

OM NAMO  
VENKATESAYA

11-03-2026

Total pilgrims: 66,606

Tonsures: 25,899

Hundi kanukalu: 4.78CR

Waiting Compartments...25

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

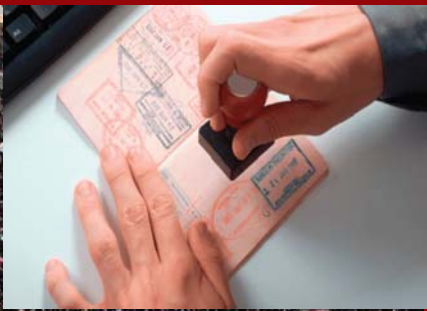
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MARCH 31



SHUBMAN GILL SET TO  
BE NAMED CRICKETER  
OF THE YEAR AT BCCI  
ANNUAL GALA



## Healthcare must remain humane, says CM Revanth



### HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:

A.Revanth Reddy said that healthcare should never become purely mechanical and stressed that medical services must always be delivered with compassion and humanity. Speaking at the inauguration of a new facility of Medcover Hospitals in Hyderabad, the Chief Minister said the hospital group has earned wide recognition across the country for its medical services.

Highlighting Hyderabad's contribution to the pharmaceutical sector, he said around 40 percent of India's pharmaceutical production comes from Hyderabad, adding that three COVID-19 vaccines were produced in the city's Genome Valley, which is a matter of pride for the state.

Chief Minister recalled that economic reforms introduced by former leaders such as P. V. Narasimha Rao and Nedurumalli Janardhana Reddy laid the foundation for Hyderabad's growth, while N. Chandrababu Naidu played a key role in completing HITEC

City and transforming the city into an IT hub. Revanth Reddy said the state government is introducing major reforms in the education sector to ensure quality learning. From the coming academic year, the government plans to introduce an integrated education system from Nursery to Class 12 and establish Telangana Public Schools, providing students with quality breakfast, lunch and transport facilities.

Transport facilities will also be provided free of cost or at 50 percent subsidy for students studying in government schools. To strengthen employability, the government is also setting up a Skills University to enhance students' professional capabilities. The Chief Minister emphasized that providing quality education can reduce the need for welfare support, adding that a healthy woman ensures the well-being of the entire family.

He also announced that the state government is preparing digital health data for around

6.5 million people, based on 20 years of Aarogyasri Health Care Trust data, and plans to issue digital health cards to beneficiaries.

The government is also focusing on cancer care, he said, adding that renowned oncologist Nori Dattatreyyudu has been appointed as an advisor. Revanth Reddy noted that the state has spent Rs.1,800 crore on Aarogyasri and Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) and is investing nearly Rs.10,000 crore in the construction and infrastructure development of hospitals including Osmania General Hospital and Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences.

Expressing concern over the rising cost of medical treatment, the Chief Minister suggested that private sector doctors should dedicate one month each year to serve in government hospitals. He further stated that the government is exploring plans to provide life insurance coverage to nearly 1.3 crore families across the state.

## IRAN'S NEW LEADER MOJTABA KHAMENEI VOWS TO AVENGE FAMILY, THREATENS HORMUZ BLOCKADE

New Delhi (TSIT) Iran's new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, issued his first statement on Thursday after succeeding his father, Ali Khamenei, who was killed along with several family members in the US-Israeli strikes at the outset of the ongoing West Asia war.

In a message broadcast on Iranian state television, read out by a news anchor, Khamenei vowed that Tehran would "avenge the blood of Iranians" killed during the conflict and warned that Iran would continue targeting American bases across

the region. "We are not enemies of the countries around us," the statement said. "But the existence of the US bases in some of these countries and their use to attack Iran is not benefiting the region and they must be closed." He also warned that Iran would continue to use the threat of blocking the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz as leverage against the US and Israel.

Linking the war to personal loss, Khamenei said members of his own family were among those killed in the strikes. "I lost my father and my wife. My sister lost

her child and her husband," he said, adding that patience and faith would guide Iran through the crisis. The statement also demanded compensation for war damages, warning that Iran could seize or destroy foreign assets if reparations were denied. The remarks echoed Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who earlier said in talks with leaders of Russia and Pakistan that peace would require recognition of Iran's rights, reparations for war losses and firm international guarantees against future aggression.



## 50 LAKH LPG CYLINDERS BEING SUPPLIED PER DAY, AVOID PANIC BOOKING: GOVT

New Delhi (TSIT): The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said on Thursday that all steps are being taken by the Government to ensure uninterrupted energy supplies, with 50 lakh LPG cylinders being delivered every day, so consumers should avoid "panic booking" of cooking gas. Crude is sourced from more than 40 countries, and 70 per cent of the crude is now coming from routes other than the Strait of Hormuz, which is currently closed, a ministry statement said. India's daily oil consumption is 5.5 million barrels, and it is the fourth largest refiner



in the world with 22 refineries in the country. Further, refineries are operating at high-capacity utilisation; in several cases, they are exceeding 100 per cent. This large refining capacity is allowing the coun-

try a much more comfortable position in terms of availability of petroleum products during the Iran war crisis. availability and sustain the crisis, it said. There are over 1 lakh retail outlets providing petroleum products, all of which have adequate stocks. The supply of natural gas has been affected due to force majeure conditions, but the procurement through alternative routes and suppliers is underway to offset this disruption. To manage this situation effectively, the government has issued a Natural Gas Control Order under the Essential

Commodities Act to prioritise the supply, the statement said. The global situation is challenging, but the Government has taken many steps to maintain the demand-supply balance. These include enhancing production of LPG by the refineries with the entire output of C3 and C4 hydrocarbon streams, comprising propane, butane, propylene, and butane being provided exclusively to the three oil marketing companies for domestic cooking gas.

Hence, in the last five days, LPG production has been increased by 28 per cent through refinery directives.

## DON'T PANIC OVER GAS CYLINDERS, CM STALIN APPEALS TO PUBLIC



CHENNAI (TSIT): Chief Minister MK Stalin on Thursday (March 12) appealed to the public not to panic over the reported shortage of LPG cylinders, in a post on social media platform X. He said he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the concerned Union Ministers regarding the gas cylinder situation and urged them to take immediate measures to ensure adequate supply. Recalling the discussions held to tackle the issue, the Chief

STALIN SAID HE HAD WRITTEN TO PM NARENDRA MODI AND THE CONCERNED UNION MINISTERS REGARDING THE GAS CYLINDER SITUATION AND URGED THEM TO TAKE IMMEDIATE MEASURES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLY..

Minister said efforts were underway to manage the situation arising out of the conflict in the West Asian region. "We have also raised the gas cylinder issue in Parliament and staged a demonstration to emphasise the need for immediate intervention by the Union government," Stalin said.

Meanwhile, the reported scarcity of LPG cylinders has affected the hospitality sector, with around 300 hotels reportedly shutting down operations in Chennai on Thursday. Several eateries have also reduced their menu options due to the shortage. In addition, canteens and hotels operating in government buildings have increased the prices of food items, with rates of items such as coffee and meals rising by Rs 10 to Rs 20, without prior notice.

## Nearly 9,000 Indians currently in Iran, govt tells Parliament



New Delhi (TSIT): There are nearly 9,000 Indians including students, business persons, factory workers, pilgrims, seafarers, and fishermen in Iran at present, the government informed Parliament on Thursday, March 12. In a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita also said the Indian Embassy has advised Indian nationals in Iran to exercise utmost

caution, maintain situational awareness, monitor local media for any developments and stay in contact with the embassy.

The Ministry of External Affairs was asked the details of Indian citizens who are still in Iran, and the details of measures taken for their safety, including emergency helplines activated by the embassy, deployment of consular teams and any arrangements with Iranian authorities for protection. "The Ministry and the Embassy of India in Iran have issued periodic advisories (5 January, 14 January, 23 February, 28 February and 3 March 2026) to Indian nationals, urging avoidance of non-essential travel to Iran and advising those wishing to leave to do so by the means available.

## POLICE KEY TO ACHIEVING \$3 TRILLION ECONOMY GOAL: BHATTI



Hyderabad (TSIT) : Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said the police department plays a crucial role in achieving the state's goal of becoming a \$3 trillion economy by 2047. He made the remarks during pre-budget meetings with the Home, Industries and IT departments held at the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat on Thursday.

The Deputy Chief Minister said strong law and order is essential as more investors are showing interest in Telangana. He directed officials of the Home Department to ensure there are no lapses in security and surveillance, assuring full government support to strengthen policing

systems. He also suggested introducing electric vehicles in the police department in phases as part of the government's push towards sustainable mobility. Stressing the importance of surveillance in crime prevention, he instructed officials to expand the use of CCTV cameras across the state and repair non-functional cameras. Bhatti Vikramarka said the state must adopt the Public-Private Partnership model to achieve its economic goals and asked the Industries Department to prepare suitable plans. He also emphasised the need to focus on rural development through the RARE (Rural Agri Region Economy) initiative.

