

Trump said later offers of support did not carry weight. “I said, I don’t want them anymore. I don’t want them after we win. I want them before we start. I don’t need your aircraft carriers after we’ve already won.” He also linked the issue to long-standing US troop deployments abroad. “We have 45,000 troops in Japan. We have 45,000 troops in South Korea. We have 45,000, 50,000 troops in Germany,” he said. “We defend all these countries.”

Hyd: Cyberabad Police
apprehend Man for
Posting Abusive Comment
on Social Media

Hyderabad, Mar 17 : The Cybercrime Police have apprehended a man for allegedly posting an abusive and offensive comment on a social media platform, the Cybercrime police said on Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Kotipalli Venkanna, a security guard by profession, was traced during an investigation into objectionable content posted online.

Police said he had posted the comment on a video of actress Renu Desai shared on Instagram.

According to police, the accused was taken into custody from Madhapur and brought to the Cyber Crime Police Station in Gachibowli.

During verification, he produced the mobile phone used to post the comment.

Police said the case was detected following monitoring of social media content and subsequent investigation to identify the individual responsible.

Issuing an advisory, Cyberabad Police urged citizens to maintain responsible behaviour on social media platforms and refrain from posting abusive, defamatory or offensive content.

They warned that such actions could attract legal consequences under relevant provisions of law.

The police also encouraged the public to report cyber offences to the nearest cybercrime police station or through the 1930 cyber helpline.

Ashwini Vaishnaw Highlights
KAVACH Expansion, Railways
Growth in Lok Sabha



New Delhi: Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Lok Sabha that KAVACH 4.0 was technically qualified and updated on July 16, 2024, following which work covering nearly 20,000 km has been taken up.

He emphasized that KAVACH is not just a device but a comprehensive safety system requiring a full telecom network, including optical fibre cables along railway tracks, data centres at stations, and telecom towers at intervals of 2.5 to 3 km. He described the efforts to implement such a large-scale system as highly

commendable.

Highlighting the transformation of Indian Railways under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the minister noted a significant rise in cargo capacity.

Freight movement increased from 1,055 million tonnes during 2004–2014 to 1,617 million tonnes last year, and is expected to reach 1,650 million tonnes by the end of March.

He stated that with this growth, Indian Railways is set to become the world's second-largest cargo carrier, reflecting a decade of rapid modernization and infrastructure expansion.

INDIA'S FIRST 'SMART COCHLEAR IMPLANT' SURGERY
PERFORMED AT KIMS HOSPITALS, SECUNDERABAD

Hyderabad, March 17, 2026: In a significant milestone for hearing healthcare in India, doctors at KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad, have successfully performed the country's first Smart Cochlear Implant surgery on a three-year-old child suffering from severe hearing loss. The procedure marks an important advancement in cochlear implant technology and opens a new chapter in the treatment of profound hearing impairment.

Cochlear implantation is typically recommended for individuals with severe to profound hearing loss generally when hearing aids fail to provide sufficient benefit. In this case, the child had a hearing loss of more than 70 per cent, making the advanced implant a suitable option.

What makes the newly introduced Smart Cochlear Implant unique is its ability to receive future upgrades. In conventional cochlear implants, once the internal device is surgically implanted, it remains unchanged for life, and only the external sound processor can be upgraded. However, the new smart implant allows the internal implant firmware to be upgraded in the



future, enabling the integration of improved signal-processing technologies without the need for another surgery.

In simple terms, much like smartphone applications that receive updates over time and gain new features, the smart cochlear implant can be enhanced with technological advancements. This capability ensures that patients can continue to benefit from evolving hearing technologies, extending the long-term usefulness of the implant.

Doctors explain that cochlear implantation is not just a surgical procedure but part of a comprehensive rehabilitation process that includes audio-logical evaluation, device programming and speech

therapy.

The surgery was performed by a team led by Dr. Janardhan Rao Jagini, Head of the ENT Department and Senior Cochlear Implant Surgeon at KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad. The team also included Dr. Shivaprasad Boddupalli, Chief Audiologist and Cochlear Implant Clinical Specialist, and Dr. Divya, Audiologist.

Experts emphasize that cochlear implantation at an early age significantly improves a child's chances of developing normal speech and language skills. By receiving the smart cochlear implant at the age of three, the child is expected to have better hearing ability and improved language development in the future.

Telangana: KTR accuses Congress of playing
'biggest fraud' after making 420 promises

Hyderabad, March 17 : Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K. T. Rama Rao on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government in Telangana and remarked that the 'credit' for playing the 'biggest fraud' in the world after making 420 promises in the elections goes to the Congress party.

Speaking on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address in the Assembly, he claimed that nowhere in the world has a party made such a large number of promises in the elections and then failed to honour them.

He accused the Congress of failing to deliver on its promises despite claiming that the guarantees would be implemented within 100 days. "The Congress said each family would benefit to the tune of Rs 2.5 lakh. Even after over two years, can the government show a single family that has received such benefits?" he asked.

KTR said that a Governor's address carries immense importance as it reflects the policy direction and commitments of the ruling government. However, he alleged that the present government had



reduced it to a mere formality devoid of accountability. He recalled that during the first Governor's address after the Congress came to power, then Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had publicly stated that the "six guarantees" promised by the Congress would be given legal status, and that the Chief Minister had even signed a file to that effect. KTR questioned what had happened to that file and demanded answers from the government.

"Where is the file signed by the

Chief Minister granting legal status to the six guarantees? If such an important document has disappeared, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) must be constituted immediately to trace it," he demanded.

KTR further said that when the very first Governor's address lacked credibility due to unfulfilled assurances, the value of subsequent addresses also comes into question. "If the Chief Minister's signed file itself has no value, how can people trust this government? Every declaration made by the Chief Minister today carries zero value in the

eyes of the public," he remarked.

KTR also criticised ministers for making contradictory statements in the Assembly and urged the Speaker to ensure accountability. "If false statements are made even in the Assembly, what hope is there for truth outside?" he said, adding that the legislature must uphold truth and responsibility.

The BRS leader alleged that the state administration had deteriorated over the past 28 months. He accused the government of mounting debts, financial mismanagement, diversion of funds, and prioritising political propaganda over development. "All that remains today are debts, dues, diversions, commissions, bulldozer politics, and abuses," he said.

He also criticised the government for allegedly spending Telangana's resources on political campaigns in other states while failing to bring funds from the Centre. "You go to Delhi not to secure funds but to offer them. That is the difference," he said.

On the economic front, KTR pointed out that Telangana,

once among the fastest-growing states, was now witnessing a slowdown. He questioned the decline in revenues, including GST collections, registrations, and vehicle revenues, and attributed it to "negative policies and negative mindset." He further alleged that industries and IT employment were declining and dismissed claims made at investment summits as exaggerated propaganda. He also accused the government of attempting to erase the legacy of former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy, stating that Telangana's development itself stands as a testament to his contributions.

On welfare measures, KTR criticised the government for failing women, farmers, pensioners, and unemployed youth. He questioned the status of promised schemes such as Rs 2,500 monthly assistance to women, interest-free loans, farm loan waivers, and unemployment benefits. The BRS leader also alleged that existing schemes introduced by the previous government had been discontinued or weakened.

India Post launches 24- and 48-hour premium
delivery services across major cities

New Delhi, March 17 : In a move aimed at strengthening India's logistics network, Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia on Tuesday launched three new premium delivery services of the Department of Posts in the national capital. The services – 24 Speed Post, 48 Speed Post and 24 Speed Post Parcel – are designed to offer faster and time-bound delivery across key cities.

The launch event was attended by Minister of State for Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani along with senior officials of the postal department.

The initiative is part of the government's broader effort to modernise India's logistics system and improve delivery efficiency. Speaking at the event, Scindia said the launch marks a major step for India Post as it looks to reinvent itself and provide better services to customers in India and abroad.

