

PM MODI ARRIVES IN KOCHI, TO LAUNCH NDA CAMPAIGN, UNVEIL PROJECTS



FUNERAL HELD FOR COMMANDERS IN TEHRAN, SHIP HIT NEAR HORMUZ



IPL 2026 SCHEDULE RELEASED, RCB TO TAKE ON SRH ON MARCH 28



IN BRIFS

SC ALLOWS FIRST PASSIVE EUTHANASIA, PERMITS WITHDRAWAL OF LIFE SUPPORT FOR MAN

New Delhi, March 11: The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed a 31-year-old man from Ghaziabad who has been in a comatose condition for almost 13 years passive euthanasia by withdrawing his life support. In terms of its 2018 Common Cause judgment (as modified in 2023) recognising the fundamental right to die with dignity, a bench comprising justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan allowed the withdrawal of life support for a 32-year-old Harish Rana. Rana has remained in an irreversible permanent vegetative state for the past 13 years after falling from a building. His brain injury left him in a condition of Persistent Vegetative State (PSV) with 100 per cent quadriplegia. According to medical reports, his medical condition has not improved in the past 13 years. He is sustaining life only on Clinically Administered Nutrition (CAN) administered through surgically installed PEG tubes. The bench passed the order on a miscellaneous application of the father seeking to remove all life-sustaining treatment from his son.

CM Revanth reviews road development plans with R&B officials



HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:

Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy held a review meeting with senior officials of the Roads and Buildings Department to discuss road infrastructure development plans in the state in line with the Vision 2047 document. Meeting was attended by R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Special Chief Secretary (R&B) Vikas Raj, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Srinivasa Raju, Enc Mohan Naik and other senior officials.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed officials to prepare comprehensive

plans for road development in accordance with the proposed Road Sector Policy-2047. He emphasized that the road network should be strengthened so that people can reach any part of the state from Hyderabad within a fixed and reasonable time.

Revanth Reddy also instructed officials to identify and develop connectivity roads required to transform Hyderabad into a traffic-free city. He asked officials to take necessary steps to begin road development works in the areas that have already been identified.

WEST ASIA CRISIS: 2 INDIANS DEAD, 778 SEAFARERS ABOARD 28 INDIAN SHIPS STUCK IN PERSIAN GULF, SAYS GOVT



New Delhi (TSIT) Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, the government on Wednesday said that 778 Indian seafarers are currently aboard 28 Indian-flagged vessels operating in the Persian Gulf region, even as New Delhi stepped up monitoring and security measures to safeguard maritime personnel and trade. Addressing a special inter-ministerial briefing, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, said 24 of the vessels are operating west of the Strait of Hormuz with 677 Indian seafarers on board, while four vessels east of the strategic chokepoint carry 101 Indian crew members.

Security agencies, ship managers and recruitment firms are coordinating closely with Indian embassies and local authorities to ensure the safety of the seafarers and provide medical assistance if required,

he said. Advisories issued by the Directorate General of Shipping on February 28 have directed Indian-flagged vessels and seafarers to adopt enhanced security protocols and strict reporting procedures, including submission of crew details to authorities.

Sinha said that port operations across India remain stable despite the regional tensions. Ports have been asked to extend all assistance to exporters and shipping operators to ensure continuity of external trade. Major ports are conducting round-the-clock monitoring of vessel movements, real-time assessment of developments in the region and regular reporting on cargo and ship status. Dedicated 24-hour control rooms have also been set up both in the ministry and in the Directorate General of Shipping to coordinate responses and maintain contact with ship owners, operators and families of seafarers.

SHIV PRATAP SHUKLA TAKES OATH AS GOVERNOR OF TELANGANA



HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:

Shiv Pratap Shukla was sworn in as the Governor of Telangana at a solemn ceremony held at Lok Bhavan on Wednesday. The oath of office and secrecy was administered by the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court, Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy, Legislative Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukender Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka,

several State Ministers, Members of Parliament, MLAs, and MLCs. Senior officials including Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, DGP B. Shivakrishna Reddy, and other top government officials were also present at the event.

Leaders from various political parties and dignitaries attended the ceremony, extending their greetings to the newly sworn-in Governor. The event marked an important constitutional occasion in the state with the participation of prominent political leaders and officials.



Minister of State for Defense Shri Sanjay Seth participated in the National Symposium on 'Changing Dimensions in India's Neighbourhood' as part of the programs organized to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Headquarters Integrated Defense Staff (HQ IDS) in New Delhi on 11th March, 2026.

West Asia conflict: 15 Nepalis injured in Iranian missile and drone attacks

Kathmandu, March 11 : A total of 15 Nepali nationals have so far been injured in Iranian attacks in West Asian countries, while the country has already lost one of its citizens, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Wednesday. Among those injured, 14 have returned to work after receiving treatment, the ministry said at a press meet on Wednesday. More than 1.7 million Nepalis are residing in the region, with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) hosting the largest — 700,000 Nepali nationals - according to the ministry.

Ram Kaji Khadka, Joint Secretary at the ministry, said that the 15 Nepalis sustained minor injuries due to missile and drone attacks launched by Iran. "One Nepali national is still undergoing treatment, but his condition is normal," he said.

In response to joint attacks by the United States and Israel, Iran has been launching retaliatory strikes on several countries in the region



that host US military assets, and civilian infrastructure in many Gulf nations has been hit by Iranian missiles and drones. The Nepali government has already confirmed that a Nepali youth, Diwas Shrestha, from the western

district of Gorkha, was killed during a drone interception operation at Zayed International Airport in the UAE. Speaking at the press meet, Nepal's Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahaur Rai however, said there was no

immediate need to evacuate Nepali workers from the Gulf region on security grounds.

"Our analysis suggests that there is no need to bring them back immediately due to risks to their lives," Rai said.

The Nepali government has also launched an online rescue tracking system to gather updated information on Nepali nationals in the region amid the ongoing conflict that has engulfed large parts of West Asia.

About 61,989 Nepalis had registered their details in the online system operated by the Department of Consular Services under the ministry by Tuesday evening, the ministry said. The information submitted through the registration is being reviewed, and further procedures are being carried out as necessary, it added. The governments of the concerned countries and Nepali diplomatic missions have been regularly issuing advisories regarding security in West Asia. The ministry has urged Nepali citizens to remain aware and vigilant about updates, information, and safety precautions.

US strikes 5,500 Iran targets, 60 ships

Washington, March 11 : US forces have struck more than 5,500 targets inside Iran, including more than 60 ships, since launching 'Operation Epic Fury', the top American commander overseeing the campaign has said, describing the operation as delivering sustained military pressure on Tehran's capabilities. Admiral Brad Cooper, Commander of United States Central Command, said that the operation continues to expand as US forces intensify strikes across multiple domains. "In short, US forces continue delivering devastating combat power against the Iranian regime," he said. According to the commander, American forces have already conducted thousands of strikes targeting Iran's military infrastructure.



work. "Every day, we're striking hard at Iranian ballistic missiles and drones," he said. The campaign is designed to neutralise current threats and reduce Iran's ability to launch future attacks.

"Just last night, our bomber force hit a large ballistic missile manufacturing facility, as an example," Cooper said. "Since the first 24 hours of this campaign, Iranian ballistic missile and drone attacks have dropped drastically," Cooper said.

Naval strikes have also played a major role in the operation. Cooper said the US military has neutralised key Iranian vessels believed to be involved in threatening maritime routes.

"We also took out the last of

four Soleimani-class warships. That's an entire class of Iranian ships now out of the fight," he said. The Commander described the strikes as "unpredictable, dynamic, and decisive."

Air operations have involved waves of advanced fighters and bombers operating from multiple locations. "From the air, we've achieved a concentration of air power with back-to-back waves of advanced fighters creating constant pressure on the enemy every single day," Cooper said.

He also pointed to the increasing role of emerging technologies in modern warfare, including artificial intelligence systems used to analyse battlefield data rapidly.

"Our warfighters are leveraging a variety of advanced AI tools. These systems help us sift through vast amounts of data in seconds so our leaders can cut through the noise and make smarter decisions faster than the enemy can react," he said.

Cooper stressed that final targeting decisions remain with human commanders.

Domestic LPG production rises 25 pc as govt directs supply to households amid Middle East tensions

New Delhi, March 11 : The government has increased domestic LPG production by about 25 per cent and is directing the entire output towards household consumers to ensure uninterrupted cooking gas supply amid the evolving situation in West Asia, it was informed on Wednesday. According to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the government issued an order on March 8 asking refineries and petrochemical complexes to maximise LPG production. Officials said India imports nearly 60 per cent of its LPG needs and around 90 per cent



of those imports usually pass through the Strait of Hormuz, which has been affected by recent develop-

ments in the region. To ensure essential supply, priority is being given to domestic users while non-domestic

LPG is being reserved for critical sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions. A three-member committee consisting of executive directors from Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited has been formed to review LPG allocations to restaurants, hotels and other commercial users and ensure fair distribution. The government said the price of a domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi currently stands at Rs 913 after a recent Rs 60 increase.

Ex-diplomat T S Sandhu sworn in as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi

NEW DELHI: Taranjit Singh Sandhu was sworn in as the 23rd Lieutenant Governor of Delhi in a ceremony held at Lok Niwas on Wednesday.

Delhi High Court Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya administered the oath of office and secrecy to Sandhu in the ceremony attended by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and other dignitaries. His predecessor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, has been appointed as the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

A 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, Sandhu was one of the most experienced Indian diplomats on United States affairs. He served in the Indian Mission in Washington, D.C., multiple times.

He was India's ambassador to the United States from February 2020 to January 2024. The 63-year-old former diplomat had also been at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations from July 2005 to February 2009.



He unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls in 2024 on the BJP ticket from the Amritsar constituency in Punjab.

Meanwhile, newly-appointed Delhi Lt Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Saturday visited the Moti Bagh gurdwara and offered prayers, reminiscing on his

deep personal association with the area. Speaking with reporters, Sandhu said he had lived in the neighbourhood earlier during different phases of his life and used to visit the gurdwara regularly. "I used to live in this area when I was studying at JNU, and later stayed

in Chanakyapuri at the accommodation for Ministry of External Affairs staff. After that, I lived in New Moti Bagh," he said.

Sandhu said both the New Moti Bagh gurdwara and the Malai Mandir temple were part of his routine visits during that time.

Census also include transgender headed households, RS told

NEW DELHI: The upcoming Census will collect data on sex of head of household—Male, Female and Transgender, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, in a written response, said Census 2027 will be conducted in two phases. The questions for the first phase, which covers Housing and Housing Census, have been notified.

"Information on Housing condition, Household particulars including name and sex of the head of the household, amenities available and assets possessed by household will be collected in this phase. Three categories of sex of head of household viz. Male/Female/Transgender will be collected," Rai said.

Questions for the second phase, which is Population Enumeration where information of each individual will be collected, will be notified in due course, he added.

The minister said enumerators shall undertake house-to-house field visits in the entire enumeration area for the collection of Census data to avoid any exclusion on any ground.



"Provision of self-enumeration is an additional facility for the respondents to submit data. Enumerators will confirm self-enumeration data before final submission. Further, FAQs, necessary 'Tool Tips' and validation checks for questions are provided in the self-enumeration Portal itself to ensure accuracy of data," he said.

The minister said all suitable measures have been taken for data security while collecting data on mobile, during data transmission and at the server level.

"Adequate training is being pro-

vided to all field functionaries appointed for Census work including enumerators and supervisors. Validation rules are incorporated in the mobile app itself to ensure data consistency and accuracy. Further, Data collected by enumerators

will also be monitored and checked by supervisors," he said.

The Union Cabinet has approved Rs 11,718 crore for conducting the Census of India, 2027, which would include the caste enumeration for the first time.

The 16th Census since Independence will be a fully digital exercise and will offer citizens the option of self-enumeration. The decadal exercise, scheduled for 2021, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic across the country.

In landmark first, SC allows passive euthanasia for man in coma for over 12 years

NEW DELHI: In its first ever order allowing passive euthanasia, the Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted the withdrawal of artificial life support to a 32-year-old man who has been in a coma for more than 12 years.

Ruling on the long discussed emotive issue, a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and K V Viswanathan asked the Union government to consider bringing comprehensive legislation on passive euthanasia. It also directed AIIMS-Delhi to ensure that life support is withdrawn with a tailored plan so dignity is maintained.

Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life support or the treatment necessary to keep him alive. Ghaziabad's Harish Rana, who was a student of Panjab University, suffered head injuries after falling from the fourth floor of his paying guest accommodation in 2013 and has been in a coma since.

Directing AIIMS-Delhi to grant Rana admission in palliative care so



medical treatment can be withdrawn, the bench stressed that the process be carried out in a "humane manner".

The top court noted that Rana survived only through clinically administered nutrition via 'percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy' tubes, and medical boards had unanimously con-

cluded that continuation of treatment merely prolonged biological existence without any possibility of recovery.

When primary and secondary boards have certified withdrawal of life support, there is no need for judicial intervention, the apex court said.