## Rahul Gandhi raises LPG issue in Lok Sabha, says 'pain has just started'

New Delhi, March 12 : Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi, on Thursday, flagged the issue of LPG shortages hitting the hotel industry, in the wake of West Asia crisis and claimed that this was the "beginning of pain" that will only aggravate in days to come. Speaking in Lok Sabha over 'LPG crisis', the Congress MP took potshots at the Union government over its alleged surrender to the US administration's diktats and asked how could the US President Donald Trump decide "from where and from whom India makes its oil purchases". Rahul Gandhi reiterated his 'compromise' charge, holding it to be the key reason for petrol and LPG shortages in the country. These claims were subsequently countered by the Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who declared that the country's oil reserves were full and there was no looming crisis before the country.

LoP Rahul Gandhi, while speaking on the West Asia crisis, said the US-Israel and Iran war will have far-reaching consequences for everyone, including India, and it has started becoming evident.

"The central artery through which 20 per cent of the global oil flows, the Strait of Hormuz, has been closed. And this is going to have tremendous repercussions, particularly for us (India), because a very large portion of our oil and natural gas comes through the Strait of Hormuz." "The pain has just started. Restaurants are closing, there is widespread panic about LPG, street vendors are affected, and as I said, this is only the beginning," the Lok



Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi, on Thursday, flagged the issue of LPG shortages hitting the hotel industry, in the wake of West Asia crisis and claimed that this was the "beginning of pain" that will only aggravate in days to come.

Sabha LoP added.

Questioning United States' 'interference' in India's petroleum pacts, LoP Rahul Gandhi asked "how could a third nation decide who we buy oil from, whether we can buy oil from Russia or not, and whether our relationships with different oil suppliers can be decided by us -- this is what has been bartered".

He went to add that this issue puzzled and perplexed him for long, however, he has now understood it and such 'capitulation' is because of India compromising its interests.

"It is a very puzzling fact why a nation the size of India would allow any other nation, or the President of another nation, to give us permission to buy Russian oil and decide who our relationships are with."

"I have figured the puzzle out, and the puzzle is about compromise," the Lok Sabha LoP said.

The LoP's mention of Epstein however did raise eyebrows as well as the hackles of the ruling Treasury benches. While cornering the Central government on the LPG issue, Rahul Gandhi said that the Union Petroleum Minister has admitted on record that he had relations with Jeffrey Epstein.

This prompted Speaker Om Birla to intervene. Outside the Parliament, a couple of Bharatiya Janata Party MPs demanded that the Congress MP Rahul Gandhi be penalised for violating the parliamentary protocols and raking up the Epstein issue despite the latter having no connection with the issue.

# Lok Sabha functions under rules, no member has privilege to speak beyond framework: Birla

**NEW DELHI:** The House functions strictly according to rules and no member has the privilege to speak at any time and on any subject, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla asserted on Thursday, a day after a resolution seeking his removal from office was defeated.

Birla said the Chair does not belong to any individual, but is a symbol of the prestige of the House.

The Lok Sabha will continue to function according to laid down rules and procedures irrespective of whether it is acceptable to any member or not, he said, underlining that he will conduct the proceedings with sincerity and fairness.

"No member in this House possesses any privilege to speak outside the framework of these rules," Birla said amid thumping of desks by the ruling side.

He said he was grateful to the members of the House for reposing their faith in him during debate. He also thanked all those who spoke in favour of him as well as against him.

"The House has been



running with rules and regulations and will continue to function in future, irrespective of whether it is acceptable to any member or not. I will continue to discharge my duty with all sincerity and impartiality," he said.

Thursday was the first time Birla came to the House to conduct the proceedings since the notice of no confidence was given against him by the opposition on February 10 during the first part of the Budget session, which ended on

February 13. The second part of the session began on March 9.

The speaker said that during the debate over the last two days, some members said Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is not given enough opportunities to speak, and he should be allowed to speak whenever he wishes and on any subject.

"Everyone has the right to speak in the House, but by following rules and regulations. No member, not even the prime minister

or any minister, can speak without the permission of the Chair. No member of the House has the privilege to speak at any time and on any subject. He can speak only when the Chair allows," he said.

Birla said the MPs have the freedom of speech in the House, but they have to follow rules and regulations.

He also addressed allegations that microphones of some members are switched off when they want to speak.

"I don't have a switch to turn the mic on or off. The mic is put on when a member is given permission to speak by the Chair," he said.

Responding to claims that Gandhi was disallowed to table a magazine article based on the unpublished memoir of former Army chief M M Naravane on the India-China conflict of 2020, Birla cited rulings by past speakers when members were not allowed to table documents by the Chair.

Soon after his speech, Birla adjourned the House till 2 pm.

**ED attaches fresh Rs 581-cr assets in case against Anil Ambani's Reliance Group**

**NEW DELHI:** The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday said it has attached fresh assets worth more than Rs 581 crore of RHFL and RCFL, companies of Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani.

An order was issued on March 11 to attach land parcels in Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said in a statement.

The properties worth Rs 581.65 crore belong to Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL), the agency said.

"The attachment follows search operations conducted on March 6 in the case against Reliance Power Limited under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)," it said.

# R N Ravi takes oath as 22nd Governor of West Bengal

**KOLKATA:** Former IPS officer R N Ravi on Thursday took oath as the 22nd governor of West Bengal at a ceremony in the Lok Bhavan here.

He was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, Sujoy Paul, in the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee, senior minister and Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim and Left Front chairman Biman Bose.

No leader from the opposition BJP camp, however, was present at the programme. Several bureaucrats, including Chief Secretary Nandini Chakravorty and senior police officers, also attended the event. The ceremony began with the singing of the national song and anthem.

Ravi was presented the Guard of Honour at Lok Bhavan, before he was



sworn in at the Sardar Patel Unity Hall. Later, the CM greeted Ravi and his wife and welcomed both by presenting traditional 'uttariyas' (stole).

During her brief interaction with the new governor, Mamata Banerjee described West Bengal as a land of culture, and that Bengali people love those who love the state.

Ravi described Kolkata as the country's cultural

capital and noted that it had served as the capital of India during the British rule, adding that he would keep a close watch on developments.

Ravi was appointed the governor of West Bengal following the resignation of his predecessor C V Ananda Bose on March 5.

He had earlier served as the governor of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tamil Nadu.

# SC refuses to entertain plea to bring back Netaji Bose's ashes

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to entertain a plea filed by the grand nephew of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, seeking directions to bring back to India the ashes believed to be those of Bose from Tokyo's Renkoji temple. After a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi showed its disinclination to entertain the plea, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for petitioner Ashis Ray, sought permission to withdraw it.

The bench permitted him to withdraw the petition.

"I am appearing for the family members who want

to give a decent quietus to the ashes," Singhvi told the bench at the outset.

The CJ asked how many times this issue would come up before the apex court.

The bench said last year itself, the top court had dismissed one petition.

Singhvi said this was not the issue that had come up before the court earlier.

"First of all, where are the ashes? What is that proof?" the CJ said, adding that Bose was one of the greatest leaders of our nation, and we all bow down to his sacrifice.

Singhvi said it is recorded that every head of state from India has paid obeisance at the Renkoji temple in Japan.



He said the matter which the apex court had dealt with earlier was concerning declaring whether Bose had died or not.

"That is inference. Until

and unless he dies, there can't be ashes," the bench observed. "First, we would like to know how many family members are supporting this," the bench asked.

# PM Modi asking people not to panic but is himself panicked for various reasons: Rahul

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi amid concerns over reported LPG shortage, saying the PM is asking the people not to panic but is himself panicked for "completely different reasons".

Gandhi alleged that the prime minister is panicked because of the Epstein files issue and the Adani Case in the US.

He made the remarks after several opposition MPs, including himself and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, staged a protest in the Parliament House complex over the shortage of commercial LPG cylinders to demand answers from the government over it.

Speaking with reporters after the protest, Gandhi said, "The PM is saying there is no need to panic, but the PM himself has panicked for completely different reasons... he is panicked because of Epstein, he is panicked because of the Adani case, he is not able to come inside the House."

"You saw yesterday that the prime minister's chair was empty. So, he is telling the country not to panic but has panicked himself," Gandhi added.

Several opposition MPs from the Congress, DMK, TMC and SP, among others, staged a protest near Parliament's Makar Dwar, raising slogans such as 'Naam Narendra, Kaam Surrender' and 'Modi ji, LPG'.

The women opposition MPs, including Priyanka Gandhi, sat down



with a mock brick cooking stove and raised slogans against the government.

In a post on X in Hindi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "When the country is grappling with a severe crisis, Prime Minister Modi ji is engrossed in election tours."

"There is a severe shortage of LPG across the country, and people are standing in queues. Countless small and large industries are being forced to bear the consequences of the BJP's failure. But the government has no answers. Only false claims," he said.

The failure of diplomacy is a serious issue, and the result of the mismanagement of energy is being borne today by the 1.4 billion people of the country, he claimed.