"On this day that we are



announcing to millions of our customers worldwide that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India Post is committed to every single citizen across the length and breadth of this country and to every international customer," Scindia stated.

The Department of Posts introduced these services after conducting extensive pilot runs over the past three months.

The 24 Speed Post and 24 Speed Post Parcel services

will offer next-day delivery between six major metro cities – New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

These services will include features such as real-time tracking, OTP-based delivery confirmation and compensation in case of delays.

Deliveries will also be available on Sundays and holidays, except national holidays.

Meanwhile, the 48 Speed Post service will ensure

delivery within two days between these cities.

It is aimed at providing a reliable and time-bound solution for document delivery, supported by tracking and SMS alerts.

Initially, the services have been launched in the six metro cities and will be expanded to other Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities in phases.

The move is expected to benefit e-commerce firms, small businesses, start-ups and individual customers by enabling faster movement of parcels.

Sonowal felicitates crew
of LPG ships Shivalik
and Nanda Devi

New Delhi, March 17 : Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday interacted with the brave crew members of Indian-flagged LPG carriers Shivalik and Nanda Devi, expressing the nation's gratitude for their courage and unwavering sense of duty in ensuring the safe transit of critical LPG cargo here.

Addressing the seafarers via video conferencing, Sarbananda Sonowal said the interaction was a "heartfelt expression of the nation's gratitude" to the crew, who ensured the safe delivery of vital LPG supplies despite operating in a high-risk maritime environment.

"It is a matter of immense pride to recognise the courage, dedication and professionalism of the crew of Shivalik and Nanda Devi. Your efforts ensured the safe passage of critical LPG cargo, strengthening India's energy security," Sarbananda Sonowal said.

The minister noted that

both vessels remained stationed in a high-risk zone for nearly two weeks amid heightened security concerns before continuing their voyage to India. Sonowal said the crew demonstrated exceptional calmness, vigilance and professionalism under challenging conditions.

The interaction was attended by Vijay Kumar, secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shyam Jagannathan, director general of shipping; Capt. B.K. Tyagi, chairman and managing director, Shipping Corporation of India; Capt. Sukhmeet Singh and the crew of Shivalik, and Capt. Dhiraj Kumar Agrawal, along with the crew of Nanda Devi. Earlier, the two Indian-flagged LPG carriers safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz before arriving in India on March 16 and 17, as the government continues to closely monitor maritime operations in the Persian Gulf region amid the evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia.

NTR Memorial Trust
Award to GITAM

The NTR Memorial Trust honoured GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, with a Certificate of Appreciation on 17 March 2026, in recognition of its generous contributions and steadfast support towards the Trust's initiatives. The certificate highlighted GITAM's selfless commitment, noting that its efforts have played a vital role in bringing positive change to the lives of the underprivileged and continue to inspire the broader community. The award was presented by Nara Bhuvaneshwari,



Managing Trustee of the Trust, to D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Resident Director, GITAM Hyderabad. Over the past four years, GITAM has been actively organizing voluntary blood donation drives, reinforcing the life-saving importance of blood donation while fostering compassion, social responsibility, and a spirit of service among students. The initiative has been widely appreciated, with organizers commending students for their generosity and selfless contributions that help save lives and encourage others to participate in such noble causes. The GITAM leadership, along with Prof. D.S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Ambika Philip, Director – Hospitality & Campus Life, Heads of Institutions, Heads of Departments, and faculty members, lauded the initiative and reaffirmed their commitment to continuing such impactful community service programmes.

PUBLIC RESENTMENT GROWING AGAINST
ANDHRA GOVT: JAGAN REDDY

Amaravati, March 17 : Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday said there is widespread public resentment against the coalition government. Addressing YSRCP leaders and cadres from Ongole, he said he would embark on a padyatra to take up people's issues.

He said the coalition government had benefited no section of society. He added that discussions in every household were centred on how he had accomplished so much and why Chandrababu Naidu was not doing the same.

YS Jagan claimed he was driven by a noble intent to serve the people and said he implemented numerous welfare and development schemes in this spirit.

He alleged that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu wanted power only for corruption.

The YSRCP chief stated that in just two years, Chandrababu had incurred Rs 3.30 lakh crore without fulfilling any of his poll promises. He said all YSRCP schemes had been scrapped, while the government's own schemes had not taken off. He asked where all the money had gone and alleged rampant



corruption.

Stating that the coalition government had only three years left, Y.S. Jagan said he would embark on a padyatra in 1.5 years.

He said he planned to spend one-and-a-half years among the people through the padyatra. He urged party cadres to work together and expressed confidence that the YSRCP would return to power.

Jagan claimed the YSRCP stood for values and credibility. He said the party was built by its cadre and its strength lay in its value-based approach. He said the contrast between YSRCP governance and that of the coalition was clearly visible.

He said the YSRCP had

inherited the state in shambles with just Rs 100 crore in 2019.

"Despite COVID, we took corrective measures and put the state back on track. Though there were pressing issues and obligations, we did not stop welfare activities and implemented our manifesto in both letter and spirit, which surprised many," he said.

The former Chief Minister said that out of the Rs 3.31 lakh crore loans taken by the YSRCP government, Rs 2.7 lakh crore was spent on welfare.

He claimed state revenues were falling and lands were being given away at throw-away prices. He also alleged that capital Amaravati works were steeped in corruption.

Jagan said the TDP was the only party whose MP had been caught in a drug case, referring to the recent arrest of TDP MP Putta Mahesh Kumar during a police raid on a farmhouse near Hyderabad.

Alleging that there was no security for women in the state, the YSRCP chief said Chandrababu Naidu had been trying to dilute issues whenever there was an atrocity against women by appointing committees and dragging matters.

EDITORIAL

Why A TVK-NDA Alliance Is Just A BJP Fantasy

Over the past week, speculation around a possible alliance between Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has dominated the political chatter in Tamil Nadu. But even at first glance, the idea has always seemed more fantasy than feasible strategy.

The BJP has certainly done its part to keep the conversation alive. A noticeably softer stance towards Vijay following the Karur episode and repeated public statements about "keeping doors open" also pointed to a calibrated effort by the party. The transfer of the stampede case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) also led to the impression of Vijay being in the grip of the Centre.

It All Makes Sense...On Paper

The calculations are tempting. A consolidation of anti-DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) votes - currently split between the TVK and the AIADMK (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) - could, in theory, tilt the scales decisively. However, the leaders of the parties and their objectives mean that this could be a long shot, even if not an impossible one, pre-poll.

Start with the AIADMK. Under Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Leader of the Opposition and former Chief Minister, the party cannot afford to cede leadership. Doing so would be tantamount to political self-destruction. Tamil Nadu's electoral history has long been defined by a bipolar contest between the DMK and the AIADMK. To surrender that position is to risk irrelevance.

Then there is Vijay. His political appeal is built entirely around himself as the central figure - he is the leader voters are meant to rally behind. He has explicitly framed his campaign in those terms, even declaring that he is effectively "the candidate in all 234 constituencies". This is not the language of compromise. Vijay cannot play second fiddle - not to Palaniswami, and certainly not within a coalition led by the BJP. His politics demands primacy. If these two factors explain why a TVK-AIADMK alliance has failed to materialise, the third obstacle is the BJP itself. Aligning with a national party carries electoral risks for Vijay, particularly among minority voters, who make up a significant share of Tamil Nadu's electorate. More importantly, such a move would hand the DMK a powerful narrative weapon - reinforcing its longstanding claim of being the sole defender of Tamil identity and state autonomy against the Centre. These are not minor tactical disagreements; they are structural incompatibilities rooted in the core political identities of all three players.