It also asked the Union of India to ensure that chief medical officers in all districts maintain a panel of registered medical practitioners for nomination to secondary medical boards.

The court made special mention of Rana's parents, expressing its appreciation to them for showing their immense love and care for their son. "His family never left his side," he said.

The order allowing passive euthanasia is in line with the court's 2018 Common Cause judgment, which was modified in 2023 and recognised the fundamental right to die with dignity.

In the 2018 judgement, a constitution bench had recognised passive euthanasia and the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21.

LPG shortage 1 Cr people to be unemployed: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday slammed the Centre for 'heavy LPG shortage' affecting people across the country and questioned the prime minister's "support" for Israel and the US.

The former Delhi chief minister said, "There is a chance that almost 1 crore people would be unemployed because of the power shortage situation emerging," he said.

"There is a heavy shortage of LPG in the country. The reason behind this is that 90 per cent of the LPG imported in India is from the Strait of Hormuz. Restaurants and hotels are facing shortages. In the next two days, 50 per cent of hotels are on the verge of shutdown, news is coming from Delhi NCR, Bihar," Kejriwal said.

Kejriwal accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "demolishing" India's non-aligned foreign policy of several decades and making Iran our "enemy".

NCERT book row: SC directs Centre to form panel of domain experts

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to constitute a committee of domain experts within a week to finalise the curriculum related to legal studies in NCERT textbooks.

The top court said that its orders in the matter were not intended to prevent any healthy and objective criticism of the institutional function of the judiciary.

The apex court, while hearing a suo motu case concerning NCERT's Class 8 social science book, which contained "offending" contents on corruption in the judiciary, noted that the chapter was drafted by the textbook development team under the chairmanship of Professor Michel Danino.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant directed the Centre, states, Union Territories and universities to forthwith disassociate the three experts who drafted the controversial chapter. The textbook development team was under the chairmanship of Danino and consisted of Suparna Diwakar and Alok Prasanna

Kumar as its members.

The bench, also comprising Justices Joyymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, said the three experts who drafted the chapter can move the apex court for modification of the order.

It said the panel of experts to finalise the curriculum related to legal studies would include a former judge, an academician and a renowned law practitioner. The bench asked the Centre to also associate the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, in finalising the curriculum related to legal studies.

During the hearing, the Centre informed the bench that it has directed the NCERT to review textbooks of all classes. The bench observed that instead of asking the NCERT to do so, it would have appreciated if the Centre constituted an expert committee to review the curriculum.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the government has asked the NCERT to review textbooks of all classes, not just class eight. He assured the bench that a panel of domain experts

would be constituted to examine the curriculum.

"We have started systemic changes," he told the bench, adding that nothing will be published without being vetted by the domain experts.

Mehta also informed the bench that the NCERT director has filed an affidavit tendering an unconditional and unqualified apology.

On February 26, the apex court imposed a "complete blanket ban" on any further publication, re-printing or digital dissemination of NCERT's Class 8 social science book as it contains "offending" contents on corruption in the judiciary, saying they have fired a gunshot and the judiciary is "bleeding".

Observing that there appeared to be a "deep-rooted conspiracy" and "calculated move" to undermine the institution and demean the dignity of the judiciary, the apex court had directed that all copies of the book - physical and digital - currently in circulation be immediately seized and removed from public access without any delay.

Nehru sat through debate, requested more time for Oppn: Cong slams Rijiju for 1954 comparison

NEW DELHI: The Congress slammed Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday for contrasting the 10 hours allocated for a debate on the resolution for the Lok Sabha speaker's removal with the two-and-a-half-hour debate on a similar resolution in 1954, saying Jawaharlal Nehru had then requested the bulk of the time be allotted to the opposition.

The debate is likely to conclude on Wednesday with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's response to the resolution.

Congress general secretary in charge of commu-

nications, Jairam Ramesh, said that in Tuesday's debate in the Lok Sabha on the motion for the removal of the Speaker, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Rijiju proudly claimed that 10 hours had been allotted for the debate, whereas in December 1954, only 2.5 hours had been set aside for a similar motion.

"What he forgot to mention was that on December 18, 1954, the prime minister himself sat through and took part in the debate. While speaking, Jawaharlal Nehru requested the deputy speaker, who was presiding in the House, that the bulk

of the time should be allotted to the opposition," Ramesh said on X.

When the motion was moved in the Lok Sabha on December 1, 1954, the Congress had 364 MPs in a House of 489 members, he pointed out. "On December 18, 1954 (as on later occasions in 1966 and 1987), there was a deputy speaker in the Chair in the Lok Sabha while the motion against the Speaker was being debated. Since mid-2019, there has been no deputy speaker in the Lok Sabha, which is a clear violation of the Constitution," Ramesh said.

Intervening in the debate on the resolution for the removal of Om Birla from the Speaker's post, Rijiju on Wednesday slammed TMC's Saugata Roy for questioning the decision on who will preside over the proceedings during the discussion on the opposition's resolution.

"Such senior MPs should know that in 1954, when the opposition party brought a resolution against G V Malavankar, a full day's time was demanded for discussion. Jawaharlal Nehru had allocated an hour and a half.

"There was a lot of debate over it, and finally, a consensus was reached on a

CBI arrests Darwin Labs co-founder Ayush Varshney in Rs 20,000 crore Gain Bitcoin scam case

NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested Darwin Labs co-founder Ayush Varshney, one of the main accused in the Rs 20,000 crore Gain Bitcoin currency scam case, officials said on Wednesday.

The agency had issued a Look Out Circular against Varshney. His attempt to flee the country on Monday triggered an alert, leading to his detention at the Mumbai airport, they said. Varshney was formally arrested on Tuesday.

According to the CBI, Darwin Labs designed and developed the digital infrastructure which formed the operational backbone of the

alleged fraudulent enterprise Gain Bitcoin.

During the investigation, the agency detected the alleged involvement of Darwin Labs Private Limited and its co-founders -- Varshney, Sahil Baghla and Nikunj Jain, the chief capital officer and founder at Vaomi AI -- in the design, development and deployment of a cryptocurrency token known as MCAP and its associated ERC-20 smart contract.

In a statement, it said that Darwin Labs allegedly played a central role in building the technological architecture underpinning the cryptocurrency ponzi

scam perpetrated through a web of platforms, including the flagship site www.gain-bitcoin.com.

It was allegedly masterminded by Amit Bhardwaj (now deceased) and his brother Ajay Bhardwaj, the officials said.

The company developed several key components, including the Bitcoin mining pool platform GBMiners.com, a Bitcoin payment gateway, the Coin Bank Bitcoin wallet and the Gain Bitcoin website used to interface with investors.

Launched in 2015, the Gain Bitcoin operation was camouflaged under the facade of Variabletech Pte.

Ltd, officials said.

The scheme lured the investors offering extraordinary returns of 10 per cent per month in Bitcoin over an 18-month period, urging them to purchase the digital currency from external exchanges and deposit it with GainBitcoin through "cloud mining" contracts.

"The funds collected from investors were subsequently misappropriated. The case is being investigated under Sections 120B, 406 and 420 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 66 of the Information Technology Act, 2000," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

108 Naxalites with Rs 3.95 Cr bounty surrender in Chhattisgarh; Rs 3.6 Cr cash, 1 kg gold seized

JAGDALPUR: In a remarkable success of the government's fight against Left Wing Extremism, 108 Maoists carrying a collective reward of Rs 3.95 crore surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district on Wednesday, officials said.

Besides a huge stock of weapons, Rs 3.61 crore in cash and one kg of gold valued at about Rs 1.64 crore were recovered from Maoist dumps, the highest seizure of cash and valuables from a single location in the history of anti-Naxal operations in the country, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj Pattilingam said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has set a deadline of 31 March 2026, for the eradication of Naxalism from the country.

Among the surrendered Naxalites, six were divisional committee members carrying a reward of Rs 8 lakh each, as per officials.

The cadres, belonging to the

Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) of Maoists, turned themselves in at Jagdalpur, the Bastar district headquarters, Pattilingam said.

DKSZC formation of outlawed CPI (Maoists) orchestrated several deadly attacks in south Bastar in the past.

Information provided by the surrendered cadres helped security forces achieve significant successes, including the recovery of weapons, cash and other materials from Maoist dumps, the official said.

A total of 101 weapons were seized, including AK-47, INSAS and SLR rifles, light machine guns, .303 rifles and barrel grenade launchers, dealing a significant blow to the already weakened military capability of the Maoist organisation, Pattilingam said.

Among those who surrendered were several key cadres, including divisional committee members Ra-

ahul Telam, Pandru Kovasi and Jitru Oyam from the West Bastar division, Ramdhar alias Biru from the East Bastar division and Mallesh from the North Bastar division.

Others included Muchaki, commander of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) battalion, and Kosa Mandavi, a divisional committee member from the Andhra-Odisha Border area of Maoists, the official said.

The large-scale surrender indicated that Maoist ideology was weakening and even members within the organisation were questioning its relevance, Pattilingam said.

He said many cadres were influenced by the "Poona Margem - Rehabilitation to Rejuvenation" initiative and were choosing to abandon violence and return to mainstream society.

Efforts are being made under the rehabilitation policies of the Centre and the Chhattisgarh government to

ensure security and a dignified life for the surrendered cadres, the official said.

Of the 108 surrendered cadres, six were divisional committee members, three company platoon committee commanders, 18 platoon party committee members, 23 area committee members and 56 party members, Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma told reporters in Raipur.

District-wise, 37 Maoists belonged from Bijapur, 30 were from Dantewada, 18 from Sukma, 16 from Bastar, four from Narayanpur and three from Kanker.

The government aims to eliminate Naxalism by March 31, 2026, said Sharma, who holds charge of the state Home department.

Maoists are increasingly abandoning violence due to sustained security operations and the government's rehabilitation policy, which offers them an opportunity to lead a peaceful life, he said.

MeT issues yellow warning in 5 districts

SHIMLA: The Shimla Meteorological Station issued a yellow warning on Wednesday for thunderstorms accompanied by hail, lightning, and gusty winds reaching speeds of 40-50 km/h at isolated locations in Chamba, Kangra, and Kullu districts on March 12, 14, and 15. Additionally, Mandi and Shimla districts are expected to experience similar conditions on March 12 and 15. Meanwhile, the maximum and minimum temperatures in the region have remained above normal. Overall, the weather across the state has been dry, with a slight drop in temperatures. Una recorded the highest temperature at 33.2 degrees Celsius, while Tabo was the coldest, with a low of 1.2 degrees Celsius.

India imported over 18,842 MTs of uranium from 2008-09 to 2024-25: Govt in LS

NEW DELHI: India imported 18,842.60 metric tonnes (MTs) of uranium in different forms for its reactors between 2008-2009 and 2024-2025 under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

In a written reply, Union minister Jitendra Singh said that the country's nuclear power generation using imported uranium increased from 3,704 million units in 2009-2010 to 39,180 million units in 2024-2025. Till January, India had generated 33,815 million units for 2025-2026, he said.

"The government has formulated a roadmap to reach 100 GW of nuclear power capacity. As per the roadmap, the present nuclear power capacity of 8.78 GW (exclud-

ing RAPS-1) is expected to reach about 22 GW by 2031-32 on progressive completion of projects presently at various stages of implementation," the minister said.

Singh also stated that another 32 GW of nuclear power capacity had been planned to be set up beyond 2032 by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited comprising indigenous pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs) and light water reactors (LWRs) with foreign cooperation by 2047, taking the capacity to about 54 GW.

"The balance of 46 GW is expected to be set up by other public sector enterprises (central and state), state governments, private sector and joint ventures in different business models, comprising reactors of different technologies," the minister said.

SPARSH HOSPITALS LAUNCH LIFE-COURSE VACCINATION PROGRAM

Bengaluru: SPARSH Group of Hospitals has launched a comprehensive Life-Course Vaccination (LCV) Program aimed at promoting preventive healthcare for people of all age groups. The initiative, covering individuals from childhood to elderly adulthood, is among the first structured hospital-led vaccination programs of its kind. The program was launched by Dr. Sharan Shivaraj Patil, Chairman and Chief Orthopaedic Surgeon of SPARSH Group of Hospitals, in the presence of Group CEO Jasdeep Singh and other officials. The initiative aims to strengthen preventive and integrated healthcare by ensuring timely vaccinations throughout different stages of life.



"SEWAGE ROBOTICS BHARAT MISSION" LAUNCHED TO END MANUAL SCAVENGING

India: A new public initiative titled Sewage Robotics Bharat Mission has been launched to eliminate manual scavenging and promote safer sanitation practices across the country. The mission aims to replace manual sewage cleaning with robotic technology to protect the lives and dignity of sanitation workers. The initiative encourages innovation, research, and collaboration among policymakers, engineers, and technology experts. It also supports India's vision of a cleaner and safer nation by strengthening modern sanitation systems. A dedicated website has been created to share the concept and invite stakeholders to participate in the mission, aligning with national cleanliness and technological development efforts.