"Narendra Modi ji, bahut hui 'Mann ki Baat, zara sansad mein aa kar kariye

'mudde ki baat' (Enough of 'Mann Ki Baat', come to Parliament and talk on real issues)," the Congress chief said.

With the House being adjourned shortly after meeting at 11 am amid sloganeering by the opposition demanding a discussion on the West Asia situation, Gandhi sat with suspended opposition MPs on the steps of the Makar Dwar and had tea with them.

The opposition has been demanding a full-fledged discussion on the West Asia situation and its impact on India.

Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday appealed to people not to panic and assured them that public interest will be protected. He expressed confidence in tackling the LPG crisis, where the short supply of commercial LPG has crippled the country's hotel sector.

From induction cooktops and microwaves to firewood and solar options, restaurants, street food vendors, and catering businesses across the country are scrambling for alternatives as a shortage of commercial LPG cylinders begins to disrupt kitchens amid the widening conflict in West Asia.

With the government prioritising domestic cooking gas supply to households as the war disrupts global fuel lifelines, businesses dependent on commercial LPG -- from small eateries to high-end restaurants -- are watching the situation anxiously, with some even staring at possible closure in the days to come.

# Women in agri-food sector should get greater role in policy formation: Prez

**NEW DELHI:** President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said women engaged in agriculture and agri-food sectors should get a greater role in policy formation, decision-making and leadership positions, and called for collective action to close gender gaps across the value chain.

Addressing the three-day Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems, the President said success case studies on women in agriculture should be published widely to ensure more people were aware of their contributions.

Emphasising India's strategic choice of women-led development, Murmu said women in the agriculture sector must be given a greater role in policy formulation, decision-making, and leadership positions.

"Larger participation of women at all levels in the sector will promote gender-inclusive agricultural growth," she said.

She called for targeted support for women farmers on issues of land titles, access to technical knowledge, and institutional finance.

On the role of technology, Murmu highlighted 'Sarlaben' -- an AI-powered initiative inspired by the government's livestock care vision -- as an example of how artificial intelligence is opening new



possibilities for women farmers.

Noting that the government had conferred Padma Shri awards on women farmers from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Bihar, Murmu said the next generation should draw inspiration from these trailblazers to contribute meaningfully to the farm sector.

The President welcomed the UN's declaration of 2026 as the International Year of Women Farmers, describing it as a call for "collective action to close gender gaps and promote leadership roles for women across the agri-food value chain". The President cited a series of central government initiatives from the past decade that have sought to economically empower women in agriculture.

The Jan Dhan Yojana, the world's largest financial inclusion programme, now has 570 million bank accounts, of which 56 per cent are held by women. Women also constitute 68 per cent of all Mudra loan beneficiaries, reflecting the reach of India's digital public infrastructure.

Under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana -- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) -- over 10 crore rural households and 90 lakh self-help groups (SHGs) have been mobilised, making it one of the world's largest women-led community initiatives.

More than 4.6 crore women farmers under this mission have received support for adopting improved farming practices.

The Namo Drone Didi scheme provides drones to women SHGs for precision agriculture. The National Rural Livelihood Mission has set a target of creating 6 crore Lakshmi Didi -- women earning over Rs 1 lakh annually -- of whom more than 3 crore have already achieved that status.

The 2025-26 Union Budget has also introduced SHE Marts (Self-Help Entrepreneur Marts) community-owned retail outlets in every district dedicated to marketing products made by SHGs and rural enterprises -- to provide women in agriculture and allied sectors better

market access.

Closing her address, Murmu invoked the global framework of people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership, urging all stakeholders to make gender a special priority in both thought and action.

"With effective gender inclusion in every sphere of activity, including agriculture, we will not only achieve the SDGs but will also make the planet a much more sensitive and harmonious place," she said.

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, ICAR Director General M L Jat, Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAAS) founder Chairman R S Paroda, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Authority (PPVFR), Chairperson Trilochana Mohapatra among others were present at the event.

The three-day event focuses on sharing inspiring success stories of women leaders and scientists; integrating gender-sensitive approaches into agricultural policies and institutions; examining entrepreneurship, financial models, and market linkages to strengthen women's roles in value chains.

It will also deliberate on digital tools, climate-smart innovations, and women-friendly technologies designed to boost productivity and reduce drudgery.

**No girl in Delhi should remain without graduation: CM Rekha**

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday said that all the girls in Delhi should attain at least a graduation-level education.

Speaking at the convocation of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women, she said her government is working tirelessly to provide opportunities for women.

Highlighting the Lakshmi Bitiya Yojana introduced by her government, Gupta said that under the scheme, each eligible girl will receive Rs 1.25 lakh after graduation.

"I wish no girl in Delhi would remain without graduation. Girls should not only go to schools but also attend colleges and study their favourite courses and subjects," the chief minister said.

Gupta said India is now heading towards women-led development.

She urged the students of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women to not only fulfil their dreams and have a career but also to contribute towards the growth of society and the country.

**Assassination bid on Farooq Abdullah figures in RS, opposition blames revocation of statehood**

**NEW DELHI:** The assassination bid on former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah figured in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, with opposition parties blaming revocation of statehood for the incident, while the Centre promised a comprehensive investigation.

Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House, Mallikarjun Kharge, raised the issue when the House met for the day, saying the former chief minister's security was at risk.

"His security is under threat because statehood of Jammu and Kashmir was revoked," he said, adding that when local security and police arrangements were previously with the state government, no such incident could occur.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir today is because the security is with the Union Home Ministry after the revocation of statehood, he alleged. "Law and order has broken down and conspiracy is being hatched to eliminate important leaders."

He said Abdullah was saved by a whisker he was fired at while leading a marriage function at the venue on the outskirts of Jammu on Wednesday night. "Is it the intention of the

government to kill Farooq Abdullah," the Congress president asked. "If the intention was to safeguard him, he should have had full security cover."

People will be safe when the state gets full statehood, he said. "People of Kashmir are not safe in your hands," he told the Centre.

He went on to allege that there was a conspiracy being hatched to eliminate people who stand for secularism, socialism and keeping the country united.

The accused, identified as Kamal Singh Jamwal, was quickly overpowered and taken into custody.

Responding to the concerns, Leader of the House and Union Minister J P Nadda said the government will take all necessary steps to ensure the security of Abdullah.

He said that "a murderous attack" on Abdullah "is a matter of great concern and a very serious matter".

"The Government of India is taking the matter very seriously," he said, assuring a thorough investigation will be done.

The motive of the alleged assign, who has been arrested, would also be ascertained, he said, adding that appropriate action will be taken to provide security to Abdullah.

# CM Naidu Reviews Development Plans at Collectors' Conference

THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES, AMARAVATI (TSIT): The 6th Collectors' Conference, held at Amaravati under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, stood as a significant milestone in the state's developmental journey. This two-day brainstorming session primarily focused on formulating the action plan required to achieve the goals of "Swarnandhra Vision 2047." Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, State Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad, along with Collectors of all districts, SPs, and high-ranking officials from various departments, participated in this conference.

The primary objective of this meeting was to bring administration closer to the people and expedite the resolution of pending issues at the field level. During the conference, the Chief Minister reviewed the performance of several key departments. He proposed the establishment of the "Indian School of Agriculture" on the lines of the Indian School of Business (ISB) to bring revolutionary changes to the agricultural sector. To



ensure farmers face no irrigation difficulties, he directed the administration to release water for Kharif cultivation starting from May 15. Furthermore, to resolve land disputes in the revenue department, he suggested implementing innovative methods like Nellore district's "One Month - One Village - Four Visits" across the state.

He set a clear target for the Collectors: there should not be a single land dispute remaining by March 2027. Discussing industries and investments, the Chief



Minister clarified that Collectors must take responsibility for ensuring that investments coming to the districts do not remain merely on paper but manifest into reality. He expressed that rankings would be given to districts based on industrial growth, which would foster healthy competition among officials. At the same time, he ordered transparency in the implementation of welfare schemes, ensuring that the "Super Six" schemes reach every eligible individual. Specifically, he requested the effective implementation of humanitarian schemes like free travel for the differently-abled in

RTC buses. At the conclusion of the conference, the Chief Minister mandated strict discipline for the officials. He ordered Collectors to tour for at least eight days a month and Secretaries for four days at the field level to personally understand people's grievances. Reviewing law and order specifically with the SPs, he advised them to crack down on ganja (marijuana) eradication and crime control.

Overall, this 6th Collectors' Conference did not stop at mere discussions but prepared a clear roadmap to position Andhra Pradesh as a leader in the country within the next five years.

## Nara Lokesh Receives Grand Welcome at Renigunta Airport



Renigunta (TSIT) Nara Lokesh, Andhra Pradesh Minister for Education, IT, Electronics and RTG, received a grand welcome on his arrival at Renigunta Airport during his visit to Nellore district. Several public representatives and officials, including MLAs Pulivarthi Nani, Nelavel Vijaysri and Bojjala Sudheer Reddy, along with MLC Balli Kalyan Chakravarthi, welcomed the minister at the airport. Officials and leaders from various departments and local bodies were also present on the occasion.