Reality Is Much More Complex

Yes, surveys suggest that the TVK could command close to 20% of the vote. On paper, adding that to the NDA's base makes for a formidable base - perhaps even enough for a sweep. But elections are not spreadsheets. Ground realities are fluid, and voter behaviour rarely aligns neatly with hypothetical projections. There is also growing speculation that the TVK could emerge as the principal challenger to the DMK, potentially displacing the AIADMK as the number-two force in the state. But this, too, remains uncertain. While Vijay's popularity is undeniable - arguably unmatched in Tamil Nadu today - translating star power into sustained electoral success is an entirely different challenge. Add to that the undercurrents of anti-incumbency against the DMK, and the electoral landscape becomes even more unpredictable. Tamil Nadu And Pre-Poll Alliances Of course, politics is no stranger to unlikely alliances. But such "strange bedfellows" typically emerge after elections, when numbers dictate necessity. Pre-poll alliances, especially in a state like Tamil Nadu, require ideological alignment, leadership clarity, and voter coherence, none of which exists in this case.

In Numbers: The Curious Reason Iran Eased Down Its 'Drone Swarms' After March 9

The recent Iranian strike campaign against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has largely been viewed through images of drones striking skyscrapers and residential buildings. But it can also be understood through the dataset emerging from daily interception reports. Beginning on February 28, Iranian forces have launched nearly 1,800 drones and missiles towards the UAE, according to compiled data and interception timelines based on the daily releases shared by the UAE's Ministry of Defence. While interception rates remained high and protected key locations, a closer examination of the data reveals a structured operational campaign. The pattern suggests that Iran's objective was not necessarily infrastructure destruction but imposing economic and operational strain on advanced air-defence networks. Based on the data compiled, we can bucket the strike pattern broadly into three distinct phases: an initial saturation attack, a sustained drone attrition campaign, and a sudden decline in attack intensity.

Phase 1: Shock Saturation

The campaign opened with massive waves of projectiles on February 28 and March 1. On February 28, approximately 346 incoming drones and missiles were detected, including 137 ballistic missiles and more than 200 drones. The following day saw an even larger wave of 362 projectiles, the highest of the campaign. This opening phase bears the hallmarks of reconnaissance-by-fire, a tactic used to map defensive systems by forcing them to respond. Large multi-weapon combinations can force the defending nation to activate radars,



deploy interceptors, and thereby reveal its response patterns. The heavy use of ballistic missiles in this opening phase is particularly notable. Ballistic weapons are one of the most valuable assets in Iran's repertoire and their early deployment served both a psychological and operational purpose.

Phase 2: The Drone Swarm Campaign

After the initial shock phase, the nature of the attacks changed. Between March 2 and March 8, the number of incoming threats stabilised at roughly 120-160 projectiles per day. However, the composition shifted dramatically toward drones. Across this period, drones accounted for nearly 90% of incoming threats, while ballistic missile launches dropped to single digits on most days. This shift reveals the core logic of the campaign: drone swarm saturation. Iranian Shahed-type drones are relatively inexpensive compared with the sophisticated air-defence missiles used to inter-

cept them. Estimates place the cost of these drones at roughly USD 20,000 to USD 50,000 per unit, while the defending interceptor missiles can cost USD 3-6 million for Patriot systems and up to USD 12 million for THAAD interceptors. This asymmetry forms the economic centre of the strategy. Analysts estimate that Iran spent USD 11-27 million producing the drones used in one wave of attacks, while the defending side spent hundreds of millions of dollars on interceptors to destroy them. Across the broader campaign, the UAE may have spent between USD 1.45 billion and USD 2.28 billion on air-defence responses, compared to USD 177 million to USD 360 million worth of Iranian drones and missiles. In other words, the defender may have spent five to 10 times more money defending than the attacker spent attacking.

Phase 3: Sudden Drop in Attack Intensity

The campaign entered a third phase with an abrupt decline in attack volume beginning on March 9.

Incoming threats fell sharply:

March 8: 134
March 9: 33
March 10: 27
March 11: 52
March 12: 36

Several factors could explain this shift. One possibility is that launch infrastructure was disrupted, either through airstrikes or covert operations targeting Iranian launch sites and drone facilities, which we have seen happen. Another is that the early waves depleted forward-positioned drone stocks, forcing a temporary pause while logistics were reorganised. A third possibility is strategic restraint. Iran may have sought to demonstrate its ability to sustain drone pressure without triggering a wider regional war.

Defensive Performance

Despite all this, the UAE's defensive systems appear to have performed effectively. Across most days of the campaign, interception rates remained between 95 and 99%, based on the data compiled here, suggesting the successful operation of a layered defence network likely involving systems such as THAAD, Patriot PAC-3, and shorter-range anti-drone defences. But, incoming projectiles will penetrate. Around 60 projectiles did penetrate and strike the UAE territory or nearby areas, representing a penetration rate of approximately 3-4%. In the context of things, this is a strong defensive outcome.

The Temporary Dip in Interception Rates

One of the more interesting signals in the data appears later in the campaign. On March 9 and March 10, the UAE's interception rates dipped to roughly 88%, the lowest levels recorded during the attack window, even if the absolute number of successful penetrations remained relatively small (the UAE's defence ministry stopped publishing interception rate data after March 11).

A Humbled Donald Trump Is Now 'Demanding' Help From Friends

US President Donald Trump's attempt to mobilise a broad-based multinational naval coalition to secure the Strait of Hormuz reflects a familiar tension in contemporary geopolitics: the gap between American expectations of burden-sharing and the willingness of partners to assume risk in crises not of their making. Despite Washington's sustained exhortations - directed at key energy-dependent actors such as Japan, South Korea, European NATO members, and even China - there has been little by way of tangible response. No meaningful allied naval deployments have materialised. This hesitation is not accidental; it is rooted in both strategic calculation and political discomfort.

Iran's Calculated Moves

Iran, for its part, has avoided the escalatory optics of a formal blockade while effectively transforming the Strait into a selective chokepoint. By allowing relatively unhindered passage to countries it does not view as hostile - such as China, India, and Turkey - while complicating transit for US-aligned states through asymmetric tactics, Tehran has engineered a calibrated disruption. The result is a partial paralysis of a waterway that carries nearly a fifth of global oil flows. This has driven up prices and disproportionately burdened Western economies. Against this backdrop, Trump's emphasis on burden-sharing appears less a strategic innovation and more a necessity born of constraint. His argument, that countries reliant on Gulf energy should "protect their own interests", has been framed in transactional terms. Yet this framing has failed to resonate. Instead, it has reinforced perceptions of



an America seeking to externalise the costs of a crisis it helped precipitate. The reluctance of partners is also tied to the origins of the confrontation. The strikes against Iran - undertaken by the United States and Israel - were not preceded by extensive coalition-building or diplomatic groundwork. Consequently, many allies interpret the unfolding situation as a narrowly conceived strategic venture rather than a collective security challenge. European capitals, including Berlin and Paris, have been explicit in distancing themselves, underscoring that this is not a NATO mandate.

A Risk-Riddled Sea

Operational realities further compound the problem. The Strait of Hormuz is not merely a transit corridor; it is a highly contested maritime environment where Iran's asymmetric capabilities - mines, drones, missiles, and fast-attack craft - can impose high costs. For many states, the prospect of deploying high-value naval assets into what could quickly become a "kill zone" is strategically untenable, particularly in the absence of overwhelming force or a clear political objective. Domestic politics also matters. In countries like Japan

and South Korea, heavy dependence on imported energy has not translated into strategic assertiveness. Instead, it has heightened sensitivities about entanglement in external conflicts. Public opinion remains cautious, if not outright resistant, to military involvement. European governments, still shaped by the legacies of prolonged interventions, are similarly disinclined towards escalation. Despite its deep energy stakes in the Gulf, China, too, has shown little appetite for alignment with the US-led initiative. Participation would not only risk entanglement in a volatile theatre but also signal strategic convergence with Washington at a time of intensifying rivalry.