ABB EXPANDS MANUFACTURING FOOTPRINT IN BENGALURU

BENGALURU, INDIA, MARCH 11, 2026: ABB, a global technology leader in electrification and automation, is expanding its manufacturing footprint in Bengaluru with greenfield campuses and shopfloors, new product line expansions, service and training centers, and precision equipment manufacturing across Electrification, Motion and Automation businesses. ABB Group CEO Morten Wierod led the groundbreaking of a new integrated Motion facility in Peenya. He also inaugurated the Electrification and Automation Nelamangala Campus 2 on Kunigal Road. ABB has a strong and longstanding presence in Karnataka, with Bengaluru serving as one of its most important manufacturing and technology hubs in India. With this latest investment, ABB will operate three manufacturing locations with multiple shopfloors in the state, employing more than 3,000 people across its manufacturing operations. "This expansion reflects ABB's long-term commitment to India and our local-for-local strategy. By strengthening our manufacturing and technology capabilities in Karnataka, we are bringing advanced ABB technologies closer to customers, enabling industries to improve energy efficiency, digitalize operations and support India's infrastructure growth," said Sanjeev Sharma, Country Head and Managing Director, ABB India. ABB's Motion business is expanding its Peenya campus with two new manufacturing facilities. Spanning 6,100 sq m., the site will accommodate up to 300 employees once fully operational. It will produce a broad range of energy efficient motors, including flameproof (Ex) designs, roller table variants, and large smoke ventilation models, along with low-voltage drives and programmable logic controllers (PLCs). The campus will also host a service and training center enhanced with digital tools and remote diagnostics to support customers throughout the equipment lifecycle. ABB's portfolio of high efficiency motors and drives installed over the past 12 years has delivered annual energy savings of approximately 20 TWh—equal to nearly half of Delhi's yearly electricity consumption. At ABB's second Nelamangala campus, a 16,470 sq m. multi business manufacturing hub has been set up to expand production for the Electrification and Automation businesses. The facility will support a broader portfolio, including smart power technologies, system interface units, gas analyzer system integration, service labs, blending operations, excitation systems and high-power rectifiers. Manufacturing of power management solutions critical for data centers will scale up nearly tenfold at this campus, reinforcing ABB's role as a key technology provider. ABB's low and medium voltage systems already power more than 30% of India's hyperscale data centers. The campus will also advance ABB's innovation led Make in India portfolio, including blending and excitation solutions for lube, paint, paper & pulp industries. The excitation supply factory will deliver systems not only within India but also for export to the wider region to support reliable power generation and resilient grids. The blending facility will include an assembly line for pigging line valves, automation staging cabinets and on-site factory acceptance tests (FAT) to enable efficient and reliable operations in the Indian paint industry. With this investment, the high-power rectifiers supplied to local chemical and metals customers will now also extend to regional markets.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN OUR UNIVERSITIES IS ESSENTIAL TO COMPETE WITH FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES: DR. M. C. SUDHAKAR



Bengaluru: If government universities fail to maintain higher academic standards, they will face setbacks from private and foreign universities, said Higher Education Minister Dr. M. C. Sudhakar. He was speaking during the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Karnataka State Higher Education Council and the British Council to strengthen collaboration in education, skills, and cultural exchange. The Minister said that in the coming years, universities in the state will increasingly face competition from foreign universities. Therefore, maintaining high academic excellence has become essential. Only when our universities become academically stronger can our students receive quality education, he added. Through this agreement, opportunities will be created to strengthen research, skill development, and digital libraries in six universities across the state. Dr. Sudhakar also noted that the Government of Karnataka has successfully implemented several agreements with UK universities aimed at advancing education while keeping the interests of students in mind. Since a large number of students

in our universities come from rural backgrounds, collaborations with international universities will provide them with broader academic exposure and opportunities, he said. Speaking on the occasion, Alison Barrett, Country Director of the British Council in India, said that the continued partnership between Karnataka and Global Wales is encouraging knowledge exchange and strengthening academic collaboration.

The event was attended by Khushboo Choudhary, Secretary of the Higher Education Department; Janaka Pushpanathan, Director of the British Council for South India; Prof. Niranjan, Vice Chairman of the Karnataka State Higher Education Council; Executive Director Chandrashekar; Vice Chancellors of universities, and other officials.

WHY ONLY MADURAI? DECLARE HUBBALLI AND BELAGAVI AIRPORTS AS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS TOO

BUTTER FOR TAMIL NADU, LIME FOR US": M. B. PATIL EXPRESSES DISPLEASURE AGAINST CENTRE

Bengaluru: The Narendra Modi-led Central Government has declared Madurai Airport in Tamil Nadu as an international airport but has not taken a similar decision regarding Hubballi and Belagavi airports in Karnataka. This reflects a discriminatory approach and is not acceptable, Infrastructure Development Minister M. B. Patil said on Wednesday. "How can it be butter for them and lime for us?" he questioned. Speaking on the issue, he said the Central Government may have taken this decision keeping the upcoming Tamil Nadu elections in mind. However, its indifferent attitude towards

Karnataka's demand is questionable, he remarked. A letter had been written on June 24, 2025, to Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, requesting that Hubballi and Belagavi airports be upgraded to international status, as this would greatly benefit the North Karnataka region. In this context, Union Minister and Dharwad MP Pralhad Joshi, Belagavi MP Jagadish Shettar, and Haveri MP Basavaraj Bommai should raise their voices and stand firmly for the interests of the State, he urged. At least one of the two airports—Hubballi or Belagavi—should be declared an international airport, he said. If both are upgraded, it would be even more welcome. The Central Government must recognise the State's requirement, Patil added.

EXPERTS HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF EARLY INTERVENTION IN SPINE & TRAUMA CARE TO PREVENT LONG-TERM DISABILITY



Bangalore: The incidence of spine and trauma-related injuries is steadily increasing across India, driven by factors such as road traffic accidents, falls, sports injuries, and fragility fractures among the elderly. During a recent awareness initiative, leading specialists Dr. Raviraj A., Dr. Amrithlal Mascarenhas and Dr. Raghu Nagraj emphasized that early diagnosis, timely treatment, and structured rehabilitation play a crucial role in preventing permanent disability and improving recovery outcomes. Experts explained that even seemingly minor trauma can lead to serious

HAVEUS AEROTECH EXPANDS INDIA'S MRO FOOTPRINT WITH LANDMARK DGCA APPROVALS AND STRATEGIC SAFRAN CABIN GERMANY PARTNERSHIP

BANGALORE: Haveus Aerotech India Limited continues to redefine the aerospace Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) landscape in India, announcing a series of strategic expansions and first-of-their-kind regulatory approvals aimed at bolstering the nation's aviation infrastructure. Strengthening the South: Bangalore's New Hub In a significant move for regional aviation, Haveus Aerotech has secured DGCA approval for its Bangalore facility to handle specialized Galley, Avionics and Life-Saving Equipment. This facility now hosts South India's first and only Safran Cabin Germany-authorized service station. With existing authorizations already operational in North India, Haveus Aerotech now provides a seamless, dual-region support network. This strategic positioning ensures that Indian airlines have immediate access to world-class OEM-authorized services at both ends of the country, significantly reducing logistical lead times and enhancing operational comfort.



Breaking New Ground in North India Setting a new benchmark for technical capability, the DGCA has granted Haveus Aerotech approval for Environmental and Temperature Controlled Containers at their Delhi unit—a first for any MRO in India. This follows the company's previous milestone as the first Indian MRO to establish a dedicated shop for Unit Load Device (ULD) container repair, a move that fundamentally changed the cargo logistics game in the domestic market. Furthermore, the North India facilities have expanded their portfolio to include: Cabin Interior Repairs: Specialized seat cover and upholstery services. Advanced Fabrication: In-house repair and fabrication of critical plastic components. World-Class Infrastructure & Accessibility To support these advanced capabilities, Haveus Aerotech has invested in massive, strategically located

ed infrastructure with the Bangalore Facility Spanning 1.5 lakh square feet and the Delhi Facility exceeds 50,000 square feet. Both hubs are located within 10 minutes of their respective international airports, ensuring rapid turnaround times (TAT) that are critical for airline efficiency. Supporting "Make in India" and Operational Efficiency These investments reflect Haveus Aerotech's commitment to building a self-reliant MRO ecosystem in India. By bringing high-end technical repairs onto Indian soil with the steadfast support of the DGCA, Haveus is directly helping domestic carriers lower their cost of operations. "Our goal is to ensure that Indian airlines no longer need to look abroad for specialized component support," the company stated. "By investing in infrastructure and securing world-class OEM partnerships like Safran Cabin Germany, we are making aviation maintenance faster, cheaper, and more reliable within our own borders."

Complete Development Works by the End of March – D.S. Ramesh

Bengaluru: ommisioner of the Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S. Ramesh, visited and inspected various infrastructure works being carried out under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Programme (CMIDP) and Ward Grants. These include road development, footpath development and drain desilting works. The main objective of these works is to strengthen the city's infrastructure, improve traffic movement and ensure proper drainage so that rainwater flows smoothly during the monsoon. The Commissioner directed the concerned officials to complete all the works with good quality by the end of March.

Details of the Works Inspected Inspection of Comprehensive Development Work on Kalkere Road: The Commissioner inspected the arterial and sub-arterial road development works being carried out on Kalkere Road from Rajkumar Circle to the T.C. Palya Road Junction in the KR Puram Assembly constituency. Under this project, comprehensive road development works including drain development, construction of footpaths and asphaltting are being undertaken. Officials were instructed to ensure that the works are completed within the stipulated time while maintaining quality standards. ahadevapura – Road Work from Indira Canteen to

Kaggadasapura Railway Gate: The Commissioner inspected the road development work being carried out from Indira Canteen to Kaggadasapura Railway Gate in the Mahadevapura area under the Major Roads Development Grant. He directed officials to speed up the work and complete it with quality. Pai Layout – Ward Road Development Work: The road development works being undertaken in Pai Layout under the Ward Development Grant were also inspected. The Commissioner directed officials to complete the work at the earliest to provide better connectivity and transport facilities for local residents.

MICRO PLAN ORDERED FOR CV RAMAN NAGAR MANAGEMENT

Bengaluru: Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao instructed officials to prepare a micro plan for the comprehensive management of the CV Raman Nagar area. As part of the Swachh Survekshan campaign, he visited the muster centre of pourakarmikas in Kaggadasapura Ward under the Bengaluru Central City Corporation today and addressed them during the "Mukhya Ayuktarinda Pourakarmikarondige Chaha Samvada" (Chief Commissioner holds tea chat with Pourakarmikas) programme. He directed that officials concerned jointly conduct site inspections and prepare a micro plan regarding issues such as roadside garbage dumping, disposal of construction debris, desilting

ing of side drains, repair of footpaths, maintaining cleanliness on arterial roads, and repair of streetlights within the CV Raman Nagar jurisdiction. Appropriate repair and maintenance work should then be carried out accordingly. Directions for 100% Inspection of Arterial and Sub-Arterial Roads: Footpaths along arterial and sub-arterial roads within the CV Raman Nagar area must be in good condition and kept clean. A 100 percent inspection should be conducted and immediate action taken at locations where problems are identified to ensure smooth and safe pedestrian pathways. He also instructed that cleaning operations be carried out using silt-removal equipment and tractors.

STRICT INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT WORKS BY THE END OF APRIL: MAHESHWAR RAO

Bengaluru: Acting on the orders of the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Urban Development Minister D. K. Shivakumar, the Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao directed officials to complete the development works undertaken in the five City Corporations under the jurisdiction of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) by the end of April. While addressing a virtual meeting held today regarding the development works being carried out in the five City Corporations of the Greater Bengaluru Authority he gave necessary instructions to the officers. The works include ward development projects taken up under the Hon'ble Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Scheme at a cost of



crore, road asphaltting works of arterial and sub-arterial roads under the Capital Support Scheme for Special Infrastructure at a cost of

Rs.1,241 crore, and the development of Suraksha-75 junctions. He instructed that development works related to arterial roads, sub-arterial roads and ward roads across all City Corporations should commence immediately. Before the onset of the monsoon season, desilting of drains should be carried out along with asphaltting.