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Rep. by its Authorized officer, Mr. Shakil Dadapuri Nipani ... Applicant  
Versus  
1. M/s. Ratnasiri Marbles. Tiles and Granites  
2. Sri. Kambhampati Vasu Babu  
3. Smt. A. Venkata lakshmi  
4. Smt. Gubbala Ramanamma  
...Defendants  
To  
D1:/M/s. Ratnasiri Marbles, Tiles and Granites Rep.by its Proprietor Sri Kambhampati Vasu Babu, D.no.110-2, R.S.no. 98/1A, Chaitanyanagar, Opp. Enadu Office, Hukumpeta, NH-16 Road, Rajahmundry, East Godavari District

**SUBSTITUTE SERVICE OF SUMMONS BYWAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION**  
1. Whereas the applicant has instituted the above application u/s 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against you for the recovery of a sum mentioned therein together with current and future interest and other reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear and file written statement before this Tribunal at 10:30 a.m. or at such time immediately thereafter according to the convenience of Tribunal on **25-03-2026** to answer the claim.  
2. A copy of the application and annexure are to be collected on your appearance before the Tribunal.  
3. If you intended to file any documents, you file the same with a list along with the written statement.  
4. You should file your registered address and a memo of appearance when you enter appearance before the Tribunal either in person or by a Pleader/Advocate duly instructed.  
5. Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day mentioned herein before, the proceedings will be heard and determined in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this the **28th day of January, 2026.**

Signature of the officer  
Authorized to issue summons  
**REGISTRAR**  
**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL**  
**VISAKHAPATNAM**

## VPA Launches Beach Erosion Mitigation Project in Visakhapatnam with an Outlay of Rs.82.98 Cr



THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES, VISAKHAPATNAM (TSIT) To combat coastal erosion and preserve the scenic beauty of the city's coastline, the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has commenced its annual maintenance dredging and beach nourishment activities. The project focuses on the New Sand Trap (NST) and other critical port areas, including RK Beach. The project is estimated to cost Rs.82.98 crore. A three-year comprehensive plan covering the fiscal years 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28. Every year, approximately 2.50 lakh cubic meters of sand will be dredged and pumped back to the shoreline to replenish the eroded areas. The first phase (2025-26) was inaugurated on March 10, 2026, using the Dredging Corporation of India's (DCI) vessel "Dredge XXI." The works are scheduled to be completed within 45 operational days. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Madhaiyan Angamuthu, Chairperson of VPA & DCI, stated, "VPA is committed to safeguarding Visakhapatnam's iconic beaches. By utilizing sand from the outer harbor's sand trap, we are ensuring the natural restoration of RK Beach. This initiative is being carried out in close coordination with the State Government to preserve our city's coastal assets."

## Visakhapatnam Port Authority Sets Record with 85.07 MMT Cargo Handling

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has created history by handling 85.07 million metric tonnes of cargo in just 345 days of the current financial year, the highest in the port's 92-year history. Chairman M. Angamuthu credited the achievement to efficient operations, improved capacity and strong coordination with stakeholders. He expressed confidence that the port will achieve the target of 90 MMT cargo this year and aim for 100 MMT in the 2026-27 financial year. The chairman congratulated the port team for their efforts in reaching this milestone.



## Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd. Launches Aarogya Seva Kendras in AP & Telangana



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd. has launched Aarogya Seva Kendras across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to provide free primary healthcare services. As part of its CSR initiative, a clinic was inaugurated at Murali Nagar in Visakhapatnam. The centers offer free doctor consultations, lab tests, medicines and health counselling, along with screening for non-communicable diseases such as anemia, diabetes and hypertension. Clinics are currently operational in Visakhapatnam and Kurnool in AP, and in Nizamabad, Khammam, Karimnagar and Mahabubnagar in Telangana. Director Himanshu Walia said the company plans to establish 32 such centres across India to improve access to healthcare in under-served areas.

## Nara Lokesh Invites Capgemini to Set Up IT Hub in Visakhapatnam

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) During a high-level meeting in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh Minister for IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, invited Capgemini CEO Aiman Ezzat to establish a major IT Development Center and Global Capability Center (GCC) in the city. Highlighting Visakhapatnam's rapid growth as an IT and Data Center hub under Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, the Minister emphasized the city's unique ecosystem, which already hosts giants like TCS and Cognizant, with a Google Data Center and the Bhogapuram International Airport set to launch soon. He urged Capgemini to create 20,000 jobs through services in Cloud, BPM, and Digital Engineering, while also



proposing a "Co-development Partnership" with state universities to build emerging technology labs for AI, Cyber Security, and a digital talent pipeline. Furthermore, Lokesh requested the firm's collaboration in developing a "Quantum Valley" in Andhra Pradesh by establishing a dedicated Quantum vertical. In response, Capgemini CEO Aiman Ezzat noted the company's massive

footprint in India, where nearly 2 lakh of its 3.4 lakh global employees are currently based.

He detailed Capgemini's extensive operations across 13 Indian cities—including Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Pune—and its core expertise in strategy, transformation, and managed services. Recognizing the state's potential and the \$23.9 billion firm's existing presence in the country, Ezzat assured that the proposals put forward by the Andhra Pradesh government would be thoroughly evaluated.

The meeting was also attended by Capgemini India CEO Sanjay Chacko and WNS Global CEO Keshav Muruges, signaling a significant step toward boosting the state's tech landscape.

## Massive Rs.100 Crore Amusement Park and Resort Project in Visakhapatnam



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Tourism Department signed an MoU with The Andhra Pradesh

Modern Masti Private Limited to develop a Rs.100-crore amusement park and luxury resort in Visakhapatnam. The agreement was finalized at the IAAPI Expo 2026 in Mumbai under the leadership of Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh. The project, part of N. Chandrababu Naidu's Swarnandhra Tourism Vision 2047, will be developed on about 50 acres and include a 100-room resort. It is expected to create around 300 direct jobs. Officials said the project will receive support under the New Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024-2029 to boost tourism infrastructure in the state.

## U.S. Consulate Team Visits Sri Padmavati Women's University



Tirupati (TSIT) As part of the English Language Fellow Project, the American government deputy Angela Susan Bakula to Sri Padmavati Mahila Viswavidyalayam in August last year to teach students communication skills employability skills and academic writing. Over the past eight months, she has been staying locally, actively engaging with students and

faculty, and successfully conducting several classes and workshops. Appreciating the success of this initiative, representatives of the U.S. Embassy, Ns.Shweta Khanna and Dr. Nausheeta Ali, Consulate General Hyderabad extended their special congratulations and thanks to the university staff for making the program highly successful.

**NIWAS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED**  
(Formerly, Niwas Housing Finance Private Limited)  
Regd. Office: - Unit No. 305, 3rd Floor, Wing 2/E, Corporate Avenue, Andheri- Ghatkopar Link Road, Sector 13, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400093

**Notice under Section 13 (2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002**

NHFL has sanctioned home loan/mortgage loan/construction loan to the following borrowers against mortgage of residential premises. The repayment of the said loans were irregular and the accounts are finally classified as Non-Performing Asset in accordance with directions and guidelines of National Housing Bank/RBI.

NHFL has therefore invoked its rights and issued a notice under section 13(2) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 and called upon the below listed borrowers to repay the total outstanding mentioned within 60 days from the date of the demand notice. The following borrowers are hereby called upon by this publication to pay the total dues mentioned against them plus further charges & interest accrued till payment within 60 days from the date of the said demand notice, failing which NHFL shall resort to all or any of the legal rights to take possession of the secured assets, disposalsale it and adjust the proceeds against the outstanding amount.

The borrowers are also restrained from alienating or creating third party interest on the ownership of the properties.

| Sr.No | Location/<br>Loan Account Number   | Name of Borrower/<br>Co-Borrowers/Guarantor                           | NPA Date    | Date & Amount as per Demand Notice               |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Vijaywada/<br>LNLEALAP-05220024907 | YEDUKONDALUREDDY PITTU (BORROWER)<br>VIJAYALAKSHMI PITTU(CO-BORROWER) | 04-Mar-2026 | 06-Mar-2026<br>Rs. 6,53,813<br>as on 06-Mar-2026 |

**Description Of Property/Secured Asset:** All That Piece And Parcel Of The Property Bearing Bapalia District - Sro M.v.palem - Karlapalem Mandal - Yazali Sivaru Dammanavaripalempanchayatthi Area Limit - Yazali - D.no.866/2 Door No.4-160a-Assessment No.138 Of R.c.c. Building 702 Sq.ft. In These An Extent Of Ac.0.03 Cents Or 145.2 Sq.Yards Or 121.40 Sq.Meters Is Being Bounded By:- East:- Property Belongs To Pittu Subbareddy, Pittu Srinivasareddy Site west :- 1.5 8.yards Of Joint Bata, North:- Pittu Sireesha Site, South:- Late Annam Venkateswarreddy Site Within The Above Boundaries Site Consisting Of 145.2 Sq. Yards Site And Rcc Ground Floor Self Construction Building Along With All Usual And Easmentary Rights.

