, the US launched the Gulf Security Dialogue (GSD) for the promotion of intra-GCC and GCC-US cooperation to meet common perceived threats. Many years later, at the US-GCC Summit in Riyadh in May 2017, an 'Arab NATO' or 'Middle East Strategic Alliance' (MESA) was also mooted,

which would have included nations of the GCC, plus Egypt and Jordan. However, it failed to take off due to the diplomatic blockade on Qatar in June 2017. At the GCC Summit at Jeddah on July 16, 2022, which included the US (President Joe Biden), Egypt, Iraq and Jordan, another assurance was made on collective security, with the leaders reiterating to "confront all activities that threaten the region's security and stability". And, most recently too, after the Israeli missile strike into Doha targeting the Hamas leadership in September 2025, the US had assured iron-clad security guarantees to Qatar, akin to Article 5 of the NATO Charter. However, all the past efforts and assurances have come to nothing as the US has failed to protect the Gulf countries from the ongoing strikes from Iran. Also, the GCC has proved to be ineffective in ensuring collective security in the region, over the past many decades due to a lack of committed organic resources and a lack of a common vision. What Are The Options? The current war has exposed the deep fragilities of the security system in the region. There is a need for a serious review and rethink. Only two options exist. One, the region continues to depend on the US or any other external player to provide it security. However, if even the US, the mightiest of the militaries and with 13 major military bases in the region, could not protect it against only one opposing nation, Iran, then the chances of any success through this model in the future are suspect. The second option is to review and reform the integral regional architecture. It may be recalled that in March 2023, Saudi Arabia and Iran had signed a peace deal, brokered by China. Around the same time, there was a wave of reconciliation among the Arab countries in the region. Egypt reached out to Turkey and Syria to reconcile relations. Qatar and Bahrain also announced the restoration of diplomatic relations. Plus, Syria was readmitted into the Arab League in April 2023, after 11 years of expulsion.

Oil and gas prices fall after Trump says war is 'very complete'

Oil and gas prices fell sharply on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump said that the war in Iran was "very complete, pretty much". Crude almost reached \$120 a barrel on Monday over fears that the conflict would cause lengthy disruption to energy supplies from the Middle East, but dropped back to around \$92 following Trump's comments. Gas prices also fell and stock markets in Europe and Asia rebounded, although US markets dipped slightly when trading began on Tuesday. The boss of Saudi Arabia's Aramco, the world's 'biggest oil exporter, has warned of "catastrophic consequences" if the Strait of Hormuz, a shipping route crucial to global energy supplies, remains blocked. About a fifth of the world's oil usually passes through the narrow waterway, but traffic has all but halted since the war started more than a week ago. Aramco's chief executive, Amin Nasser, warned that global stockpiles of oil were at the lowest for five years and the supply bottleneck meant these would be used at a faster rate. "The longer the disruption goes on... the more drastic the conse-



quences for the global economy," he said. On Tuesday, the International Energy Agency (IEA) held a second meeting with G7 nations to discuss options for stabilising the global oil market, including releasing millions of barrels of crude from countries' stocks. The IEA is holding a meeting of member governments later "to inform a subsequent decision" on whether or not to make emergency stocks available. On Monday, Trump told a news conference in Florida: "We took a little excursion because we felt we had to do that to get rid of some evil. Then, I

think you'll see it's going to be a short-term excursion." He later wrote on social media: "If Iran does anything that stops the flow of Oil within the Strait of Hormuz, they will be hit by the United States of America TWENTY TIMES HARDER than they have been hit thus far." The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said "in response to Trump's nonsense", Iran's armed forces will "not allow the export of a single litre of oil from the region". Trump's comments raised hopes that the war would not be a drawn-out conflict, and Brent crude fell below \$84 a

barrel at one point before rising to \$91.72 on Tuesday. It is nearly \$20 higher than it was before the US-Israel war with Iran began on 28 February when Brent was priced at around \$73 a barrel. Gas also dropped, with UK prices for month-ahead delivery falling sharply to 126p a therm, well below Monday's peak of 171p. The fall in oil prices has given traders a moment to "exhale", but energy markets remain in a state of "total tug-of-war", said Alberto Bellorin, founder and managing director oil and gas investment firm InterCapital Energy. Oil

trading will "remain incredibly twitchy", he said, and prices are likely to spike if the conflict escalates and fall if it seems to be easing. The hopes of a swift end to the lifted raised European stock markets. London's FTSE 100 rose 1.2%, Germany's Dax index climbed 1.9% and the French Cac 40 rose 1.4%. Earlier in Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 had closed up 2.9%, recovering some of Monday's losses, while South Korea's Kospi gained 5.4%. But US markets, which had ended Monday slightly higher, fell as trading began. The S&P 500, Dow Jones and Nasdaq all fell by about 0.5%. On Monday, G7 nations said they were ready to take "necessary measures" to address the global supply of energy in the light of surging oil prices. A meeting between G7 leaders and the IEA ended without a final decision on whether the nations would release oil from stockpiles, though the matter was discussed. Robin Mills, chief executive of Qamar Energy, an energy consultancy based in Dubai, told the BBC that there was a reluctance to use this option too early as "once the strategic reserves are gone, they're gone".

Asian shares surge as oil prices sank back to about USD 90

Tokyo: Asian shares have rebounded from their sharp declines a day before after a rally on Wall Street as global investors wagered that the war with Iran may not last too long. But the gains early Tuesday, March 10, fell far short of losses Monday, when oil prices neared \$120 per barrel before falling back to about \$90. US futures were trading about 0.4% lower. Helping to assuage investors' fears, US President Donald Trump told CBS News he thinks "the war is very complete, pretty much." However, he made other comments that seemed to threaten intensified action against Iran if it makes any "attempt to stop the globe's oil supply." Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 3.2% to 54,399.08 after the government released revised economic data that showed Japan's economy grew slightly faster than initially estimated in the final quarter of last year, boosted by solid business investments. The economy expanded at an annual pace of 1.3%. The initial estimate was a much weaker 0.2%. "Today is the rebound, obviously positive comments from President Trump overnight, we're starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel for the war," said Neil Newman, a



managing director and head of strategy at Astris Advisory Japan. "So volatility is going to remain with us but things are certainly looking a lot brighter today." Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.8% to 8,669.50. South Korea's Kospi jumped 3.6% to 5,453.45. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 1.6% to 25,804.70, while the Shanghai Composite index rose 0.4% to 4,119.29. Share prices have been swinging mostly in tandem with oil prices, which have gyrated as the war has deepened. Early Tuesday, benchmark US crude fell \$4.70 to \$90.07 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, dipped \$5.13 to \$93.83 a barrel. On Monday, stock prices swerved from a steep early loss to a moderate gain. The S&P 500 dropped as much as 1.5% before flipping to a

gain of 0.8%. It closed at 6,795.99. The Dow Jones Industrial Average clawed back a plunge of nearly 900 points to rise 239 points, or 0.5%, to 47,740.80. The Nasdaq composite climbed 1.4% to 22,695.95. Share prices have wavered due to uncertainty about just how high oil prices will go and how long they will stay there because of disruptions to Middle East energy facilities. If oil prices stay very high for very long, households' budgets already stretched by high inflation could break under the pressure. Companies would see their own bills jump for fuel and to stock items on their store shelves or in their data warehouses. It all raises the possibility of a worst-case scenario for the global economy, "stagflation," where growth stagnates and inflation remains high.