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Date: 12.03.2026 For Indostar Capital Finance Limited Authorised Signatory

EDITORIAL

Paradoxical Statecraft: Sharp Tongue, Weak Knees

On the final day of the Raisina Dialogue 2026, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar delivered a resounding rebuttal to US deputy secretary of state Christopher Landau's warning that Washington wouldn't allow India to rise economically like China. Jaishankar asserted: "India's rise will be determined solely by India. It will be defined by our strength, not by the mistakes of others." He further emphasised the emergence of multipolarity, stating: "Multipolarity is now a permanent reality. The world is unlikely to revert to a system where a few powers dictate major agreements and expect the rest to simply comply." Earlier that day, foreign secretary Vikram Misri questioned the legitimacy of a rules-based international order that excluded India's participation, prompting a pointed question: "India supports a rules-based order, but did we have a role in shaping those rules?" Misri also advocated for moving beyond shared values, suggesting that countries could compete in one domain while cooperating in another. Together, these statements challenge the multilateral dominance of the US and the West and propose that countries don't necessarily need to be strategic allies to function cooperatively. They implicitly reject the US's framing of the relationship as one where India must choose between aligning with Washington and pursuing its own interests. At a time when Modi's foreign policy faces scrutiny even from some of his supporters, these statements serve as a bold assertion of Indian strategic autonomy. However, there's a significant contradiction. The twelve months preceding these statements paint a very different picture. In Washington, India conceded to US pressure while in Delhi, India firmly refused. The capitulation began even before Trump initiated the tariff war and weaponised trade, dominating conversations. Prime minister Narendra Modi presented a list of concessions when he met the newly inaugurated Trump in February 2025. Before any tariffs were imposed, India offered to reduce duties on some American exports and suggested purchasing more US energy and defence products. India remained silent on Trump's demonstrative decision to deport illegal immigrants in chains, which was filmed for maximum embarrassment. Modi remained silent. Washington acknowledged Delhi's submission and praised the partnership. Trump called Modi a great leader and Modi declared that MAGA plus MIGA equals mega - a mega partnership for prosperity. However, within weeks, Trump imposed a 25% reciprocal tariff on Indian goods in April 2025 as part of his 'Liberation Day' executive order regardless. When the tariff was doubled to 50% as India was importing Russian oil, India labelled it 'unfair unjustified and unreasonable'. However, it did not take retaliatory action nor initiate a formal multilateral challenge. India simply absorbed the blow meekly. In May, following the Pahalgam attacks, India launched Operation Sindoor. However, this response was abruptly and unceremoniously extinguished by Trump's unilateral announcement of a ceasefire on social media. Trump claimed credit for mediation, but India denied the claim. Modi failed to respond to the repeated barbs of a dictated ceasefire. The strategic autonomy, so eloquently articulated at the Raisina Dialogues, was lacking. At the Raisina, Misri asked if India had a hand in shaping the rules. The US Trade deal answers this question: NO. In the US-India Joint Statement on the Framework for Trade Agreement, India almost unquestioningly accepted the rules set by the US regarding tariffs, data, agricultural product access, pharmaceutical trade and all industrial products.

'We Protect America, Not Vice Versa': Inside Gulf's Growing Frustration With Trump

Soon after Operation Epic Fury began, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, Saeed Khatibzade, who was visiting India to participate in the Raisina Dialogue, announced that Iran and the Gulf states had been engaged in back-channel talks when the joint Israel-US attacks on Iran began. The messaging was clear. The assaults were, in part, to sabotage these talks; they began also when Iran had been negotiating with the US over its nuclear programme through Omani mediation. For decades after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran - which, by the way, the Arabs have always called an "Iranian revolution", dismissing claims of it being "Islamic" - the security architecture of the Gulf countries has been developed as a counter to Iran and to pre-empt its export of the 'revolution' to their lands. The primary fear has been the toppling of the monarchies in these countries. Saudi Arabia, for instance, had admitted that it had invested millions in exporting Wahhabism across the world, primarily as a counter to the Shiite political Islam that Iran was exporting.



The Birth Of The Carter Doctrine
Intra-Gulf relations were transferred, as were the relations between the Gulf countries and the US. America's reliance on Iran and Saudi Arabia, the two largest energy powerhouses in the region, was replaced by the Carter Doctrine. In 1980, the then US President, Jimmy Carter, unveiled it in his State of the Union address, which declared that the US would use military force to defend its interests in the Persian Gulf.

In 1981, the Gulf monarchies joined forces to form the Gulf Cooperation Council. Since then, the security architecture of the region has been anchored in the Carter Doctrine, which made the US the net security provider in the region. While the Shiite threat remained, with Iran forming its axis of resistance through the creation of proxies like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, Houthis in Yemen, and, much later, the Hashed al Shabi, or armed Shiite militias in Iraq, yet another threat arose over the last decade.

The Arab Spring, which brought back political Islam on the Arab map and led to the rise of Sunni militants such as ISIS - which even launched attacks on facilities such

as Saudi Aramco - shook the GCC. The perceived US disinterest in the region following its pivot to Asia, together with its endorsement of the Arab Spring, led to Arab capitals rethinking their security doctrine.

The Abraham Accords

Israel capitalised fully on this window of opportunity that had opened up against common goals. It had long been trying to cultivate ties with the Arab and Muslim world. However, while it had been successful in the Muslim world, it could establish ties with only two Arab countries - Egypt and Jordan. Intense back-channel talks and lobbying by the first Trump Administration resulted in the path-breaking Abraham Accords in 2020, where a range of Arab countries, beginning with GCC heavyweight UAE, then Bahrain, and then Morocco, normalised ties and established diplomatic relations with Israel. While Saudi Arabia, as Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, was more circumspect, it did engage in unofficial relations with Israel. The common threat that underpinned these Accords was Iran.

Therefore, a normalisation of the ties between GCC states and Iran would hardly have been looked upon benignly by Israel, or, for that matter, even by the US under a second Trump administration.

Questioning It All Now

In spite of their security arrange-

ments with the US, the GCC countries have, during the current crisis, come to terms with the fact that this arrangement has been counterproductive for them. For one, Iran has retaliated by targeting not just Israel but also US bases in the Gulf as well as civilian infrastructure, where US military personnel have a presence with their drones and missiles. As Israel bombed Iran's oil storage refineries and sites, Iran struck energy infrastructures in the GCC, including Shaybah oilfields in Saudi Arabia and its most important refinery, Ras Tanura, and Qatar Energy's facilities at Ras Laffan, which made the world's largest LNG producer halt production entirely. GCC stocks have plummeted, trade and tourism have come to a grinding halt, and the image of the region as an oasis for global business and money now lies tainted. Worldwide, oil prices have spiked to more than \$100 a barrel for the first time since 2022. On the other hand, the GCC has also come to face the bitter truth that the US prioritised Israel's security over the Gulf's safety. As Israel's air defence system was overwhelmed with Iran's barrage of drones and missiles, the US began moving its air defence systems from the GCC to Israel.

'Step-Fatherly' Treatment For Middle East?

Ironically, while Israel is not an immediate neighbour of Iran, most GCC states are. They have been in the line of fire and had anticipated this. In spite of this, they were not

taken into confidence or informed in advance of the joint Israel-US assault on Iran, leaving them susceptible to the very threat they had long anticipated. Moreover, while Israel received mostly military aid and grants, the GCC pays for its security arrangements with the US but still doesn't have many of the US technologies that Israel has been given access to. Transactions run into billions of dollars; just a year ago, President Trump had agreed to arms sales of \$142 billion dollars to Saudi Arabia.

'We Constantly Informed You'

Inevitably, the pushback has begun. The GCC states have publicly announced that they would not allow their territories to be used for launching attacks. On Iran, they also know that part of its military doctrine is guided by the fact that US bases in the region, in the case of any attacks on Iran, become legitimate targets. The UAE's ambassador to the UN stated, plainly, "We have constantly informed [you] that our territories would not be used for any attacks against Iran. Yet, we are being targeted, frankly, in a very unwarranted manner." Similarly, influential UAE billionaire Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor has stated, "The truth is that hasty American decisions are what embroiled the region in a war whose peoples were not party to its decision-making, and its local allies were not consulted before it was launched."

This Poll Season, Mamata Banerjee's Hindu Outreach Goes The Extra Mile



West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee has been on an overdrive for about a year, to announce and inaugurate temples in various corners of the state, amid BJP allegations that she is "appeasing" the minority Muslim community. Banerjee - a devotee of goddess Kali - holds an annual Kali Puja for decades at her home, barely a couple of kilometers away from the famous Kali temple in Kalighat. But she never played up her personal religious credentials in the political arena before the BJP landed in a big way on Bengal's battleground in 2019. Now she seems to have decided to play up the Bengali-Hindu sentiment on the political stage to counter the BJP brand of "Hindutva" in a bipolar political state. She had trodden this path for the 2021 assembly polls, reciting from the "Chandi" (invocation of Durga) on stage at election campaigns, to counter BJP's Hindutva push with "Jai Sri Ram" slogans and Hanuman Jayanti rallies that lack a Bengali cultural identity to it. Now, in the run up to the 2026 assembly polls where she is seeking a fourth straight term as Chief Minister, she has decided to showcase her temple building spree and development of traditional Hindu religious sites and events. The first big splash

came last year when her government built a Jagannath temple in Digha, modelled after the famous temple in Puri in Odisha. Inaugurated on April 30 by the chief minister, the temple was also the first of its kind since the roughly Rs 250-crore project was implemented by the state government's housing corporation (HIDCO), sparking a controversy on whether public money should be used to build religious structures. The footfall since has been overwhelming - a factor the ruling Trinamool Congress thinks could be to the party's advantage. Digha is in East Midnapore district, where BJP's Suwendu Adhikari - who defeated Mamata from Nandigram, in 2021, after shifting to the BJP - holds a lot of cards. In December 2025, a grand Mahakal temple in Siliguri has been announced for which a trust has been formed. The Chief Minister also inaugurated a bridge project in Gangasagar that will connect the little islands at the delta where pilgrims gather for the auspicious Makar Sankranti in January. The foundation stone for a Rs 262 crore "Durga Angan" project in New Town, Kolkata, was also laid by the Chief Minister, who at the time had dismissed any allegation of appeasement politics, saying it was a tribute to UNESCO's recognition of

Durga Puja as a cultural heritage. The 17-acre complex will have temples, museums and cultural spaces. If the Durga Angan and Gangasagar projects are large scale, Banerjee also inaugurated a local temple of goddess Bagalamukhi in Kalighat, close to her home. A new temple complex has come up where a non-descript tiny temple of the goddess stood, and mostly devotees from the neighborhood offered prayers. Banerjee is a worshipper of "Ma Bagala" since childhood. While the Chief Minister has pledged the state's 27 per cent minority Muslim population with government schemes and stipends for minority students and developing religious sites, she is being extra cautious this round to establish that it is not by overlooking the interests of the majority Hindu community. To prove the point, she has raised her government's grants to the 40,000 Durga Puja committees across the state from Rs 85,000 to Rs 1.10 lakh recently. Durga Puja is the state's biggest religious-cultural festival. As a political veteran, Banerjee is reaching out to her core Bengali-Hindu voters amid attempts by her rivals - outfits like Humayun Kabir's JUP or the ISF or even Assaduddin Owasi's AIMIM - to split the minority votes.

Nitish Kumar, And The Great Bihar Promise That Never Came

The politics of dour men is often workmanlike, yet effective when they acquire power. Take PV Narasimha Rao, for instance. Until he became Prime Minister, he was barely acknowledged as a charismatic leader, but finished his political innings as arguably one of the most wily and consequential politicians independent India had seen. So was his political protege, Manmohan Singh.

At one of the lowest points in his career as a politician and the last press conference as Prime Minister, Singh famously quipped: "History will be kinder to me than the contemporary media or, for that matter, the Opposition in the Parliament." Those were prescient words by a man content to remain in others' shadow most of his political life but managed to irrevocably change India's destiny. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could be clubbed with such men in the way he played the game of politics, but falls well short in his achievements. Kumar has indicated he is hanging up his more than 20-year-old chief ministerial boots and has filed to contest the Rajya Sabha elections. Victory is almost certain as the numbers are on his side. Unlike Rao and Singh, however, Nitish will not be remembered for his impact but the promise he wasted.

Ace Of The Pack

Nitish was easily eclipsed by charismatic socialist colleagues such as Laloo Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan in the early years. By the time he won his first election in 1985, Yadav and Paswan were veterans of legislative affairs. Belonging to the numerically weak Kurmi caste, he did not have the backing of a large community vote bank such as the Yadavs for Laloo and Paswans' for Ram Vilas. Nor was he a rousing speaker. His relevance was always tied to the mercy of a larger, stronger political ally than his own stature. Alliance and compromise kept him in power even as he created maneuvering space in coalitions



by holding on to a bare minimum set of values rooted in socialism and secularism. When he partnered with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), he didn't let the party's Hindutva politics permeate deeply in Bihar. As a Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) ally, he kept the Yadavs, accustomed to getting their way, on a tight leash. But over the years, his political formula evolved into an unabashed pursuit of power combined with undiluted populism. It gained him the nickname 'Paltu Ram', or flip-flopper, but helped him emerge as a leader with a loyal vote base. Over time, Nitish engineered a grassroots coalition of non-Yadav backward communities, Pasmanda Muslims, Bhumihars, and women cutting across caste and religion, which made him a winner in his own right. If he could not rule Bihar on his own, nobody else could either.

Bicycle Man

Soon after becoming Bihar's Chief Minister in 2005, Nitish's initiatives to gift bicycles to high school girl students to keep them in school is now part of political lore and a global case study in development economics emulated as far as Africa. The success of the scheme and the political dividends it paid Nitish were keenly watched by rivals and paved the way for women's empowerment, becoming central to every future election strategy and

development plan. In that first term (technically the second because he was CM for a week in 2000), Kumar focused on improving law and order in the state, earning him his other nickname, Sushasan Babu (the good governor). He set up fast-track courts, which convicted over 50,000 criminals between 2006 and 2010. A state known for rampant kidnappings and murders was suddenly safe for women to walk even at night. In 2006, Bihar became the first state to reserve half the seats in local governance bodies for women. It was also one of the early-bird states to have a separate gender budget, from 2008-09. Yet, Nitish's party, Janata Dal (United), fielded only 13 women in the 101 seats it contested in the 2025 assembly elections. Between 2005 and 2010, Nitish picked the low-hanging fruits of governance and administrative presence in a state lounging at the bottom of the national rankings for socio-economic development. The bicycle scheme saw girls' enrolment and attendance improving, while better policing made streets relatively safer for them. A state notorious for a lack of roads saw rapidly improving connectivity, although much of it was through a centre-funded rural roads project. Nitish's cynicism was on display when he gave a party ticket to strongman Anant Singh even as his police locked up sundry criminals.

