

GOLD, SILVER PRICES DROP SHARPLY OVER RISING GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS

New Delhi, March 23 : Gold and silver prices plummeted further on Monday, over profit-taking, a stronger US dollar and rising real yields.MCX gold April futures lost 6.91 per cent to Rs 1,34,506 per 10 grams around 3.30 pm on an intraday basis. Meanwhile, MCX silver May futures declined 8.84 per cent to Rs 2,06,716 per kg.



FRANCE'S FORMER SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER LIONEL JOSPIN DIES AT 88



WORLD | NEWS

DOMINANT HODGKINSON WINS FIRST WORLD INDOOR TITLE



SPORTS | NEWS

OIL PRICES DOWN OVER 13 PC

GIFT NIFTY RISES AS TRUMP PAUSES STRIKES ON IRAN POWER INFRA

New Delhi, March 23 : Global oil prices plunged sharply on Monday, with Brent crude falling over 13 per cent, after US President Donald Trump announced a temporary halt on military strikes against Iran and said talks between the two countries were "productive".

Brent crude futures dropped by around \$17, or nearly 15 per cent, to touch a session low of \$96 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude fell about \$13, or 13.5 per cent, to \$85.28. The sharp fall came as fears of supply disruption eased following signs of de-escalation in the ongoing conflict.

US President Donald Trump said he has instructed the Department of Defense to postpone planned airstrikes on Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure for five days.

He said the decision was taken after "very good and productive conversations" between the United States and Iran over the past two days. Gift Nifty futures also followed suit and surged to 23,533.50 as against the last close of 22,465, recording a 1,068.5-point or 4.75 per cent upside. Around 5.20 pm, the Gift Nifty futures were 853.50 or 3.80 per cent higher at 23,318.50. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the pause in military action depends on the progress of ongoing discussions aimed at resolving hostilities in the Middle East.

TWO PILOTS KILLED AS PLANE COLLIDES WITH FIRE TRUCK AT NEW YORK AIRPORT

New York (TSIT) : The pilot and the co-pilot were killed as an Air Canada Express plane flying from Montreal collided with a ground vehicle upon landing at New York's LaGuardia Airport, Xinhua reported, citing local media. Operations at New York's LaGuardia Airport were suspended after the collision.

Air Canada Express CRJ-900 aircraft collided with a ground vehicle on Runway 4, triggering an emergency response and a complete ground stop. The aircraft, operated by Air



Canada Express and arriving from Montreal, reportedly struck a fire truck during landing, according to initial accounts and flight-tracking data.The Federal Aviation Administration confirmed that the airport has been closed and that a ground stop order has been implemented following the collision between the aircraft and the emergency vehicle.Audio recordings circulating online, along with preliminary visual reconstructions, suggest that air traffic control had repeatedly instructed both the flight crew and the ground vehicle to halt moments before the impact occurred. Unconfirmed reports, citing the New York Fire Department, indicate that at least five firefighters have been seriously injured, while more than 100 passengers on board the aircraft are also reported to have sustained injuries.

CM Revanth promises rehabilitation of all displaced

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday assured that all families to be displaced by the Musi Riverfront development project will be provided rehabilitation. Speaking in the Legislative Council on Monday, the Chief Minister said that the government formulated a road-map for the development of Musi and assured that all the displaced will be provided rehabilitation.

"We will not render anyone living alongside Musi homeless. We will not cause harm to even a single individual," the CM said while appealing to the political parties to stop false propaganda against the Musi project. The Chief Minister also stated that the government is ready to constitute a Cabinet Sub-Committee led by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, comprising IT and Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu and Transport Minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar, for the Musi Rejuvenation Project.While seeking suggestions from the opposition parties, he said they feel uncomfortable submitting suggestions directly to him, and he was to constitute a Cabinet Sub-Committee.



The CM criticised the previous BRS government for abandoning the Musi project. Revanth Reddy referred to the claim by Sircilla MLA K.T. Rama Rao that he established the Musi River Development Corporation. He asked why the BRS was politicising the project. He revealed that the government has secured permission from the Airports Authority of India to develop an underpass road at Begumpet Airport. The underpass will be constructed beneath the runway, making it the first of its kind in the country, the Chief Minister said, adding that the government wants to ensure smooth traffic flow. He said measures were also taken to clear encroachments from footpaths in order to safeguard human lives and allocated designated spaces for street vendors.

Stand ready, alert and united like we did during Covid pandemic: PM Modi



New Delhi (TSIT): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday urged the nation to stand ready, united and alert as the difficult circumstances created around the world due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia are expected to last a long time. PM Modi highlighted that some elements will try to take undue advantage of the current situation. "When such crisis arise, some elements also try to take undue advantage. Therefore, all agencies responsible for maintaining law and order have been put on alert. Be it coastal security, border security, cyber security, or strategic installations, security of all is being further strengthened. If every government and

every citizen of the country moves together, then we can overcome every challenge," said PM Modi. He also urged the state governments to stay alert and take necessary actions against those who are spreading fake news and also indulging in hoarding and black marketing. "We also need to stay alert. There are people who will try to spread lies by taking advantage of the current situation. We should not let these people succeed. I will also request all state governments to strongly monitor people who get active at such demanding times and indulge in hoarding and black marketing," he said. Highlighting the long-term

trade and economic consequences of the West Asia crisis, Prime Minister Modi admitted that India is facing significant challenges currently.

"The current situation in West Asia is worrisome. In the last few days, EAM Jaishankar and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri briefed the House about the

"The effects of these difficult circumstances around the world due to this ongoing conflict are expected to last a long time. Therefore, we have to stay ready, we have to stay united. We stood united and faced such circumstances during Covid pandemic also. In the same manner, we have to stay ready this time around as well. We have to face every challenge with patience and perseverance. This is our identity, our strength,"

PM MODI

issue. Now, this crisis has escalated beyond three weeks.

Its adverse impact is being felt on the global economy and on people's lives. Therefore, the entire world is urging all parties to find an early solution to this crisis."

No proposal for complete loan waiver for farmers: Sitharaman



NEW DELHI (TSIT): There is no proposal of a complete loan waiver for farmers under consideration with the central government, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Parliament on Monday. However, she said, the government has taken several measures to strengthen the economic conditions of the farmers, including timely and adequate credit through Kisan Credit Card (KCC), wherein crop loan up to Rs 3 lakh is provided at subsidised interest rates under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), with additional incentives for timely repayment. Besides, the government has enhanced collateral free short-term agricultural loans, including loans for allied activities, from Rs 1.60 lakh to Rs 2.00 lakh and ensuring adequate flow of credit from the banking system to the priority sectors of the economy.

CM Naidu Lays Foundation Stone for Rs.1.36 Lac Cr ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel Plant in Anakapalli

Amravathi (TSIT) In a major boost to Andhra Pradesh's industrial growth and India's steel production ambitions, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu today laid the foundation stone for ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India)'s green-field integrated steel plant at Rajayyapeta near Nakkapalli in Anakapalli district. The Rs.1,35,964 crore (approximately Rs.1.36 lakh crore) project, one of the largest industrial investments in the state, aims to produce 17.8 million metric tonnes of steel per annum. It will be developed in two phases, with the first phase targeting around 7.3-8.2 million tonnes capacity and operations commencing by 2028-2029, followed by full capacity expansion.

The ceremony was attended by key dignitaries, including Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy, Minister of State Srinivasa Varma, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, IT and HR Minister Nara Lokesh, AM/NS India Executive Chairman Lakshmi Mittal, and company representatives. Lakshmi Mittal presented



the plant model to the Chief Minister and Union Minister, followed by a visit to the Experience Zone at the site.

CM Chandrababu Naidu hailed the project as not just a steel plant but the foundation for a future "Steel City." He emphasized that the Andhra Pradesh government achieved this milestone in just 20 months through its "Speed of Doing Business" approach, attracting over Rs.20.35 lakh crore in investments since coming to power.

He credited the swift land acquisition, approvals, and cooperation from farmers who sacrificed their land. The project includes a captive port with Rs.11,198 crore invest-

ment (50 million tonnes capacity), dedicated pipelines for raw material supply, and connectivity via a four-lane national highway.

It is expected to generate direct and indirect employment for approximately one lakh people, with priority given to local youth from Anakapalli district. Skill development initiatives, including a Center of Excellence, will be established to train the workforce. Naidu highlighted the broader impact on North Andhra (Uttarandhra), positioning Visakhapatnam as a key economic region for knowledge economy, ports, steel, data centers, and IT.

2 more Indian LPG ships move through Strait of Hormuz amid tensions

New Delhi (TSIT): Two Indian-flagged ships carrying cooking gas are currently passing through the Strait of Hormuz, raising hopes of easing LPG shortages in India amid ongoing tensions in the region. Ship-tracking data shows that the vessels, Jag Vasant and Pine Gas, are moving through the strategically important Strait of Hormuz after receiving approval for safe passage. The ships are carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which is widely used as cooking fuel in India. Both vessels began their journey early Monday, sailing from the UAE coast and moving close to Iran's coastline near Qeshm and Larak islands. Instead of showing a specific destination, the ships signaled Indian ownership through their tracking systems, a precautionary step taken by several vessels navigating the sensitive route. The ships are expected to reach the Gulf of Oman by Monday evening if their journey continues without disruption, according to reports.

CM Revanth hands over 1 Cr insurance cheques to families of deceased power employees



Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU: Chief Minister A.Revath Reddy on Monday handed over accident insurance cheques of 1 crore each to the families of electricity department employees who lost their lives while on duty. Chief Minister presented the cheques to the families of Orsu Suresh and Mukhtar Beg, who died during the course of their duties in the power department. He said the government is committed to supporting families affected by such tragic incidents.

Revath Reddy appreciated Electricity Minister Bhatti Vikramarka for taking the initiative to support the families of deceased employees and ensuring financial security for them. Highlighting welfare measures, the Chief Minister announced that the Rajiv Aarogyasri

health insurance limit has been enhanced from Rs.5 lakh to Rs.10 lakh. He added that all families identified under the CPEC survey will be covered with an insurance benefit of Rs.5 lakh.

CM stated that the government introduced family insurance schemes to ensure that families do not face financial distress in the event of the death of the breadwinner.

He further said that accident insurance coverage exceeding Rs.1 crore has been extended to workers in the electricity and Singareni sectors, reflecting the government's commitment to employee welfare. The cheque distribution programme was conducted during the Assembly session to boost the morale and confidence of employees and their families, he added.

'Didn't say anything new': Priyanka on PM Modi's West Asia address

New Delhi (TSIT): As Prime Minister Narendra Modi briefed the Lok Sabha on the West Asia conflict on Monday, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra stated "nothing new" was revealed and reiterated the party's call for a discussion on the issue.

"He (PM Modi) has briefed the House today, and he has not spoken anything new. We have submitted a notice for a discussion. We think that discussion is important so that all sides can present their stand," Priyanka Gandhi told the reporters outside the Parliament following the Prime Minister's address.



Prime Minister Modi stated that the government is working to ensure uninterrupted oil and gas supplies amid the conflict in West Asia, while emphasising that India has diversified its energy imports, unlike in previous instances, and will continue sourcing from wherever possible. Initially, India imported energy needs such as crude oil.

Trump says US and Iran holding 'productive' talks, halts strikes on Iranian power plants for five days

Washington (TSIT) : US President Donald Trump on Monday said that he has instructed the country's defence department to postpone all airstrikes against Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure for a five-day period. "I am pleased to report that the United States of America, and the country of Iran, have had, over the last two days, very good and productive conversations regarding a complete and total resolution of our hostilities in the Middle East," Trump wrote on Truth Social.



Based on the "tenor and tone" of the discussions, Trump mentioned, he

had instructed the Department of Defense to postpone planned mili-

tary strikes on Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure for a five-day period. This, he added, is subject to the "success" of ongoing "meetings and discussions". On Saturday, Trump had threatened to "hit and obliterate" Iran's power plants within 48 hours if Tehran does not reopen the Strait of Hormuz. He, however, said that Washington was close to meeting its military objectives in the conflict.

In a series of posts, Trump issued a direct

ultimatum over the strategic waterway, saying: "If Iran doesn't FULLY OPEN, WITHOUT THREAT, the Strait of Hormuz, within 48 HOURS... the United States of America will hit and obliterate their various POWER PLANTS, STARTING WITH THE BIGGEST ONE FIRST!"

The warning marked a sharp escalation centred on the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy route, even as Trump signalled that US military operations could soon wind down.

Modi not just a person but an idea, an institution: Union Min Chouhan

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday hailed Narendra Modi as "not just a person but an idea and an institution" as he completed a historic 8,931 days in public office as the prime minister.

Addressing a press conference here, Chouhan noted that Modi has now become the longest-serving head of an elected government in India, surpassing the previous record held by former Sikkim chief minister Pawan Kumar Chamling.

The senior BJP leader, who is also the former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, described Modi as a leader who has worked relentlessly for the country and set an example of dedication in public life.

"Modi ji is not just a person, he is an idea, an institution. While spending the highest number of days in public office is a significant milestone, what is even more remarkable is his tireless commitment to public welfare throughout this tenure," he said at the BJP headquarters here. Nationalism has been the core driving force behind Prime Minister Modi's work, he added. "In every role, the core inspiration I have seen in him is nationalism - nation first, nation above all. He is a true devotee of Mother India and a servant of the people. This is the fundamental motivation behind his work," he said.