INDIA'S MOST-LOVED MID-SIZE CRUISER: ROYAL ENFIELD METEOR 350 CROSSES 6 LAKH SALES MARK

Royal Enfield Meteor 350, India's most loved cruiser, has crossed the 6 lakh sales milestone, earning the trust of riders across the globe since its launch in November 2020. With its relaxed cruising character, refined engine and effortless rideability, the Meteor 350 has quickly become the preferred cruiser motorcycle among both seasoned motorcyclists and new riders. Over the years, the motorcycle has also earned several global accolades, including the prestigious 'Indian Motorcycle of the Year 2021' award, cementing its place as one of the most successful cruisers in the mid-size motorcycle segment. Ever since its launch, the Meteor 350 has redefined what easy cruising means for riders across age groups, emerging as an accessible cruiser for both daily city commutes and long highway rides. As the first Royal Enfield motorcycle to migrate on the J-series platform, Meteor 350 immedi-



ately struck a chord not only with long-distance riders and motorcycle enthusiasts, but also with first-time buyers who appreciate comfort and mechanical refinement. By delivering an experience that feels equally comfortable while navigating city traffic or riding on open highways, the Meteor 350 has helped expand the mid-size cruiser segment by attracting new riders. The motorcycle enjoys a strong demand in India and international markets, especially LATAM, SAARC and European markets, reflect-

ing its wide-ranging appeal across diverse riding environments and geographies. Combining timeless cruiser aesthetics with modern engineering and rider-centric features, the Meteor 350 is powered by a 349cc air-oil-cooled, single-cylinder engine that delivers smooth, tractable power with a refined character. The motorcycle features a digital-analog instrument cluster, Tripper navigation pod, LED lighting elements, premium switchgear, USB Type-C fast-charging port, Assist-and-slip clutch and

adjustable levers. This reflects Royal Enfield's focus on blending classic design with contemporary functionality. The Meteor 350 is offered in four distinct variants - Fireball, Stellar, Aurora and Supernova, catering to a range of rider preferences, with ex-showroom prices in India ranging between ₹1,95,546 and ₹2,15,770. The Meteor 350 is sold in 60+ countries, backed by a strong dealer network of over 2000 stores in India and over 1000 outlets in the international markets.

G7 TO TAKE 'NECESSARY MEASURES' TO SUPPORT ENERGY SUPPLIES

G7 nations have said they are ready to take "necessary measures" to support the global supply of energy after the US-Israel war with Iran sent oil prices surging. However, a meeting of G7 finance ministers and the International Energy Agency (IEA) ended without an agreement to release strategic crude reserves. The oil price reached nearly \$120 a barrel on Monday, over fears of a lengthy disruption to supplies, before falling back sharply after President Trump raised hopes the war would soon end. At the virtual meeting, the option of releasing oil from stockpiles was one of several discussed as Fatih Birol, head of the IEA, said global oil markets "have deteriorated in recent days". Birol said: "In addition to the challenges of transit through the Strait of Hormuz, a substantial amount of oil production has been curtailed. This is creating significant and growing risks for the market." IEA member countries currently hold over 1.2 billion barrels of public emergency oil stocks, with a fur-



ther 600 million barrels of industry stocks held under government obligation." Follow the latest developments on the war in the Middle East Following the meeting, French finance minister Roland Lescure said, "we are not there yet," on the question of whether emergency stocks will be released. If reserves are released it would be the first time since 2022 following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In a statement following the meeting, the G7 said: "We stand ready to take necessary measures, including to support global

supply of energy such as stockpile release." Chancellor Rachel Reeves said on Monday the UK used the meeting to call for "immediate de-escalation" in the Middle East and guaranteed security for ships in the region. "I stand ready to support a co-ordinated release of collective IEA oil reserves," she added. Major disruption to energy supplies from the region threatens to push up prices for consumers and businesses around the world. Rising inflation could lead to fewer interest rate cuts by central banks. About a fifth of the

world's oil supply is usually shipped through the Strait of Hormuz. But traffic through the narrow passage has all but halted since the war started more than a week ago. The US and Israel launched fresh waves of airstrikes across Iran over the weekend, hitting multiple targets including oil depots. Meanwhile, Iran targeted energy infrastructure in neighbouring Gulf states. Overnight, Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted and destroyed two waves of drones heading towards a major oilfield. Last week the markets had been relatively relaxed about the seemingly nightmare scenario of millions of barrels of crude and liquefied gas trapped in the Gulf. But the escalations over the weekend, alongside scenes of destruction of energy infrastructure both in Iran and across the Gulf, saw the markets take rapid fright. On Monday morning in Asia, the price of Brent crude jumped by more than 25% to touch \$119.50 a barrel at one point before dropping below \$90 after Trump told CBS the "war is very complete, pretty much".

Volkswagen to cut 50,000 jobs as profits drop

Volkswagen has said it will cut 50,000 jobs in Germany by 2030 as its profits dropped to their lowest level since 2016. Chief executive Oliver Blume told shareholders that the cuts would take place in Germany and fall across the entire group, including Audi and Porsche. Europe's largest carmaker said post-tax profits had fallen by around 44% in 2025. It said it was hit by US import tariffs, intense competition from China and high restructuring costs from the shift to electric vehicles. The firm projects a recovery in the coming year, but its finance chief stressed that it would have to focus on "rigorously" reducing costs. "In total, around 50,000 jobs are due to be cut by 2030 across the Volkswagen Group in Germany," Blume said in a letter to shareholders in the firm's annual report. "We are operating in a fundamentally different environment," he added. The



group had already struck a deal with unions to cut more than 35,000 jobs across the country in a "socially responsible manner" by 2030, in order to save some 15bn (£12.4bn). Volkswagen, along with other German carmakers, has been badly affected by a decline in demand for its cars in China, previously a lucrative market. At the same time, Chinese brands have been moving into Europe, increasing competition for sales. US President Donald Trump's decision to impose 25% tariffs on car imports has made conditions even harder. In its annual fig-

ures, Volkswagen said its net profit after tax fell from 12.4bn (£10.7bn; \$14.4bn) to 6.9bn (£6.1bn; \$8bn) last year. For 2026, Volkswagen said it predicted a core profit margin of between 4% and 5.5% - potentially lower still than the 4.6% it achieved this year. Volkswagen finance boss Arno Antlitz warned that the group's profit margin was "not sufficient in the long run" and said that further cost-cutting was needed. "We can only realise this if we continue to rigorously reduce costs," he said. "That is what we will focus on in the coming months."