G7 welcomes potential record release of oil reserves as prices surge

G7 nations have said they would support the collective release of oil from their reserves to tackle soaring prices since the start of the US-Israel war with Iran. The group of countries has been meeting with the International Energy Agency (IEA), which is reported to be readying its biggest ever intervention in the oil market on Wednesday afternoon. The conflict has caused oil exports through the vital Strait of Hormuz - which carries a fifth of global oil supplies - to virtually stop and production in the region to slump. Prices have jumped since the conflict started but stabilised following reports that oil could be released from countries' stockpiles though some experts say the move would only be a short-term solution. According to reports, the IEA could release 300 to 400 million barrels of oil - more than double the amount it released following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in early 2022. However, the reported figure would only amount to around three or four days' worth of global supply or roughly a fortnight's worth of what would normally be shipped out of the Strait of



Hormuz. Following a meeting with the IEA on Wednesday, G7 energy ministers said: "In principle, we support the implementation of proactive measures to address the situation, including the use of strategic reserves." All IEA member countries are required to keep 90 days' worth of their nation's oil use in reserve in case of global disruption. The oil itself is not in a single place. For example, producers like Shell and BP keep stocks at terminals and refineries around the UK and can earmark stocks held elsewhere as counting towards their reserves. When it is released, it does

not mean a sudden flood of new oil starts moving. Instead, producers will make more available in the market for refineries to order, though energy analysts have told the BBC that there is a shortage of refining capacity. The other issue with releasing reserves is that it is not something you can do again. The impact of the US and Israel's war in Iran is starting to hit home - no matter where you live. As the conflict blocks oil, gas, and other exports from the Gulf region, and producers start to cut output, the supply shock has sent prices soaring. This has rattled financial markets. However,

it is also affecting people's day-to-day lives, with prices for petrol and diesel at the pump already rising. And the effects could get wider still with the possibility that everything from food prices to holidays could become pricier. Analysts have also raised the possibility of an economic downturn, with some countries more at risk than others. "This is essentially the biggest supply shock at least in modern global oil market history," said Hunter Kornfeind, senior macro energy analyst of Rapid Energy Group. Motorists across the world are feeling this at the pump.

In the US, average petrol prices have risen above \$3.50 (£2.60) per US gallon, from about \$2.92 a month ago, while diesel had risen from \$3.66 to \$4.78 over the same period, according to the American Automobile Association. In the UK, the most recent data from the RAC motoring organisation shows that since the war began, average UK petrol prices have risen by 4.95p to 137.78p a litre. Diesel has increased by 9.43p to 151.81p. There is normally a time lag, with movements in oil markets taking about a fortnight to feed in to fuel prices. Meanwhile, the Gulf is where Europe gets around half of its jet fuel from. The disruption has caused the continent's benchmark jet fuel price to almost double to its highest level since the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Fuel typically makes up 20-40% of airlines' operating costs. This means flights could become more expensive, while any shortage of fuel could mean some flight cancellations. However, the impact might not be equal across the board. Many European airlines use contracts to get their fuel at fixed or capped prices for months, or even years, in advance.

Sensex, Nifty tumble over 1 pc during afternoon session



Mumbai: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty were trading sharply lower during afternoon session on Wednesday, March 11, after a day's breather as investors' sentiment remained cautious amid the ongoing tensions in West Asia and sustained foreign fund outflows. Besides, selling in blue-chip bank stocks also drove the markets lower. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,045.15 points or 1.33 per cent to 77,160.83. The 50-share NSE Nifty tanked 290 points or 1.19 per cent to 23,971.60. From the 30-Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards. Sun Pharma, NTPC, Adani Ports and Power Grid were

among the gainers. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.06 per cent to USD 87.75 per barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,672.64 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however bought stocks worth Rs 6,333.26 crore. "Although equity markets staged a technical rebound on Tuesday, the underlying sentiment remains cautious as the deepening crisis in the Middle East begins to influence global financial markets through higher energy prices, disruptions to key shipping routes, and shifting investor risk appetite," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading

and wealth tech firm, said. From an equity market standpoint, geopolitical disruptions of this nature tend to trigger sharp bouts of volatility as global investors rotate toward safer assets and reduce exposure to risk-sensitive markets, he added. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 traded over 1 per cent higher. Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were also quoting in positive territory. The US market ended flat on Tuesday. On Tuesday, the Sensex jumped 639.82 points or 0.82 per cent to settle at 78,205.98. The Nifty climbed 233.55 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 24,261.60. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,045.15 points or 1.33 per cent to 77,160.83.

Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth holds 29th Convocation & Shishyopanayaniya Samskara Ceremony at BHU

The 29th Convocation and Shishyopanayaniya Samskara Ceremony of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, was held today at Swatantrata Bhawan, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi. The ceremony celebrated the achievements of scholars trained under the Certificate of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (CRAV) programme and reaffirmed the enduring Guru-Shishya tradition of Ayurveda. Shri Prataprao Jadhav, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush and Minister of State in the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, addressed the gathering through a virtual message as the Chief Guest. In his address, Shri Jadhav said it was a matter of great pride to address such an august gathering of scholars in the sacred city of Kashi, the ancient seat of Ayurvedic knowledge and the land

associated with Dhanvantari Divodasa, regarded as the originator of surgical science in Ashtanga Ayurveda. He paid tribute to Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the founder of Banaras Hindu University, whose vision made BHU one of the historic centres of Ayurveda education. The Minister emphasised that Ayurveda is not merely a system of medicine but a holistic knowledge system that offers comprehensive insights into health and life. He highlighted the significance of the Guru-Shishya tradition, which has preserved and transmitted Ayurvedic wisdom across generations. He noted that legendary figures such as Dhanvantari, Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata emerged through this tradition. Shri Jadhav appreciated the efforts of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth in sustaining this tradition by enabling young physicians to learn directly from eminent and experienced Vaidyas through structured programmes such as CRAV

and MRV. He also commended the leadership of Padma Bhushan awardee Vaidya Devendra Triguna, President of the Governing Body of RAV, and Dr. Vandana Siroha, Director of RAV, for strengthening Ayurveda education and training. Highlighting the growing reach of Ayush systems under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Minister said that Yoga and Ayush have gained global recognition and are increasingly contributing to India's healthcare diplomacy. He stated that the Ministry of Ayush is working to strengthen education, research, and training in the recognised systems of traditional medicine—Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homoeopathy. Addressing the graduating scholars, Shri Jadhav said the convocation marked not just an academic milestone but the beginning of a new responsibility. He urged them to integrate traditional knowledge with modern scientific research and con-

tribute to making Ayurveda evidence-based and globally accepted. He also emphasised the importance of compassion, ethics, and soft skills in medical practice. Padma Shri Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, congratulated the graduating scholars and encouraged them to actively engage in research and scientific writing, stressing that evidence-based studies are essential for strengthening the credibility and global acceptance of Ayush systems. He also highlighted the Ministry's initiatives, including the development of All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) institutions and the upgradation of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre, aimed at advancing research and global collaboration in traditional medicine. Prof. Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi, Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, emphasised the need for students to maintain academic focus and dedication while contributing to the advancement of the Ayush sector.

Hyland appoints Kumaran Sasikanthan as Managing Director, India and Senior Vice President of Engineering

Highlights
Hyland, the pioneer of The Content Innovation Cloud™, is pleased to announce the appointment of Kumaran Sasikanthan as Managing Director, India and Senior Vice President of Engineering. With more than 25 years of enterprise engineering and leadership experience.



Hyderabad, India - 11 March, 2026 - Hyland, the pioneer of The Content Innovation Cloud™, is pleased to announce the appointment of Kumaran Sasikanthan as Managing Director, India and Senior Vice President of Engineering. With more than 25 years of enterprise engineering and leadership experience, Sasikanthan is a seasoned enterprise software executive with a strong track record of scaling global engineering organizations. In this dual role, Sasikanthan will play a strategic leadership role in advancing Hyland's growth across its India operations while also

leading the company's global OnBase and Perceptive Content engineering teams. His appointment reflects Hyland's continued investment in India as a key driver of innovation, scale, and global collaboration. "Kumaran's appointment is a significant step forward in how we continue to scale Hyland globally while staying deeply connected to our customers' needs," said Tim McIntire, chief technology officer at Hyland. "India is a critical engine for innovation, engineering excellence, and collaboration across Hyland, and Kumaran's proven

ability to build and lead high-performing global teams will help us accelerate delivery, strengthen our platforms, and better serve customers worldwide." "Hyland's role as an enterprise content management leader, and agentic automation pioneer makes this a transformative time to join the company," said Sasikanthan. "I'm energized by the opportunity to lead Hyland's India organization and partner with our global engineering teams to drive innovation at scale." Most recently, Sasikanthan served as Senior Vice President of Product Development at

Informatica, where he played a key role in maturing distributed engineering teams and expanding engineering leadership across India. As part of Hyland's executive leadership team, he will be essential in driving the continued growth and maturity of the company's India operations, especially in Kolkata and Hyderabad. This includes attracting, developing, and retaining top technical talent to enable future-focused expansion, strengthening engineering culture and leadership capability at scale, while advancing Hyland's global engineering strategy and execution.

A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARDS STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 6 March 2026 at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, among the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) - Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and A & U Tibbia College & Hospital for the collaborative research project titled: "Effect of Seasonal Emesis (Vasanthik Vamana) on Metabolic, Inflammatory, and Microbiome Markers in Apparently Healthy Adults - An Exploratory Randomized Controlled Study." This collaborative initiative aims to explore the scientific basis and health impacts of Vasanthik Vamana by assessing its effects on metabolic, inflammatory, and microbiome markers in apparently healthy adults. The study reflects a shared commitment to



generating evidence-based insights in Ayurveda through rigorous clinical research. Representatives from JNU- Prof. Kedar Singh, Director, R & D, Prof. Arun Kharat and Prof. Amal Chandra from school of life sciences and from CCRAS-CARI Dr. Hemanta Panigrahi, Institute Incharge, Dr.

Babita Yadav, Dr. Shaizi Layeeq and Dr. Renu Rani were present during the signing ceremony. We look forward to meaningful outcomes from this partnership that will contribute to advancing integrative healthcare and strengthening the evidence base of traditional therapeutic practices.

91% of Indian Sales Professionals Say AI Agents Are Mission-Critical to Business Success

Hyderabad, 11 March 2026: Salesforce, the world's #1 AI CRM*, today announced findings from its latest State of Sales report, revealing that 91% of Indian sales professionals say AI agents are essential to driving business success. As sales teams kick off 2026 with ambitious new quotas, they're turning to AI - especially agents - to hit their numbers. The survey reveals AI as the top tactic to drive company growth this year. The data also reveals why: Sales teams are increasingly stretched between changing customer demands and limited bandwidth to meet them. The real drag on productivity, the research suggests, isn't effort or skill; it's administrative bottlenecks.

Detailed Findings: Sellers are doubling down on AI agents and deploying them across the entire sales cycle. AI adoption in sales is already mainstream: 90% of Indian sales organizations

currently use some form of AI for tasks like prospecting, forecasting, lead scoring, or drafting emails. Indian sellers using AI report meaningful value: 94% say AI deepens customer understanding, and 89% say it makes their job less stressful. AI agent adoption is accelerating quickly: 54% of Indian sellers say they've used agents, and nearly 43% plan to by 2027. Once fully implemented, Indian sellers expect agents to cut prospect research time by 35% and email drafting by 38%, giving sales teams meaningful time back in their day. Top-performing sellers are 1.7 times more likely to use prospecting AI agents for outreach than underperformers. 58% of Indian sales reps point to cold calling as the worst part of their job, yet a strong pipeline requires more contacts and more engagement than teams can deliver on their own.