Demanding, Not Asking For Help

Trump's rhetorical approach has arguably aggravated these structural constraints. Public admonitions about the "ingratitude" of allies, warnings of consequences for NATO, and ultimatums directed at partners have produced defensiveness rather than solidarity. In international politics, coercive persuasion rarely substitutes for prior consensus-building. Iran, meanwhile, has exploited these fissures with

notable dexterity. By ensuring that not all stakeholders are equally affected, it has reduced the incentive for collective action. Those less impacted see little reason to incur risks to restore flows that primarily benefit Western economies. What emerges is a picture of strategic misalignment. The US seeks coalition support for a crisis shaped by its own unilateral choices, while its partners weigh costs, risks, and political optics - and largely opt for caution. Trump's optimism about eventual support sits uneasily with the reality that, without a shift in approach, the burden will remain disproportionately American. In that sense, this episode underscores a broader lesson: coalition-building cannot be improvised in the midst of a crisis. It requires prior legitimacy, shared ownership, and a clear articulation of common stakes - elements that, in this instance, appear to be in short supply. Other major aviation hubs within the UAE also experienced disruption. Abu Dhabi International Airport saw traffic fall to roughly half of normal levels at certain points, while Al Maktoum International Airport experienced traffic fluctuations as flights were diverted.

THE SHADOW OF A TRUMAN MOMENT IN THE IRAN WAR

Wars often produce moments when leaders feel compelled to seek a decisive stroke that will end the conflict once and for all. History shows that such moments can generate choices that would have seemed unthinkable only months earlier. When Harry S. Truman authorised the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the decision emerged from precisely such wartime pressures. As the conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran intensifies today, the world must ensure that a similar moment of desperate calculation does not arise again. The lesson of that moment in history is not that such weapons can end wars, but that once the logic of escalation begins to dominate wartime decision-making, even the most unthinkable options can enter the realm of strategic calculation. The mere possibility that such debates could arise is reason enough for policymakers everywhere to approach the present conflict with extreme caution. An Unravelling War As the war drags on, both Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu will face mounting pressure to produce decisive results. Wars rarely remain confined to their original scope once expectations of rapid victory begin to fade. Political leaders must demonstrate progress, military planners search for breakthroughs, and public narratives increasingly revolve around the need for a conclusive outcome. In this environment, media speculation about "exit strategies" or "off-ramps" for Washington can unintentionally increase pressure on decision-makers. Even well-intentioned commentary can shape the cli-



mate in which leaders make decisions, potentially nudging them toward harder, more dramatic actions.

The Nuclear Threat Is Very Much There

Neither the United States nor Israel lacks the technological capability associated with advanced nuclear arsenals. The nuclear arsenals of advanced powers today are far more sophisticated than the devices used in 1945. While their existence is intended primarily as deterrence, prolonged wars have historically forced strategic communities to examine every available option. Even the discussion of such possibilities is deeply unsettling, yet ignoring the pressures that produce such debates can be dangerous.

A Leader Challenged?

For that reason, policymakers and societies on all sides must recognise the full range of choices that prolonged wars can place before leaders. For Iran's leadership and its wider strategic community, absorbing this reality may be essential if catastrophic escalation is to be avoided. From Tehran's perspective, the conflict may well be seen as existential. Yet history also shows that wars

framed as existential struggles can generate the most dangerous strategic decisions. The intellectual climate in Washington has also evolved. A number of influential voices in Washington now argue that the United States has become excessively risk-averse and that restoring global credibility requires a more assertive posture. Such arguments reflect a broader shift toward the language of renewed deterrence and strategic competition. Yet this very logic can make it politically harder for leaders to conclude conflicts without visible demonstrations of strength.

The 1945 Atomic Bombing

The outcome of this conflict will also be watched closely by other major powers. In 1945, the atomic decision was shaped not only by the desire to end a brutal war but also by the strategic message it sent to rival states observing the emergence of a new geopolitical era. Today, other significant powers will similarly draw lessons from how the United States manages both the conduct and the conclusion of this conflict. This is why cool judgment is essential at this stage of the war. Whether the origi-

nal decision to go to war was wise or ill-advised is now largely beside the point. Once a conflict has begun, the overriding priority must be to prevent escalation into something far more dangerous.

India's Unique Position

In such moments, the international system can benefit from the quiet diplomacy of actors that retain a degree of strategic autonomy. Among emerging nations, India stands out as a major emerging power in this regard. Despite its energy dependence on the Gulf and deep economic engagement with the United States, India has consistently demonstrated a capacity to maintain independent channels of communication across geopolitical divides.

This unique positioning may allow New Delhi to explore, discreetly and without public fanfare, avenues for de-escalation with Washington, Tel Aviv and Tehran alike. At moments of heightened tension in international politics, the world sometimes requires what might be called an "adult in the room": a state capable of engaging all sides while remaining aligned exclusively with none.

ISRAEL SAYS IRAN'S SECURITY CHIEF ALI LARIJANI HAS BEEN KILLED IN STRIKE

AGENCY
Tehran: Ali Larijani's death, if confirmed, is undoubtedly a massive body blow to the regime in Tehran. I first came across him in Geneva in the 1980s when he was involved in various negotiations taking place at the UN. Back then, he was a diplomat who you could see was intelligent and sought different angles on matters of discussion. In recent decades he has become a key figure inside the regime of the Islamic Republic, particularly since the killing of the former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. But he was also seen as a pragmatic figure. While he said some tough, war-like things in recent weeks, over the years he's been seen as a man of flexibility, a man you can do business with. Israel's foreign minister, Gideon Saar, says "Iranians are safer" without top security official Ali Larijani and Basij commander Gholamreza Soleimani, after the Israeli military says it killed both of them in strikes. Speaking in

Jerusalem, Saar says Israel is weakening Iran's "repression mechanism". He adds that the regime can only be toppled by the Iranian people but that cannot be done without external help. In wide-ranging remarks, Saar also says Iran's effective blocking of the Strait of Hormuz is a "global problem" following US President Donald Trump's call for other countries to help stabilise the shipping channel. Israel says it has killed Iran's security chief Ali Larijani in a strike, and will "continue hunting down" the leaders of the country. As the graphic below shows, many of the country's pre-war senior figures have been killed. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's death was announced on 28 February, following the first day of US-Israeli strikes on Iran. Also killed in the first wave of strikes were security adviser Ali Shamkhani, defence minister Amir Nasirzadeh, Revolutionary Guards commander General Mohammad Pakpour, and armed forces chief of staff



Abdollah Mousavi. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) says Ali Larijani was "one of the most veteran and senior figures within the Iranian regime leadership" after announcing the Iranian security chief had been killed in a strike. After Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed, the IDF says, Larijani "functioned as the leader of the Iranian regime" and led its combat against Israel and neighbouring countries. The Israeli military also links

Larijani with a crackdown on anti-establishment protesters in Iran, suggesting he "advanced violent enforcement measures and repression operations". Iran is yet to confirm Larijani's death, and state media has published a photo of a handwritten message said to have been issued by him, which was also posted on his social media accounts. A statement from Ali Larijani, posted by Iranian media outlets earlier this morning, seems to be

nothing more than a message written to mark the funeral of Iranian sailors killed almost two weeks ago. In an earlier statement, issued hours before Israel claimed to have killed him, Larijani bemoaned the lack of support for Iran from fellow Muslim countries. "No Islamic government stood alongside the people of Iran," he complained, "except in rare cases and limited to political positions." The language of the message, addressed to Muslims worldwide, suggested that the top security official believed Iran's cause might resonate on the streets of Muslim nations, even if their governments had largely turned their backs. "The United States and Israel on one side and Muslim Iran and the forces of resistance on the other," he wrote. "Which side of this battle do you stand on?" Larijani reserved special scorn for Gulf countries which have hosted American forces or conducted rapprochements with Israel. "Is Iran expected to sit idly by

while American bases in your countries are used to attack it?" he asked. Iran's Ministry of Intelligence says in a statement that it has confiscated "hundreds of Starlink devices sent by the enemy" - referring to the US and Israel, Iranian news outlets are reporting. The statement says that according to law, acquiring and using Starlink is a "crime" and during the war anyone doing so will be dealt with at the "highest penalty". Using Starlink in Iran carries a punishment of up to two years in prison. It is still very difficult to contact those inside Iran during the internet outage that has been in place since the start of the war, but tech-savvy residents have been using SpaceX's Starlink devices and sharing their connections with others. A member of the United Nations Iran fact-finding mission says investigators are seeking access to the site of a deadly strike on a school carried out at the beginning of the conflict.