Hyderabad, this one's for you: Ai+ Smartphone's Pulse 2 Goes on Sale on Flipkart on March 11 at Rs. 5,999

Hyderabad, March 10, 2026- Ai+ Smartphone's Pulse 2 goes live on Flipkart on March 11, 2026, at 12 noon, starting at just ₹5,999. And Hyderabad is firmly in the brand's sights for what comes next. The city ranks among Ai+ Smartphone's top 10 markets nationally, and the brand isn't slowing down. Hyderabad's young, digitally-native consumers, streaming more, gaming more, and spending smarter, are exactly who Pulse 2 was built for. As demand for feature-packed, value-first smartphones surges across Telangana, Ai+ Smartphone sees the market as a key driver of its next growth chapter. "Hyderabad consumers know what they want: real performance, real value, no compromises," said Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone and Founder, NxtQuantum. Shift Technologies. "We designed Pulse 1 last year to deliver on all three expectations. Today, Pulse 2 takes that promise further. It's an upgrade designed



for people who are passionate about growing and evolving," he added. With Hyderabad increasingly shopping online-first, Flipkart is the natural launchpad, giving city consumers the same day access and first-day pricing as buyers anywhere in the country. Ai+ Smartphone already operates a service centre in Hyderabad as part of its 300-strong nationwide network, and has firm plans to deepen its footprint across the region.

What's Inside Pulse 2 significantly upgrades the Pulse 1 experience with improvements across the features users rely on most. The front camera jumps from 5MP to 8MP, the battery grows from 5000mAh to a slim 6000mAh, and the refresh rate improves from 90Hz to 120Hz for smoother visuals. Durability also steps up from IP54 to IP64, while the 50MP Dual AI rear camera continues to deliver

strong photography performance in the segment. Software sees an upgrade as well, with Pulse 2 launching on Android 16 with NxtQuantum OS (versus Android 15 on Pulse 1), bringing transparency, privacy, sharper responsiveness, stronger system efficiency, and a more refined experience straight out of the box. A redesigned form factor adds improved in-hand comfort and a cleaner aesthetic, avail-

able in five colours: Green, Blue, Pink, Purple, and Black. Pulse 2 goes live on Flipkart on March 11, 2026, at 12 noon.

About Ai+ Smartphone Ai+ Smartphone is a next-generation brand built in India, delivering reliable and high-performance mobile experiences. Powered by NxtQuantum OS, India's first sovereign mobile operating system. The brand focuses on delivering a clean design, ensuring long battery life, and maintaining trusted software performance, all while keeping prices accessible without compromising the user experience. From redefining smartphones to pioneering IoT products as part of the company's Connected Ecosystem, Ai+ Smartphone is creating a new standard for trust, immersive experience, and accessibility. Rooted in a privacy-first architecture and a commitment to equitable access, Ai+ Smartphone stands for more than specs — it stands for India's next era of user-owned.

Hegseth says today will be 'most intense' of US war on Iran, as people in Tehran describe strikes

United Arab Emirates air defences have detected nine ballistic missiles today, destroying eight while one fell in the sea, the nation's Ministry of Defence has said. An additional 35 drones were detected, 26 of which were intercepted while nine fell in UAE territory. According to the MOD's post on X, this brings the total of Iranian weaponry directed at the UAE to 262 ballistic missiles (241 of these destroyed) and 1,475 drones (1,385 of these intercepted). The attacks have resulted in six deaths, of Emirati, Pakistani, Nepalese and Bangladeshi nationalities. "The Ministry of Defense affirms that it is on high alert and readiness to deal with any threats and to firmly counter all that targets the destabilization of the state's security, ensuring the preservation of its sovereignty, security, and stability, and protecting its interests and national capabilities," the MOD said. British Airways has cancelled more flights to



the Middle East. BA said flights to Amman, Bahrain, Doha, Dubai, Tel Aviv have been cancelled up to and including 28 March. Abu Dhabi will not restart until October, as this is only a winter route for BA. The airline said the update was to give more certainty to passengers. BA still has two more repatriation flights from Oman to the UK this week, with tickets still on sale. The airline continues to operate a

reduced service to Larnaca, Cyprus. The US stock market is flat this morning, as concerns about the situation in Iran persist. The Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 were down about 0.3% in early trade, while the Nasdaq was flat. As a major producer of oil and gas, the US is less exposed to economic risks from the jump in oil prices sparked by the US-Israeli war. Its shares have been less impacted than those in

regions that rely more heavily on energy imports. The US says it will ramp up strikes against Iran, as attacks continue across the Middle East. Here's what you need to know: A top Iranian security official has threatened Donald Trump to be careful "so that you won't get eliminated" after the US president warned against stopping the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz - as oil prices fall from their Monday peak of

almost \$120 a barrel US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth says today will be the "most intense" day of US strikes on Iran so far, with "the most fighters, the most bombers, the most strikes" A mother in the Iranian city of Karaj described feeling the "shadow of death" after a strike hit close to her home Our Middle East correspondent reports that in northern Israel there have been at least 30 warnings of incoming missiles and drones today as millions of people in parts of the country rush for shelter. Qatar and the UAE have also reported fresh attacks Earlier, the UK Ministry of Defence announced it was preparing another warship for possible deployment to the Eastern Mediterranean as HMS Dragon prepares to leave Portsmouth within days. Ali Larjani, Iran's top security official, has been responding to the US in a series of posts on X. He says that Iran is not scared of Trump's "worthless threats",

adding that "even those bigger than you couldn't eliminate Iranian nation". "Be careful, so that you won't get eliminated," he concludes. It comes after the US president warned on TruthSocial that Iran would be hit "TWENTY TIMES HARDER" if the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz is stopped. Ali Larjani, Iran's top security official, has issued a warning - seemingly toward the US and Israel - that the Strait of Hormuz can be a "strait of peace" or "suffering". The full message, which Larjani posted in six different languages, reads: "Strait of Hormuz will either be a Strait of peace and prosperity for all or will be a Strait of defeat and suffering for warmongers." It comes as oil prices have spiked over fears the war with Iran could cause disruption to supplies from the Middle East through the strait - which sees about a fifth of the world's oil supply shipped through it.

FAMILY OF CHILD INJURED IN CANADA SCHOOL SHOOTING SUES OPENAI



The family of a girl critically injured during a mass shooting at a Canadian school is suing ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, claiming it had been aware the suspect had been planning an attack but failed to alert the authorities. Twelve-year-old Maya Gebala was shot in the neck and head in the attack in Tumbler Ridge on 10 February and remains in hospital. An initial ChatGPT account linked to the suspect, 18-year-old Jesse Van Rootselaar, was banned by OpenAI in June 2025 due to the nature of her conversations with the chatbot, but Canadian police

were not notified. OpeanAI told the BBC it was committed to making "meaningful changes" to help prevent similar tragedies in the future. Eight people were killed in the attack, including five young children and the suspect's mother, in one of the deadliest shootings in Canadian history. The civil lawsuit, brought by Gebala's mother Cia Edmonds, alleges Rootselaar set up an account with ChatGPT before she turned 18 - something users can do with parental consent. The plaintiffs allege no age verification took place on the site.