Despite devoting nearly one full day of their workweek to prospecting efforts, 61% of Indian sellers say they lack bandwidth to do adequate cold outreach. To close the capacity gap, 54% of Indian sales professionals are using AI for prospecting, with another 41% planning to do so in the future. 92% of global sellers with AI agents say it benefits their prospecting efforts. Globally, high performers - sellers who have sub-

stantially increased year-over-year revenue - are 1.7 times more likely to use agents to help with prospecting than underperformers who merely maintained or decreased YOY revenue. Administrative friction is hitting the lower rungs of the career ladder hardest. The grunt work tax is real: While the average seller spends 40% of their time selling (or 41% in India), Gen Z reps overall are trapped at just 35% - losing approximately two full hours each week to manual data entry that senior reps spend researching prospects and building relationships. **They're also navigating a mentorship drought:** 46% rarely get feedback on their sales conversations. 47% don't get enough roleplay opportunities before customer calls. When asked what prevents effective enablement, Gen Z points to lack of manager time as the #1 obstacle, while millennials, Gen Xers,

and baby boomers cite lack of access to data and insights. Sales teams - particularly high-performing ones - are tackling messy data to better support AI initiatives. To get the most from AI, sales professionals are focusing on trusted, connected data - with high performers leading the charge. Over half of Indian sales leaders with AI (66%) say disconnected systems are slowing down their AI initiatives. To help, 82% of Indian sales professionals are focusing on data cleansing - doing the unglamorous but essential work of removing duplicates, correcting errors or omissions, and standardizing formats across siloed systems to maximize their AI returns. **High performers take it further:** 79% prioritize data hygiene compared with only 54% of underperformers overall.

Cargo ship catches fire in Strait of Hormuz after three vessels hit by 'unknown projectiles'

Iran says it won't allow 'a single litre of oil' to pass through Strait of Hormuz. Iran says its policy for reciprocal strikes "has ended", a spokesman for Tehran's Khatam al-Anbiya military command headquarters says in a statement. Tehran's policy now will be "strike upon strike," spokesman Ebrahim Zolfaqari says. Tehran will "not allow even a single litre of oil" to pass through the Strait of Hormuz to reach the US, Israel and their partners, Zolfaqari adds. "Any vessel or tanker bound to them will be a legitimate target." "Get ready for the oil barrel to be at \$200 because the oil price depends on the regional security which you have destabilised," the spokesman adds. Germany's economy minister appears to have confirmed plans for the International Energy Agency (IEA) to make the biggest release of oil reserves in its history. She said the 32 members have been asked to release 400m barrels collectively. That's a



significant chunk because it's about a third of the total these governments hold. Katherina Reiche said her country would contribute to what she called "an instrument for dealing with supply shortages" and that it was "clear that there must be a visible signal to the market to curb high risk premiums and speculative gains with such a significant step". This global effort to calm energy markets comes after oil prices have

been particularly volatile in recent days, sending shockwaves through the global economy. They remain significantly ahead of where they were before the Iran war started - as I write this, a barrel of benchmark Brent Crude is trading at over \$91 (£68). Earlier, Japan, which has one of the biggest reserves, said it was planning to release 15 days' worth of private-sector oil reserves and one month's worth of

state oil reserves, according to Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. She said "rather than wait for formal IEA approval of a coordinated international reserve release, Japan will act first to ease global energy market supply and demand, releasing reserves as early as the 16th of this month". Meanwhile Austria's energy minister says they "will support a decision in principle". All are members of the IEA which is

reported to be announcing a decision on a release in the coming hours but hasn't responded to my enquiries. Israel has announced a "wide-scale wave" of attacks against Iran and further attacks against Beirut while Iran continues to strike neighbouring countries in the Gulf region. Strait of Hormuz Thailand's navy says it is assisting after a Thai-flagged cargo ship was attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, with 20 of the 23 crew members already rescued by Oman's navy. The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) has reports that, in total, three cargo vessels have been hit by unknown projectiles in the strait today. Overnight the US military said it destroyed 16 mine-laying Iranian ships in the strait. Continued airstrikes Israel has announced a further "wide-scale wave" of strikes against both Beirut and Iran after confirming that it struck targets in the Dahieh suburb Beirut earlier on Wednesday. BBC reporter

Alice Cuddy was at the scene of an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon which left a four-storey building ablaze, while Carine Torbey reports from a strike in central Beirut. Four people have been injured after two drones fell near Dubai International Airport, while the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman have all reported Iranian attacks. Oil prices Sources tell the BBC that the UK is prepared to support a coordinated release of collective Energy Agency oil reserves as prices remain volatile due to the conflict. It comes as energy ministers in the G7 say they have given support "in principle" for the use of strategic energy reserves. In the UK, Prime Minister's Questions is under way and the focus is on the war in Iran, with Keir Starmer asked about the knock-on impact on the British public and whether British troops will get involved.

AT LEAST SIX DEAD IN SWITZERLAND BUS FIRE



At least six people have been killed and others injured after a bus caught fire in a town in western Switzerland, according to police. The incident took place at around 18:25 local time (19:25 GMT) on Tuesday in the centre of Kerzers - known in French as Châtres - in Fribourg canton, about 20km (12 miles) from the capital, Bern. At least three people were taken to hospital, police said, and there were reports that a rescuer was also hurt. The cause of the fire is not yet known but local police said the fire was believed to have been started deliberately. There have been reports that a person doused themselves

in gasoline but the authorities said they could not immediately confirm this. While the act is thought to be intentional, there is no evidence it was terror related, a spokesperson for Fribourg police told Swiss national broadcaster RTS on Wednesday. Romain Collaud, a local politician, also confirmed to RTS that "we have no indication that suggests we might be dealing with a terrorist attack". Video posted by local media shows a bus in flames, and a local resident described seeing a thick column of smoke. The bus involved had reportedly travelled from the Düringen municipality, 17km south of Kerzers.

MUGABE'S SON DROPS BAIL REQUEST - WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE FAMILY AFTER LOSING POWER



The arrest in South Africa of the youngest son of Zimbabwe's former President, Robert Mugabe, has brought renewed attention to the former first family and their controversies over the years. Bellarmine Mugabe, who appeared in court on Wednesday for a bail hearing, is accused of attempted murder, among other charges, after a 23-year-old man was shot and injured at a property in an upmarket suburb of Johannesburg. He has not commented on the charges but in an unexpected move, he abandoned his request for bail and agreed to plea negotiations with South African prosecutors. He is charged alongside his bodyguard. Their lawyer Simenhlahlha Mnguni said it was "premature to say... whether we will plead guilty to anything at this stage". The matter returns to court next Tuesday. His father led Zimbabwe for 37 years before being forced out of power at the age of 93 in 2017. He died two years later. The long-serving president and his second wife Grace had three children together: Bona Mugabe - now 37 Robert Mugabe Jr - now 33 Bellarmine Mugabe

- now 28. Grace also had a son from an earlier marriage: Russell Goreraza - now in his early 40s. Managing editor of Zimbabwean privately owned NewsHawks website, Dumisani Muleya, told the BBC that the Mugabe family had "lived a life of privilege" and that the children "grew up in that environment where they were protected from the broader realities of the Zimbabwean political and socio-economic situation". The family had amassed a vast personal fortune, including \$10m (£7.5m) in cash, four houses, 10 cars, a farm and an orchard among other assets. These details emerged three months after Robert Mugabe's death in a legal letter submitted to the high court in Zimbabwe by his daughter Bona. At the time, a lawyer for the family, Terrence Hussein, told the BBC that none of the properties were under the former leader's name. In 2013, Grace denied that her husband was accumulating wealth while in office, saying her husband did not earn as much as people thought as he was a civil servant. "The allowance I get is just a pittance.

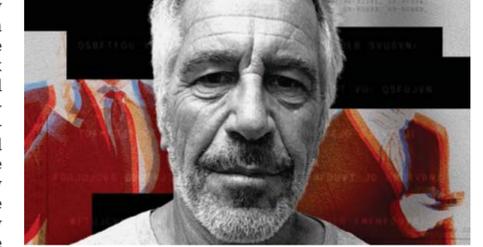
GEORGIA RACE TO REPLACE MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE HEADS TO A RUNOFF

The special election to replace former Georgia Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene is projected to head to a runoff after none of the candidates secured a majority of the votes on Tuesday night. Republican Clay Fuller, who received President Donald Trump's endorsement, is projected to face Democrat Shawn Harris to represent Georgia's 14th congressional district, according to a projection by the BBC's US partner CBS. The two candidates beat out a crowded field of 17 candidates for the runoff slots. Trump gave Fuller his "complete and total endorsement" in a Truth Social post and while holding a rally in Rome, Georgia, last month. Tuesday's election served as an early test of Trump's power to shape the upcoming

midterm elections in November. "For those of you who questioned how important Donald J Trump is to this country, to Georgia 14, and the state of Georgia, you see what this man means to this community, what he means to the people in this country, and what he means to the MAGA movement," Fuller, a former district attorney, said on Tuesday night. The runoff election will be held 7 April. Whoever wins the seat will serve out the rest of Greene's term, which ends in January, but they must begin campaigning again immediately to win their own full term in Congress in the midterms. Harris, the Democrat, received the most votes on Tuesday night, likely due to the fact that the Republican base splintered among many candidates.

JEFFREY EPSTEIN HAD TWO KEY AIDES - WHY DO THEY STILL CONTROL HIS MONEY AND SECRETS?

When the FBI raided Jeffrey Epstein's New York mansion in July 2019, on the day he was arrested for child sex trafficking, agents forced open a large safe to find diamonds, bundles of cash, passports, binders of CDs and hard drives. But an issue with the warrant meant they could not leave with the items. And when they returned with a new one, the safe had been emptied while they were gone - according to FBI documents. Richard Kahn, Epstein's accountant and bookkeeper since 2005, had told the mansion's staff to pack two suitcases with the contents of the safe and deliver them to his home, agents wrote. After the FBI spoke to Kahn's then lawyer, Kahn agreed to hand over the suitcases untouched, but he did not want agents coming to



his house and declined to say who had told him to remove the items. However, a source close to the investigation into Epstein told us that he was not aware of Kahn ever being interviewed or investigated in relation to the paedophile financier's criminal investigation. Kahn's current lawyer told BBC News that his client had fully co-operated with the FBI's requests. Kahn, and Epstein's long-

part of its investigation into Epstein's network, the congressional committee has subpoenaed - summoned - the pair to testify. Kahn is appearing on Wednesday 11 March, while Indyke is due to testify on Thursday 19 March. We have spoken to people associated with investigations linked to Epstein, looked through papers from multiple court cases, and analysed the most recent material released in the Epstein files by the US Department of Justice - to try to uncover more about the role the two men are alleged to have played in Epstein's life and continue to play after his death. Epstein appointed Indyke and Kahn as co-executors in August 2019, just two days before he died in jail awaiting trial for sex-trafficking minors.

LARGE PARTS OF DRESDEN EVACUATED AFTER 250KG WW2 BOMB FOUND

Much of the centre of the German city of Dresden has been evacuated, after the discovery of a large unexploded British World War Two bomb. The 250kg (551lb) device was discovered near the former Carola Bridge, which collapsed in the Elbe River in 2024. The fire brigade in Dresden says this is the city's largest evacuation to date for such an incident, affecting around 18,000 residents, tourists and commuters. Much of the old town has been cordoned off, including some of the city's most famous buildings - the iconic Frauenkirche Lutheran church, the



Residenzschloss Palace and the Semper Opera. The police headquarters, Saxony's state parliament, several ministries, retirement and nursing homes, daycare centres and other social institutions are also located in the evacuated area. The authorities are

providing emergency accommodation at the Dresden Exhibition Centre from 07:00 (06:00 GMT), while additional buses and trams will be running to this location. It is not clear how long it will take to defuse the bomb. Dresden was attacked by

British aircraft on 13 February 1945. In the days that followed, the British and their US allies dropped nearly 4,000 tons of bombs in the assault on the city. The ensuing firestorm killed 25,000 people and ravaged the city centre, once known as the Jewel Box because of its Baroque and Rococo architecture. Four other bombs were found during demolition work on the Carola Bridge last year. The attack on Dresden is one of the most controversial Allied acts of World War Two. Some say it was strategically justified. Others argue it was a war crime.

CARNEY INCHES CLOSER TO MAJORITY, AS FOURTH MP DEFECTS TO LIBERALS



A fourth MP of the current Canadian parliament has defected to join the Liberals, bringing Prime Minister Mark Carney closer to a majority in the House of Commons. Lori Idlout, a member of the left-leaning New Democrats (NDP), is joining the governing party. In a statement issued by the Liberals, she said she had undergone "much personal reflection and encouragement from my community, family, and supporters". Interim NDP leader Don Davies said he was "very disappointed", adding: "We believe that when someone rejects the decision of their electors and wants to join another party, they should put that decision to their voters." The Liberals said they were "deeply excited to welcome" Idlout. Idlout was first elected as an MP from the Canadian territory of Nunavut in 2021. She told the CBC in January that she had been asked to consider joining the Liberals but was not yet ready to make the move. Carney, who leads a minority government, has been closing in on a majority in recent months - largely helped by recent defections by three former Conservative members of parliament. In February, Matt Jeneroux, a

Conservative from Edmonton, joined the Liberal caucus. Two other Conservative MPs, Chris d'Entremont of Nova Scotia and Michael Ma of Ontario, had crossed the floor late last year to join Carney's government. Opposition Conservatives have accused the Liberals of using "pressure tactics" on their members. Over the weekend, Carney also announced three by-elections on 13 April - races that could secure the Liberals the majority government that they crave. Two of the by-elections will be held in Toronto, in constituencies that are considered Liberal strongholds. The third will be a closely-watched contest in Montreal that his party won by just one vote in the last election - a result that was nullified by the Supreme Court. If the Liberals win all three seats in April, following the addition of Idlout, they would secure 173 seats in the House of Commons, allowing the prime minister to likely avoid an election for three more years. In the federal election a year ago, the NDP won just seven seats after losing significant vote share to rival parties. The NDP will vote for a new leader later this month.