Chouhan said Modi emerged as a "symbol of trust" during a period



marked by corruption and public disillusionment.

"I remember the dark days of 2011-13, when scams and corruption were widespread, and people were disillusioned. In that darkness, Narendra Modi emerged as a symbol of faith and trust," he said.

"The belief spread that 'good days are coming'. In 2014, the world watched in surprise as a single party formed the government with a majority under his leadership," the senior BJP leader added.

He further said that Modi's leadership led to a new phase of development in the country, with people believing that "if there is Modi, it is possible".

"What once seemed impossible began to happen - highways, air-

ports, ports, railways, metros, and discussions on bullet trains," he added.

Listing key government initiatives, Chouhan said several schemes boosted investment and welfare. "Programmes like Make in India, Stand-Up India, and Start-Up India created a new environment of investment, hope, and trust," he said.

He also highlighted efforts towards women's empowerment. "For women, education, welfare schemes, and economic empowerment initiatives like the 'Lakshmi Didi' programme were launched," he added.

"The target of 3 crore was achieved ahead of schedule, and now the goal is 6 crore. Women's empowerment has entered a new

phase, including 33 percent reservation in legislatures," the Union minister said.

On national security, Chouhan said the government has taken strong measures against terrorism, including surgical strikes and airstrikes. "We are friendly to the world, but firm. Gentle like a flower for the good, and hard like a thunderbolt for enemies. Naxalism is nearing its end," he added.

Referring to key political decisions, he said issues once seen as slogans have now been realised.

"As a worker, I remember the slogans we used to raise - 'One nation cannot have two flags, two constitutions, two heads'. At that time, it felt like just a slogan. Even 'We will build the Ram temple' seemed distant," he said.

"But today, the country and the world have seen the Ram temple has been built in Ayodhya, and Article 370 has been abrogated. What seemed impossible has been made possible," Chouhan added.

The senior BJP leader further said that Modi connected directly with people, and called him a "social reformer" and an "exceptional listener".

A prosperous, strong, self-reliant, and developed India - this dream will be fulfilled under Modi's leadership, he said, adding that history moves in cycles, and it is after long periods that a leader like Modi is born.

Domestic workers should be recognised as essential service workers: K Laxman

NEW DELHI: BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP K Laxman on Monday urged the government to recognise domestic workers as essential service workers and strengthen their inclusion in welfare programmes.

Raising the issue through a Special Mention in the Upper House, Laxman said domestic workers are among the most unorganised segments of the workforce. "Domestic workers perform essential work such as cleaning, cooking, caregiving and childcare, supporting millions of households and enabling the functioning of the urban economy," he said. According to the eSh-

ram portal, there are 2.89 crore domestic and householder workers in the country, a large portion of whom are women, migrants and those from economically weaker backgrounds.

Despite their crucial role, most domestic workers continue to work without written contracts, fixed wages, social security coverage and proper grievance redressal mechanisms, he noted.

Laxman acknowledged that the government has taken steps to support unorganised workers through initiatives such as the eShram portal and the Code on Social Security, 2020, which aims to extend social

security benefits across sectors.

However, he pointed out that domestic workers face unique challenges as their workplace is inside private homes, making regulation and protection difficult. "Many remain vulnerable to irregular wages, long working hours and sudden termination," he said.

Laxman urged the government to consider recognising domestic workers as essential service workers and to strengthen their inclusion in welfare programmes through better registration, access to social security and effective grievance redressal mechanisms.

Jaya Bachchan raises concern over VIP movements causing road blocks

NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Amitabh Bachchan on Monday expressed concern over the growing menace of VIP culture affecting vehicular traffic and causing inconvenience to people.

Raising the matter during the Zero Hour in the House, she said roadblocks and traffic diversions due to the movements of VIPs, including politicians, high-ranking officials, and dignitaries, have become a major source of disruption in the daily lives of countless citizens in the country.

"One has travelled all over the world, but has never seen many VIPs and cavalcades going, but they never stop people on the street," Bachchan said.

She also narrated a recent incident when Rajya Sabha MPs, who leave from Shardula Dwar, were stopped at the main door was locked because there



was VIP movement.

"We have never faced such humiliation in the last 22 years of mine in this parliament. We are not a threat to any of the VIPs, especially the political lot," she emphasised.

The SP member further said there are roads along the houses of political "big wigs" which remain blocked.

The MP highlighted that not only common citizens,

even ambulances get stuck due to VIP movements.

She urged Chairman C P Radhakrishnan to take up the matter with the government.

"Sir, speak to the government. You are the Vice President of this country... this culture has to stop in order to give dignity to the taxpayers of this country who have brought us into this House," Bachchan said.

IIT researchers design cost-effective 3D tracking for surgical instruments

MUMBAI: IIT researchers have developed an efficient method to track surgical instruments in 3D using standard 2D video and basic geometry. Surgeons and patients increasingly choose laparoscopic surgery, also called surgery through a keyhole, as patients experience less pain and faster recovery.

When surgeons manipulate robotic arms to guide a tiny tool inside the body in 3D space, they rely on experience and skill to perceive depth from the 2D video captured by the tiny camera at the operation site, which is also inserted through a keyhole.

While some tertiary healthcare facilities in big

cities in India have high-end robotic surgery systems with 3D visualisations, such facilities are limited and expensive.

Dr Shubhangi Nema and Prof Leena Vachhani from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay and Abhishek Mathur from Indian Institute of Technology Goa have developed a novel software technique that enables 3D tracking of surgical instruments using standard video feeds, eliminating the need for expensive sensors and high-end computing.

The cost-effective approach, based on fundamental geometry, can enhance virtual reality training and has the poten-

tial to significantly lower the cost of 3D visualisation systems in surgeries.

"We chose a geometric approach because geometry is fundamentally reliable and interpretable. We leveraged geometric cues such as perspective projection, instrument shape constraints, and interval-based uncertainty modelling (using a range of possible position coordinates instead of an exact position)," said Dr Nema. The researchers developed an algorithm that treats surgical tools as connected geometric shapes and tracks them using bounding boxes in 2D video. By analysing changes in size, shape, position, and angles - based on perspec-

tive rules - of the boxes, the system estimates the instrument's depth, movement and rotation in 3D.

Accurately estimating depth from 2D images is challenging due to unclear object outlines caused by poor lighting, camera noise, or motion blur. "From a single camera view, multiple 3D configurations can produce the same 2D projection. We introduced geometric constraints and interval-based bounds to narrow the feasible solution space," explained Dr Nema.

Instead of saying that the tooltip is at an exact point P, the algorithm gives a range, or an interval, in which the tip can be present, she said.

SC to examine whether women can be stripped of religious identity after inter-faith marriage

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday decided to examine a significant constitutional challenge involving gender discrimination within religious personal laws, questioning whether a Parsi woman can be stripped of her religious identity following the inter-faith marriage.

The top court issued notices to the Centre, Nagpur Parsi Panchayat, the Ministry of Minority Affairs, the Maharashtra government, and the Charity Commissioner on the plea filed by Dina Budhraja.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi heard preliminary submissions of senior advocate Shayam Divan, appearing for the petitioner, challenging the constitutional validity of Rule 5(2) of the Nagpur Parsi Panchayat's constitution. The petition, filed under Article 32, said that the rule is discriminatory and violates Article 14 (equality before law), Article 21 (right to life and dignity), and Article 25 (freedom of religion) of the Constitution.

The rule allegedly strips Parsi women of their religious identity and access to religious institutions such as the Agyari (Fire Temple) upon marrying a non-Parsi.

Nitish launches programmes worth Rs 405 crore in Jehanabad, Arwal districts

JEHANABAD/ARWAL: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday launched several development projects and schemes valued at around Rs 405 crore in Jehanabad and Arwal districts during his 'Samridhi Yatra'.

Of the programmes, Jehanabad received programmes worth Rs 252 crore and Arwal got projects valued at Rs 153 crore, according to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Kumar also reviewed ongoing schemes and development projects in both districts.

"The CM launched development projects/schemes worth Rs 252 crore in Jehanabad district. These included the inauguration of 88 programmes costing Rs 70 crore and laying the foundation stones for 73 others worth Rs 182 crore," the statement said.

Kumar inaugurated a stitching training-cum-production centre for Jeevika Didis at the old block office premises in Jehanabad.

The state government, through the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), an autonomous body under the Department of Rural Development, is spearheading a World Bank-aided rural livelihoods project with the objective of social and economic empowerment of the poor. Women associated with the project are called Jeevika Didis.

Encouraging Jeevika Didis associated with the centre, the CM said, "The government is providing all possible facilities. We are making every effort to promote self-employment among you."

Later in the day, Kumar launched 272 development projects/schemes worth around Rs 153 crore in Arwal district. These included the inauguration of 250 programmes valued at Rs 90 crore and laying the foundation stones for 22 projects worth Rs 63 crore, said the statement.

The CM also inaugurated and inspected the upgradation work carried out at the government's higher secondary school at Itwan. During the inspection, he reviewed the astronomy laboratory and smart learning hub at the school.

ZPM announces candidates for Aizawl Municipal Corporation polls

AIZAWL: Mizoram's ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) on Monday announced its candidates for all seats of the upcoming elections to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC).

The opposition Congress also announced six more candidates for the elections, thereby fielding nominees in all 19 seats.

The two parties also launched their election campaigns and unveiled their manifestos during the day.

The main opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) has already announced candidates for all 19 seats, while the BJP is yet to release its list.

According to the State Election Commission (SEC), polling will be held on April 21, and the counting of votes will take place on April 27.

Odisha signs agreement to set up visa application centre in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government on Monday signed a tripartite agreement to set up a visa application centre at the Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar Bus Terminal here. The agreement was signed between the home department, the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and VFS Global Group. Officials said the state government has allocated around 3,000 square feet of space at the bus terminal to house the centre.

At present, residents of Odisha have to travel to cities like Kolkata, Delhi or Hyderabad for visa-related services, and the new facility is expected to make the process more accessible locally.

Satara ZP poll fracas: Sena members cowards, its ministers shown their place in govt, says Aaditya

MUMBAI: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on Monday targeted the rival Shiv Sena over the "manhandling" of minister Shamburaj Desai during the election of Satara Zilla Parishad president last week and said the incident has shown the Eknath Shinde-led party its place in the Maharashtra government.

Those in the Shinde group are a bunch of cowards, who go quiet when they are shown files, Thackeray told reporters in the Vidhan Bhavan premises.

They will come around due to fear of central probe agencies, the Worli MLA claimed.

During the Satara Zilla Parishad (ZP) president poll on Friday, BJP's Priya Shinde was elected to the post, trumping the Shiv Sena-NCP combine's candidate despite the latter having the majority. The BJP narrowly surpassed the Sena-NCP alliance's tally to win the top post. The police allegedly took away some Zilla Parishad members before the voting.

On Desai's charge that democracy was murdered during the Satara ZP president's polls, Thac-

keray said the reaction is laughable.

"As you sow, so shall you reap, Jaisi karni, waisi bharni," Thackeray retorted.

"The incident has shown the place of Shiv Sena ministers in the government," the former Maharashtra minister said.

On legislative council Deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe's direction to the government to suspend Superintendent of Police Tushar Doshi over the ruckus during the Zilla Parishad president election last week, Thackeray said an answer is expected from council Chairman Ram Shinde whether the suspension was right.

Shiv Sena minister Shamburaj Desai, NCP's Makarand Patil and other members of the two parties demanded the SP's suspension. Desai and Patil alleged that the local police manhandled them during the polls to elect the Zilla Parishad president on Friday.

Thackeray also demanded action against those seen in photographs related to self-styled godman Ashok Kharat, who has



been arrested for allegedly raping a woman repeatedly over the past three years. Thackeray alleged some individuals were called by Shinde to a hotel and urged these persons to come forward.

He further said the prime

minister and the chief minister should speak on issues affecting the state and the country, including about agreements and their consequences.

Referring to the economic situation, Thackeray said people

could face hardships similar to the COVID-19 period, questioning whether citizens would again have to depend on relief funds.

"Can the country afford the ongoing slide of the rupee," he questioned.

Protest against internal reservation roster allocation to be held in Bengaluru on Mar 24

Mangaluru, Mar 23: A massive protest has been organized on March 24 at 10 am at Freedom Park in Bengaluru opposing the internal reservation roster allocation. The protest will be led by Sri Immadi Siddarameshwara Mahaswami of the Chitradurga Bhovi Gurupitha and will be held with the participation of members from Bhovi, Banjara, Korama, Koracha, Chalavadi, and Chammakar sub-communities, said Bhovi community leader Pavan Kumar during a press conference on Monday.

He alleged that the data included in the report of the internal reservation commission headed by justice H N Nagamohan Das is biased. He said the leaked report contains incomplete, unscientific, unclear, and unjust recommendations.

He demanded that the government release comprehensive survey data collected over the last 50 years regarding the socio-economic conditions of 101 communities listed under Scheduled Castes. He also urged the government to provide time for objections from all 101 Scheduled Caste communities regarding the report.