Lebanon calls for talks with Israel on plan to end Hezbollah conflict



Lebanon's president has called for direct negotiations with Israel as part of a proposal to end the escalating conflict with Hezbollah, while sharply criticising the Iran-backed group for dragging the country into a wider regional war. A spokesperson for President Joseph Aoun told the BBC that Lebanon was ready to negotiate, but not while the country remained under Israeli fire. Speaking during a virtual meeting with senior European Union officials on Monday, Aoun outlined what he described as a path towards "permanent security and stability arrangements on our borders". Israeli officials have shown little sign of backing negotiations, and the government did not immediately comment. Under the Lebanese president's four-point plan, a "complete truce" would coincide with the disarmament of Hezbollah, and international assistance for the Lebanese Armed Forces to help them regain control of "areas of tension". "And simultaneously, Lebanon and Israel [to] begin direct negotiations under international sponsorship, in order to execute the aforementioned plan," a statement said. Aoun said the war had

taken a devastating toll on Lebanon, with more than 700,000 people displaced, including 200,000 children, and hundreds killed in Israeli strikes over the past nine days, according to the United Nations. "Some of them are on the roads. They have no shelter and not even the most basic necessities of life," he said. The president also delivered unusually blunt criticism of Hezbollah, accusing the Shia Muslim militia and political movement of acting against Lebanon's national interests. Referring to Hezbollah as an "armed faction", Aoun said it gave "no weight to Lebanon's interests or to the lives of its people", and wanted the "collapse of the Lebanese state under aggression and chaos". The remarks follow the government's declaration last week that Hezbollah's military operations were illegal, though the state currently lacks the capacity to disarm the group on its own. Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the Lebanese government directly on X, writing: "It is your responsibility to enforce the ceasefire agreement and it is your responsibility to disarm Hezbollah."

SYRIAN EX-COLONEL IN COURT ON CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY CHARGE

A former colonel in the Syrian Air Force intelligence department has appeared before a London court charged with crimes against humanity. Salem Michel Al-Salem, appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court via video link and has been named publicly for the first time after a request from his team to prevent this was rejected. The 58-year-old is charged with three counts of murder as a crime against humanity, one count of conduct ancillary to murder as a crime against humanity and three counts of torture. The charges all relate to alleged events in Damascus in 2011 and 2012, including deaths at a demonstration on 22 April 2011 when protesters calling for prisoners to be freed were allegedly shot

dead. Chief magistrate Paul Goldspring remanded Al-Salem on bail until his next court appearance at the Old Bailey on Friday. No indication was given as to how al-Salem will plead to the charges. Al-Salem remained seated on the video link throughout the hearing, wearing what appeared to be an oxygen mask. The court heard that he has been diagnosed with spinal onset motor neurone disease and was too unwell to confirm his name. It had been argued by Al-Salem's lawyer that he should not be named in the media, and that doing so could put him at risk. But the chief magistrate turned down the application, saying the fact that it might "rise in people strong feelings of hostility and concern is not.

MIXED MESSAGES FROM TRUMP LEAVE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS OVER WAR'S END

President Donald Trump and his administration have so far offered mixed messages and contradictory explanations on the joint US-Israeli military campaign against Iran. And Monday - the 10th day of an operation that has rattled allies and shaken markets - typified this confusion around the war's timeline and ultimate goals. After a tumultuous morning during which US shares indices dropped and oil prices surged, the American president began speed-dialling reporters in an apparent effort to soothe nerves. His comments, however, were lacking in clarity even when he was pushed for more detail. "I have a plan for everything, OK?" he told a reporter from the New York Post



when asked about spiking oil prices. "I have a plan for everything. You'll be very happy." To CBS News, he said the war "is very complete, pretty much". "We're very far ahead of schedule," he added. When asked whether the operation could therefore end soon, Trump said: "I don't know, it depends. Wrapping up is all in my mind, nobody else's." His telephone spree,

at least in an economic sense, had the desired effect. Stock markets rallied, and the price of a barrel of oil - which had reached \$120 earlier in the day - dropped below \$90. Just days ago, Trump said that he would not stop the war until Iran's "unconditional surrender". But after his comments on Monday, it appeared as though an end to a military operation

that has roiled the Middle East and led to the near complete shutdown of shipping traffic through the Straits of Hormuz could be in sight. By evening, however, Trump was walking back those comments. "We could call it a tremendous success right now," he said. "Or we could go further. And we're going to go further." He said the US was "very close to finishing" what he called an "excursion", but warned that the US would intensify its strikes if Iran continued to threaten oil tankers exiting the Persian Gulf. "We will hit them so hard that it will not be possible for them or anybody else helping them to recover that section of the world," he said. Trump also laid out an expansive mission for the war.

FIVE IRANIAN FOOTBALLERS GRANTED AUSTRALIAN VISAS AFTER ANTHEM PROTEST

Five members of the Iranian women's football team have been granted humanitarian visas in Australia after their elimination in the Asian Cup, the government in Canberra says. Immigration Minister Tony Burke said the women "were moved to a safe location" by Australian police. He said other squad members had been told they were welcome to stay in the country. The women had been due to fly home, but supporters had raised fears for their safety after the team declined to sing the national anthem ahead of their match against South Korea



last week. This prompted criticism in Iran, with one conservative commentator accusing the team of being "wartime traitors" and pushing for harsh punishment. The remainder of the team was taken to Gold Coast Airport and was expected to fly to Sydney

on Tuesday evening local time. The team's coach was briefly stopped by dozens of activists who tried to persuade the other players to stay in Australia. Some protesters lay on the ground in an attempt to block the coach from moving forward. The players

watched from inside the bus. Australia's humanitarian visa programme grants permanent protection to refugees and people in humanitarian need. Visa holders can live, work and study in the country. Speaking early on Tuesday, Burke said the five players were happy for their names to be confirmed as Fatemeh Pasandideh, Zahra Ghanbari, Zahra Sarbali, Atefeh Ramazanzadeh, and Mona Hamoudi. "They want to be clear they are not political activists. They are athletes who want to be safe," he said, adding that talks had been going on over several days.

Canada police investigate reports of shots fired at US consulate in Toronto



Canadian police say they are investigating reports that a gun was fired at the US consulate in Toronto. "Evidence of a firearm discharge has been located," Toronto Police Operations posted on X on Tuesday, adding that the report of gunfire was received just before 05:30 local time (09:30 GMT). No injuries have been reported,

and no suspect has been identified, the police statement adds. It comes as Norwegian police investigate an explosion that occurred outside the US embassy in Oslo on Sunday. Officials there are seeking a suspect who they believe may have placed the improvised device in a possible act of terrorism.