**Date: 13-03-2026.**  
**Place: Andhra Pradesh**

Sd/- Authorized Officer  
**NIWAS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED**

**ICI Home Finance** Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India  
Branch Office: 54-20-1B, Unit No. 4, Third Floor, Surya Prakash Square, Guranak Colony, Revenue Ward No. 2, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh - 520007, Branch Office: Shop No. 4, A Block, Gupta Square, 60 feet Road Kurnool Road, Ongole, Andhra Pradesh - 523002, Branch Office: 23B-5-7, Shop No. 4, 4th Floor, Vasavi Plaza, Eadaraavari Street, Ramachandra Rao Pet, Eluru, Andhra Pradesh - 534002

[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

| Sr. No | Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs, Loan Account No.            | Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any                                                         | Amount Outstanding              | Reserve Price                       | Date and Time of Inspection         | Date & Time of Auction             | One Day Before Auction Date    | SARFAESI Stage      |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| (A)    | (B)                                                                                     | (C)                                                                                                                     | (D)                             | (E)                                 | (F)                                 | (G)                                | (H)                            | (I)                 |
| 1.     | Puvvada Hemanth Kumar (Borrower) P V Ramana Rao (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHVJW00001395270 | D. No. 4-34, Asmt No. 634, Ground Floor Rcc Building Rs. 302/6, 302/7 Situated at Penamakuru, Thottavuru March 10, 2026 | Rs. 27,33, 872/- Rs. 10, 2026   | Rs. 35,47, 800/- Rs. 89, 354, 780/- | March 23, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM | March 30, 2026 11:00AM To 12:00 PM | March 27, 2026 Before 03:00 PM | Symbolic Possession |
| 2.     | Koteswararao J jaramandamudi Malathi (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHOGE00001552872            | Sy No: 113/A of Chekurupadu Village Chekurupadu Gp Naguluppalapadu Prakasam District Ongole Andhra Pradesh 523262       | Rs. 5,23, 413/- March 10, 2026  | Rs. 8,93, 268/- Rs.89, 327/-        | March 23, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM | March 30, 2026 11:00AM To 12:00 PM | March 27, 2026 Before 03:00 PM | Symbolic Possession |
| 3.     | Jaladi Sudha Rani (Borrower) Veelpa Gopalrao (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHVJW00001371319    | Door No. 3-215 Rs. No. 714 Asst No. 1071010641 Nehru Pet Revenue Ward No.3 Nuzvid Nuzvid-521201                         | Rs. 11,99, 342/- March 10, 2026 | Rs. 23,30, 370/- Rs.2,33, 037/-     | March 23, 2026 11:00 AM To 12:00 PM | March 30, 2026 11:00AM To 03:00 PM | March 27, 2026 Before 03:00 PM | Symbolic Possession |

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- <https://BidDeal.in>) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Mortgagees/notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till March 27, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule. The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before March 27, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before March 27, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article. For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icicifhc.com/>

**Date: March 13, 2026**  
**Place: Vijayawada, Prakasam, Nuzvid**

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

**Bandhan Bank** Regional Office: Netaji Marg, Nr. Mithakhali Six Roads, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-6. Phone: + 91-79-26421671-75

**Demand Notice to Borrowers**

The under mentioned account turned into N.P.A and demand notice is issued by Bandhan Bank Ltd. to the following borrower(s), under sec.13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act (The Act), 2002 which was returned unsecured. Hence, this notice is issued to you all and public at large through publication.

| Name of borrower(s) and Loan Account No.                                   | Description of mortgaged property (Secured Asset)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Date of Demand Notice/Date of NPA | O/S Amount as on Date of Demand Notice | Date of Pasting of Notice |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chittabattula Venkatamarala Mahesh Chittabattula Padmavathi 90001030811259 | All the piece and parcel of Item No.1 - Sri Potti Sreeramulu Nellore Registration District, Stonehousepet Sub Registration, Nellore. Mandal, Vavilpetipadu Gram Panchayat, Vavilpetipadu Village, Survey No's: 127-1,134-2 &126, land approved layout by DTPC, Nellore vide L.P.No.109/2007/RQ/NLR in the name & style of "Satyam G Nagar" Location, init Plot No.08, an extent of 33.33 ankanams & Plot No.09, an extent of 33.33 ankanams, Plot No.10, an extent of 33.33 ankanams & Plot No.11, an extent of 33.33 ankanams, totalling into an extent of 133.32 ankanams or 1066.56 Sq. Yards of site out of which undivided extent of 4.44 ankanams or 35.52 Sq. Yards of Site with all easement rights therein. Item 2 :- Item No 2 :- Flat No.306 in Third Floor and extent of 1152 Sq.ft or 107.024 Sq.Mts(Including with common Area) of R.C.C. Slab Flat in "Ganapathi Nivas" Residential Complex to be built ini 'A' Schedule property bounded by, With these boundaries an extent of 1152 Sq.ft or 107.027 Sq.Mts (Including with Common Area) of R.C.C. Slab Flat in "Ganapathi Nivas" Residential Complex with all fittings and including all easement rights therein. Owned by Chittabattula Venkatamarala Mahesh and same bounded as under: On or towards North Item 1 :- North: Plot No.7 & O-Block, Plot No.38, Item 2:- common corridor On or towards East : Item 1 :- East: 33 feet Layout Road, Item 2:- Common Corridor to some extent, open to sky to some extent On or towards West : Item 1:- West: 33 feet Layout Road, Item 2 :- Lift to some extent, open to sky to some extent On or towards South : Item 1 :- South: 33 feet Layout Road, Item 2 :- open to sky | November 11, 2025/ June 03, 2025  | Rs.24,40,818.37                        | January 29, 2026          |

Demand made against you through this notice to repay to the Bank dues mentioned against your name with interest, costs and charges within 60 days from the date hereof, failing which the Bank will further proceed to take steps u/s.13(4) of the SARFAESI Act. The borrowers /mortgagors' attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**Place: Nellore**  
**Date: March 13, 2026**

Authorized Officer  
**Bandhan Bank Limited**

# EDITORIAL

## Amid Growing LPG Crisis, Why Your Piped Gas May Be The Real Winner

The contrast between LPG and PNG is a contrast between two energy delivery architectures: one, based on physical distribution cycles, and another on continuous infrastructure flow. India's latest cooking-fuel disruption has revealed a structural asymmetry in how energy reaches Indian households. As geopolitical tensions around the Strait of Hormuz disrupted LPG cargo movements in March 2026, the contrast between India's cylinder-based LPG ecosystem and the piped natural gas (PNG) network became stark. The queues outside LPG agencies were not merely a temporary logistics problem. They exposed a deeper vulnerability in India's cooking fuel architecture, one rooted in import dependence, thin storage buffers and a complex distribution chain. By contrast, households connected to city gas distribution (CGD) pipelines experienced little disruption. However, the current crisis does not mean PNG has replaced LPG. But it does explain why, under stress, PNG has demonstrated an infrastructure resilience that LPG struggles to match.

**INDIA'S LPG DEPENDENCE**  
India is one of the world's largest LPG consumers. According to data from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG), India consumed about 31.3 million tonnes of LPG in FY2024-25, while domestic production stood at roughly 12.8 million tonnes. Imports, therefore, met close to 60% of total demand. The scale of LPG dependence is equally visible at the household level. Data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) indicates that India has over 33.2 crore active LPG connections, including more than 10 crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). This rapid expansion of LPG access since 2016 has been a major clean-cooking achievement. But it has also deepened the country's exposure to external supply shocks. The geographical concentration of LPG imports amplifies this risk. Government briefings in March 2026 indicated that around 90% of India's LPG imports normally transit through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy choke-points. Estimates from S&P Global suggest that the strait directly affects over half of India's LPG consumption when transit routes are accounted for. The physical storage capacity of the system offers limited cushioning. In a supply system designed for rapid cargo-to-distribution turnover, even short shipping disruptions can create local shortages before national reserves are mobilised. This is exactly what unfolded during the March disruption.

**WHY PIPED GAS WAS UNHARMED**  
However, while LPG distribution faltered, PNG supplies to households in major cities continued largely uninterrupted. The difference lies in the structure of the two delivery systems. LPG is a logistics-heavy fuel. After production or import, LPG must pass through multiple stages: storage at terminals, transport to bottling plants, cylinder filling, trucking to distributors and final delivery to households. India operates around 210 LPG bottling plants with a rated capacity of about 22.6 million tonnes annually, with more than 25,000 LPG distributors. Each stage in this chain introduces potential disruption points during supply shocks. PNG, by contrast, relies on a continuous pipeline network. Natural gas flows from production fields or import terminals through the national gas grid to city gas distribution systems and then directly to household meters. Once connected, the household receives gas through an underground pipeline without booking refills or managing cylinder deliveries.