He further stated that the report has caused injustice to communities such as



Chalavadi, Banjara, Bhovi, Korama, Koracha, Chammakar, and Samagara. He demanded that the government form a new commission to correct the injustice and hold a meeting with leaders of all communities. As the government has not responded to these demands, the protest has been organized, he said. He also alleged that due to these issues, members of the Bhovi community in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts are not being issued caste certificates.



Dhee Hospital in association with Ahikha Karnataka Brahmana Mahasabha conducted a Health camp, successfully in Gayatri Bhavan Banashankari, Bangalore. on 21/03/2026(Saturday) between 10am to 2pm. AKBMS President Sri Reghunath along with Dhee Hospital Marketing Team Headed by Smt. Manjula devi and Sri Subramanya were present at the occasion.

Tata Power Collaborates with Salesforce to Accelerate India's Clean Energy Transition

Bangalore : Tata Power, one of India's largest vertically integrated power companies, today announced its collaboration with Salesforce, the world's #1 AI CRM, to digitally transform its rapidly expanding rooftop solar (RTS), EV charging, and smart home solutions businesses. The collaboration reinforces Tata Power's long-term clean energy roadmap aligned with India's net-zero ambitions by establishing a secure, intelligent, and fully integrated clean energy ecosystem powered by AI, automation, and data-driven insights. The platform will enable scalable growth, deeper partner and customer engagement, and operational excellence across the renewable energy value chain.

As part of this transformation, Tata Power has deployed Agentforce Sales, Agentforce Service, and Agentforce Marketing across its renewable energy subsidiary, Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL). The Salesforce platform powers intelligent, AI-enabled workflows that enhance visibility, accelerate decision-making, and create seamless omnichannel experiences—driving efficiency, agility, and service leadership at scale. Agentforce Sales and Agentforce Service form the foundation of Tata Power's best-in-class omnichannel engagement model. Salesforce serves as a strategic digital backbone for Tata Power's high-growth renewable energy businesses. The platform enables end-to-end digitisation of partners and customer journeys, delivering streamlined lead management, inventory visibility,



process automation, and real-time performance tracking. This ensures enhanced transparency, operational efficiency, and a superior customer experience across touchpoints. Additionally, Tata Power has developed a proprietary deep learning and agentic intelligence layer built on top of Salesforce to enable a zero-touch quality and safety validation process. This digital capability facilitates instant on-site verification and automated warranty generation, reinforcing Tata Power's commitment to quality assurance and delivery excellence under its Solaroof offerings.

Driven by strong policy momentum under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana, Tata Power's residential rooftop solar segment has delivered over 200% growth across the past two financial years. Overall, the Company's solar portfolio has achieved a fivefold increase in revenues between FY2020 and FY2025, reflecting accelerated market adoption, digital-led execution excellence, and expanding customer trust across segments. 76 Looking ahead, Tata Power and Salesforce will collaborate to co-innovate high-

impact, agentic AI-led workflows designed to transform omnichannel customer and partner contact centre operations - driving faster resolution, proactive service, and predictive engagement.

Dr Praveer Sinha, CEO and MD Tata Power said, "Tata Power is leading India's green energy transition by scaling rooftop solar nationwide, expanding EV charging infrastructure, and advancing intelligent energy management solutions. As we accelerate this growth, digital capability is a critical enabler of scale, speed, and customer trust. Leveraging Salesforce's AI-powered platform, we are transforming customer and partner journeys with greater transparency and agility, while strengthening operational excellence. Together, we are building a future-ready clean energy ecosystem that advances India's net-zero ambitions."

Arundhati Bhattacharya, President & CEO at Salesforce - South Asia, said, "The path to a sustainable future is being paved by visionary enterprises that are embedding intelligence, agility, and customer-centricity into the core of their operations.

ALTOS COMPUTING LAUNCHES 'MAKE-IN-INDIA' AI SERVERS TO BOOST INDIA'S AI ECOSYSTEM

Bangalore : Altos Computing Ltd., an Acer Inc. group company and a global provider of high-performance computing and AI infrastructure solutions announced the launch of its Make-in-India AI server portfolio, marking a significant step toward strengthening India's sovereign AI and data centre ecosystem.

The announcement was made at a dedicated launch event in New Delhi attended by Sushil Pal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India; Sudhir Goel, Chief Business Officer, Acer India; Vishal Dhupar, Managing Director, Asia South, NVIDIA; PP Sunil Acharya, Senior Director - Global accounts (OEMs & Hyperscalers), Intel India; Jackie Lee, CEO, Altos Computing Inc. and Priya Krishnamurthy, Director, Altos India, alongside media, senior representatives, partners and stakeholders from the technology industry.

The highlight of the event was the unveiling of the Altos BrainSphere™ R300 AI Series Server, the company's flagship Make-in-India AI server designed to power next-generation AI workloads across enterprises, research institutions, government organizations, and hyperscale data centres. Built for high-performance computing and advanced AI model training and inference, the R300 Series platform supports high-density GPU acceleration, scalable memory architecture, and advanced thermal efficiency, enabling organizations to manage compute-intensive AI workloads while maintaining performance, reliability, and scalability.

Talking about the launch,



Harish Kohli, President and Managing Director, Acer India, said, "India today stands at the threshold of a transformative AI era where powerful computing infrastructure will be the backbone of innovation across industries. With the launch of Altos' Make-in-India AI server portfolio, we are taking an important step toward building this digital backbone locally. By bringing advanced AI infrastructure manufacturing closer to the Indian market, we are enabling faster deployment, improved accessibility, and greater scalability for enterprises, research institutions, and public sector organizations. Through Altos' high-performance AI platforms and our strong partner ecosystem, we remain committed to empowering organisations across India to unlock the full potential of AI."

"The launch reflects Altos' commitment to supporting India's ambition of becoming a global hub for AI innovation and digital infrastructure. By manufacturing AI servers locally and enabling organizations to deploy powerful computing platforms within the country, the company aims to address the rapidly growing demand for scalable AI infrastructure across sectors, including research, manufacturing, healthcare, and public services.

Kumaraswamy Reviews Vizag Steel Plant Operations, Pushes for RINL Revival

Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh: Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy conducted a comprehensive two-day review of the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) plant in Visakhapatnam, aiming to strengthen operations and boost production efficiency. The visit reflects the Centre's commitment to revitalising the Vizag Steel Plant and enhancing its position in India's steel sector.

The Minister inspected key production units, beginning with the Coke Oven Batteries, emphasising the need for efficiency and uninterrupted operations. He also reviewed the performance of Blast Furnace-3, which was recommissioned in June 2025, focusing on fuel efficiency, advanced automation, and energy



recovery systems.

Kumaraswamy visited the Blast Furnace Control Room, where real-time monitoring ensures operational stability, and later inspected the Wire Rod Mill,

highlighting the importance of quality production and global competitiveness in value-added steel products.

He chaired review meetings with senior officials, discussing production

optimisation, raw material security, sustainability, and capacity utilisation. The Minister directed officials to implement time-bound measures to streamline operations and improve performance. Interacting with employees and labour unions, he assured that workers' concerns would be addressed promptly, stressing their crucial role in the plant's growth.

Kumaraswamy reaffirmed that RINL will play a key role in achieving India's target of 300 million tonnes of steel capacity by 2030 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit also aligns with national goals such as Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat 2047, aiming to transform RINL into a competitive and efficient steel producer.

Heer by GIVA Debuts First Offline Store, Hosts 'Alfaaz-e-Heer' Poetry Night

Bengaluru : Heer by GIVA, GIVA's gold and lab-grown diamond jewellery brand, celebrated the launch of its first offline store with 'Alfaaz-e-Heer', an evening of poetry, stories and celebration that brought together creators, fashion enthusiasts and members of the growing Heer community.

The launch event featured a special Shayari Night with Priya Malik, whose evocative verses set the tone for an evening rooted in expression, individuality and storytelling, values that lie at the heart of the Heer brand. The celebration also included a lively Trivia Night and launch party, creating an engaging and immersive experience for guests as they explored Heer's jewellery collections.

Designed as more than a traditional store opening, 'Alfaaz-e-Heer' reflected the brand's philosophy that jewellery is not just adornment but a form of



personal expression. Through poetry, conversations and community moments, the evening celebrated the many voices and stories that define Heer's identity.

The new store offers customers the opportunity to experience Heer by GIVA's gold and lab-grown diamond jewellery collections in a thoughtfully designed retail environment that brings the brand's contemporary and expressive spirit to life.

On the debut of the

store, Resha Jain, Chief Brand Officer at GIVA, said: "Heer has always been about celebrating individuality and the many voices of modern India. With the launch of our first offline store, we wanted to create an experience that reflects the soul of the brand, expressive, personal and rooted in culture. Alfaaz-e-Heer was our way of bringing that spirit alive, where poetry, community and jewellery come together to celebrate self-expression."

VAN HEUSEN INNERWEAR EXPANDS JAYANAGAR FLAGSHIP STORE, UNVEILS COMPLETE PRODUCT RANGE

Bengaluru : Van Heusen Innerwear, from the house of Aditya Birla Lifestyle Brands Ltd., has expanded its flagship store in Jayanagar, bringing its full range of high-performance innerwear for men and women under one roof. Spanning 1,500 sq. ft., the refreshed store is designed as a one-stop destination for urban consumers, offering a curated mix of innerwear, loungewear and athleisure. The store features a streamlined layout with dedicated sections for men and women, focusing on comfort, innovation and functionality suited to fast-paced lifestyles. The men's collection highlights performance-driven styles tailored for hybrid routines, while the women's range includes supportive and well-engineered essentials designed for everyday wear. Key offerings include the Cotton Minimizer for enhanced support.

City Corporations to Take Over Chronic Property Tax Default Properties as Last Resort: Mounish Moudgil

Bengaluru : In a decisive step to address long-pending property tax arrears, the City Corporations have initiated a last-resort mechanism to recover dues from chronic defaulters.

Special Commissioner (Revenue), Mounish Moudgil has said that, Despite repeated statutory actions—including issuance of demand notices, attachment of properties, and multiple attempts to recover dues through public auction—several cases have remained unresolved due to non-payment and lack of bidder participation in auctions.

In such exceptional cases, where all prescribed recovery measures have been exhausted and auctions have failed repeatedly, the City Corporation will now proceed to purchase the defaulted properties itself at the notified upset price.

Key Features of the Action:

This step is invoked only after due process—demand notice, attachment, and unsuccessful auction attempts—has been fully completed.

• Corporation Purchase at Upset Price:

The property will be deemed sold to the City Corporation at the pre-determined upset price (linked to guidance value).

• Adjustment of Dues: From the sale proceeds, all outstanding property tax dues—including penalties, interest, and administrative expenses—will be fully recovered.

• Refund to Owner: Any surplus amount remaining after adjustment of dues will be refunded to the original khatedar (property owner) through bank transfer, ensuring fairness and transparency.

• Vesting of Property:

The property will vest with the City Corporation free of encumbrances, and ownership records will be updated accordingly.

• Final Opportunity to Default:

Even at this stage, the defaulter is provided a final one-month window to clear all dues (with applicable interest), upon which the takeover order will be withdrawn and the property restored.

Public Advisory: Citizens are strongly advised to clear their property tax dues promptly and avoid coercive recovery measures. This step is intended to ensure fiscal discipline, improve municipal revenues, and uphold equity among compliant taxpayers.

The City Corporation reiterates its commitment to transparent, lawful, and citizen-centric governance while ensuring that long-pending arrears are effectively resolved.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Offers New Hope To Millions Of Diabetic Foot Patients In Karnataka

BREAKTHROUGH TREATMENT CAN HEAL WOUNDS FASTER AND PREVENT AMPUTATIONS



Bangalore : For the nearly 80 million Indians living with diabetes, a devastating complication quietly threatens their quality of life and their limbs. Diabetic foot ulcer (DFU) affect between 25% and 34% of diabetic patients at some point in their lifetime, with half of those cases progressing to serious infection. Now, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is emerging as a powerful, life-changing solution that gives patients a real chance at healing — and staying whole.

Such a therapy has been set up in the Karnataka Institute of Endocrinology & Research Institute (KIER) located at Indiranagar. "HBOT is not just a medical treatment. It is a restoration of dignity and livelihood for patients who have been suffering," said Dr Sharanprakash R Patil, minister for medical education and skill development* after inaugurating the therapy on Monday. "We are now able to offer patients a genuine path to recovery that was not available before." India carries one of

the heaviest burdens of diabetes anywhere in the world, accounting for 1 in 7 adults with the condition globally. Of those complications, diabetic foot disease is among the most debilitating. Socio-cultural practices, including walking barefoot during daily activities, significantly increase the risk of foot wounds progressing into serious ulcers. The financial toll is equally crushing. Managing a single diabetic foot ulcer costs an average of Rs.1.5 lakh from diagnosis to healing. Over a patient's lifetime, diabetic foot complications consume an average of 5.7 years of income. "HBOT is changing the outlook for patients living with active diabetic foot wounds. By delivering high concentrations of oxygen in a pressurised environment, the therapy accelerates wound healing, fights infection and critically helps save limbs that might otherwise be amputated," noted Dr.Ravi, director of KIER.