SIGNAL ISSUES SCAM WARNING TO USERS AFTER HACKERS TARGET OFFICIALS



Signal has warned users to look out for signs of scams, after Dutch intelligence said high-profile users of the secure messaging app were being targeted by hackers. Dutch cybersecurity agencies said on Monday a Russia-based campaign had targeted individual users of Signal, as well as WhatsApp. They said this had seen hackers pose as support staff to try and obtain details that would give them access to accounts or hijack linked devices - with Dutch officials, military staff and civil servants among those targeted in the "global" campaign. Signal says its systems remain secure but it is taking reports of such activity "very seriously". The campaign was identified by Dutch intelligence agencies, the Military Intelligence and Security Service (MIVD) and General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD). They said in a press notice the "large-scale global cyber campaign" appeared to target people of interest to the Russian state, such as government officials and journalists. "It is not the case that Signal or WhatsApp as a whole have been compromised. Individual user accounts

are being targeted," said Simone Smit, AIVD director-general. Signal reiterated this in a series of posts on X, stressing its systems "have not been compromised and remain robust". "These attacks were executed via sophisticated phishing campaigns, designed to trick users into sharing information - SMS codes and/or Signal PIN - to gain access to users' accounts," it wrote. So-called phishing attacks see criminals attempt to convince users to part with passcodes, money or details about their identity - often by impersonating customer support agents, friends, family and celebrities. In the campaign identified by Dutch intelligence agencies, hackers pretended to be Signal Support to try and get people to share account details. Users are asked when creating a Signal account to secure it with a PIN code - something it says should never be shared with anyone. The company added users should also not share verification codes messaged to their phone number. WhatsApp has given similar advice, saying users should not share six-digit codes used to secure their account.



Wildflowers cover Death Valley in best display since 2016

ICC Books Commercial Tickets For West Indies, South Africa After Charter Flight Cancellatio

The wait is finally over, as the International Cricket Council (ICC) has booked separate commercial flights for the stranded West Indies and South Africa teams to ensure a safe journey home, sources told NDTV. This move comes after the charter flight, originally scheduled to take off from Kolkata, was canceled due to "logistical issues." Speaking to NDTV, an official confirmed that commercial bookings were made to guarantee the safe passage of the players amid the ongoing conflict involving the United States and Iran. The source also revealed that the players will begin departing India in batches rather than as a single group. "All the players are now booked on commercial flights out... they have started leaving in batches," the official told NDTV. The two teams that played their final T20 World Cup games in Kolkata (West Indies in Super 8s on March 1 and South Africa on March 4 in semi-final) have



not been able to fly out due to the disruption that has been caused by International airspace restrictions across parts of West Asia following American and Israeli strikes on Iran. The situation has forced multiple airlines to avoid routes through the Gulf region. ICC's airline partner is Emirates and they are

unable to operate due to shutdown of Dubai airspace. The restrictions severely complicated outbound travel from India towards the Caribbean and Africa, forcing cricket authorities to explore alternative routes and charter arrangements. Earlier, in a communication conveyed on Tuesday evening, both teams were scheduled to

leave Kolkata on a shared charter flight to Johannesburg on Tuesday afternoon. From there, the West Indies contingent was to continue onward to Antigua, while the South Africans were expected to disperse for their respective commitments. The West Indies squad has been stranded in Kolkata since March 1 after being

knocked out of the T20 World Cup by India, who defeated them by five wickets in their Super Eight match at Eden Gardens on March 1. South Africa's campaign had ended a few days later when they lost the first semifinal to eventual runners-up New Zealand at the same venue on March 4, leaving them caught in the same boat.

"Bohot Miss Karunga Aapko Papa": Rinku Singh Shares Emotional Note For Late Father

Indian cricketer Rinku Singh realised a long-standing dream as he became a world champion in the T20 format. Rinku was a part of India's team that defeated New Zealand in the final on Sunday to retain the T20 World Cup trophy. While the moment was undoubtedly of great jubilation for Rinku, the explosive batter couldn't quite celebrate the way he would've liked to because of his father's death, only a few days before the final. As Rinku held the trophy in his hand, he could only think about his father and how happy he would've been seeing him fulfil this dream. Referring to his father in an emotional Instagram post, Rinku said that he stepped onto the field only with the vision of fulfilling his dream. But, is now unable to fill the void that his dad left, even as the dream has become a reality. "Aapse baat kiye bina itne din kabhi nahi nikale. Mujhe nahi pata aage ki zindagi aapke bina kaise chalegi... par mujhe har kadam par aapki



zaroorat padegi." (So many days have never passed without speaking to you. I do not know how life ahead will go on without you... but I will need you at every step.) "Aapne sikhaya tha ki farz sabse aage hai... toh field par bas aapka sapna pooraa karne ki koshish kar raha tha. Ab aapka sapna pura ho gaya hai... toh bas yahi lagta hai ki kash aap mere paas hote." (You taught me that duty comes before everything else... so on the

field, I was only trying to fulfil your dream. Now that your dream has been realised... I just wish that you were here with me.) "Har chhoti badi khushi mein aapki kami khalegi. Bohot miss karunga aapko Papa... bohot zyada." (I will feel your absence in every joy, big or small. I will miss you a lot, Papa... so very much. Rinku's father was undergoing treatment for fourth-stage liver cancer before the news of his death was confirmed.

JAIPUR POLO TEAM WINS SMS GOLD VASE, SECURES NINTH TITLE OF THE SEASON

The Jaipur Polo Team continued their remarkable run this season as HH Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh led the side to victory in the prestigious SMS Gold Vase, securing their ninth title of the season with a narrow 6-5.5 win over Krishna Polo in a closely contested final. The team had earlier confirmed their place in the final with a strong semi-final performance against RPC. The final was a tightly fought encounter, with both teams exchanging momentum across the chukkers. Jaipur began on a positive note, taking a 2-1.5 lead at the end of the first chukker through early attacking pressure.



Krishna Polo responded in the second chukker, with Kr. Vishal Singh Rathore leading the charge to give his side a narrow 3.5-3 advantage at halftime. Jaipur shifted gears in the third chukker, regaining control of possession and capitalising on scoring oppor-

tunities. HH Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh led the attack with clinical finishing, helping the team move ahead 5-3.5. Krishna Polo mounted a determined challenge in the final chukker through goals from Kr. Vishal Singh Rathore and Rk. Sidhant Singh. However,

Jaipur maintained composure in the closing stages, holding their defensive structure and managing the game effectively to secure the 6-5.5 victory and lift the SMS Gold Vase. Semi-Finals - Jaipur vs RPC In the semi-final against RPC, Jaipur overcame an early deficit after RPC took a 3.5-1 lead at the end of the first chukker. Jaipur responded steadily in the second chukker through goals from Br. Harshodya Singh and Mr. Yogendra Singh, narrowing the gap to trail 4-5.4 at halftime. The momentum shifted decisively in the third chukker as Jaipur tightened their defence and controlled possession.