## Obscene content, social media and culture: Whose responsibility is it?

- Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

The digital age has profoundly transformed the structure of our society, our ways of thinking, and our ways of expressing ourselves. Today, through mobile phones and the internet, anyone can reach millions of people in a matter of seconds. Social media platforms have democratized expression—where previously, opportunities for entertainment and fame were limited to a limited few, now everyone has a platform to showcase their talent. But with this new opportunity has also emerged many new challenges. One of the most significant is the debate surrounding content that some sections of society consider “vulgar” or “indecent.” Over the past few years, social media has seen a rapid rise in videos that, in the name of dance, acting, or entertainment, showcase gestures and performances that many consider to be contrary to cultural values. These videos often garner millions of views, likes, and shares, further expanding their reach. In this race for popularity, content quality and social responsibility are often overlooked. A large segment of society believes that this type of content has a particularly damaging impact on young people and teenagers. When they see others achieving immense fame and financial gain by creating videos that last only a few seconds, they may develop a desire to do the same. Sometimes this inspiration is channeled into a creative direction—creating content related to music, art, dance, or education. However, in many cases, this motivation turns into a mere pursuit of virality, where any means are used to gain attention. It's also been observed that trends and algorithms have a significant impact on social media. Content that is viewed and shared more often spreads faster. Therefore, if viewers repeatedly watch the same types of videos that they themselves consider “vulgar,” they are inadvertently perpetuating that trend. Therefore, blaming only the content creators isn't a complete solution to this problem. Viewers are

also a vital part of this digital ecosystem. On the other hand, there is also the argument that art and entertainment have their own freedoms. There are many forms of dance, acting, and expression, and each person views them differently. What one person finds inappropriate may be merely a form of entertainment or art to another. This is why this topic sparks heated debate in society. Some consider it a part of freedom of expression, while others see it as an erosion of social and cultural values. This raises an important question—should any kind of popularity be considered a benchmark for success? Social media has greatly accelerated the process of achieving fame. Previously, it took years for an artist to gain recognition; today, a viral video can make someone a star overnight. But this instant fame is often not lasting, and its social impact can be complex. Many young people may fall into the trap of believing that only controversial or attention-grabbing content is the path to success. As a result, they chase instant popularity instead of developing their talents. This trend not only impacts personal growth but also impacts the quality of entertainment in society. Culture isn't the product of a single individual or generation. Culture is shaped by centuries of experience, traditions, and social values. It's constantly changing—as each era brings with it new ideas and new forms. But it's essential to maintain a balance between change and excess. When entertainment becomes solely about sensationalism or attention, it's natural for society to worry about whether we're drifting away from our values. In this context, the role of family, education, and society also becomes crucial. It's crucial to teach children and young people that not everything they see on the internet is worthy of emulation. Digital literacy—that is, understanding how the online world works—has become a crucial necessity today. If young people understand how algorithms work, how views and likes are generated, and what types of content can influence them, they will be able to make

more informed decisions. Content creators also have a responsibility no less. Those who reach millions of viewers also have the power to influence society. If they use their popularity to promote positive messages, creative art, and inspirational content, social media can become a powerful platform for society. There are many examples where creators have promoted education, folk culture, languages, and traditions, influencing millions of people. Therefore, the solution lies not in mere protests or boycotts, but in a balanced approach. Society must decide what type of content it wants to promote. If audiences are more supportive of creative, informative, and culturally rich content, more of that content will naturally be seen. Social media algorithms ultimately depend on audience preferences. Platform companies also have a responsibility to develop standards and policies that take into account the broader interests of society. Many platforms already implement community guidelines, but their effectiveness depends on how seriously they are enforced. Ultimately, it's important to understand that culture isn't protected solely by slogans or hashtags. Culture is strengthened when society sustains it through its behavior, choices, and priorities. If we truly want to preserve our cultural identity, we must promote positive alternatives—whether it's folk art, traditional music, literature, or modern, yet sensitive and responsible, entertainment. Social media is a powerful medium. It can both unite and divide society. The only difference lies in how we use it. If creators create content responsibly and viewers choose wisely, these platforms can become the greatest platforms for cultural preservation and creative expression. Ultimately, culture isn't created or destroyed by one person, one video, or one trend. It's shaped by society's collective consciousness and decisions. Therefore, the responsibility lies with all of us—creators, viewers, and society. (Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

Edit

## Is Trump Starting To Regret Backing Netanyahu's Iran Gameplan?

January's anti-government protests in Iran were probably seen by Israel's wily leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, as a golden opportunity to finally convince Donald Trump to mount a joint military operation against the country. Basking in the glory of his stunning success in Venezuela, Trump must have been swayed by Netanyahu's argument that the clerical regime was at its weakest since the 1979 Islamic revolution and could easily collapse, giving him another quick victory. Trump was likely convinced by Netanyahu that during the 12-day war last summer, Israel had destroyed Iran's air defences, killed its top military commanders, and finished off its air force as well as its large stock of ballistic missiles and drones. He also believed that his decision to drop massive 13,000 kg GBU-57 MOP bombs using giant B2 bombers had destroyed Iran's nuclear facilities in Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan. If Iran had concealed any ballistic missiles within these facilities, those would have been inaccessible after the attack.

**Were Israel And The US In Sync?**  
While Israel was convinced of the need to launch a joint attack to completely destroy Iran's military capability, American military commanders were not sure whether there was any immediate need to do so; they were also not prepared. Only a quarter of the US public supported attacking Iran. But Trump only needed to convince himself. He was emboldened by his swift capture of Nicolás Maduro, replacing him with a compliant Delcy Rodríguez. He wanted to repeat that change in Iran. Persuading American presidents to attack Iran and change its regime has been a major political and strategic goal of Netanyahu for over three decades. But Israel never had an occupant in White House who would actually share that objective and be so open towards it. It was Trump who, in his first term, recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and shifted the US embassy there from Tel Aviv. Under Netanyahu's influence, Trump also withdrew the US from the Iran nuclear deal negotiated by the Obama administration, which Tehran had adhered to. Iran



began enriching uranium to levels close to weapons-grade only after Trump pulled the US out of the deal. It was also Trump who supported Netanyahu's brutal military campaign in Gaza following Hamas's invasion of Israel in 2023. He even sanctioned the judges of the World Court who issued an arrest warrant against Netanyahu for alleged war crimes. Most Israelis have seen Iran as their most important security challenge for years and agreed with Netanyahu that its Islamic regime with an advanced nuclear programme posed an existential threat to the Jewish state. The Ayatollahs have never hidden their wish to wipe Israel from the face of the earth. Under the previous Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, Iran funded, armed and trained anti-Israel groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis. Israel, however, has managed to degrade most of these groups and kill their leaders and commanders in the past three years.

**Netanyahu's Awkward Timing**  
Even so, the timing of Netanyahu's push for a joint military operation against Iran raised eyebrows even in Israel. The strikes came when he was under increasing criticism for the security failures that allowed the 2023 Hamas attack, which resulted in the death of 1,200 Israelis and 251 others being taken hostage. Netanyahu was also fac-

ing a corruption trial, and his popularity was waning ahead of the October elections. Therefore, he aimed to regain public support, which he had enjoyed during the early stages of the Gaza war. For Netanyahu, the Iran conflict is also a useful distraction that has gained even more political significance after the Gaza ceasefire put into question the logic of that conflict - with the release of hostages, he couldn't justify military action in Gaza. Israelis are tired of endless wars where ordinary citizens, as military reserves, have to participate in military conflicts. Netanyahu's policies on Gaza and West Bank settlements have also isolated Israel on the international stage. But as happens during wars, Netanyahu has managed to unite his country once again in favour of military action. After years of suffering from missile attacks by Iran's proxies, they are in favour of destroying its military capability to harm them and even bringing regime change in Tehran. Iran and its proxies have killed at least 3,500 Israelis since the turn of the century. No wonder that last month, a poll in Israel found that 59% of Israelis supported joining an American attack on Iran.

**Americans No Longer Support This War**  
But in the US, the picture has been different. Fewer Americans than

ever share Israel's aims. On the eve of the launch of the current military operation in Iran, a Gallup poll found that more Americans now sympathise with the Palestinians than with the Israelis. According to the survey, 41% of respondents express greater sympathy for the Palestinians, compared with the 36% who side with the Israelis. This is the first major military conflict in which an American administration lacks majority public support. Only 41% of the US public supports this war, according to an analysis of various polls by The New York Times. Even the Iraq war of 2003, during which the public was misled by the George W Bush administration into believing that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, had the backing of 76% Americans.

**Goodbye To Powell Doctrine**  
The late Colin Powell, who was the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff during the first Iraq war in 1991, developed a war doctrine that stated that war should be the last resort, used only after all political, economic, and diplomatic efforts have been exhausted. If the US must go to war, it should have a clear objective, public support, and an exit strategy, according to the doctrine. Since then, most military campaigns have largely adhered to the Powell doctrine, except for the current war against Iran.