SUSPECTED SUICIDE ATTACKS KILL AT LEAST 23 IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA



AGENCY
Nigeria: At least 23 people have been killed and 108 injured by a series of suspected suicide bombings in Maiduguri, marking one of the worst recent attacks on the capital of Borno state. A post office, a popular weekly market and the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital were hit within minutes of each other at around 19:30 local time (18:30 GMT) on Monday, police in the north-eastern state say. The sites, which are among the city's busiest locations, had drawn large crowds after the day's Ramadan fast was broken. Nigeria's military has

blamed the attack on militants from the notorious Boko Haram group. Boko Haram originated in Maiduguri and the city became the epicentre of the Islamist group's insurgency, which began in 2009. However, the state capital had been enjoying a relatively stable period after intensified military operations had pushed armed groups into remote border areas. "Preliminary investigation reveals that the incidents were carried out by suspected suicide bombers," Borno police said in a statement, adding that an investigation was under way to establish the identity of the attackers.

Trump says presidents 'should not have learning disabilities' as he mocks Newsom's dyslexia



AGENCY
White House: Donald Trump has said he believes people with learning disabilities should not be president, as he renewed his taunts at California Governor Gavin Newsom over his dyslexia. President Trump said Newsom, a potential Democratic White House contender, was "dumb". He also made fun last week of the California governor's difficulty with reading and spelling, prompting Newsom to call him "a brain-dead moron". The National Center for Learning Disabilities told the BBC it was "disturbed by and strongly condemns" the Republican president's remarks. Dyslexia, a learning condition that disrupts how the brain processes written language, affects as many as one in five Americans. "With a low IQ person, you know, because Gavin Newsom has admitted that he is a, that he has learning disabilities," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Monday. "Newsom" is Trump's nickname for the governor. "Honestly, I'm all

for people with learning disabilities, but not for my president. I don't want, I think a president should not have learning disabilities, OK And I know it's highly controversial to say such a horrible thing." He added: "The President of the United States, Gavin Newsom, admitted that he has learning disabilities, dyslexia. Everything about him is dumb." Newsom made fun of Trump for appearing to accidentally refer to the governor as president. "NO THANK YOU, WE BELIEVE IN FREE ELECTIONS!" he posted on X. During an on-stage conversation last month with the mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, Newsom discussed his dyslexia. "I'm like you," the governor told the audience as he cited his poor exam results and difficulty reading. "You've never seen me read a speech, because I cannot read a speech," he added. His remarks to a predominantly black audience sparked a chorus of conservative claims that he was talking down to African-American voters.

Columbia University protester released after one year in immigration custody



AGENCY
Gaza: A Palestinian woman who was detained during Gaza war protests at Columbia University has been released after a year in immigration detention in Texas, her lawyers say. Leqaa Kordia, 33, was among more than 100 demonstrators arrested out-

side the New York City college's campus in April 2024, but she was released. She was arrested again in March 2025 during a routine immigration check-in. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said she had overstayed her student visa, which was terminated in 2022 "for lack of attendance".

TRUMP SEEKS TO DELAY MEETING WITH XI IN CHINA

AGENCY
Beijing: US President Donald Trump said on Monday that he is planning to delay a high stakes visit to China later in March by about a month because of the Iran war. "We've requested that we delay it a month or so," he told reporters at the White House, adding that it was important that he remained available to oversee the war. The meeting between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping is currently set to take place between 31 March to 2 April, following their last face to face talks in October last year. Chinese foreign affairs spokesman Lin Jian said on Tuesday that Beijing and Washington are in talks over "the timing and related



matters of President Trump's visit to China". China also rejected any connection between the delayed meeting and issues around the Strait of Hormuz - a critical waterway for global energy shipments from the Gulf. "We have noted that the US side has publicly clarified these false reports by the media, stating that

the relevant reports are completely wrong, and emphasised that the visit has nothing to do with the issue of the open navigation of the Strait of Hormuz," Jian said. On Sunday, Trump told the Financial Times he might postpone the meeting if China did not help unblock the Strait of Hormuz. But on Monday, he

said he had proposed the delay solely to make sure he was around to manage the war. "I'm looking forward to being with him," he said, referring to Xi. "We have a very good relationship." "There's no tricks to it either," Trump added. "It's very simple. We've got a war going on. I think it's important that I be here." The Iran war has eclipsed most of Trump's other foreign policy priorities, faced with an intensifying conflict and disruptions to the global oil supply, which has threatened to raise prices in the US. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Monday that the meeting's delay would not be due to Washington's request that Beijing help in the Gulf, or any trade disagreements.

FROM TORNADOES TO BLIZZARDS, SEVERE WEATHER BATTERS PARTS OF THE US

AGENCY
Texas: Tornadoes, thunderstorms and blizzard conditions are forecast to pummel parts of the eastern US. More than 34 million people were under tornado watches from Florida to New Jersey. Nearly 3ft (0.9m) of snow has fallen in Minnesota, Wisconsin and northern Michigan since the storm began this weekend, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). The bulk of the storm is expected to churn off the east coast into the Atlantic by Tuesday, with abnormally cold weather to follow in its wake. Over 11 million people are under blizzard warnings, and another four million are



under winter storm warnings, according to the BBC's US partner CBS. By Monday evening, nearly 4,600 flights had been cancelled and almost 11,300 delayed, according to flightaware.com. The bulk of the flight cancellations and delays were at Chicago's

O'Hare International airport and LaGuardia in New York. More than 406,000 customers were without power, a third of them in Michigan, followed by Virginia and North Carolina. In Minnesota, over 25in (63.5cm) of snow fell in parts of the state by Monday morning. More snow and

strong winds were forecast. "Whiteout conditions are expected and will make travel treacherous and potentially life-threatening," the NWS said. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has authorised the state's National Guard to support emergency operations, CBS said. Severe thunderstorms were expected in parts of North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia, where NWS has predicted hail and "a tornado or two possible". Tornado warnings were issued between 10:00 and 11:00 local time in parts of northern Virginia. A similar warning was issued for parts of the Florida panhandle.

Utah bereavement author found guilty of fatally poisoning her husband



AGENCY
Utah: A Utah mother who published a children's book about grief after the sudden death of her husband has been found guilty of his murder. A jury found that Kouri Richins killed her husband in March 2022 by poisoning him with a fentanyl-laced drink. The jury deliberated the case for about three hours before reaching its verdict on Monday. During the trial, the court heard how Richins, 35, had racked up millions of dollars in debt, had taken out life insurance policies on her husband, and was having an extramarital affair. Prosecutors called more than 40 witnesses, including the woman who said she sold the drugs used to kill Eric Richins. Her defence team chose to not call any witnesses, and rested their case without having her take the stand to testify in her own defence. Richins was also found guilty of fraudulently claiming insurance benefits after her husband's death at their home outside the ski resort

town of Park City. Prosecutors said during the trial that she falsely believed his estate worth more than \$4m after he died. They also said she was planning a future with another man, whom she had been having an affair with. Officials said Richins was found to have poisoned her husband's sandwich in an earlier incident, nearly killing him, before later increasing the dosage until he died. She was also found guilty of attempted murder over this incident. Richins pleaded not guilty to all the charges. The most serious, aggravated murder, carries a sentence of 25 years to life in prison. "She wanted to leave Eric Richins but did not want to leave his money," said Summit County prosecutor Brad Bloodworth. Richins was arrested in March, 2023 - two months after she published the picture book Are You With Me?, which she said was designed to help people - including her three children - cope with the death of a loved one.