He Just Set A National Record With 113-Foot Free Dive, But What Is The Sport All About?

As cricket continues to hog the sporting limelight, diver Dinesh Saundappa is quietly making history for India. He made a new national record in freediving, achieving a depth of 34.5 metres in the Variable Weight category. This milestone marks a significant moment for the sport in India, highlighting the growing presence of Indian athletes in less conventional sporting arenas. Dinesh's journey into the world of professional freediving began almost by accident. While scuba diving in the Maldives, he found himself so captivated by the underwater world that he decided to pursue freediving seriously. Today, he has transitioned from a curious diver to a certified freediving coach and a national



record holder. Speaking to NDTV, Dinesh mentioned that he wasn't even aware he had broken the record at the moment it happened. He has dedicated this achievement to his mother. Why Freediving? Freediving is often described as a meditative experience rather than just a physical challenge. Unlike scuba diving, which

relies on heavy equipment, freediving is about exploring the depths on a single breath. For Dinesh, the sport acts as a form of "medicine" that offers a sense of absolute freedom and tranquility. According to Dinesh, the sport is as much about mental discipline as it is about lung capacity. As a diver descends, the increas-

ing pressure causes the oxygen in the lungs to compress. To conserve oxygen for vital organs, the mind must remain perfectly still. Training allows a diver's heart rate to drop significantly. While a typical resting heart rate is around 75-80 bpm, a freediver's heart rate can plunge to 40-50 bpm during a dive. Meditation is a crucial part of his training, helping him maintain the focus required to manage the body's oxygen consumption effectively while diving. Dinesh also emphasised the critical role of a coach in this high-stakes sport. Because a diver must trust their life to the person on the surface or accompanying them, the bond between the athlete and the coach is paramount.

"WEST INDIES STILL STRANDED": ENGLAND GREAT BLASTS ICC BIAS IN EXPLOSIVE POST

While the England cricket team boarded their return flight home just 36 hours after being eliminated from the T20 World Cup 2026, the likes of West Indies and South Africa are reportedly still waiting to leave India. West Indies' T20 World Cup campaign concluded on March 01 after a Super 8 loss to India, while South Africa were eliminated by New Zealand in the semi-finals on March 04. Yet, both remain in India due to airspace restrictions, in the wake of the US-Israel war with Iran over West Asia. Former England captain Michael Vaughan, who has been questioning the International Cricket Council (ICC) over the prolonged delay. On Tuesday, Vaughan poked ICC again,



asking why England were able to leave so early while West Indies and South Africa continue to wait. "Just to let you all know that the West Indies got knocked out of the World Cup on March 1st. It's now March 9th. They are still stranded in Kolkata.. SA are in the same position..!!!!!! This isn't right... England got on a charter 36 hrs after being knocked out.. as should be

the case for all teams," he wrote on X (formerly Twitter). When Will South Africa, West Indies Fly Out? The stranded West Indies and South Africa squads are scheduled to leave Kolkata in the early hours of Tuesday on a shared charter flight to Johannesburg following their exits from the T20 World Cup. From Johannesburg, the West Indies squad will continue to Antigua. This shared flight was arranged after both teams were stranded in India for several days due to international airspace restrictions amid the conflict in the Middle East. The number of players currently remaining in India are 12 from the West Indies plus 10 support staff and 12 from South Africa plus two support staff.

Gujarat Titans Appoint Matthew Hayden As Batting Coach Ahead Of IPL 2026

Gujarat Titans today announced the appointment of former Australian great Matthew Hayden as the franchise's batting coach ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season. A World Cup winner and one of the most dominant opening batters of his era, Hayden joins the Titans setup with an illustrious international career and expertise in modern-day T20 batting dynamics and will strengthen the franchise's support staff as it prepares for the 2026 season with renewed vigour. Commenting on the appointment, Vikram Solanki, Director of Cricket, Gujarat Titans, said: "Matthew's appointment comes at a pivotal phase in our journey. As a



franchise committed to excellence and long-term success, we are constantly focused on strengthening our cricketing ecosystem. His experience at the highest level, coupled with his ability to mentor emerging talent, will be instrumen-

tal in shaping our batting identity for the seasons ahead." Commenting on his appointment, Hayden said: "Good batting applies pressure. Great batting owns the game. That's the standard we want to set at Gujarat Titans." Hayden represented Australia in 273 international matches across formats, scoring over 15,000 international runs and playing a pivotal role in multiple ICC tournament victories. His aggressive yet technically robust approach to batting laid early foundations for the evolution of powerplay dominance in white-ball cricket. He also featured in 32 IPL matches, showcasing a style of play ideally suited to the league's high-intensity demands.

'FIGHTER' KARTAL STUNS KEYS IN INDIAN WELLS COMEBACK



Britain's Sonay Kartal showed her "fighter" spirit as she battled back to stun former Australian Open champion Madison Keys in the third round at Indian Wells. American Keys, who won her first major at Melbourne Park in 2025, dominated the first set but Kartal rallied to complete a 2-6 6-2 6-3 turnaround in just under two hours. The British number two revealed she was still struggling with the back injury that had forced her to call a medical time out during her second-round match against Emma Navarro on Sunday, when she saved a match point en route to victory. "At times in this match I was in discomfort with my back, so it's a match like today which shows the fighter in me," Kartal told BBC Sport after her win over Keys. "On these courts I do feel I can beat anyone on any given day." Kartal's run to the fourth round at Indian

Wells last year, her debut at a WTA 1,000 tournament, helped kick-start a breakthrough season for the 24-year-old, who reached a career-high ranking of 44 in 2025. With victory over 15th seed Keys, Kartal - now ranked 54th - becomes the first British woman to reach the fourth round at the California-based tournament twice. Kartal said she will prioritise recovery for her back before she meets Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina, the reigning Australian Open champion, in the last 16. "It [the back] was a pretty big hindrance," Kartal added. "I didn't really practise yesterday so I gave it as much recovery as I could, so I think now it's about getting recovered and doing the same exact thing to get back on the court in the next couple of days." Kartal was not the only player to cause an upset on Monday with a comeback win.

Cheltenham Festival: Saratoga wins for McManus on owner's 75th birthday

Trainer Nicky Henderson, speaking to BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra, whose horse Hyland goes in the Ultima Handicap Chase: "We have got a strong load on today. "This has been a good race, and it has been kind to us over the years. It is all the best novice hurdlers, who are all coming out to play. They are the future. "It keeps us going. It is terrific. When you have horses as good as these - we will keep bashing away all week! I know a lot of people going abroad and watching horse rac-

ing. To go and sit in the sun, watch the racing on TV. If you want to have a bet, you can do it on your phone. It is a different way of doing it, but I like to be at Cheltenham. The atmosphere at Cheltenham is what makes it. It is amazing the first race today when the tape goes up and off we go - it will be a great atmosphere. Trainer Nicky Henderson, speaking to BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra, whose horse Hyland goes in the Ultima Handicap Chase: "We have got a strong load on today. "This has

been a good race, and it has been kind to us over the years. It is all the best novice hurdlers, who are all coming out to play. They are the future. "It keeps us going. It is terrific. When you have horses as good as these - we will keep bashing away all week! " Sean Bowen, the reigning champion jockey who is on course to win the title again this season, has yet to land a winner at the Cheltenham Festival. The 28-year-old has another chance here as he rides Resplendent Grey. The longest Grade

One race of the day at three miles and a furlong, with the joint biggest field with 22 runners scheduled to compete. Multiple tipsters fancy Quebecois, despite the seven-year-old trained by Paul Nicholls enduring patchy form in recent races. He has not won in four over fences, but the mount of jockey Harry Cobden hugely impressed at Cheltenham Trials Day in January. And with the seventh-lightest weight of the field, this is a chance for this well-tipped lad to step up.