## The hunger for followers and the auction of relationships

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

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

viewers? In fact, social media algorithms also encourage this trend. Content that evokes controversy, emotional reactions, or sensationalism tends to go viral faster. People comment more on such videos, offering their opinions, and sometimes even arguing for or against them. This is why some creators deliberately choose topics that can stir up emotions. Unfortunately, sometimes these conflicts are genuine, and the privacy of family members is at stake. A minor dispute can be blown out of proportion by being exposed to the cameras. This not only compromises the dignity of relationships but can also negatively impact other family members—especially children. In some cases, it's been observed that disputes are deliberately exaggerated or even completely scripted. This means that the conflict isn't real, but an attempt is made to appear real to attract audience attention. This blurs the line between entertainment and reality. In this age of social media, going “viral” has become synonymous with success. When a video receives millions of views and thousands of new followers, the creator feels they've chosen the right path. But this popularity is often fleeting. A controversy that captured audience attention one day is overshadowed by another controversy the next. There's also a social aspect to this trend. When viewers repeatedly see such content, they gradually begin to perceive it as normal to

bring personal relationships into the public arena and make them a topic of discussion. This can undermine the sense of privacy and decorum in society. In our society, the family has always been considered a strong institution. Family is not just a living arrangement, but also a foundation of emotional security, trust, and mutual understanding. When internal family problems are made a public spectacle, it undermines the trust that is the foundation of relationships. Furthermore, young people and teenagers make up a significant portion of the social media audience. They are influenced by what they see. If they repeatedly see that it's normal to publicize personal conflicts in order to gain popularity, they may develop the impression that it's acceptable to go to any lengths to achieve success in life. It's also true that not all content creators are like this. There are many YouTubers, bloggers, and digital creators who produce informative, creative, and positive content. Many people working in education, science, art, culture, travel, and social issues are using social media as a positive platform. Their efforts prove that controversy and drama aren't the only path to popularity. The real question is one of responsibility. When someone has the power to reach thousands or even millions of people, it also carries a social responsibility. Content creators must understand that their con-

tent not only entertains but also influences people's thinking and perspectives. Viewers also play a significant role in this. After all, they are the ones who decide what type of content gets watched and what gets ignored. If viewers only promote sensational and controversial videos, it's natural that such content will continue to grow. But if they give more support to constructive and positive content, the digital landscape could change. Today, there's a need for balance and understanding in the use of social media. We should set boundaries for our personal lives and understand that not everything needs to be made public. Popularity and followers are important, but the dignity of relationships and personal respect are far more important. Ultimately, it's important to remember that social media is a tool, not an end. It can be used to spread knowledge, communicate, and foster positive change. But when it becomes a mere pursuit of popularity, its negative consequences begin to emerge. If this hunger for followers and views continues to grow, it's possible that one day people may become popular but lose touch with their own relationships and values. Therefore, it's important to understand in time that true success is achieved with respect and sensitivity—not by auctioning off relationships.

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



# Iran’s unrelenting attacks on Mideast shipping, energy infrastructure send oil prices soaring

**Dubai:** Unrelenting Iranian attacks on shipping traffic and energy infrastructure pushed oil above USD 100 a barrel Thursday, March 12, as American and Israeli strikes pounded the Islamic Republic with no sign of an end to the war in sight. Iran hit a container ship off the coast of Dubai, caused a blaze near Bahrain’s international airport, targeted a major Saudi oil field with a drone and forced Iraq to halt operations at all of its oil terminals after attacking its port of Basra on the Persian Gulf. Iran flouted a UN Security Council resolution from the previous day demanding that it halt strikes on its Gulf neighbours with new attacks also reported in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Sirens wailed before dawn in Jerusalem as Israel intercepted incoming Iranian missiles, and loud booms were heard later in the day in another attack on the city. Israel launched a “wide-scale wave of strikes” on Tehran and in Lebanon, where Israel says it is targeting Iran-linked Hezbollah militants, 11 people were killed in two early morning strikes. Since the United States and Israel started the war with a February 28 attack on Iran, Tehran has focused on inflicting enough global economic pain to pressure them to halt their attacks. US President



Donald Trump suggested that was not imminent, however, promising to “finish the job” even though he claimed Iran is “virtually destroyed.” “We don’t want to leave early do we? We’ve got to finish the job,” he said at an event Wednesday in Kentucky. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei hasn’t yet made a statement or been seen since being chosen to succeed his father Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the opening day of the conflict. But Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian suggested online Thursday that for the war to end, the world would need to recognise Iran’s “legitimate rights,” pay reparations and offer guarantees against

future attacks. In addition to attacking energy infrastructure around the region, Iran has a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway leading from the Persian Gulf toward the Indian Ocean through which a fifth of the world’s oil is transported. With traffic in the strait effectively stopped, the price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose another 9 per cent to more than USD 100 a barrel, up some 38 per cent over what it cost when the war started. Iran fires at Gulf Arab countries and hits ship in Persian Gulf The UN Security Council voted Wednesday to approve a resolution demanding a halt to Iran’s “egregious attacks” on its Gulf neighbours, but

Tehran showed no signs of changing its strategy. As the day began Thursday, a container ship in the Persian Gulf was hit with a projectile off the coast of Dubai, sparking a small fire, according to British military’s United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre. It said the crew of the vessel were safe. In Bahrain, an Iranian attack sparked a major fire on Muharraq Island, home to the country’s international airport. Sirens sounded again later in the morning with more incoming Iranian fire. Kuwait’s Defence Ministry said an Iranian drone smashed into a residential building, wounding two people. The UAE said it had activated air defences twice to

protect Dubai from attacks, and firefighters extinguished a blaze at a tower in Dubai Creek Harbour after a drone hit. Saudi Arabia said it shot down a drone targeting the diplomatic quarter of the capital, Riyadh, and also reported downing drones in the kingdom’s east, including at least one trying to target its Shaybah oil field. Following an attack on Iraq’s Basra port Wednesday that killed at least one person, officials said Thursday that operations were halted at all the country’s oil terminals. Farhan al-Fartousi, the director-general of the General Company for Ports of Iraq, said the attack targeted a vessel in a ship-to-ship transfer area of the Persian Gulf port. In the UAE, Citibank said it would close all its branches except one due to a threat by Iran, not yet realised, to target financial institutions in the region. Other financial institutions have reportedly urged their staff to work from home for the time being. Explosions heard Jerusalem while Lebanon and Tehran are hit In addition to the attacks on Jerusalem, in which no casualties were immediately reported, missile launches from Iran and Hezbollah also sent Israelis to shelters in multiple other areas, including Tel Aviv and the northern border with Lebanon.

## Telangana CM inaugurates Netflix’s Eyeline Studios facility



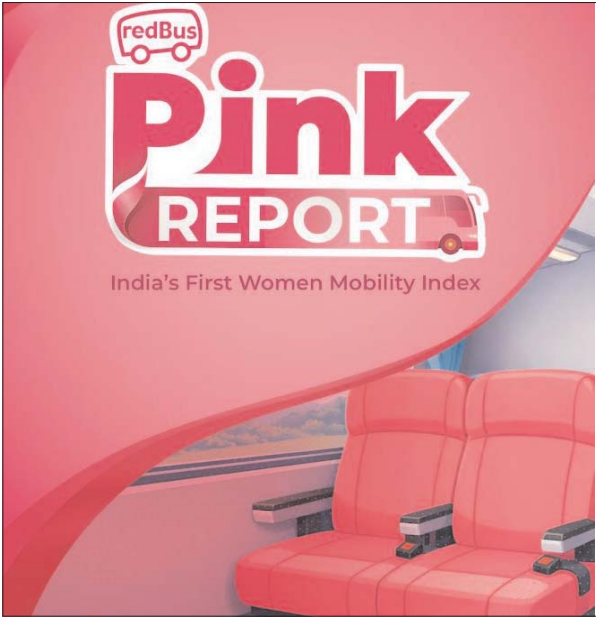
**Hyderabad:** Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday, March 12, inaugurated Netflix Eyeline Studios Global VFX and Virtual Production Hub here and invited the OTT leader to set up a bigger facility in the ‘Bharat Future City’ being developed by the state government on the city outskirts. Eyeline is Netflix’s innovation hub. Reddy vowed to attract all the Fortune 500 companies to the Bharat Future City. Highlighting his dream to make Hyderabad a hub of the international film industry, Reddy said Netflix setting up a facility in the city means the “arrival” of Hollywood. “This is the stepping stone for my

dream. This is the place not only for Tollywood, Bollywood, Kollywood. I have been focusing on Hollywood. Today, I am happy to announce that Netflix is here. I can authoritatively say Hollywood is here. My dream is going to come true. I sincerely welcome Netflix,” he said. Urging Netflix to expand its presence in Hyderabad, he assured the government’s support to the OTT platform. Reddy, who said he has been interested in films since his childhood, offered to allot land in the ‘Bharat Future City’ where AI would be hosted in a big way for Netflix to establish a bigger facility. “I don’t know where your corporate office is. But, you have

to relocate your corporate office to my Bharat Future City. I have openly told my Prime Minister (Narendra Modi). I am going to attract every company in the Fortune 500 list to my Bharat Future City,” he said. Observing that “Hyderabad is a natural home for Netflix”, he said both the city and the OTT platform are global success stories. Noting that Netflix has, of late, been putting lot of focus on sports, Reddy said his government is promoting sports in a big way by building sports infrastructure and establishing a sports university. Telangana IT Minister D Sridhar Babu, Union I&B Secretary Sanjay Jaju and other officials were present.