EDITORIAL

Trade War: The Theatre Of The Absurd In Trump's New Fight On Tariffs

The US government's trade lawyers are working overtime. So what if the work in question requires more imagination than it does expertise? Over the past fortnight, investigations into 16 countries for supposed manufacturing "excess capacity" have been launched under Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act. The office of US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer also announced that similar probes would begin into forced labour practices in 60 countries. Several of America's largest trading partners, including the European Union, Japan, India and Mexico, will be on both lists. One can safely assume that these 76 enquiries will proceed at a somewhat speedier rate than is usual, and the answers will arrive with the same breathtaking rapidity at which the questions were asked. An even safer assumption is that these answers will just happen to be the ones that the Trump administration wants.

The White House is moving with commendable efficiency here, as it tends to do whenever it sets out to destroy institutions. Section 301 investigations serve a real purpose - identifying countries that are deliberately setting out to violate trading norms - and generally take months. Their purpose was to remove trade barriers, not raise them. It's perverse to employ them as post-hoc scaffolding for a policy that's already been declared unconstitutional. The entire world can see what's going on. Everyone knew that President Donald Trump's response to the Supreme Court striking down his tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act would be to find another law that lets him do exactly what he was just forbidden from doing. "No" has never been Trump's favourite word, and if there's one skill that a certain sort of real-estate developer perfects, it's forum-shopping.

The list of countries is a bit of a giveaway that this entire process is a legal fiction. Picture an army of worthy USTR officials solemnly poring over Bangladesh's structural overcapacity in manufacturing with all the seriousness of purpose that the exercise demands. Then imagine them turning with equal care to cataloguing the forced-labour practices of Norway, one of the 60 countries being examined. Hard though it might be, the rest of the world will have to take this seriously. It's far from certain that the courts will ride to the rescue again.

Yes, the margin on the IEEPA ruling was 6-3, and Chief Justice Roberts was quite emphatic. But Section 301 is different. It outlines a process that must be followed, and this investigation, however theatrical, checks off that procedural box. The world cannot assume that the justices will want to strike them down in toto again. The administration is counting on that; Greer has described these provisions as "incredibly legally durable." Washington has clearly learned something from its failures over the past year. Have its counterparts in the rest of the world learnt anything from theirs?

First, is it safe to negotiate with Trump? As the European Union has found out, he will relitigate his own deals even when he isn't being forced to by the Supreme Court. What the Section 301 investigations do is reopen - implicitly, perhaps explicitly - every deal Trump's done so far, whether with Korea, Japan, India, or Southeast Asia. Must they go through the whole thing again? Can they?

Some, like Malaysia's trade minister, think they will. The bilateral Agreement on Reciprocal Trade that Trump signed with Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to considerable fanfare at the ASEAN Summit last year is "null and void," the trade minister said: "It is not on hold. It is no longer there." The deal was as dead as Monty Python's parrot. It has ceased to be. Why should any country consider itself bound by agreements signed under coercive terms that a court has voided?

Inside The '\$500 Billion' Iran War Bill No Economist Is Talking About

In 1916, as Europe was converting its young men into statistics, an American economist named JM Clark sat down to ask a question nobody in power wanted answered: what, precisely, does a war cost? Not the spiritual cost, not the civilisational cost, not the kind measured in widows and orphans. He meant money. His answer, published in the Journal of Political Economy, was careful and devastating. Direct costs were only the beginning. The real damage lay in what he called the indirect costs. The production foregone, the trade disrupted, the capital consumed and never replenished. War was the single most efficient mechanism humanity had devised for destroying wealth. One hundred and ten years later, we are still learning this lesson. We are, as a species, slow students. On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel began strikes on Iran. By the end of six days, the Pentagon had spent \$11.3 billion. Not allocated. Not requested. Spent. By week two, the White House's own National Economic Council revised the figure to \$12 billion, presented as a routine accounting update. The war was, officials noted, "proceeding on schedule". Nobody appeared to find the phrase alarming. War has acquired the cadence of project management. It runs at approximately \$900 million a day. The \$12 billion is the smallest number in the ledger.

Only The 'Direct' Costs
It is what economists call the direct, visible, immediate fiscal cost. It does not include the aircraft carriers repositioned from the Indo-Pacific,



touched \$113, an 83% rise since the start of the year. US natural gas jumped 6.5% in a single session. European gas prices rose to EUR 54 per MWh.

The Ras Laffan Catastrophe
The Ras Laffan strikes deserve a paragraph of their own, because they are unlike anything else in this ledger. Iran fired five ballistic missiles at the complex: four were intercepted, one struck. Hours later, a second attack set fires that Qatari civil defence teams spent the night containing. QatarEnergy reported "sizeable fires and extensive further damage" to several of its LNG facilities. Ras Laffan covers 295 square kilometres, roughly one-third the area of New York City. It is home to Shell's \$18 billion Pearl GTL plant, QatarEnergy's LNG export terminals, and multiple gas-related installations whose total construction cost, in 2011 dollars, was \$70 billion. It accounts for roughly a fifth of global LNG supply. The critical detail, often missing from the coverage, is that production had already been halted

weeks earlier after an Iranian drone attack prompted QatarEnergy to declare force majeure on deliveries. The missile damaged a facility whose reconstruction timetable is now measured not in weeks but in seasons. With oil, governments can release buffers. With LNG, the loss is immediate, structural, and without offset.

The Wealth That Won't Be Created
The deeper damage extends below the surface. Ras Laffan sits atop Qatar's North Field, one half of the world's largest natural gas reservoir. The other half is Iran's South Pars field. Israel struck South Pars. Iran struck Ras Laffan. The reservoir they share (9,700 square kilometres, approximately the size of Qatar itself) now has damaged extraction and export infrastructure on both sides of its border. On the list of the world's 25 largest natural gas fields, this single reservoir holds roughly 40% of their combined recoverable reserves. It is nearly six times larger than the second-biggest field on earth. And it is only 10% depleted. As much as 90%

of the gas remains underground. It will remain there, inaccessible, for at least a decade while surface facilities are rebuilt on both sides. Clark would have a word for this. He called it 'indirect cost', the production foregone, the capital consumed, the wealth that will not be created. LNG prices rose 60% after the initial drone strike on Qatar. That complex is now shut. Helium production (Qatar alone had been producing 17 tonnes per day at Ras Laffan, a third of global supply) has ceased. There are no ready substitutes for helium. Semiconductor fabrication, which depends on it for cooling supermagnets, is beginning to feel the constraint. South Korean chipmakers are already reporting shortages. This is not a disruption to one sector. It is a disruption to the supply chain that manufactures the physical substrate of the modern economy.

Just Days Of Jet Fuel Left
The Economist's modelling of fuel stocks, drawing on Kpler shipping data, is the kind of number that belongs in a war communique rather than a commodities note. If the Strait of Hormuz remains blocked, Oceania will have exhausted 80% of its jet fuel within 36 days. Africa within 23. Asian countries outside China, Japan, and South Korea will be critically short of petrol within 12. Right now, 125 product tankers (five percent of the global fleet) are trapped inside the Gulf with nowhere to go. The disruption is not only about oil, and it was never only about oil. The Gulf, by accident of geology, has become the processing hub for an interlocking web of industrial inputs.

Pakistan And The Collapse Of Its 'Good Taliban, Bad Taliban' Illusions

The 'Good Taliban, Bad Taliban' fallacy unravelled far quicker than Pakistan anticipated after the Afghan Taliban took over Kabul. Once nurtured, funded, and supported by the Pakistani establishment, the group has since become one of the most pressing security challenges and structural liabilities for Rawalpindi. Days after the Taliban overthrew the West-backed Ashraf Ghani government, then-Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was quick to state that Afghans had "broken the shackles of slavery," and former chief of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Faiz Hameed was found drinking coffee in a Kabul hotel. However, the moment of perceived victory proved fleeting. Since 2021, the relationship has gradually deteriorated, embroiled in a repetitive cycle of calibrated hostility, border clashes, closure of border crossings, backchannel third-party mediation, short-lived ceasefire, and renewed violence. Pakistan also tried trade coercion, direct negotiation, and multilateral mediation with Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and China - with no meaningful success. The crux of the issue was the Afghan Taliban's inability, or rather unwillingness, to curb Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), an anti-Pakistan group that has steadily intensified attacks in Pakistan's peripheral provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, as well as periodic small-scale attacks in urban cities. That rupture has entered a far more volatile phase. On March 16, the Afghan Taliban administration accused the Pakistani military of conducting airstrikes on the Omid Hospital in Kabul, a 2,000-bed substance-abuse rehabilitation facility. The



Taliban alleged 400 deaths and 250 injuries among civilians in that attack. Nonetheless, Islamabad rejected these figures, claiming the target was an ammunition depot. Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar stated that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) launched "precise, deliberate and professional" aerial strikes on military installations and terrorist infrastructure, which included an ammunition storage site, and that the visible detonations clearly indicated the presence of huge ammunition depots. Pakistan formally declared an "open war" with Afghanistan in late February, launching Operation Ghazab Lil Haq, translating to 'Rage for the Righteous Cause.' Over the weeks, Pakistan has launched strikes inside Kabul, Nangarhar, Paktika, Khost, and the Taliban's stronghold of Kandahar province. At present, both sides have agreed to temporarily pause the hostilities for Eid al-Fitr this week. The deterioration was glaringly evident in 2022 - with the TTP relinquishing a ceasefire agreement with Pakistan and subsequently increasing its operations against Pakistani security forces. In the following

years, the Taliban and Pakistani forces engaged in periodic border clashes, including gunfire along the Torkham border. Pakistan also launched three air campaigns on different occasions by December 2024 in response to TTP-led attacks, and for the first time, hit Kabul in October 2025. The ongoing conflict was triggered by a suicide bombing at a border checkpoint in Bajaur on February 16. India at the UN condemned Pakistan's airstrikes on Afghanistan, citing the attack during the month of Ramadan. Meanwhile, the Chinese foreign ministry raised concern over civilian deaths. Despite the competing narratives from Kabul and Islamabad, the conflict gains attention for its scale and for the shift in Pakistan's rules of engagement - which involves an overt targeting of military and logistical infrastructure of the Taliban administration, rather than striking TTP-linked targets. In a strikingly similar doctrine to India's approach toward Pakistan's Military-Jihadi Complex (MJC), Pakistan's recent attack in Afghanistan indicates its new policy of directly targeting the Taliban administration - alleged to be responsible for enabling the TTP. This has

also involved a focus on degrading strategic assets that sustain the Taliban's military and governing capacity using its aerial capabilities; the Taliban does not possess a sophisticated air force. This new militarised approach in Pakistan's operations in Afghanistan likely reflects a coercive bargaining strategy to alter the cost-benefit calculus of shielding the TTP, and compel a behavioral change from the Taliban. The Taliban's reluctance to curtail TTP has likely continued given the low costs associated with hosting the group instead of suppressing it; the Taliban and TTP share deep ethnic, ideological, tribal and familial connections. Pakistan's sustained military pressure is likely to change that strategic calculus. What Comes Next? The most near-term security threat is retribution from the Taliban. This could involve attacks, likely including suicide bombings by the TTP to maximise damage, in Pakistan's Punjab province - to hit the heart of Pakistan's military leadership. While the TTP has intensified attacks in border regions, their operational capabilities have remained largely limited in major cities of Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi.

'HUMILIATION', 'NEGLECT':

Congress's Quiet Unravelling As Leader After Leader Leaves

Ahead of the April 9 Assembly elections, the Congress party received a severe jolt in Assam when Pradyut Bordoloi, its veteran leader and incumbent Member of Parliament from Nagaon, resigned from the party. Later, Bordoloi told the media that he was leaving after three decades with the Congress because he was feeling humiliated and isolated, insinuating that all was not well between him and Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Gaurav Gogoi. Bordoloi described how the party renominated an MLA who orchestrated an attack on him during the Panchayat elections in April 2025, but emphasised that his decision to quit was driven more by the humiliation and neglect he faced in the Congress than by ticket distribution or political opportunism. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who switched to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Congress in 2015, citing similar reasons, lost no time in welcoming Bordoloi into the BJP. "The Assam Pradesh BJP will recommend to the central leadership that he (Bordoloi) should fight the Assembly elections. There is no reason for someone with self-respect to stay with the Congress party. We aim to bring more Congress leaders into the party," Sarma said. Not Just A Bordoloi Story While the renomination of a tainted MLA may have triggered Bordoloi's resignation, discontent inside the Assam Congress has been hurting the party for the past several months. "When we inform Delhi of problems we face at the ground level, we get no response. They do not even respond to our



emails," a Congress worker from Assam says. During conversations with state-level Congress leaders, words like 'lack of self-respect', 'isolation', 'sidelined', and 'ignored' come up frequently. This undercurrent, left unaddressed, has resulted in significant resignations. In May 2025, PCC spokesperson Bobbeeta Sharma resigned. This was followed by a bigger blow in February 2026, when Bhupen Borah, two-time MLA and the president of the state unit from 2021 until 2025, quit the party. Borah was regarded as the "indigenous Hindu face". Himanta Biswa Sarma was quick to move in, wasting no time to accommodate Borah into the state executive of the BJP. A senior police official in Guwahati summed up the situation cogently. "Now, it will be a cakewalk for the BJP," adding that it is the Congress that has now become the BJP in Assam. Same Plot, Different Characters In West Bengal, it is a similar story - of neglect and isolation. The only silver lining being that there are fewer instances of desertion. Ironically, it is because neither the

Trinamool Congress (TMC) nor the BJP can accommodate the Congress deserters. Battle-scarred party veterans are clearly upset at the High Command's decision to field candidates in all 294 seats. They argue that given the strong anti-incumbency sentiment against the TMC and the communal politics of the BJP, a secular alliance with the Communist Party of India Marxist (CPI-M) could perhaps break the TMC-BJP binary in West Bengal's politics. However, given the Congress' electoral stake in Kerala, where it is pitted head-on against the CPI(M), an alliance in West Bengal would be mired in political contradictions, which the BJP would leverage. While there may be creative ways to resolve such contradictions, the prevailing mood within the Bengal Congress is that of frustration - frustration that local interests do not feature in the party's larger scheme of things. Over in Odisha, things are not dissimilar, as Sofia Firdous, the state's first Muslim woman legislator, defied a party whip and cross-voted with two other Congress MLAs during the

recent Rajya Sabha election. This led to the surprise victory of the BJP-backed independent candidate Dilip Ray, who defeated his Congress-Biju Janata Dal (BJD) backed rival. The Congress has expelled Firdous from the party and sought her disqualification from the Assembly under the anti-defection act. But what made Sofia Firdous break ranks? Firdous has claimed that the Congress leadership did not consult their MLAs before deciding to support the BJD candidate. She argued that the BJD had historically acted as the "B-team" for the BJP and that aligning with them betrayed the struggle of Congress workers in Odisha. Her father, Mohammed Moqim, pointed out that Firdous was repeatedly sidelined within the party's decision-making processes. New Mutation, Old Disease It would be intellectually dishonest to pretend that the Congress has never split before. It split, repeatedly, in its moments of genuine crises. The 1969 split, triggered by Indira Gandhi's clash with the Syndicate following the 1967 electoral setback, was ideological and seismic.