Pakistan air strike kills at least 100 at Kabul drug rehab centre

Sri Lanka declares Wednesdays off as Asian countries try to conserve fuel

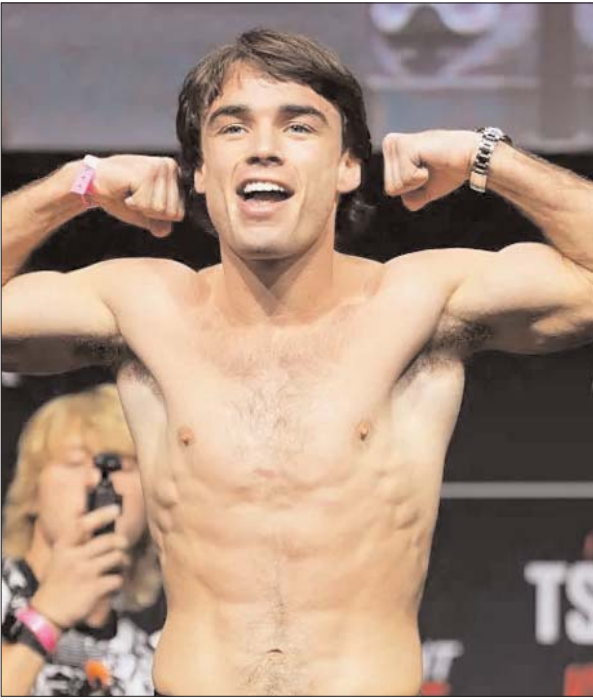


AGENCY
Dhaka: Sri Lanka has declared every Wednesday a holiday for public institutions to conserve fuel as the island nation grapples with possible shortages in the wake of the US and Israel's war with Iran. "We must prepare for the worst, but hope for the best," President Anura Kumara Disanayake said at an emergency meeting with senior officials on

Monday. This is the latest in a series of belt-tightening measures undertaken by Asian countries since the war choked off the Strait of Hormuz, which used to carry millions of barrels of oil from the Gulf into the region. Nearly 90% of all the oil and gas flowing through the strait last year was bound for Asia, which is the world's largest oil-importing region.

Following Pimblett's footsteps - but Riley is 'different animal'

A team-mate of Paddy Pimblett, the 26-year-old signed with the promotion after winning the first 11 fights of his career, eight by knockout. Like some of the UFC's biggest stars before him - such as Pimblett, Conor McGregor and Tom Aspinall - Riley compiled his unbeaten record in Cage Warriors. Cage Warriors president Graham Boylan has overseen the development of each one of those stars, and in Riley he saw something different. Speaking to BBC Sport last year, Boylan described Riley as a "different animal" and "already a polished athlete", whereas "Paddy and Conor were still on their way up" while in Cage Warriors. It came as little surprise then, when faced with adversity after being out-grappled in the first round of his UFC debut against Bogdan Grad in November, Riley responded with a thundering left hook



to claim victory. Many fighters have crumbled in similar situations, joining the UFC with big reputations and finding the step up in compe-

tition too big - but not Riley. "I went through a lot of adversity in Cage Warriors. I feel like with some fighters it takes maybe 10 to 15 fights to

get a bit of adversity. I had it three fights in, where I'd been fighting the best," Riley tells BBC Sport. "So when that moment came against Grad it was nothing new, I've felt this before, it was easy work." On Saturday at UFC London, Riley faces American Michael Aswell Jr in a featherweight bout at O2 Arena. It is just Riley's second fight in the UFC but the contest serves as the co-main event, illustrating the star power the UFC believes the Liverpooldian can generate. For many fighters this could bring added pressure, but Riley is already acclimatising to the attention of being a star. Before his interview with BBC Sport, he jokes around with team-mates at his gym in Liverpool, throwing darts at a board he got a week prior during a social media skit at the PDC World Darts Championship. During his time in Cage Warriors, he was the face of the promo-

tion, headlining multiple shows for which fans would buy tickets mainly to watch him. He is already flourishing in the public eye, so performing at the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena does not bring added pressure. "I said to my coaches and people close to me, it feels no different to Cage Warriors in a sense," he says. "It could be in a park, on a street, in a little social club, in an arena with 20,000 people. Once the cage is shut, it doesn't feel any different." On Saturday at UFC London, Riley faces American Michael Aswell Jr in a featherweight bout at O2 Arena. It is just Riley's second fight in the UFC but the contest serves as the co-main event, illustrating the star power the UFC believes the Liverpooldian can generate. For many fighters this could bring added pressure, but Riley is already acclimatising to the attention of being a star.

Sania Mirza Returns Home For Eid After Tense Days In Dubai

Former India tennis star Sania Mirza has returned to Hyderabad for Eid after spending tense days in Dubai, where she lives with her son, amid security concerns and uncertainty in the region. Mirza said she decided to travel to India after hearing fighter jets overhead and learning that debris from an intercepted projectile had fallen close to her home in Al Barsha. "We heard fighter jets above our house and saw interceptions," Mirza said. "There was debris that fell around 400-500 metres from where we live." While she said she never felt directly unsafe, the uncertainty - especially with a young child at home - prompted the decision to leave temporarily. "You don't want your child going through that. He was asking questions," she said. "It didn't feel unsafe, but it did feel uncertain and unsettling." Mirza lives in Dubai for much of the year, where her seven-



year-old son Izhaan goes to school. She said the family will decide when to return depending on how the situation develops. "School is supposed to start next week, but we'll monitor the situation," she said. "I'm lucky that I can come back to Hyderabad and still have a home here with family."

Eid homecoming Mirza said returning to Hyderabad during Ramzan is along-standing tradition. "I come every Eid," she said. "We try to spend the last week of Ramzan in Hyderabad because Ramzan here has to be experienced. It's always nice to be around family."

Australian Players Warned Not To Travel To This Pakistan City For PSL After Air-Strike On Afghanistan: Report

With 400 people killed in Kabul, Afghanistan, after airstrikes from Pakistan, the future of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) is in doubt. The problems for the PSL have increased after travel disruptions caused by the Iran-Israel-US war. The question now is whether the PSL will see its entire foreign contingent play in the league. Several Australian players like Steve Smith, David Warner, Marnus Labuschagne and Glenn Maxwell are set to play the 2026 PSL. The league will start on March 26, two days before the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) begins. Australian coaches like Tim Paine and Jason Gillespie are also part of the league. Now, according



to a report by Australian publication CODE Sports, as quoted by Times Now, the Australian government has granted permission for the players to travel to Pakistan, but they have been advised to stay away from Peshawar. The city is set to host a PSL match, but the Australian government has labelled it

a "do not travel" zone due to the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This puts a question mark on the fixture between Peshawar Zalmi and Rawalpindiz at the Imran Khan Cricket Stadium on March 28. Both teams have Australian players. Aaron Hardie is with Zalmi, while Jake Fraser-McGurk

was picked by Pindiz. The report added that Australian players have been assured evacuation by private flights if needed. Afghanistan players withdrew their names from the first-ever players' auction held ahead of the 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL). A franchise owner confirmed initially that players like Mujeeb Ur Rehman, Seddiqullah Atal, Mohammad Nabi, Waqar Salamkheil and Fazal Haq Farooqi had registered for the auction held in Lahore on Wednesday. But they withdrew their names following backlash over the direct signing of Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz by Peshawar Zalmi.