PRIYADARSHI'S SUYODHANA RELEASE DATE LOCKED AS MARCH 27

Suyodhana, starring Priyadarshi and Drishika Chander in the lead roles, is gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on March 27. The film also features Dialogue King Sai Kumar and senior actress Prema in pivotal roles. Produced under the Prajwala Line Creations banner, the film is directed by Y. S. Madhav Reddy and produced by Bosubabu Nidumolu. The makers recently unveiled the film's release date poster, confirming that the movie has completed all formalities and is ready for its theatrical rollout. Speaking on the occasion, producer Bosubabu Nidumolu said that Suyodhana has been crafted with a strong storyline and high production standards. He noted that the film features significant performances from Priyadarshi, Sai Kumar, Drishika Chander, and veteran actress Prema. The music for the film has been composed by Jai Krish, while the lyrics have been penned by Ramajogayya Sastry.



Highlights

■ **SUYODHANA, STARRING PRIYADARSHI AND DRISHIKA CHANDER IN THE LEAD ROLES, IS GEARING UP FOR A WORLDWIDE THEATRICAL RELEASE ON MARCH 27. THE FILM ALSO FEATURES DIALOGUE KING SAI KUMAR AND SENIOR ACTRESS PREMA IN PIVOTAL ROLES.**

The producer added that the team is excited to bring the film to audiences on March 27 and revealed that the

teaser, trailer, and songs from the film will be released soon as part of the promotional campaign.

The Blockbuster combination Vamsi Nandipati Entertainments and ETV Win next "Inka Em Anukoledhu" Crazy Title Announcement Video; Film Releasing on Sept 4th

Producer Vamsi Nandipati, who previously delivered multiple successful projects in collaboration with ETV Win, is once again joining forces with the platform for "Inka Em Anukoledhu." Their earlier collaborations proved that content-driven entertainers with a unique comedic flavor can resonate strongly with audiences. "Inka Em Anukoledhu" is directed by the writer-director duo Pranai Valluripalli and Giri Pemmasani, with Sinjith Yerramilli composing the music and Rehan Shaik handling cinematography. The makers of "Inka Em Anukoledhu" have sparked major buzz online with a wildly entertaining title announcement video that instantly caught everyone's attention. Instead of following the usual promotional formula, the team unveiled the title through a quirky, meme-packed video that blends satire, nostalgic ETV theme, and unapologetic humor. What makes the announcement stand out is its creative use of meme references and witty punches throughout the video. Packed with humorous nods and internet-style comedy, the clip keeps viewers



engaged from start to finish. Adding to the curiosity, the makers cleverly kept the cast details completely under wraps in the announcement. Produced by Vamsi Nandipati with co-producers Ramana Reddy and Sameer Kannu, the bromantic comedy is gearing up for a theatrical release on September 4, 2026. With its unconventional and hilarious title reveal, the film has already created strong anticipation among audiences.

Grand Felicitation Ceremony: "Katti Kantha Rao Memorial National Award" Presented to Actor Dr. Rajendra Prasad



Grand Felicitation Ceremony: "Katti Kantha Rao Memorial National Award" Presented to Actor Dr. Rajendra Prasad" On Monday evening in Hyderabad, the Katti Kantha Rao Memorial National Award was presented to veteran actor Dr. Rajendra Prasad, popularly known as Nata Kireeti. The award ceremony was organized jointly by the Bharata Cultural Academy and the Telugu Film Television Welfare Forum. As part of the event, International Women's Day was also celebrated, and several women from different fields were honored. The program was attended by many distinguished personalities including BJP State President Ramachander Rao, noted director S.V. Krishna Reddy, senior actress Kavitha, Telangana FDC MD and I&PR Commissioner Ms. Priyanka, directors Prem Raj, Vision VVK founder Vijay Kumar, Nagabala D. Suresh Kumar, lyricist

Venigalla Rambabu, political leader Venugopalachari, Chittaranjan, Srinivasa Raju, Akkineni Sridhar, retired IAS officer Parthasarathi, writer Mamidi Harikrishna, film journalist Prabhu, and several others. During the event, women including actress Jyothi, senior actress Dubbing Janaki, Sushila (daughter of Kantha Rao), and many others from various fields were felicitated and presented with mementos. Vijay Kumar (Founder, Vision VVK) Vijay Kumar said he was delighted that the Katti Kantha Rao Memorial National Award was being presented to Rajendra Prasad on the occasion of International Women's Day celebrations. He appreciated Nagabala Suresh for organizing the event in a very short time and assured continued support from Vision VVK. He added that prosperity flourishes wherever women are respected. **Senior Actress Dubbing**

Janaki Dubbing Janaki expressed her gratitude to the Bharata Cultural Academy and Telugu Film Television Welfare Forum for remembering senior artists like her and honoring them. She requested Nagabala Suresh to continue organizing such programs every year to recognize veteran artists. **Nagabala Suresh Kumar** Nagabala Suresh said that good deeds should inspire people even after we are gone. He recalled that his career began 32 years ago with the serial Adi Parashakti, followed by successful serials like Swathi Chinukulu and Nagabala, which created a sensation. He noted that the Nagabala serial was appreciated in 18 countries and was translated into 16 Indian languages. Over his career, he produced 27 serials, received 12 Nandi Awards, a Lifetime Achievement Award, and recognition from the Guinness Book of World Records.