Oil falls and shares rebound after Trump says talks have been held to end war

Oil prices plunged and stock markets rebounded after Donald Trump said the US and Iran had held talks over halting the conflict in the Middle East. After the US president's statement on Truth Social, the price of Brent crude sank initially, while European and US shares rose. Trump said the US and Iran spoke about a "COMPLETE" resolution and he would postpone strikes against Iranian power plants for five days, but Iranian state-affiliated media said Tehran had not spoken to the US. On Saturday, Trump said he would "obliterate" Iranian power plants if the key Strait of Hormuz shipping route was not reopened in 48 hours. Iran had said it would respond by targeting key infrastructure in the region. The comments over the weekend had rattled financial markets, adding to fears that the US-Israeli war with Iran would be a prolonged conflict. At one point on Monday, the price of Brent had hit \$113 a barrel, but it tumbled in the immediate aftermath of Trump's latest comments. It fell to a low of \$96 a barrel, before rebounding to \$103. While oil fell, stocks rose. London's FTSE 100 index was up 0.3% hav-



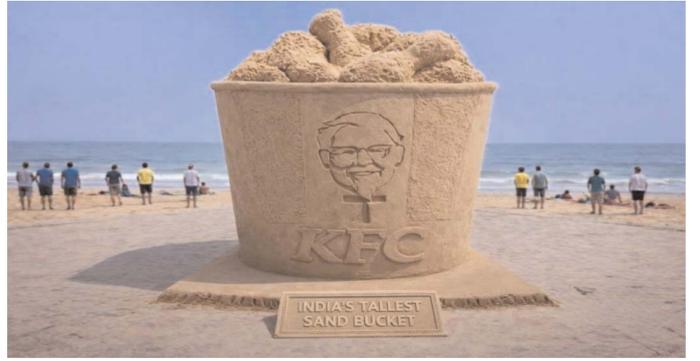
ing being down more than 2% earlier on Monday. Germany's Dax index also rebounded to stand 1.7% higher while France's Cac was up 1.2%. In the US, both the S&P 500 index and the Dow Jones opened up about 2%. Stocks in Asia, which closed before Trump's latest comments, had seen heavy falls with Japan's Nikkei index dropping 3.5% and South Korea's Kospi down 6.5%. Japan and South Korea have been particularly affected by the conflict, as they are heavily dependent on oil and gas that would normally pass through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's busiest oil shipping channels. Since the war began on 28 February, Iran

has effectively blocked the waterway. About 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas usually passes through the strait - and the conflict has sent global fuel prices soaring. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said that over the past two days the US and Iran have had "VERY GOOD AND PRODUCTIVE" talks over "A COMPLETE AND TOTAL RESOLUTION OF OUR HOSTILITIES". He added he had told the Department of War to postpone any military strikes "AGAINST IRANIAN POWER PLANTS AND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A FIVE DAY PERIOD, SUBJECT TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ONGOING MEETINGS

AND DISCUSSIONS". However, Iran's foreign ministry then issued a statement, which said: "We deny what US President Donald Trump said regarding negotiations taking place between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran." Susannah Streeter, chief investment strategist at Wealth Club, said Trump's comments had taken markets on a "wild ride". However, she added: "Clinging to President Trump's words is fraught with risks, given how hopes have already risen and then been dashed over the last four weeks." She also noted that with oil still above \$100 a barrel, "energy costs will remain super-painful for

companies and consumers". "It's clear that traders are still expecting significantly lower flows from the Middle East, even if a ceasefire is agreed, given the disruption to supply routes and the damage to facilities." The conflict has already disrupted global energy supplies, pushing up prices and causing fuel shortages. Earlier on Monday, the head of the International Energy Agency (IEA), Fatih Birol, had warned the war could see the world facing its worst energy crisis in decades. Birol compared the current energy crisis to those of the 1970s and the impact of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "This crisis as things stand is now two oil crises and one gas crash put all together," he said, speaking at an event in Australia. The jump in oil and gas prices since the start of the conflict has raised fears of a sharp increase in domestic energy bills in the UK later this year. UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer spoke to Trump on Sunday and they discussed the need to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Later on Monday, Sir Keir is set to chair a meeting of the government's emergency Cobra committee, which will be attended by Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey.

KFC UNVEILS INDIA'S TALLEST SAND BUCKET AT RK BEACH TO CELEBRATE NEW RESTAURANT OPENING



Larger-than-life sand sculpture inspired by KFC's iconic bucket marks the opening of new Beach Road restaurant - Vizag's RK Beach is synonymous with many things - crashing waves, morning walks, evening strolls and the occasional sandcastle. But this week, beachgoers were in for a surprise as a life-size KFC bucket emerged from the sand. Created entirely by local sand artist Akunuru Balaji Varaprasad over 48 hours, using only beach sand, the striking installation transformed 7+ tonnes of sand into one of the world's most recognisable brand icons. Akunuru Balaji Varaprasad is a renowned sand artist and sculptor

who has crafted over 700 sand sculptures across beaches in India including those at Perupalem, Manginapudi, and Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh. He is a four-time winner of the Konark International Sand Art Festival and has represented India at international sand art competitions in Qatar and Europe. The sculpture celebrates the opening of KFC's newest restaurant on Beach Road, turning the familiar Vizag landmark into a coveted photo spot, with a steady stream of curious onlookers stopping by to click pictures, film reels and share the unexpected sight with friends online. Set against the backdrop of Vizag's vast shoreline, the 2280 sq. ft, 70-seater restau-

rant draws inspiration from its nautical surroundings. At the heart of the space is boat-inspired décor, a bamboo-clad façade and sea-facing seating, creating a relaxed setting for beachgoers to unwind & enjoy finger lickin' good food. The new restaurant is the perfect stop for beachgoers to grab their KFC favourites - including Hot & Crispy Chicken, Hot Wings, Chicken Popcorn, Peri Peri Boneless Strips, Zinger Burgers, Rolls, Rice Bowlz and more - after a walk along the waves. The new opening at Beach Road marks the 14th KFC restaurant in the city. So Vizag, what are you waiting for? Head over to KFC Beach Road now and experience it for yourself.

Bank of Baroda : Insurance Amount Handed Over To Deceased Constable Family



Hyderabad., 23 Mar 2026: Bank of Baroda under its Special Salary Package agreement with the Telangana Police Department, provides Insurance coverage to employees in the unfortunate event of accidental death. In a recent case, Mr B Rama Naidu of AR Constable from CAR, Petlaburi HQs met with a road accident and passed away last year. He was maintaining Baroda Police Salary Package with Bank of Baroda Narketpally Branch, Telangana South Region. His insurance claim was processed immediately.

Today, Mr B Shivadhar Reddy, DGP of Telangana State Police handed over a cheque of 1.05 Crore to Mr. Boya Beechupalli, brother of Late B Rama Naidu at DGP Office, Telangana Police Headquarters, Hyderabad. The event was attended by Dr. Gajarao Bhupal, IPS, IG Welfare, Mr Ritesh Kumar, General Manager and Zonal Head, Mr. Ravi H G, DGM and Regional Head of Telangana South Region, Brigadier Saniya Kumar Prasad, Defence Banking Advisor, along with other Officials from TG Police and Bank of Baroda.

ONLYFANS OWNER LEONID RADVINSKY DIES AT 43

The owner of OnlyFans, a site known for its adult content that is credited with revolutionising the online porn industry, has died at the age of 43. Leonid Radvinsky, who was born in Ukraine and grew up in Chicago, had purchased the company in 2018 from its two UK-based founders, OnlyFans said. The site's popularity surged during the Covid-19 pandemic, landing him on Forbes' annual list of billionaires just three years later. He "passed away peacefully after a long battle with cancer," OnlyFans confirmed in a statement, which asked for privacy for his family. Founded in 2016, OnlyFans is a social media platform where creators can post videos and photos and charge subscribers for tips or a monthly fee. Creators share a range of content from cooking to fitness videos, but it is best known for pornography and the way it encourages creators and fans to connect through livestreams, personalised messages, and direct requests for custom-made



photos and videos. In return for hosting the material, OnlyFans takes a 20% share of all payments. The company generated \$1.4bn (£1.04bn) in revenue from more than 377 million subscribers in 2024, according to its most recent Companies House filing. About 4.6 million creators were posting to the site that year, it said. The boom in size and popularity under Radvinsky's ownership also brought scrutiny from lawmakers and regulators over its adult content. In 2024, British regulators launched an investiga-

tion into whether children were accessing porn, an issue that the company at the time blamed on a technical issue. Ofcom ultimately dropped that probe, but it fined the firm about £1m for failing to respond accurately to its requests for information about the measures it had in place to check the age of its users, who in theory must be 18 or over. Several years prior, the platform had been accused of failing to deal with illegal content, including child sexual abuse material. Amid increased pressure and scrutiny over its content, OnlyFans out-

lined plans in August 2021 to stop allowing sexual material on the platform. However, it dramatically turned on the proposal days later, after the plans were met with intense backlash from users and adult performers. The company has also been involved in legal fights with users, including some who felt scammed after learning that chats they thought they were having with OnlyFans creators were actually handled by low-paid, third parties. Those cases have not succeeded to date. Radvinsky graduated with an economics degree from Northwestern University and most recently lived in Florida, according to his website. Forbes estimates his net worth at \$4.7bn. He had been exploring a sale of OnlyFans last year. As well as OnlyFans, he invested in tech companies via a Florida-based venture capital firm, Leo.com. His philanthropy included donations to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, according to his website.

Adani Green Energy commissions 510 MW capacity power projects in Gujarat



New Delhi: Adani Green Energy on Monday, March 23, said it has operationalised 510 megawatt of power projects in Khavda, Gujarat. With the commissioning of the plants, its total operational renewable generation capacity has increased to 17,982.3 megawatt (MW), Adani Green Energy said in an exchange filing. The power projects having an aggregate capacity of 510.1 MW have been operationalised through its step-down subsidiaries, the company said. Based on the relevant clearances, it was decided to operationalise these plants and

ADANI GREEN ENERGY ON MONDAY, MARCH 23, SAID IT HAS OPERATIONALISED 510 MEGAWATT OF POWER PROJECTS IN KHAVDA, GUJARAT. commence power generation from March 22. Adani Green Energy Ltd is one of the largest renewable companies in India. The power projects having an aggregate capacity of 510.1 MW have been operationalised through its step-down subsidiaries, the company said.