Ukraine says it has hit Russian 'missile component' plant

Zelensky sends drone teams to Middle East, touting Ukraine's expertise

"Teams of Ukrainian military experts have been sent to Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to help them defend against drones being launched from Iran in retaliation for the massive US and Israeli air attacks. Others are also helping the US defend its military presence in Jordan, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. In a video address, Zelensky said Ukraine had "the greatest experience in the world in countering attack drones" - a reference to expertise built up over the more than four years of attacks by Russia on its neighbour. Ukraine says the US and 10 more countries across the Middle East and Europe have asked for help countering the threat of



drones that have wrought much damage. There has been no comment by any of the countries concerned. Last week President Trump said he would take help from "any country" that offered it, including Ukraine. In his address, Zelensky said one of Ukraine's top officials, Rustem Umerov, secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, was on his way to the Gulf.



Jay Shah's Unnoticed Act With New Zealand Players After T20 World Cup Final Loss Earns Praise

ICC chairman Jay Shah, who earlier served as BCCI secretary, recently attended the T20 World Cup 2026 India vs New Zealand final in Ahmedabad. During his time with the BCCI, the Women's Premier League was launched, pay parity between men's and women's cricketers was introduced, record-breaking media rights deals for the IPL were signed, and domestic cricket witnessed massive upliftment. Jay Shah, after resigning from his post as BCCI secretary towards the end of 2024, took over as ICC chairman in December the same year. After the T20 World Cup final 2026, several videos of Jay Shah went viral in which he could be seen with Indian cricket legends MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma. In fact, after India's win, Jay Shah and the side's skipper Suryakumar Yadav, along with coach Gautam Gambhir, went to a Hanuman temple in Ahmedabad and took the trophy along. But Jay Shah



did not interact only with the Indian players. In a recent viral video, Jay Shah can be seen meeting the New Zealand players. The act was appreciated by social media users. Coming to the match, NZ won the toss and elected to field first. However, a return-to-form, record-breaking fifty from Abhishek Sharma (52 in 21 balls, with six fours and three sixes) and his 98-run stand with Sanju Samson (89) made NZ regret the decision. Later, Samson stitched a century stand with Ishan Kishan (54 in 25

balls, with four boundaries and four sixes) to take India past the 200-run mark in the 16th over. After a brief slowdown, Shivam Dube (26* in eight balls, with three fours and two sixes) made some valuable runs to take India to 255/5, the highest total in T20WC finals. James Neesham (3/46) was the leading wicket-taker for NZ. In the run-chase of 256 runs, Axar Patel (3/23) and Jasprit Bumrah (4/15) reduced the Kiwis to 72/5, despite a half-century from Tim Seifert (52 in 26 balls,

with two fours and five sixes). Despite a brief partnership between Daryl Mitchell (17) and skipper Mitchell Santner (43 in 35 balls, with three fours and two sixes), India kept chipping in with wickets, and the Kiwis were bundled out for just 159 runs. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has issued a statement acknowledging the frustration of players, coaches, support staff, and families who remain stranded following the conclusion of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. The governing body confirmed that ongoing disruptions across the Gulf region have severely impacted international air travel, delaying the safe return of teams to their home countries. According to the ICC, the crisis has led to airspace closures, missile warnings, re-routing constraints, and last-minute cancellations of both commercial and charter flights. These conditions, the ICC stressed, are entirely outside its control

and have made travel arrangements "significantly more complex and time-consuming" than usual. We understand that players, coaches, support staff and their families who have completed their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 campaigns are anxious to return home. That they have not yet been able to do so is a source of genuine frustration, and the International Cricket Council (ICC) shares that frustration. The delay is the direct result of the ongoing crisis across the Gulf region, which has caused widespread and continuing disruption to international air travel, including airspace closures, missile warnings, re-routing constraints, as well as the cancellation and rescheduling of both commercial and charter flights at short notice. These are conditions entirely outside the ICC's control, and they have made each travel solution significantly more complex and time-consuming than under normal circumstances.

SANJU SAMSON TO BECOME NEXT T20I CAPTAIN?

Mohammad Kaif believes that Sanju Samson can become the next Indian cricket team T20I captain after his brilliant performances in the T20 World Cup. Samson slammed three consecutive half-centuries, including two in the semifinal and final, to guide his team to a record third T20 World Cup title. The wicket-keeper batter, who has captained Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League (IPL), was instrumental in his team's success and his redemption story has earned his praise from both fans as well as experts. Kaif said that Samson is a good fit because of his experience in the shortest format of the sport and the ex-India batter pointed out that his stint as a captain in the IPL can also help him a lot if he succeeds Suryakumar Yadav. "Tough to say right now as to who would become the next captain, but Samson could well be the one. I



mean, why not? A Captain must be someone who has seen the world. Implementing bowling changes, playing the perfect XI, and backing players out of form, as with Abhishek Sharma and Varun Chakaravathy. A captain would know that these things happen. They themselves have gone through this. They understand these little things," Kaif told Ravish Bisht in a

video. "So, I feel, Samson sure can be a candidate. However, if Surya keeps playing well then he can hold on to the position longer. If you're fit, you can play till 38-39. There's no problem. And in the shorter format, you need more experience. Someone who has captained remains forever valuable. If Surya decides to step down, Sanju can fill that position.

Waseem Bilal On Winning REIHL Season 3 And Ladakh's Next Wave Of Ice Hockey Talent

With the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 3 concluding in Ladakh earlier this winter, one of its standout performers - Humas Warriors' Assistant Captain Waseem Bilal - reflect on his journey in the sport, the intensity of the competition, and what winning the League has meant for players emerging from the region's growing ice hockey community. Q. Growing up in Drass, how did that shape you as a player? A. Growing up in Drass, the harsh winter is a way of life. It's extremely cold, and sometimes even reaching the rink feels like a training session in itself. Lacking fancy facilities or modern gear, we played on natural ice and adapted. You learn to



fall, get up, and keep going-it becomes second nature. For me, initially Ice hockey was something that gave excitement during long winters. We weren't chasing big dreams; we just wanted to play. But as I started competing elsewhere and facing new teams, I realised that with enough hard work, I

could reach their level. Ultimately, Drass made me strong mentally because if you can train in that cold, you can handle pressure in games also. Q. You made sacrifices to continue playing. How do you look at that now? A. At that time, I didn't think of it as a sacrifice. I just felt that if I really want-

ed to continue, I had to make a choice. Selling my bike was emotional because it was a gift from my father. But I knew I needed proper equipment if I wanted to compete seriously. Without that, I would always fall behind. Now, when I look back after winning the League, I don't see it as a sacrifice. I see it as a step I had to take to move forward. There were moments when it felt easier to step away. But something inside kept telling me to continue. The title is special, but more than that, the journey taught me resilience. That stays with you longer than any medal. Q. As Assistant Captain, what did you focus on this season? A. Leadership for me is mostly about consistency.

Gautam Gambhir's Befitting Reply To Kirti Azad's "Degrading" T20 World Cup Remarks

Not known to be a man who minces his words, India head coach Gautam Gambhir has hit back at cricketer-turned-politician Kirti Azad's criticism of the team's temple visit with the T20 World Cup trophy. Azad criticised the Indian team, Gambhir, and the International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman Jay Shah for visiting the Hanuman Temple in Ahmedabad soon after India beat New Zealand in the final to win the trophy. Gambhir hit back at Azad, saying that such remarks "degrade his own team and players, which should not be done." India's triumphant T20 World Cup squad, led by captain Suryakumar Yadav and coach Gambhir, visited a Hanuman temple in



Ahmedabad to offer prayers with the trophy. The gesture drew sharp criticism from 1983 World Cup winner and Trinamool Congress MP Kirti Azad, who questioned why the trophy was taken only to a temple and not to other places of worship, calling it discriminatory. Gambhir, known for his outspoken nature, defended the

team's choice and gave a strong response to Azad over the controversial remarks. "It is not even worth answering this question. Answering that question, it is a big moment for the entire country. If you ask me, then it's a huge moment for our whole country. I think it's important that we celebrate the World

Cup winner. That's why I said certain statements; there is no point picking up certain statements, because these statements will only dilute your achievement. If you want to dilute the achievements of those 15 players and their efforts, then tomorrow anyone can give any statement, and we start taking it seriously, which isn't fair to the boys," Gambhir said during a chat with ANI. He stressed that players should be allowed to celebrate in their own way without political or religious interference. "Imagine that the boys have gone through so much - the amount of pressure they've been under after losing one match in South Africa, the kind of pressures the boys were under.

HOW KINSKY'S HORROR NIGHT UNFOLDED BEFORE 17TH-MINUTE SUBSTITUTION

Tottenham replaced goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky in the 17th minute of their Champions League last-16 tie at Atletico Madrid after conceding three goals. The Czech Republic international, 22, endured a nightmare start and interim boss Igor Tudor quickly replaced him with Guglielmo Vicario. Italian Vicario has started the majority of Tottenham's games this season but was dropped for Tuesday's first-leg tie in Madrid after being criticised for poor performances. Vicario conceded five minutes after coming on as Atletico stormed into a 4-0 lead by the 22nd minute, before Pedro Porro reduced the deficit by half-time. But Spurs face an almighty task to turn it around in the second leg on 18 March after



losing 5-2. Tottenham signed Kinsky from Slavia Prague in a deal worth about £12.5m in January 2025. His first error - a slip - led to Marcos Llorente making it 1-0 in the sixth minute, before Antoine Griezmann added a second eight minutes later. Kinsky, who last started a game in October - the second of two Carabao Cup games this season - was also at fault

for Atletico's third goal, gifting the ball straight to Julian Alvarez to finish easily in the 15th minute. Kinsky had his head in his hands and was taken off less than two minutes later. He was not acknowledged by Tudor before he headed down the tunnel. BBC Sport's chief football writer Phil McNulty, who was at the match, said he was not sure he had "ever witnessed anything quite like this" after Spurs' series of mistakes was followed by Tudor's decision to take Kinsky off. BBC Sport's Spanish football reporter Elizabeth Conway, also at the match, said Kinsky was shown support by teammates Kevin Danso, Cristian Romero and Pedro Porro as he left the pitch.

IS TUDOR'S SPURS REIGN ALMOST UP AFTER ONLY FOUR GAMES?

If Igor Tudor's jaw-dropping removal of goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky after 17 calamitous minutes in Madrid was a brutal example of a mistake being rectified swiftly, then is it time for Tottenham Hotspur's hierarchy to consider doing the same? Interim head coach Tudor delivered the time-honoured blunt "no comment" when asked whether he deserved to keep his job after the 5-2 loss at Atletico Madrid, his fourth straight defeat. This situation, like Spurs' season, seems out of his control even after only 26 days in charge. In reality, the Croat's position is looking increasingly untenable, every scrap of evidence produced since he succeeded Thomas



Frank suggesting he is the wrong man in the wrong place. With their former manager Mauricio Pochettino watching on from the stands in Madrid, the Spurs power brokers must be pondering another emergency appointment as their season slipped further into crisis. In the emotional, atmospheric surroundings of the Metropolitan this was, in

a strictly sporting context, like being present at the scene of an accident. This was Spurs in microcosm with mistake piled upon mistake - the self-destruct button pressed with despairing regularity. And at the centre of it all was poor 22-year-old Kinsky, selected ahead of previous first-choice Guglielmo Vicario, but substituted in short order after two slips gifted goals to Marcos Llorente and Julian Alvarez. If the Spurs fans who travelled to Madrid - with neither hope nor expectation - thought this wretched season could not produce fresh horrors for them, one of the worst opening 23 minutes in the club's recent history soon put them straight.

'IT'S WILT, ME, THEN KOBE' - ADEBAYO SCORES 83 POINTS



Bam Adebayo scored 83 points - the second highest number in an NBA game - as the Miami Heat beat the Washington Wizards 150-129. The center said it was a "special moment" when he passed Kobe Bryant's 81-point tally, set in 2006. Wilt Chamberlain's record of 100 points has stood since 1962. Adebayo scored 36 of 43 free-throws - records for the most free-throws attempted and most free-throws made - at Kaseya Center in Miami. "It's Wilt, me, then Kobe, which sounds crazy," he said. The 28-year-old described it as a "special moment" and said he "really got emotional" when he realised the scale of his achievement. "I wish I could relive it twice," Adebayo said.

Paying tribute to his family and trainers, he said: "They've seen me at the lowest, at the bottom of the bottom, trying to figure out how to really pick myself up. "To have this moment and share it with all them, it's a pretty emotional moment." The Los Angeles Lakers beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 120-106 at home thanks to Luka Donicic's 31 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists. The Lakers climbed to fourth in the Western Conference, ahead of the Timberwolves on a tie-breaker as they both have 40-25 records. Eastern Conference leaders the Detroit Pistons moved to 46-18 with a 138-100 win at the Brooklyn Nets as Jalen Duren scored 26 points.