Rohit Sharma Engages In Hilarious Banter With Mumbai Indians Star After Hitting Him For A Six: "Catch It"

Indian cricket team star batter Rohit Sharma engaged in hilarious banter with his Mumbai Indians teammate Shardul Thakur after hitting him for a six during practice. During the net practice ahead of IPL 2026, Shardul delivered a length delivery on the middle stump and Rohit dispatched it for a massive six over long-on. Following the shot, the star batter hilariously mocked the bowler by saying - "Catch it... in the stands". Mumbai Indians will begin their campaign on March 29 with a match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. Rohit Sharma has won six IPL titles, including one with Deccan Chargers and five



as captain of the Mumbai-based franchise, making him the joint most successful captain in the tournament's history. The veteran opener joined Mumbai in 2011 and became captain in 2013. Sharma then took MI to their maiden IPL title in his first season as captain and went on to lead MI for 11 years before he

of the Final as Mumbai beat Chennai Super Kings to win their second IPL title. MI went on to win the IPL in 2017, 2019 and 2020 under Rohit's leadership. On Monday, MI officially commenced pre-season training, marking the first session of the upcoming 2026 campaign. Head coach Mahela Jayawardene led the session on the ground, joined by bowling coaches Paras Mhambrey and Lasith Malinga, fielding coach Carl Hopkinson, and the full strength and conditioning and physiotherapy support teams, according to a release. Mahela Jayawardene, Head Coach, Mumbai Indians, said, "There's always something special about the first day of pre-season."

Indorama Ventures Open Golf Championship Tees Off With Record Prize Purse

The greens of Kalhaar Blues & Greens Golf Club in Ahmedabad came alive as the second edition of the Indorama Ventures Open Golf Championship teed off with a record prize purse of 300,000 US dollars, making it the highest prize money event ever hosted in Gujarat under the Professional Golf Tour of India. Jointly staged by Indorama Ventures and DP WORLD PGTI, the four-day tournament featured 143 players competing over four rounds on the challenging par-72 course, known for its 14 water hazards that demand precision and strategy. The field included some of India's top professionals such as Yuvraj Sandhu, Veer Ahlawat, Manu Gandas,



and Shaurya Bhattacharya, alongside a smaller but competitive international contingent. The global lineup, however, was impacted by the ongoing Iran-Israel war, which disrupted travel plans for many international golfers. Originally, more than 70 foreign players were expected, but only 12 international professionals managed to reach Ahmedabad.

Among them were players like Matthias Schwab, Clement Sordet, and Jhared Hack, adding global competition to the tournament. "It will be a great event. The prize money has increased and although the tournament has been affected by the ongoing tensions, it will still be a fantastic competition. India has a great future in golf."

Belgium Cricket League: Zaheer Khan Joins Antwerp Anchors As Co-Owner

Antwerp Anchors, a franchise in the EUT20 Belgium Cricket League, on Monday announced that former India fast bowling legend and World Cup winner Zaheer Khan has joined the club as a Co-Owner. One of the most celebrated left-arm pace bowlers of his generation, Zaheer brings to the Antwerp Anchors not only his iconic cricketing stature but a deep passion for growing the game in new markets - a mission central to the EUT20 league's founding vision. The EUT20 Belgium Cricket League will be played from June 4 to 14 in Brussels, marking a historic milestone for cricket in continental Europe. The tournament brings togeth-



er some of the most recognisable names in global T20 cricket, playing for franchise teams that represent Belgium's rich multicultural landscape. Zaheer Khan will be formally introduced as Co-Owner and Partner of the Antwerp Anchors in all official league communications, marketing materials,

and media engagements. His involvement extends beyond ceremonial - as a stakeholder, he will play an active role in shaping the franchise's cricketing identity and long-term direction. "Europe is a big canvas for cricket, and I genuinely believe we are only at the beginning of what is possible here."

"It's A Starting Point": Kimi Antonelli Sets Sights On More F1 Glory After Chinese GP Triumph



Kimi Antonelli said Monday that he is eyeing further Formula 1 success after the teenage Italian announced himself on the world stage with victory in the Chinese Grand Prix. The 19-year-old won his maiden GP from pole position on Sunday and was greeted by media and enthusiastic fans as he touched down in his native Bologna. "I'm so happy for the win and to have brought the Italian flag back onto the highest step of the podium," Antonelli told reporters. "It's a starting point and I hope I can keep going because we're on the right track. It won't be easy." Antonelli, who took over Lewis Hamilton's old seat at Mercedes at the start of the 2025 season, is the first Italian to win an F1 GP since Giancarlo Fisichella 20 years ago. He finished in front of Mercedes teammate George Russell and Ferrari's Hamilton after becoming the youngest

pole sitter in F1 history. And Antonelli even hinted that he was aiming to become the first Italian to win the drivers' championship since Alberto Ascari in 1953. "I've removed a bit of weight from my shoulders, I'm more relaxed. It's the kind of result which gives you strength and more awareness of what you can do," he said. "There's another, bigger step, which is the most difficult. I'm sure that if I do everything well we can get there." Antonelli's win was huge news in Italy and led to tennis superstar Jannik Sinner dedicating his Indian Wells triumph to F1's rising star. "I was really surprised by Sinner's homage, I sent him a message because I really appreciated it, it was really nice of him," he said. Antonelli sits four points behind Russell in the world championship standings with the Japanese GP coming up on March 29.

RADUCANU WITHDRAWS FROM MIAMI OPEN BECAUSE OF ILLNESS

Emma Raducanu has withdrawn from this week's Miami Open as she continues her recovery from a recent illness. The British number one became unwell while playing in the Middle East last month, and is still suffering with post-viral symptoms. She had a first-round bye for the event at Miami Gardens in Florida from 17 to 29 March. Raducanu decided to play last week's event in Indian Wells, and reached the third round before losing in just 52 minutes to the world number six Amanda Anisimova. The 23-year-old has 215 ranking points to

defend from reaching the quarter-finals in Miami last year, but has decided it would be best to take a break to recover fully. Raducanu beat both Anisimova and the then top 10 player Emma Navarro before losing to Jessica Pegula in three sets in last year's quarter-finals. Raducanu had already decided not to play in Great Britain's Billie Jean King Cup tie in Melbourne next month, but is currently scheduled to return to the tour in three weeks' time. She has entered the WTA event in Linz, which would be her first clay-court tournament of the season.

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Prominent Director V.V. Vinayak released the song ‘Makkulu Makkulu College’ from the film ‘Pithapuram lo’



Directed by the renowned filmmaker Mahesh Chandra, the movie *Pithapuramlo* features a lead cast comprising Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Prudhviraaj, Kedar Shankar, Mani Chandana, Annapurnamma, Sunny Akhil, Virat, Sai Praneeth, Srilu, Prathyusha, and Rehana. The film bears the subtitle ‘Ala Modalaindi’ (Thus It Began). Produced under the banner of Mahesh Chandra Cinema Team, the movie was bankrolled by Dundigalla Balakrishna, Akula Suresh Patel, and F.M. Murali (Godavari Kittayya). With music direction by G.C. Krishn, the film’s song—titled ‘Makkulu Makkulu College-u, Yavvana Markata Garage-u’—was officially unveiled by the celebrated director V.V. Vinayak. The lyrics for this song were penned by Sriram Tapasvi. Speaking on the occasion,

Vinayak remarked, "I previously worked as a co-director under Mr. Chandra Mahesh for the film *Cheppalani Undi*. Subsequently, I made my debut as a director with the movie *Aadi*. Mr. Chandra Mahesh is a person I hold in very high regard. He was, in fact, one of the favorite directors of the legendary producer D. Ramanaidu. With *Pithapuramlo*, he has crafted a youthful entertainer that weaves together three distinct love stories. I wholeheartedly wish for this film to become a massive hit. Furthermore, I hope that the producers reap excellent profits from this venture." Director Chandra Mahesh stated, "We are releasing the trailer for this film later this week." "We will release the film in April. This will stand out as one of the finest films of my career," he stated.