From First SIP to Rs. 150 Crore AUM: Kalpalatha Siri Seva Pvt Ltd's Trusted Journey with NJ Wealth

Kalpalatha Siri Seva Pvt Ltd is a Hyderabad based firm, overseeing approximately ₹150 crore in assets under management, serving 800+ clients, and overseeing a live SIP book of nearly ₹1.8 crore per month. Built on discipline, trust, and a long-term investment philosophy, the firm's journey reflects how the right mindset, supported by a strong platform like NJ Wealth, can build a sustainable and scalable mutual fund distribution business. Before entering financial services, P V Atreyudu, the founder began his professional career in the education sector and later transitioned into insurance distribution with ICICI in 2010. During this phase, his interest in capital markets deepened, leading him to explore mutual funds as a structured and transparent route to long-term wealth building. A professional reference introduced him to NJ Wealth's mutual fund distribution model, which stood out for its clarity, research depth, and strong ethical



conviction, professionalism, and a long-term business outlook. These learnings ensured that the focus always remained on the client's needs rather than short-term market movements. Today, nearly 90% of the firm's old clients have remained associated since the early years, reflecting deep trust and long-standing relationships. The firm is also witnessing a generational shift, with second-generation clients and Gen Z investors increasingly availing its services. Many young investors are starting early, allocating a meaningful portion of their monthly salaries towards SIPs from the beginning of their careers. An internal analysis of clients associated for over seven years indicates stable long-term returns and meaningful alpha compared to benchmark indices. The firm follows a need-based approach, with SIPs forming the core of wealth creation, while encouraging well-diversified portfolios aligned with life goals.

framework. After completing onboarding with NJ in December 2013, he formally began his mutual fund distribution journey in early 2014. Over the years, NJ Wealth has played a pivotal role in shaping the firm's growth. Its powerful technology platform, comprehensive research support, and well-structured recommended MF portfolios enabled consistent and confident client engagement. Equally impactful were NJ's regular training programmes and interaction forums, where guidance from branch teams, regional leadership, and senior management helped build

CREDAI HYDERABAD WELCOMES HISTORIC TDR REFORMS

HYDERABAD: The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI) Hyderabad expresses its profound gratitude to the Government of Telangana and the Hon'ble Chief Minister for the landmark amendments issued in G.O.Ms. No.95 (MA&UD Department). These progressive reforms to the Telangana Building Rules-2012 mark a significant milestone in rationalising Transferable Development Rights (TDR) and enhancing the ease of doing business in the real estate sector.

A Visionary Leap for Urban Development
CREDAI Hyderabad applauds the government's responsiveness to stakeholder representations aimed at balancing urban growth with regulatory flexibility. The newly notifi-

fied rules provide much-needed clarity and incentive for sustainable high-rise development across the state.

Key highlights of G.O.Ms. No.95 welcomed by the industry includes:

- Redefinition of High-Rise Buildings: The height threshold for High-Rise Buildings is now set at 21m or more, excluding non-working and architectural areas like lift machine rooms and water tanks.
- TDR Utilisation for Mid-Sized Plots: For plots between 750 sq.m to 2000 sq.m, buildings from 18m to 21m height are now permitted through TDR utilisation, unlocking value for smaller developers.
- Flexible Setback Relaxations: * In Non-High-Rise Buildings, setback relaxations are now permitted via TDR.
- In High-Rise Buildings, a relaxation of up to 10% of



permissible setbacks is allowed through TDR, maintaining a safe 7-meter all-round minimum.

- Additional Floors Incentives: The government has introduced a tiered system for additional floors in plots above 2000 sq.m based on road width (up to 5 floors for 80 ft roads), strictly subject to TDR and safety norms.
- Rationalised TDR Loading: The new slab system—requiring 3% TDR for buildings between 10-20 floors and 5% for those

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI) Hyderabad expresses its profound gratitude to the Government of Telangana and the Hon'ble Chief Minister for the landmark amendments issued in G.O.Ms. No.95 (MA&UD Department).

above 20 floors—provides a realistic framework for vertical growth.

• Staggered Compliance: We especially thank the government for allowing 50% of TDR submission at the time of permission and the remaining 50% prior to the Occupancy Certificate, which significantly eases the initial capital burden on projects.

"This G.O. is a testament to the government's commitment to making Telangana a global real estate destina-

tion. By integrating TDR into road widening, master plan modifications, and height relaxations, the state is ensuring a win-win for both urban infrastructure and private development."— CREDAI Hyderabad Leadership

About CREDAI Hyderabad: The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) is the apex body of private Real Estate developers in India, established in 1999, with a vision of transforming the landscape of the Indian Real Estate industry and a mandate to pursue the cause of Housing and Habitat. Today, CREDAI represents 13,300+ Developers across 230 city chapters in 21 states and plays an important role in policy formulation by representing the views of its members to various Ministries at regular intervals.

Trump says Iran and US both 'want to make a deal' and says they'll talk today

US stocks on Wall Street joined in the markets rebound on Monday, as investors reacted to Donald Trump's comments that there have been talks between the US and Iran about a "total resolution" to the conflict in the Middle East. The S&P 500, Dow Jones and Nasdaq indexes were all up by more than 2% even though Iran's foreign ministry denied such talks had taken place, according to the BBC's US partner CBS. Earlier on Monday, stock markets in Europe reversed early losses, and London's FTSE 100 is currently up 1%. The price of Brent crude oil is currently hovering around the \$100-a-barrel mark, whereas earlier today it had risen above \$113 (£84). "Markets have been taken on a wild ride, as investors have swung from deep pessimism to giddy optimism about the trajectory of the war with Iran," said Susannah Streeter, chief investment strategist at Wealth Club. However, she adds: "Clinging to President



Trump's words is fraught with risks, given how hopes have already risen and then been dashed over the last four weeks." The number of tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz has slowed to a trickle since the start of the US-Israel war against Iran on 28 February. Many of those that make the journey in the face of Iran's threats against shipping have turned their AIS tracking devices off to make detection harder. But a

few have kept their transmitters on suggesting a greater confidence that they wouldn't be attacked. Today, three vessels made that journey with their transmitters active according to MarineTraffic data. The ships were seen sailing close together and taking a less-travelled route nearer to the Iranian coast than is normal. The three ships are the India-owned liquid petroleum gas tankers Pine Gas and Jag Vasant, and the China-owned

chemical tanker Bright Gold. Last week, a Pakistan-owned crude oil tanker took the same path close to Iran's shoreline, also with its tracker switched on. Former US Navy Capt Bradley Martin, who is a senior researcher at US defence think tank Rand Corporation, tells me these ships might be following a route given by Iran providing a safe passage if "any mines have been laid anywhere in the Strait". The disruption to the global oil

market that has seen prices surge is "temporary", US Energy Secretary Chris Wright claims. He says that "markets do what markets do" and had increased prices to send a signal to producers to supply more oil. Wright also says costs have not yet risen enough to "drive meaningful demand destruction" - where high prices or limited supply lead to a sustained decline in demand for a product. However, our economics editor Faisal Islam points out in an earlier post that there are longer-term impacts from the war and, even if the conflict ends this week, war-damaged facilities in the region would take time to restore. We've just been hearing from the UK prime minister, who's addressing a committee of MPs in Westminster. Keir Starmer says the UK was aware talks were taking place between the US and Iran. He also says the UK wants to see de-escalation and an end to the conflict "as swiftly as possible". "To that end, I welcome

the talks reported between the US and Iran," he adds. Starmer continues by saying "a negotiated agreement" should put "tough conditions on Iran, particularly in relation to nuclear weapons". Trump has also claimed the price of oil will "drop like a rock" if a deal is done to end the war with Iran. Oil prices have risen significantly since the conflict began, with Iran threatening vessels in the key shipping channel the Strait of Hormuz. He tells reporters "we have a very serious chance of a deal" but adds "that doesn't guarantee anything". The US president also claims the two countries are discussing 15 points to end the war, with Iran giving up nuclear weapons as points "number one, two and three". However, Trump says he wants to see a "very serious form of a regime change". Trump continues by telling reporters at Palm Beach that the US and Iran have "major point of agreement". Speaking

KENYAN EX-FOREIGN MINISTER RESURFACES AFTER ABDUCTION FEARS



Former Kenyan Foreign Minister Raphael Tuju has resurfaced a day after his reported disappearance, which led to fears he may have been abducted. Speaking to local Citizen TV station on Monday afternoon, he said he had gone into hiding after being followed by an unmarked vehicle. He said that on realising he was being trailed, he had branched off onto a road where it would be more difficult to follow him. Once he had shaken off the other vehicle, he then abandoned his car which they would be looking for. "My family is very traumatised... and I consider myself

blessed because there are many Kenyans in unmarked graves," he said, thanking Kenyans and opposition politicians who had stood by him. He mentioned other Kenyans who had been abducted or killed in the past, explaining that this was why he had not sought police help and instead went into hiding. Earlier, the police had said they were investigating his reported disappearance and appealed to the public for information. His family had said the ex-minister and his driver had gone missing as they were on their way to an evening radio interview on Saturday.

Nigerian police arrest 15 after viral videos of alleged sexual assault at festival



Police in Nigeria say 15 people have been arrested following allegations of sexual assault at a community festival in the southern Delta state. Videos circulated online showing young men openly attacking women who were on their own. The clips sparked widespread anger, leading to the hashtag #StopRapingWomen to trend on social media, and renewed calls for accountability over gender-based violence. Delta state police have rejected claims circulating online that the Alue-Do festival in Ozoro was a "rape festival". Local spokesperson Bright Edeafe told Channels TV on Monday that no formal report of rape had been made in connection with the festival. The videos, taken during the Alue-Do fertility festival in the city of Ozoro, show groups of young men chasing, stripping, grabbing and assaulting women in public spaces, in some cases while people are filming. The police spokesman described the scenes as "alarming, disgusting and embarrassing" and said they had arrested several suspects identified from the videos and transferred them to the state Criminal

Investigation Department (CID). Edeafe told Channels: "We have spoken to four girls and all of them said nobody raped them." Among those detained is a community leader widely named as the organiser of the event. The police say investigations are continuing. Some witnesses, activists and residents say women were warned not to go out during parts of the festival, and that those seen outside were deliberately targeted. This has raised concerns that sexual violence may have been organised or tolerated under the cover of tradition. Rights groups say that even if it is not clear whether anyone was raped, the documented acts - including forced stripping, grabbing and public humiliation - constitute serious gender-based violence under Nigerian law. The King of Ozoro has rejected suggestions that the Alue-Do festival condones sexual assault, describing it as a fertility rite that was "misinterpreted and abused by some youths". Traditional leaders also say that no rape occurred. They admit that two women were harassed, but stressing that such acts are criminal, not cultural.

FRANCE'S FORMER SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER LIONEL JOSPIN DIES AT 88



Former French Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has died at the age of 88. In addition to his achievements as head of government from the late 1990s, he will be remembered as a two-time presidential candidate who in 2002 suffered a stunning first-round humiliation from the far-right's Jean-Marie Le Pen. Before that Jospin had served five years as prime minister under conservative president

Jacques Chirac. Chirac defeated him in the 1995 presidential race, but then lost a snap parliamentary vote in 1997, forcing him into so-called 'cohabitation' with the left. In power, Jospin formed an alliance with Communists and Greens. His government enacted important changes like the 35-hour working week, which is still in force today though much criticised by business.

UN issues new climate warning as El Niño looms

The Earth's climate is further out of balance than at any time in recorded history, the UN's weather agency has warned. The World Meteorological Organization says that our planet is gaining much more heat energy than it can release, driven by emissions of warming gases such as carbon dioxide. This record "energy imbalance" heated the ocean to new heights last year and continued to melt our planet's ice caps. And scientists fear that a natural warming phase called El Niño - expected to begin later this year - could soon bring further heat records. In response to the report, UN Secretary General António Guterres reiterated his call for countries to move away from fossil fuels to renewable energy to "deliver climate security, energy security and national security". "Planet Earth is being pushed beyond its lim-



its. Every key climate indicator is flashing red," he warned, in a typically punchy video address. The last 11 years were the Earth's 11 warmest years in records stretching back to 1850, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) says. In 2025, global average air temperatures were about 1.43C above those of "pre-industrial" times - before humans started burning large amounts of fossil fuels. A temporary cooling from

the natural La Niña weather pattern meant that 2025 was not quite as hot as 2024, which was boosted by the opposite El Niño phase. But last year was still one of the three warmest years since records began. Many scientists now believe that warming is accelerating, although they say temperatures are broadly within the range of long-term predictions. And the WMO points to a wealth of other evidence showing that the climate is changing

faster than we have ever seen before. Perhaps the most comprehensive measure is the amount of extra heat energy being taken up by the Earth. This "energy imbalance" ultimately drives climate change and reached a new high last year, the WMO says. While scientists are still working out exactly why the Earth has accumulated so much extra heat over the past decade or so, they have no doubt that heat-trapping greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2) are the root cause of the imbalance. Levels of CO2 in the atmosphere are at their highest for at least two million years, the WMO says, due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels. Some of the extra energy trapped by these gases warms the atmosphere and the land, as well as melting the planet's ice.

AUSTRALIA'S ABC STAFF TO GO ON STRIKE FOR FIRST TIME IN 20 YEARS

Staff at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) will go on strike on Wednesday for the first time in 20 years, after rejecting a pay rise offer. The 24-hour strike will begin at 11:00 local time (00:00 GMT) and is expected to disrupt live television and radio broadcasts. It comes after 60% of ABC staff rejected management's offer of a 10% total pay rise over three years - 3.5% in the first year and 3.25% in the two years after. Australia recorded an annual inflation rate of 3.8% in January. The unions said the offer was too low and failed to address many other concerns including reproductive health leave and the use of artificial



intelligence. The ABC has about 4,500 staff members and 75% voted on the offer on Sunday. "We can't accept a deal that cuts conditions, sends pay backwards against inflation and refuses to rule out replacing ABC journalists with AI bots," said Michael Slezak of the

journalists' union, Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA). Disruptions are "inevitable" unless ABC puts on the table a "fair offer", said Jocelyn Gammie of the non-journalists' Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). "The last union members

want to do is inconvenience loyal ABC audiences by disrupting programming and services, but key bargaining claims remain unresolved," she said. But ABC managing director Hugh Marks said the offer "reflects the maximum level the ABC can sustainably provide and is balanced when looking across all the factors that we need to consider". Marks said the offer was "both sustainable and financially responsible". The ABC will ask Australia's workplace tribunal, the Fair Work Commission, to help resolve the dispute. The last time ABC staff members went on strike was in 2006, over pay and employment conditions.