TRUMP WILL WELCOME IRAN AT WORLD CUP - INFANTINO

US President Donald Trump has said Iran are "welcome" to take part in this summer's World Cup despite the countries being at war, according to FIFA president Gianni Infantino. Posting on Instagram, Infantino said he met with Trump on Tuesday to discuss preparations for the tournament, which is being hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico and gets under way on 11 June. Infantino said he and Trump "spoke about the current situation in Iran". Iran are scheduled to play three

matches in the US, but their participation has been in doubt since the US and Israel launched strikes on the country this month, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran responded by launching missiles and drones towards Israel and four Gulf Arab countries which host US military bases - Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. "During the discussions, President Trump reiterated that the Iranian team is, of course, welcome to compete in the tournament in the United

States," Infantino said. "We all need an event like the Fifa World Cup to bring people together now more than ever, and I sincerely thank the president of the United States for his support, as it shows once again that football unites the world." Iran are due to face New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles on 15 and 21 June respectively and Egypt in Seattle on 26 June. Trump last week told Politico, external "I really don't care" if Iran play in the World Cup. Following the outbreak of military action, Iran football federation president

Mehdi Taj has been quoted as saying: "What is certain is that after these attacks, it's hard to look at the World Cup with hope." Australia has granted six humanitarian visas to members of Iran's women's team over concerns about their safety. The remaining Iran players left Australia on Tuesday after the team's elimination from the AFC Asian Cup. Australia's Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said seven people were granted asylum, but one woman later changed her mind and opted to return home.



Manchu Manoj Powers Up for David Reddy with a Gritty “Real Stunts Mode” Transformation

Manchu Manoj has once again caught the attention of fans with a powerful social media post that shows his renewed discipline and dedication towards his craft. Known for his intense screen presence and commitment to performance, Manoj shared an update from his ongoing physical transformation, revealing that he has spent the last three weeks pushing himself beyond comfort in preparation for his upcoming projects. The post, accompanied by striking workout images, quickly gained traction among fans who praised the actor's determination. In the post, Manoj spoke candidly about his decision to cut out excuses and put in the work. “Three weeks ago, I made a decision. No more negotiating with comfort. No more excuses. Just the work,” he wrote, talking about how demanding action filmmaking really is. He went on to say that performing stunts on camera leaves no room for shortcuts. “In action cinema, nobody can fake it for you. Every punch, every fall, every hit. Your body either shows up or it doesn't. The camera doesn't lie.” He said he has stopped training for looks and is now focused on building endurance and resilience, with the goal of becoming “unbreakable.” Calling the update “Week 3,” Manoj said the journey has only begun but that he already feels like a different man from who he was just 21



days ago. Manoj's recent work on screen has also kept him in the spotlight. He made a strong comeback with Mirai, where he played the powerful antagonist Mahabir Lama, also known as “Black Sword.” The film did well at the box office and Manoj's intense performance was widely appreciated by audiences and critics. It was yet another reminder of the physical intensity and emotional conviction he brings to his roles. Looking ahead, Manoj is gearing up for one of the most ambitious films of his career, David Reddy, a large-scale pan-India period action drama directed by Hanuma Reddy Yakkanti and produced by Nallagangula

Venkat Reddy and Bharat Motukuri. Set during the British colonial period between 1897 and 1920, the film follows a fierce warrior who rises against oppression. The cast includes international actress Maria Ryaboshapka, and the project is being mounted on a grand scale for audiences across India. The recently released David Reddy glimpse has already crossed 10 million digital views, building strong buzz and raising anticipation around Manoj's powerful new avatar. Apart from David Reddy, Manoj has several other projects in the pipeline, signalling a busy and exciting phase in his career.

SUDIGALI SUDHEER'S G.O.A.T SET FOR WORLDWIDE RELEASE ON MARCH 26



The latest film G.O.A.T (Greatest Of All Times) starring popular comedian-turned-hero Sudigali Sudheer is gearing up for release. The film features Divya Bharathi as the female lead and is directed by Vedavyas. It is jointly produced under the banners Mahateja Creations and Jaishnav Productions, with Chandrasekhar Reddy Mogulla as the producer. Currently in the post-production stage, the film is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on March 26. All

the content released so far from the movie has received a positive response. The makers are also planning to release the trailer soon. Speaking about the film, the producer said, “We are currently completing the remaining work. We are making the film on a rich scale without compromising on expenses. Technically too, the film will be of a high standard. This movie will stand as a milestone in Sudigali Sudheer's career. Every frame of the film looks fantastic.

“Bapu Bomma – Vishwa Mahila” Awards Ceremony By Noted Actress & Bapu Bomma K. Divyavani Choudary



The prestigious “Bapu Bomma – Vishwa Mahila” Awards ceremony was organized in a grand manner by noted actress K. Divyavani Choudary. The first award recipient was Mega Mother Mrs. Konidela Anjanidevi. Divyavani Choudary, a prominent actress who earned a permanent place in the hearts of Telugu audiences as a “Bapu Bomma”, and who has also been making her mark in the social and political spheres, instituted these awards on the occasion of International Women's Day 2026 under the title “Bapu Bomma – Vishwa Mahila.” Among the distinguished women who received the awards were Mrs. Konidela Anjanidevi, wife of Rebel Star Krishnam Raju – Mrs. Shyamala Devi, Anchor Swapna, Janeta Kancherla

(USA), Dr. Vennela Gaddar, Dr. Padmaja Chandrakant, Sameera Bharadwaj, Rekharani, and D. Jyothi Reddy (USA), among others. The grand event was held at Daspalla Hotel, Hyderabad, with the support of Telangana Minister Juppally Krishna Rao. Several prominent personalities attended the ceremony as guests, including Telangana Congress Party President Mahesh Goud, Telugu One Chairman K. Ravishankar, noted actor and writer Harshavardhan, Deputy Collector E. Venkatachari, and Assistant Commissioner of Police M. Kiran kumar, among others. Speakers at the event appreciated Divyavani for launching the prestigious “Bapu Bomma – Vishwa Mahila Awards” and for beginning this initiative by

honouring Mega Matriarch Mrs. Konidela Anjanidevi. Divyavani, who has been actively contributing to the film, political, and social sectors, stated that the purpose of this initiative is to honour women who excel in various fields and inspire other women in society. She expressed her heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the grand success of the event. Divyavani also conveyed special thanks to the Government of Telangana under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for its efforts towards women's empowerment in the state. On this occasion, Divyavani announced that the “Bapu Bomma – Vishwa Mahila Awards” will soon be expanded beyond the two Telugu states and conducted across India and internationally!!

MARDAANI 3 OTT RELEASE: WHEN AND WHERE TO WATCH IT IN INDIA

Rani Mukerji's latest crime thriller Mardaani 3 is preparing for its digital debut after completing a decent run in theatres. The film, which released in cinemas on January 30, 2026, marked the return of the fearless cop Shivani Shivaji Roy, a character loved by fans since the

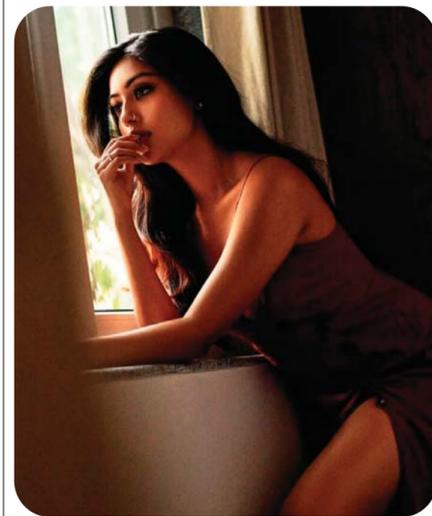


first film in the franchise. Despite receiving mixed reviews from critics and audiences, the movie performed well at the box office and became the highest-grossing film in the Mardaani franchise. When and Where to Watch Mardaani 3 on OTT According to

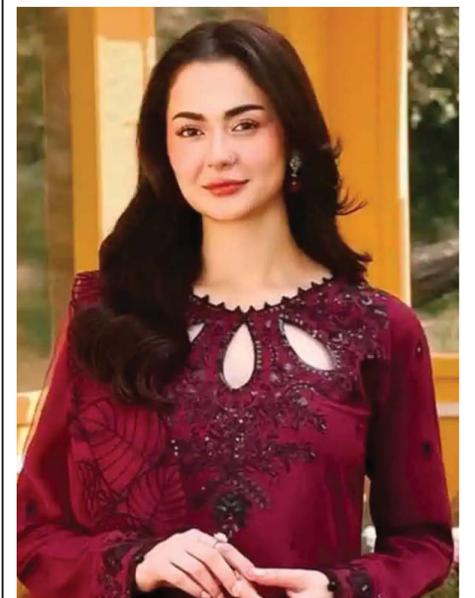
several reports, Mardaani 3 is expected to start streaming on Netflix from March 27, 2026. The date follows the typical eight-week theatrical window that many Hindi films follow before arriving on OTT platforms. Netflix holds the post-theatrical streaming rights for the film. However, the makers, Yash

Raj Films, have not yet made an official announcement confirming the digital release date. The OTT premiere is expected to help the film reach a wider global audience, especially viewers who missed watching it in theatres. Box Office Performance During its theatrical run, Mardaani 3 collected around Rs. 50.78 crore nett in India and approximately Rs. 75 crore gross worldwide. By its sixth week in cinemas, the film had already crossed the Rs. 50 crore mark in India. Reports also suggest that the movie became the third-highest-grossing Hindi film of 2026, after big releases like Border 2 and O'Romeo.

ANU EMMANUEL TURNS SULTRY IN WINDOWLIGHT POSE



THE REPORTED AMOUNT HANIA AAMIR ASKED FOR A PODCAST APPEARANCE



Islamabad: Pakistani actress Hania Aamir knows how to stay in the headlines. From making buzz around her rumoured wedding with singer Asim Azhar to impressing audiences with her role as Ayra in the ongoing hit drama Meri Zindagi Hai Tu, the actress has been grabbing attention for both personal and professional reasons. And now, she is once again trending after a video surfaced about the amount she allegedly demanded to appear on a popular Pakistani podcast. Hania Aamir's fees goes viral. In a clip that is now going viral on social media, podcast host and journalist Adnan Faisal revealed that Hania Aamir had asked for 2 million Pakistani rupees (PKR 20 lakh) to appear on his podcast. According to Faisal, he found the amount too high, especially since he

claims he has never paid such a fee to any of his previous guests. Speaking about the matter, Faisal said that even established names like Faysal Quraishi have appeared on his show without such payment demands. He added that while it was entirely Hania's choice to quote that figure, he personally does not pay guests for interviews. “It was Hania Aamir's choice to ask for 2 million rupees to appear on my podcast, but I've never given this kind of money to anyone for an interview,” Faisal said in a video. Soon after the video surfaced online, it triggered a heated debate among fans and social media users. While some questioned the large appearance fee, many others came out in support of the actress, arguing that her current popularity and stardom justify such a demand.

NEARLY 60 STILL SERVING SIZZLING STYLE



Madhuri Dixit once again proves that true style and grace never fade. The legendary actress recently shared stunning new pictures where she looks elegant and confident in a striking black gown. The outfit features a fitted silhouette that highlights her graceful posture, while the dramatic silver ruffled shoulder design adds a bold fashion statement. Standing under soft spotlight lighting, Madhuri's pose with her hands on her waist brings out her timeless charm and strong

screen presence. The gown beautifully blends classic glamour with modern style. The sleek black lower portion flows smoothly to the floor, giving a sophisticated red-carpet feel, while the textured silver detailing around the shoulders adds volume and drama to the look. Her wavy hairstyle, subtle makeup, and sparkling earrings perfectly complement the outfit. The entire look feels polished yet effortless, showing why she continues to remain a fashion inspiration even after decades in the industry. With a career spanning nearly four decades, Madhuri Dixit has successfully evolved from being one of Bollywood's top heroines to exploring

new platforms like OTT shows. She was recently seen in the series Mrs. Deshpande and will soon appear in the upcoming film Ma Behen. Even at 58, her latest pictures have left fans amazed, as she looks radiant and confident, proving that her star power and elegance remain as strong as ever. The voluminous silver ruffle almost resembled a wearable piece of art, cascading across the neckline like a couture collar. Beneath the ruffled layer, a subtle sweetheart-style inner neckline added structure and balance to the design, lending the look a refined sensuality. Keeping the styling in sync with the gown's glamorous mood, Madhuri opted for soft, side-parted

waves that fell gracefully over her shoulders. Her makeup followed a classic red-carpet formula — luminous skin, softly defined eyes and a muted lip — enhancing her natural elegance without overpowering the ensemble. Accessories were kept polished and minimal. Statement diamond earrings and a sparkling ring added just the right amount of sparkle, complementing the metallic drama of the neckline. The fashion spectacle unfolded alongside a celebration of storytelling excellence. The News18 Showsha Reel Awards continues to recognise outstanding achievements across Indian cinema and the rapidly growing OTT space.