RAKASA" TELUGU STATES RIGHTS BAGGED BY SRI LAKSHMI NARASIMHA MOVIE MAKERS IN A BIG-TICKET DEAL

The upcoming fantasy-come-dy entertainer Rakasa has registered a major business milestone ahead of its theatrical release. The Telugu States theatrical rights of the film have been bagged by Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Movie Makers in a big-ticket deal, underlining the strong trade confidence the project has generated in the lead-up to its release. The development marks a significant step in the film’s release journey, signalling that the industry sees considerable potential in the film’s theatrical prospects. The deal further strengthens the film’s expanding distribution network as the makers prepare for a wide global rollout. While Sri Lakshmi

Narasimha Movie Makers will be releasing the film across the Telugu States, RaaKaaSaa is simultaneously gearing up for a large-scale overseas launch. International distribution will be handled by Atharvana Bhadrakali Pictures, which is planning a release across more than 350 international screens, spanning key territories including the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Canada, and Australia. Distribution responsibilities for the crucial North America and United Kingdom markets will be handled by Prathyangira Cinemas, ensuring the film reaches audiences across major overseas hubs.

Overseas premieres are scheduled for April 2, 2026, a day ahead of the film’s world-wide theatrical release. Beyond theatrical distribution, the film has also secured notable non-theatrical partnerships that further reinforce its market positioning. The digital streaming rights have been acquired by Netflix, while the audio rights have been bagged by Saregama Music, one of India’s most reputed music labels. These alliances collectively add to the film’s commercial ecosystem and underline the growing anticipation surrounding the project. The promotional campaign for Rakasa has also been generating strong digital traction. The film’s

title glimpse has crossed 1.9 million views, while the teaser has moved past 2.8 million views, drawing considerable engagement online. The first single “Rapappa” quickly struck a chord with listeners, crossing 1.1 million views on YouTube. The recently released second single “Padhe Padhe”, sung by Sindhuja Srinivasan, composed by Anudeep Dev, and written by lyricist Kittu Vissapragada, has also crossed the 1 million view mark. With both songs resonating strongly with listeners and continuing to gather views across platforms, the soundtrack of Rakasa is steadily emerging as a chart-buster album, reflecting the growing audience connec-



Deepthi Srirangam Crowned Miss Infinity of India 2026 at a Grand Finale Celebrating Beauty, Talent, and National Unity

Hyderabad, March, 2026: The much-anticipated Miss Infinity of India 2026 Grand Finale was successfully hosted in Hyderabad, marking the culmination of an inspiring four-month journey that began with nationwide auditions and witnessed participation from aspiring contestants across the country. The prestigious pageant received an overwhelming response with over 500-600 entries from across India. Following multiple rounds of auditions and screenings, the competition shortlisted the most promising participants, leading to the selection of exceptional finalists representing 30 states ,

each embodying the culture, diversity, and spirit of their region. The grand finale featured multiple competitive rounds where contestants showcased their confidence, intelligence, talent, personality, and elegance, making it a spectacular display of beauty with purpose. After an intense and inspiring competition, Deepthi Srirangam from Andhra Pradesh was crowned Miss Infinity of India 2026 , marking a remarkable milestone in her journey. Her victory stands as a testament to seven years of hard work, perseverance, and unwavering dedication , inspiring aspiring young women across the

country. The event was graced by renowned music composer Koti , who attended as the Chief Guest and extended his encouragement and support to the participants. The competition was evaluated by an esteemed jury panel comprising: Actress Mounika Kalapala Actress Naksha Saran Dr. Akshaya (Cosmetologist) J. Pranoo Jawahar (Entrepreneur & Movie Producer) The visual grandeur and stage presentation of the evening were elevated under the creative direction of Show Choreographer Maneendra Kumar, whose expertise added elegance and

professionalism to the event. More than just a beauty pageant, Miss Infinity of India 2026 served as a powerful platform promoting women’s empowerment, confidence, cultural diversity, and national unity. With participants from diverse backgrounds, the event beautifully reflected the essence of India—where diversity becomes strength. The organizing team expressed immense pride in successfully hosting the national-level event and reaffirmed their commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for young women to pursue their dreams with confidence and determination.

Universal Music India forms exclusive partnership with Anirudh Ravichander’s new label Albuquerque Records

Universal Music India, a division of Universal Music Group, the world leader in music based entertainment, today announces an exclusive partnership with Albuquerque Records – the independent record label recently launched by singer-composer Anirudh Ravichander. The partnership will see Universal Music India and Albuquerque Records release future pop and hip hop music by Anirudh Ravichander, and future artists signed to the label. The first release under the label is planned to release early April featuring Anirudh. The global part-

nership will see Universal Music India work closely with Albuquerque Records to expand the influence of Anirudh’s artistry. In time the label will become home to emerging pop and hip-hop artists from the region. Anirudh’s track record over the last 15 years has been enviable and unparalleled. Debuting as a composer in 2012 with his global viral hit ‘Why This Kolaveri Di’, he has amassed over 13 billion audio streams across his over 770 + tracks, making him the No.1 South Indian artist on Spotify in terms of total streams. Additionally, he is one of the most coveted composers in the Tamil Original Soundtrack (OST)



space, with many global chart topping successes, including Hukum, Vaathi Coming, Arabic Kuthu, Monica ,A23 Theme, Aaja Raja, Aya Sher and more.

Universal Music India has maintained a steady focus on the South Indian region, working closely with the rich artistry and culture which spans the four key

south language markets (Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu). The arrangement with Anirudh, one of the region’s most accomplished artists, will help further the presence of groundbreaking music from this region on the global stage. Additionally, it further expands Universal Music India’s presence in pop and hip-hop, genres associated with some of the most influential names in the South Indian market. Commenting on the partnership *Devraj Sanyal, Chairman & CEO, Universal Music India: SVP Strategy, AMEA, said:* ‘Anirudh represents the future of Indian music bold,

original, and with enormous potential. At Universal Music India, identifying transformative talent is our superpower, and this partnership reflects that belief. We’re proud to stand behind Anirudh as he embarks on his next chapter, and helps take more Indian music to the world.’ Anirudh Ravichander commented: “Albuquerque Records was built to be an artist-backed, homegrown label focused on nurturing independent talent and taking their sound to the global stage. Universal Music India’s leadership in pop and hip-hop made them the natural partner.

'VANAJEEVI RAMAIAH' BIOPIC INTO MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

The life story of Padma Shri awardee, Vanajeevi Daripalli Ramaiah, popularly known as 'Koti Plante Ramaiah', has come to the silver screen. The biopic 'Vanajeevi Ramaiah' based on the life of this great man who gave an environmental message to the society has been selected in the best short films category in the prestigious Gaddar Awards presented by the Telangana government. Produced by Nidigonda Naresh Kumar Prajapati, Bhusham Rabindranath and Lingampally Chandrasekhar, the film is directed by Nandi awardee Vemuganti and has music by Ballepalli Mohan. Recently ChitraUnit organized a special preview screening at Prasad Lab in Hyderabad. Telangana State Cultural Sarathi Chairperson Vennela, TJS Chief Professor



Kodandaram, political analysts V. Prakash, Tanneru Babu Rao, Naga Mahesh, film celebrities Tanikella Bharani, Tammareddy Bharadwaja and others were present and congratulated the film. The film team revealed that they have decided to release the film in Indian

languages as well. Director Vemuganti said, "We have made this film with the intention of serving the nature of Ramaiah who planted crores of plants to become an inspiration for the future generations. Soon we will bring this biopic in Indian languages as well." Music director

Ballepalli Mohan also expressed the same sentiment and said that the film is being dedicated as a tribute to nature lover Ramaiah. Daripalli Ramaiah of Reddypally village has earned special recognition for himself in environmental protection.

FARHANNA BHATT, AWEZ DARBAR’S DANCE AT IFTAR SPARKS OUTRAGE



■ Priya Prakash Varrier, who has been waiting for a strong comeback for the last couple of years, is now gearing up for her upcoming Malayalam OTT web series Cousins and Kalyanams, which will stream on JioHotstar. While fans are curious about her next project, Priya is also keeping them engaged on social media with beautiful travel pictures from Hong Kong.