HK police can now demand phone passwords under new national security rules



Hong Kong police can now demand phone or computer passwords from those who are suspected of breaching the wide-ranging National Security Law (NSL). Those who refuse could face up to a year in jail and a fine of up to HK\$100,000 (\$12,700; £9,600), and individuals who provide "false or misleading information" could face up to three years in jail. It comes as part of new amendments to a bylaw under the NSL that the government gazetted on Monday. The NSL was introduced in Hong Kong in 2020, in wake of massive pro-democracy protests the year before. Authorities say the laws, which target acts like terrorism and secession, are necessary for stability - but critics say they are tools to quash dissent. The new amendments also give customs officials the power to seize items that they deem to "have seditious intention". Monday's amendments ensure that "activities endangering national security can be effectively prevented, suppressed and punished, and at the same time the lawful rights and interests of individuals

and organisations are adequately protected", Hong Kong authorities said on Monday. Changes to the bylaw was announced by the city's leader, John Lee, bypassing the city's legislative council. While law enforcement officials in many parts of the world have the authority to demand access to electronic devices as part of criminal investigations, the NSL covers a sweeping range of vaguely defined offences from secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with external forces. The NSL also allows for some trials to be heard behind closed doors. The city has seen the arrests of hundreds of protesters, activists and former opposition lawmakers since the introduction of the NSL. In February, the father of pro-democracy activist in exile was jailed for trying to cash out her insurance policy, under a homework law that expands on the NSL. Also in February, media tycoon Jimmy Lai was sentenced to 20 years in jail after being convicted of foreign collusion and publishing seditious material under the NSL.



BTS agency shares drop after comeback show turnout falls short

France's Socialists hold on to power in major cities in election boost for mainstream



Socialists and allies held on to power France's big four cities - Paris, Marseille, Lyon and Lille - on a local election night that offered hopes for mainstream parties in next year's presidential elections. The new aspirants of the far-left and far-right also made gains - notably in Nice for an ally of Marine Le Pen and

Roubaix in the north for the France Unbowed (LFI) party. But the big lesson of the evening was the failure of alliances between mainstream left and LFI, with voters turning to the centre and right in long-time Socialist Party (PS) strongholds like Clermont-Ferrand and Brest. On the contrary, in cities like Paris, Marseille and Lille - where incumbent Socialists steered clear of the far-left because of accusations of sectarian anti-Semitism in its ranks - left-wing administrations were comfortably returned. Lyon - where the ecologist mayor Gregory Doucet did ally himself with LFI and still won - was seen as a case apart, because the right-wing challenger.



DOMINANT HODGKINSON WINS FIRST WORLD INDOOR TITLE

After an injury-blighted first season as Olympic champion, 2026 is about one thing for Keely Hodgkinson: "domination". The 24-year-old captured her first world indoor title in commanding fashion as she claimed 800m gold in a championship record time on a historic night for Great Britain in Poland on Sunday. That success came one month after she smashed the long-standing women's indoor 800m world record, set by Slovenia's Jolanda Ceplak on the day the Briton was born in 2002. The first of two serious hamstring injuries prevented her from attacking that mark 12 months ago, and she was forced to wait 376 days to race again following her crowning moment at Paris 2024. But Hodgkinson - branded Keely 2.0 within her training group following her impressive rebuild in the gym - is already making up for lost time. "My word this year has been domination," Hodgkinson told BBC Sport. "When I'm in the shape of my



life, why leave it to chance? "If you want to beat me, I'll make you work hard for it." Hodgkinson made further history by becoming Britain's first women's 800m world champion - indoors or outdoors - crossing the line more than a second clear of her rivals in one minute 55.30 seconds. That triumph wrapped up 28 minutes of success after golds for her

training partner Georgia Hunter Bell and pole vaulter Molly Caudery on a sensational Sunday for the British team. Following Josh Kerr's 3,000m triumph on Saturday, it guaranteed the British team's most successful World Indoor Championships of all time, surpassing the three gold medals achieved in 1999. Hodgkinson reappeared on the track less than an hour

after her gold to join the bid for a women's 4x400m relay medal at the end of the final day of action in Torun. Despite her best efforts - and running the quickest leg of any athlete in the event with a 50.10-second split - she was unable to overturn a substantial deficit on her anchor leg. After executing her seismic, record-breaking run last month, Hodgkinson's atten-

tion was fixed firmly on gold in Torun. This was the final international podium missing from Hodgkinson's extensive list of honours, after various injuries prevented her from competing at each of the past three world indoors. Hodgkinson, who has 11 international medals, has also been denied in her three attempts to win world gold outdoors, achieving two silvers and one bronze. She said she hoped it would be "fourth time lucky" indoors in 2026 - but had to overcome misfortune even before beginning her gold medal bid, after the airline she had travelled with lost her kit. With her belongings delayed, Hodgkinson was forced to complete her preparations in somebody else's spikes, which ended up giving her a blister. But that did not affect Hodgkinson as she dominated Friday's heat, before cruising to victory in Saturday's semi-final in a time faster than all but one of her fellow finalist's personal bests.

Sebastian Korda Sends Carlos Alcaraz To Another Early Exit In Miami Open, Aryna Sabalenka Advances

Sebastian Korda stared down Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday, sending the world number one crashing out of the Miami Open third round 6-3, 5-7, 6-4. Korda, ranked 36th in the world, notched his first victory over a world number one, sending Alcaraz to his second straight early exit in Miami following defeat to 55th-ranked Belgian David Goffin in the second round last year. Since that defeat, Alcaraz had built a remarkable 73-6 record, including a 16-0 start to 2026 that included an Australian Open triumph to complete a career Grand Slam and a title in Doha. It looked like Korda had missed his chance to spring the upset when he served for the match at 5-4 in the second set and was broken at love. Alcaraz won the next two games to force a third set, part of a run of five straight games for the Spaniard. But Korda didn't buckle, and it was the American who seized a break for 4-3 in the third when Alcaraz sailed a forehand wide. He held his next service



game with confidence, slamming down an overhead winner on game point and after Alcaraz held serve Korda served for the match again, this time making no mistake. "It feels great," said Korda, who has been ranked as high as 15th in the world but has endured two seasons disrupted by injuries. "I took the scenic route, that's for sure - a little more stress than I would want but happy with how I played, happy with how I stayed with it." Alcaraz said Korda played an "incredible" match. "A lot of tight, tight moments that I just didn't

make the most of it," Alcaraz said. "I think he was better on those points, on those moments. I would say that was the key of the match." Korda will face Spanish qualifier Martin Landaluce for a place in the quarter-finals after Landaluce ousted 14th-seeded Russian Karen Khachanov 6-3, 7-6 (7/2). Sabalenka marches on World number one Aryna Sabalenka kept her title defense on track with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over 72nd-ranked American Caty McNally that was tougher than the score indicated.

"People Committed Suicide": Afghanistan Star Gives Shocking Take On Pakistan Rivalry

The on-field rivalry between Pakistan and Afghanistan has grown more intense over the years and tempers have flared between the players on some occasions in the recent past. The last few matches between the two sides have produced a number of memorable moments but Afghanistan cricket team wicket-keeper batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz made a stunning claim about their loss against Pakistan in the Asia Cup 2022 Super 4 match. Pakistan defeated Afghanistan by one wicket to make their way into the final after mounting a stunning comeback. Afghanistan looked in control for the majority of the match but Naseem Shah slammed Fazalhaq Farooqi



for back-to-back sixes on the first two balls of the final over of the game to clinch the win. Gurbaz narrated the feelings after the loss and even said that people in Afghanistan committed suicide after the defeat. "For me, the most heartbreaking match was the loss against Pakistan in the 2022 Asia

Cup. People back home were very hurt. Many people cried. Here, people committed suicide. We have many emotional people here. We also get hurt as we play for people here," Gurbaz told Shubhankar Mishra in an interview. "As I am talking to you about that match, I can still recall the sad mem-

ories. Whenever I walk into the Sharjah Stadium, I am reminded of that heart-breaking loss. I still think about how we lost that game, which we should have won. We didn't bat well, but we bowled nicely. But in the end, we lost," he added. Gurbaz made it clear that he does not hold any personal grudge against the Pakistan cricketers but added that the fans demand a win over Pakistan whenever the two teams face each other. "We are cricketers. We play for people here in Afghanistan. Our happiness lies in our people's happiness. If you ask people here about the most memorable game, they would tell you about the 2023 ODI World Cup win against Pakistan," said Gurbaz.

Axar Patel Makes Big Remark On Team India's 'Tradition': "Temple Visits Not A Bad Thing"

Delhi Capitals skipper Axar Patel opened up about the 'tradition' of the Indian cricket team to visit temples during bilateral series as well as ICC tournaments. During the T20 World Cup 2026, the Indian cricket team players visited multiple temples ahead of their matches and even after their title win, captain Suryakumar Yadav, head coach Gautam Gambhir and International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman Jay Shah visited the Hanuman Temple in Ahmedabad and took blessings with the trophy in hand. During an event on Monday, Axar was asked about the team's 'tradition' and whether he will continue it during the IPL. The DC skipper gave a clear reply and said that it is a



decision taken by most players due to time constraints. "Temple visits are not a bad thing. We go to temples where otherwise we wouldn't be able to go. We have security with us during tournaments," said Axar Patel during a Delhi Capitals press conference ahead of the upcoming IPL 2026 season. Meanwhile,

playing XI with one of the five listed substitutes at any point of the match. It was introduced in 2023 and will stay until at least 2027. In 2024, Rohit had said that he was not a fan of the strategic rule saying it hampered the development of all-rounders in Indian cricket while the following season, Hardik said it had become to difficult pick an all-rounder in the side unless he was equally good with both bat and ball. Responding to a PTI query seeking his views on the rule, the Indian T20 vice-captain too weighed in on the subject ahead of his second season as Delhi Capitals captain. "I don't like this rule as I am all rounder myself (laughs). Earlier we used to pick all-rounder for this role (batting and bowling).

Gary Kirsten Accuses Pakistan Cricket Board Of 'Interference', Mohsin Naqvi Responds

A World Cup winner in 2011 with the Indian team as head coach, Gary Kirsten's experience with the Pakistan team was quite different. Under the South African, India became world champions in the ODI format, but his association with Pakistan failed to create a similar impact on the global stage. Reflecting on his stint with the Pakistan team, Kirsten accused the country's board of "excessive interference" in his role. PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi has now responded to Kirsten's accusation. In his remarks, Kirsten said the level of intervention from "outside forces" in Pakistan cricket was unprecedented. Such involvement, he explained, made his job more difficult. "The thing that surprised me more than anything was the



level of interference. I don't think I have ever seen it at that level before," Kirsten said. "It is quite difficult for a coach to come and formulate a way that you can work with the players when there is just this constant noise from the outside." Responding to Kirsten's accusation during a media briefing, Naqvi said his interactions with the South

African were very limited. Therefore, it would be better for others who worked closely with him to respond in detail to the allegations. "I didn't have many interactions with Gary Kirsten, so it would be better if those people who were coordinating things with him and involved regularly with him responded in detail to his allegations," Naqvi said.

"Can't Be Surrounded By Warships": India Chess Great Koneru Humpy On Pulling Out Of Candidates

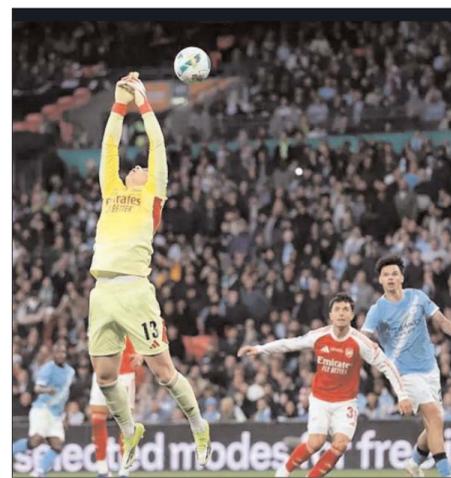
Indian chess great Koneru Humpy stood firm on her decision to pull out of the Candidates tournament in Cyprus later this month, saying one cannot be "surrounded by warships" and still play peacefully, while asserting she is "not scared" of penalties and is not playing for monetary benefits. Humpy, the two-time World Rapid champion and one of four Indians set to compete in the Candidates in Cyprus from March 28, pulled out of the prestigious event citing safety concerns amid the ongoing Gulf conflict, given the island's proximity to the volatile region. Earlier this month, a drone strike on a UK base heightened fears in the region, prompting Humpy to pull out. She has since been replaced by



Ukrainian Grandmaster Anna Muzychuk. "You can't play surrounded by warships, which is guarding the island (Cyprus). If a foreigner like me and being a woman, if I have to travel and that too for such an important tournament, how can I play peacefully?" Humpy told PTI on Monday. With her late withdrawal, Humpy is the only one

among the 16 contestants - eight in the Open and eight in the women's section - to pull out, and while there could be a hefty financial penalty, she said she is not scared. "See, that's the point. That is why they (international chess federation FIDE) keep these things (penalties) so that players will not speak out the facts. No, I'm not scared about it.