"Dark Night" – Emotional Thriller Starring Poorna Releasing in Theatres on March 13

"Dark Night," an emotional thriller starring actress Poorna in the lead role, is all set to release in theatres across the Telugu states on March 13. The film is written and directed by G.R. Aditya. Poorna plays the character Hema, a pivotal role that drives the narrative forward. The film also stars Trigun (Adith Arun) as Roshan, Vidarth as Alex, and Subhashree Rayaguru as Sophia in important roles. The movie features music composed by Mysskin, and is presented by Patolla Venkat Reddy under the P19 Studios banner. The film is produced by Suresh Reddy Kovvuri. Speaking on the occasion, producer Suresh Reddy

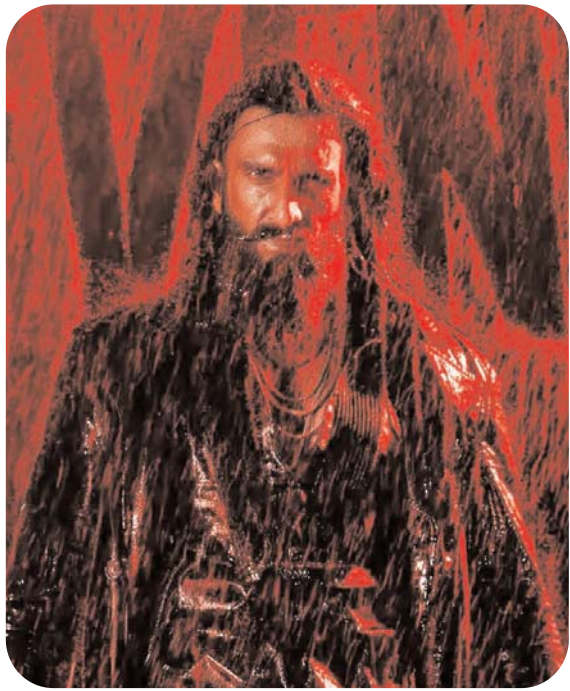


Kovvuri said: "'Dark Night', starring Poorna in the lead role, will be released in theatres across the two Telugu states on March 13. The

story revolves around the lives of four central characters. The complex emotions, secrets, and conflicts between them create a grip-

ping and engaging narrative. As the story unfolds, audiences will experience an emotional journey filled with suspense. The film also introduces an unexpected twist with supernatural elements that take the story in a surprising direction. With Mysskin's signature background score, the film blends emotion and suspense, making 'Dark Night' a memorable cinematic experience. Overall, with its unique storytelling, emotional depth, and thrilling elements, the film will keep audiences engaged with the characters for two intense hours. The story particularly highlights themes relevant to today's youth, reflecting their experiences and emotions."

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Sai Pallavi says 'just coz I love what I wore' as she shares new pictures



Mumbai: Actress Sai Pallavi shared a few glimpses of her latest look, saying "just coz I love what I wore," as she posted a set of pictures celebrating the outfit she donned. The actress took to Instagram, where she appeared delighted with her look, giving a candid peek into her personal style. Keeping it simple, the actress looked every inch gorgeous in sarees and salwar kameez. "Just coz I love what i wore," Pallavi wrote as the caption. Pallavi's acting journey began with uncredited roles and appearances on dance shows, but her breakthrough came as Malar in the 2015 Malayalam film Premam. In 2017, she ventured into Telugu cinema with Fidaa. Pallavi has starred in the films Kali, Middle Class Abbayi, Maari 2, Paava Kadhaigal, Love Story, Shyam Singha Roy, Gargi, Amaran and Thandel. Her song "Rowdy Baby" is the first South Indian video song

to reach one billion views on YouTube. She will next be seen playing Sita in Nitesh Tiwary's 'Ramayana'. The upcoming film features a galaxy of stars with Ranbir in the role of Lord Ram and Yash essaying Raavan. Sunny Deol will portray Lord Hanuman, Amitabh Bachchan will play Jatayu, and Lara Dutt will be seen as Kaikeyi. Two music titans, Hans Zimmer and A. R. Rahman are joining forces for the film. 'Ramayana' is a two-part live-action cinematic universe being reimaged on the scale of the biggest tentpoles produced to date. The film also features Hollywood's top stunt directors Terry Notary (Avengers, Planet of the Apes) and Guy Norris (Mad Max: Fury Road, Furiosa), choreographing the epic battles between gods and demons. 'Ramayana' is being filmed for IMAX and will be released worldwide with Part 1 releasing in Diwali 2026 and Part 2 in Diwali 2027.

28th Ugadi Awards under the Aegis of Sri Kala Sudha – Pemmasani Chandrasekhar and Kandula Durgesh to Attend as Chief Guests

Marking 27 years since its inception, the Sri Kala Sudha Telugu Association, which was established on November 21, 1998, in Chennai to promote and celebrate Telugu culture, will be presenting the 28th Ugadi Awards on the auspicious occasion of the Parabhava Nama Samvatsara Ugadi. The awards ceremony will be held on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at 4:29 PM at the Music Academy, Chennai. During the event, "Mahila Ratna," "Bapu Bomma," "Bapu-Ramana," and "Vishishta Ugadi" Awards, along with Cine Awards-2025, will be presented. These awards will honour actors, directors, producers, and technicians from films released in 2025 across various categories. Additionally, accomplished women from different fields will be felicitated with the Mahila Ratna



Award. The decision regarding the awardees was taken after discussions with the committee members. Members of Sri Kala Sudha have invited Telugu people from across regions to attend the event and celebrate the rich legacy and achievements of the Telugu community. On this occasion, the organizers announced the names of the award recipients and shared details of the upcoming ceremony. The press meet was attended by Telugu

Film Producers Council Secretary Tummala Prasanna Kumar, senior film journalist Prabhu, Bethireddy Srinivas, Prativadhi Bhayankara Phaninder, Venu Gopal, Ajay Kumar, journalist Keshava, and others. The event will have Dr. Brahmasani Chandrasekhar as the Chief Guest, while MVR Murali Krishna will attend as the Guest of Honour. A. Sai Prasad, Sahu Garapati, Shashikanth

Valleppalli, Muba Padmaiah, Rajamouli Sheern, and Saroj Vivekanand will grace the occasion as Special Guests. The Vasishta Ugadi Award for Public Service will be presented to Andhra Pradesh Tourism and Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh. The Mahila Ratna Award will be conferred upon Mrs. Mamatha Madireddy. The Andesri Memorial Award will be presented to Oscar-winning lyricist

Chandrabose, while the PB Srinivas Award will be given to music director Devi Sri Prasad for the film Thandirini.

Ugadi Cine Awards – 2025 Winners

- Best Film: Mirai
- Best Sensational Film: Sankranthiki Vasthunnam
- Best Jury Award Film: Dude
- Best Actor: Akkineni Naga Chaitanya
- Best Actress: Rashmika Mandanna
- Best Director: Anil Ravipudi
- Best Dialogue Writer: Mahesh Babu P
- Best Cinematographer: Niketh Bonmi
- Best Villain: Diksith Shetty
- Best Music Director: Bheems Ceciroleo

- Best Debut Director: Ram Jagadish
- Best Debut Actor: Harsh Roshan
- Best New Hero: Keeriti Reddy
- Best Male Singer: Ramana Gogula
- Best Female Singer: Haripriya

- Other Awardees
- Best New Actresses: Aishwarya Arjun, Anaswara Rajan, Sakshi Madolkar
- Best Dialogues & Director: Rahul Ravindran
- Best Child Artist: Bulli Raju

The organizers stated that the Ugadi Awards ceremony will celebrate excellence in cinema and recognize distinguished personalities from various fields, further strengthening the pride and cultural identity of the Telugu community.