THE SENTIMENTAL GOALKEEPING CALL THAT COST ARSENAL



There is no hiding place for a manager when decisions go against them and Mikel Arteta's choice to stick by cup goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga will be one that haunts him. Arteta is known for his ruthlessness but, by opting to stick with cup goalkeeper Kepa for the Carabao Cup final, he showed a rare glimpse of his sentimental side - especially with Arsenal having not won a major trophy since 2020. Kepa's error - when he let Rayan Cherkki's cross slip through his fingers - allowed Nico O'Reilly to head Manchester City into the lead. And Pep Guardiola's side never looked back as O'Reilly headed in again just four minutes later to seal the win. Arteta's decision to play Kepa over first choice David Raya was highlighted further because of the performance of City's own cup

goalkeeper, James Trafford. Trafford was re-signed during the summer to be City's number one before Gianluigi Donnarumma became available and the club moved to sign him from Paris St-Germain, which meant Trafford became second choice. Trafford made an excellent triple save early in the game, when he denied Kai Havertz and Bukayo Saka twice, to keep the scores level. He went on to keep a clean sheet, while the questions about Kepa's selection will dominate the headlines. Former Blackburn striker Chris Sutton told BBC Radio 5 Live: "I never understand why managers play their second-choice goalkeepers in cup finals. 'You're trying to win a trophy, why wouldn't you play your number one to give yourself the best possible chance? That's common sense."

SUNDERLAND NOT VERY GOOD COMPARED WITH NEWCASTLE - GORDON

Anthony Gordon says Newcastle United's defeat by rivals Sunderland is "not good enough" because the Black Cats are "not very good" compared with the Magpies. Sunderland completed a league double over their north-east rivals on Sunday with a 2-1 win at St James' Park, having beaten the Magpies 1-0 in the reverse fixture. The defeat means the Tyneside club have failed to beat Sunderland in any of their past 11 league meetings - the longest winless run for either club in the fixture's history. But Newcastle forward Gordon, who scored his side's opener before

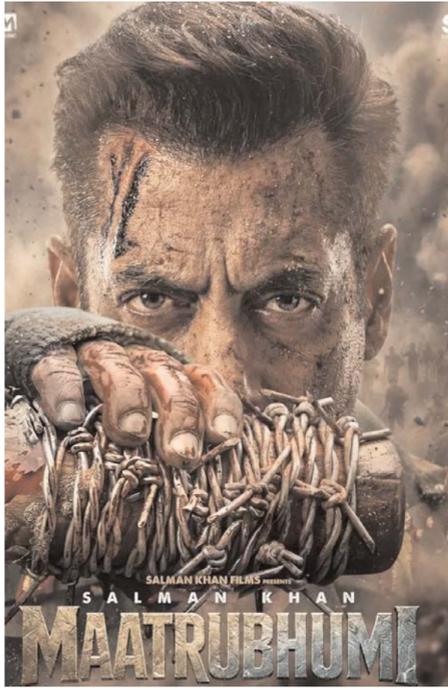
Sunderland's comeback through goals from Chemsidine Talbi and Brian Brobbey, says Eddie Howe's side are the better team. "The frustrating thing is, in my opinion, they're not a very good team compared to us. We shouldn't lose to them," Gordon told Newcastle's club media. "Away is obviously more difficult because they have the fans, the atmosphere and a bit more pressure, but at home we should not lose that game. Not with the first half that we had, but again we haven't been good enough starting second halves and it's an ongoing problem." Sunderland's vic-

tory means they leapfrogged Newcastle in the table, with the Magpies dropping to 12th. The loss followed an 8-3 aggregate defeat by Barcelona in the Champions League. "Not good enough really, no excuses," said Gordon. "We were good for 45 minutes, which has been the case too often this season - we actually knew going into the game and had been trying to work on it. 'Not good enough start to the second half and they were the better team second half.'" The win for Sunderland, managed by Regis le Bris, moved them into 11th place in the Premier League on 43 points

- one point and a place above Newcastle - after 31 games. The Black Cats have won 11, drawn 10 and lost 10 games in the top flight, while the Magpies have won 12, drawn six and been beaten 13 times. Newcastle have scored 44 goals and let in 45 compared to their rivals scoring 32 and letting in 36, while the Tyneside club have, according to Opta, an xG (expected goals) score of 46.7 ahead of Sunderland's 30.3. The St James' Park side have had more shots - 409 to Sunderland's 306 - but the shot conversion rate is similar, with Newcastle's at 10.8% and 10.5% for the Black Cats.



SALMAN KHAN'S MAATRUBHUMI HIT BY DELAY AFTER CAST LOSS



Salman Khan's upcoming film Maatrubhumi, earlier titled Battle of Galwan, has been delayed due to unexpected challenges during production. The film was initially planned for release in early April 2026, but the timeline has now been pushed further.

REASON BEHIND THE DELAY

The primary reason for the delay is the sudden demise of actor and singer Prashant Tamang, who played a key role in the film. He was cast as the main antagonist and had already completed a major portion of his scenes. However, some important sequences, including action scenes, were still pending. His absence has created a major gap in the storyline, making it difficult for the team to move forward smoothly. The production team initially considered reshooting his role, but this option turned out to be complicated and expensive. Since his character was involved in large-scale action sequences, recreating those scenes would require significant time and resources. Additionally, coordinating Salman Khan's schedule and maintaining continuity in his appearance has added to the difficulties.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The makers are currently exploring different options to complete the film. One option is to recast the role, similar to how Paresh Rawal replaced Rishi Kapoor in Sharmaji Namkeen. Another option is to use AI and VFX technology to recreate Prashant Tamang's presence in the remaining scenes. However, this would require permission from his family.

ABOUT THE FILM
Maatrubhumi is directed by Apoorva Lakshia and also stars Chitragada Singh in an important role. The film is inspired by the 2020 Galwan Valley clash and carries the tagline "May War Rest In Peace."

EXPECTED RELEASE UPDATE

The makers are yet to confirm a new release date. However, reports suggest that the film may now aim for a release around Independence Day, depending on how the situation is resolved. Despite the delay, the film remains highly anticipated, and fans are hoping the team overcomes these challenges soon. His absence has created a major gap in the storyline, making it difficult for the team to move forward smoothly.

Kalki 2898 AD sequel back on sets, Prabhas to join soon

The sequel to Kalki 2898 AD has officially resumed shooting, creating excitement among fans. After a short break, the team is back on set, with the latest schedule currently underway in Hyderabad. Though the makers have not made an official announcement yet, multiple reports confirm that work on the film is progressing steadily.

Star Cast Joins New Schedule

Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan recently shared pictures from the sets, confirming that filming has restarted. According to reports, Dulquer Salmaan and JD Chakravarthy have joined the ongoing schedule and are shooting alongside him. Prabhas is also expected to join the shoot soon, which is expected to further boost momentum for the project. Earlier, Amitabh Bachchan had completed a portion of his scenes and returned to Mumbai. He will be seen again as Ashwatthama, one of the most powerful characters from the first film.

Reunion and Production Updates

One of the major highlights of the sequel is the reunion of Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan after nearly four

decades. The duo last appeared together in the 1985 film Geraftaar, making this collaboration special for fans. Reports also suggest that some parts of the sequel were previously shot in

Shankarpally without Prabhas. Now, with the Hyderabad schedule in full swing, the film is moving ahead at a faster pace.

Deepika Padukone Exits the Project

In a surprising update, Deepika Padukone is no longer part of the sequel. The production house confirmed her exit, citing reasons such as scheduling conflicts, a pay hike demand, and her reduced role in the film. Her character was reportedly limited to a cameo in the sequel.



Tovino Thomas's prestigious film "Pallichattambi" teaser has been released. The movie is all set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on April 10



"Pallichattambi" is a big-budget film starring Malayalam star Tovino Thomas. The film is being produced by Noufal, Brijesh, and Chanukya, Chaitanya, Charan under the banners of Worldwide Films and C Cube Bros Entertainments. It is directed by Dijo Jose Antony, with Kayadu Lohar playing the female lead. The movie has generated huge expectations at

pan-India level. This prestigious project is scheduled for a grand theatrical release on April 10 in five languages, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada. The teaser of "Pallichattambi" was released today. It opens intriguingly with the backdrop of a famous ancient church. The teaser hints at dark forces eyeing this sacred place, portraying demonic individuals tormenting innocent people.

Hania Aamir gets trolled brutally for opting 'bold outfit' on Eid

Pakistani actress Hania Aamir is once again making headlines, this time for her Eid-ul-Fitr look that has divided social media. The actress, who was recently seen in the drama Meri Zindagi Hai Tu, which concluded on March 22, is now trending for her festive outfit choice.

For Eid, Hania opted for a saree paired with a sleeveless blouse, keeping her overall look minimal with simple makeup and a traditional parandi hairstyle. While some fans appreciated her elegance, a section of social media users expressed disappointment, stating that the outfit did not align with typi-

cal Eid fashion. Several users took to social media to share their opinions. While a few praised her beauty, others criticised her styling choices, suggesting that the look lacked the traditional "Eid vibe." "What kind of Eid look is this? Is this what we call having the best sense of fashion? Tauba, bhai. Hania was cute, but recently I don't know what she's done to herself, I don't like this at all," one X user wrote. Some comments pointed out that sarees are not commonly associated with Eid celebrations, while others felt her overall appearance could have been styled differently for the occasion. Another commented, "She

looks pretty as usual, but for Eid, she should have worn something else or draped her saree a little differently."

One netizen commented, "saree isn't very appropriate for Eid in my opinion. And she could have at least done her hair well" Another wrote, "Indian fans k Liye indian look krliya but this is not Eid look" "This is not giving the Eid vibe, you could of done better," a third one wrote "Pathetic not according to eid," another commented. Another social media user wrote, "Eid outfits should be traditional & somehow religious as it's a festival related to the religion." Despite the mixed reac-

tions, Hania continues to remain one of the most talked-about celebrities, often grabbing attention for both her on-screen performances and off-screen appearances.

On the work front, the actress was last seen alongside Bilal Abbas Khan in Meri Zindagi Hai Tu. With the drama now concluded, fans are eagerly waiting to see what she takes up next.

For Eid, Hania opted for a saree paired with a sleeveless blouse, keeping her

over-a 11 look minimal with simple make-up



"Gaddar Award has encouraged me to deliver even better music to audiences – Music Director Mark K Robin

Some people exaggerate their small talent as something huge, while others, despite being highly talented, stay away from publicity and quietly focus on their work. Young and talented music director Mark K Robin belongs to the second category. In his 8-year musical journey, he has composed music for more than 20 films. These include successful films like The Ghost starring Nagarjuna, Malleshham starring Priyadarshi Pulikonda, Zombie Reddy featuring Teja Sajja, Mission Impossible with Taapsee Pannu, and Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya starring Naveen Polishetty. Recently, he won the Telangana Government's Gaddar Award for Best Music Director for the film Dandora. On this occasion, he shared insights about his journey and experiences as a music director.

- I am very happy to receive the Gaddar Award as the Best Music Director for the film Dandora. I believe this award will serve as an inspiration for me to deliver even better music to audiences. I feel that this award has increased my responsibility as a music director. I would like to thank

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bharti Vikramarka, and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkata Reddy for announcing the Gaddar Awards. Director Murali made the film with great clarity. The core theme of the film inspired me to compose meaningful music. When the director narrated elements like caste barriers, denial of last rites even after death, and bodies being dropped into water from a bridge, it deeply moved me. I composed the music for Dandora with a heart full of emotion. I used local instruments in this film. I had already gained an understanding of local instruments and folk music while working on Malleshham, and that experience helped me in Dandora. - I have loved music since my childhood. I worked as a teacher. Lyricist Krishna Kanth is a good friend of mine. Krishna Kanth, Prasanth Varma, and I used to meet often. Prasanth and I together created Dialogue in the Dark, India's first virtual audio short film. I composed background music for the trailer of Majnu starring Nani.



"THERACHAAPA" TRAILER LAUNCHED

The trailer of the upcoming film "Therachaapa", produced by Kailash Durgam under the Ananya Creations banner, has been launched in a grand manner. Directed by Joel George, the film stars Naveen Raj Shankarapu, Pooja Suhasini, and Sreelu in lead roles, with a strong supporting cast including Rajeev Kanakala, Prithviraj, Jagadeesh Prathap Bandari, Fish Venkat, Jabardasth Ashok, Nagi, Apparao, Rising Raju, Rajesh Bhoopathi, Naga Vamsi, Srinivas Nesa, Chandra, and others.

The film's cinematography is handled by Azeem and Venkat, while the music is composed by Prajal Krish, with background score by M.L. Raja. Editing is done by Raju Bodasingi, and choreography is by Jeevan George.



As the release date approaches, the makers unveiled the trailer, offering a glimpse into the film's world. The trailer begins with a pleasant and soothing background score, setting the tone for a story rooted in a coastal village. It portrays the

essence of rural life — filled with love, relationships, politics, and social divisions.

The narrative appears to revolve around a young man who rises against the prevailing circumstances in his village, highlighting emotional conflicts and

societal struggles. The dialogues and treatment stand out, promising a compelling cinematic experience. Overall, "Therachaapa" looks like a promising village political drama that could set a new benchmark in Telugu cinema.