## Andhra Pradesh Among Top 3 States for Women’s Bus Travel in India: redBus Pink Report

**Hyderabad, 12th March, 2026:** redBus, the world’s largest online bus ticketing platform, released state-level insights from its first-of-a-kind redBus Pink Report during International Women’s Week. Based on internal data between 2019 and 2025, the report highlights a steady rise in women’s participation in intercity bus travel across Andhra Pradesh. The state has emerged as a leading market for women’s intercity bus mobility, and is categorised as one of the top three states for women’s mobility\*. Women travellers have grown by 124% in 2025 compared to 2019, outpacing the overall growth of Andhra Pradesh. Women now account for 35% of intercity bus travellers in 2025, up from 24% in 2019. The findings reflect how women’s mobility has evolved in the post-pandemic period, supported by greater digital adoption, strong intercity connectivity, and rising participation in education and the workforce.



**Here is the link to the full report:**

**Key highlights for Andhra Pradesh:**

Solo women travel has increased by 89% compared to 2019, highlighting a strong shift towards independent journeys

32% of people undertaking long-distance bus journeys above 500 km are women,

indicating rising confidence in intercity travel for work, education, and personal needs.

The 21–30 age group has significantly grown by 92% since 2019, indicating younger users are increasingly driving intercity travel demand These trends indicate that women’s travel in Andhra Pradesh is becoming more frequent, diverse, and purpose-driven, spanning education, employment, and personal mobility.

Prakash Sangam, CEO, redBus commented: “Andhra Pradesh is emerging as a leading state for women’s intercity bus travel, reflecting a clear shift in how women are embracing mobility across the region. Women’s travel in India today reflects more than just rising journeys; it signals a growing sense of independence. More women across India are choosing to travel on their own terms, for work, education, opportunity or leisure. At redBus, we are continuously strengthening features that build trust, from better visibility of bus ratings by women, to enhanced safety information and dedicated support systems. Our goal is to continue to make intercity travel more reliable, more accessible and more empowering for every woman in Andhra Pradesh - whether she is travelling alone or leading a group. We believe mobility is freedom, and freedom should be seamless.”

## HOW IRAN WAR LAID BARE THE WORLD'S RELIANCE ON GULF OIL AND GAS

The US-Israel war with Iran has made startlingly clear how much the world relies on energy from the Gulf region. Since the conflict began, the price of oil has soared and is currently trading at over a third higher at \$100 a barrel, pushed up by air strikes on shipping and energy infrastructure, and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for energy shipments, which carries a fifth of global oil supplies. Nowhere is feeling the effects of the current energy crisis quite like Asia. Last year, nearly 90% of all the oil and gas that passed through the Strait of Hormuz was bound for the region. Ordinary people rely on it to heat their homes, fuel their vehicles and generate electricity. Businesses need it to power the region’s vast manufacturing base. South East Asia, in particular, is highly exposed to the blockade in the Persian Gulf. Even countries that produce oil themselves, such as Malaysia and Indonesia,



have gradually started producing less and importing more over the past decade. The vulnerability is also partly to do with the type of oil produced in the Middle East and how countries in the region refine it. "Middle Eastern crude is generally 'heavy sour' or 'medium sour'," says Jane Nakano, a senior fellow in the Energy Security and Climate Change Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Refineries in South East Asia, Nakano explains, have been set up to process this type of crude oil and simply switching to another provider, such as the US,

is not straightforward. "It would take significant investment to alter refinery specifications," she says. It puts many countries in a bind. The Philippines, for example, gets around 95% of its crude oil from the Middle East. The country’s president has already told public workers to switch to a four-day working week to save fuel. Working from home is being heavily encouraged by various governments in the region. Other fuel-saving measures, such as setting air conditioner temperatures in public offices at a higher than usual 26°C, were announced by Thailand’s energy minister on Tuesday. South East Asia is also heavily reliant on food imports. The island city-state of Singapore imports 90% of its food, while all of Indonesia’s wheat, for example, comes from outside the country. This makes food prices particularly sensitive to rising transportation costs. Last week, the price of jet fuel had soared by nearly 60%. Petrol price caps Vietnam is also feeling the strain. The price of diesel has gone up there by nearly 60% since last month. In some cities this week there were long queues of moped riders at petrol stations panic-buying fuel. There have been similar scenes in Bangladesh. Prices at the pumps have been going up around the world, although to a lesser extent than seen in Asia. In the US average petrol prices are up 23% on a month ago, while diesel prices are up by a third. In the UK diesel is up 9%. It is something that governments are keeping an eye on. South Korea has ordered a tem-

## WHATSAPP ROLLS OUT PARENT-CONTROLLED ACCOUNTS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 13



**New Delhi:** Meta-owned WhatsApp has unveiled a new “parent-managed” account model, effectively opening the messaging platform to pre-teens (children under the age of 13) under strict guardian oversight. The move marks a strategic shift for the messaging app, which has historically maintained a minimum age requirement of 13 (or higher in some regions). “With input from families and experts, we’re rolling out new parent-managed accounts that allow parents or guardians to set up WhatsApp for pre-teens, with new controls to limit their WhatsApp experience to messaging and calling,” WhatsApp said in a blog post. WhatsApp said that while parents can control the contact list, the content of the messages will remain protected by end-to-end encryption. The new parental controls and settings will be gated by a parent PIN on the managed device, and only parents will be able to access and change privacy settings. The feature is currently being rolled out in phases.

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## Cognizant Research Shows Plug-and-Play AI is a Myth

**Bangalore, March 12, 2026:** Cognizant (Nasdaq: CTSI) released new research showing that companies pursuing AI adoption overwhelmingly prefer IT services firms - such as “AI Builder” firms, a new services model defined by designing and building custom, full stack AI solutions - to deliver real enterprise value from AI. The research, based on a quantitative study of 600 AI decision makers and qualitative interviews with 38 senior executives, finds that organizations rank custom solutions and flexible engagement models as the most important factor when selecting an AI partner, ahead of pricing and time to value. Pricing and proven AI case studies remain important, but rank below capabilities that enable AI to be embedded directly into business operations and value chains.

**Cognizant AI** At the same time, enterprises cite generic, off-the-shelf AI solutions as a leading reason to reject an AI provider,

along with lack of industry-specific expertise, inability to integrate into existing technology stacks, and inadequate support and maintenance. According to the research, the top three challenges organizations face in enterprise AI adoption are regulatory and compliance concerns, difficulty demonstrating return on investment and lack of clear AI strategy and vision. “AI success is not about deploying isolated models—it’s about engineering intelligence into the enterprise with purpose-built solutions,” said Ravi Kumar S, CEO of Cognizant. “The most trusted path to an AI future is working with an AI Builder—one that brings deep industry context, systems engineering expertise, and operational accountability. At Cognizant, we focus on building the bridge from AI experimentation to measurable enterprise value.”

**Key findings from the study include:** Enterprises face a “messy middle” in scaling AI: AI

builders can create the bridge to enterprise value - solving complex, real-world problems: 63% of enterprises report moderate-to-large gaps between their AI ambitions and current capabilities. The biggest barriers to scaling AI are operational and organizational: 33% cite regulatory and compliance challenges 31% struggle to demonstrate ROI 27% report shortages in talent 27% report inadequate data readiness AI investment is long term, not experimental: Enterprises are committing sustained capital to AI, signaling long-term infrastructure building rather than speculative investment: 84% of enterprises maintain formal AI budgets 91% expect AI budgets to grow in the next two years 50% anticipate double-digit increases in AI budgets over the next two years 52% are already investing \$10M or more annually on AI initiatives

AI is augmenting human workforces, not replacing them: Enterprise leaders are not forecasting workforce collapse, they’re forecasting redesign of workflows for human-AI collaboration. Across 13 enterprise functions, the highest expected level of full automation is only 20% (in sales) Even in customer service, where 76% of leaders expect workflows to become AI-dominant, only 9% believe they will be fully automated. In qualitative interviews conducted as part of the research, enterprise leaders said “out-of-the-box” AI is inadequate; they want tailored solutions AI builders can develop and tune. A Vice President in the UK banking sector shared, “A lot of vendors are in thinking that the off-the-shelf solutions they have would fit our needs, but often enough they find that that’s not the case. And it takes them a number of years, more than they planned, and a lot of money, both from us ... to get those software working. And these are not just AI software.” A US-based insurance industry CIO stated, “It depends on where I’m inserting this particular ingredient in our value. And so sometimes I want a builder and an engineer, sometimes I want an integrator, sometimes I want an activator. Because they’re playing more of a coordinating function—a weaving, stitching-together function.” Together, these research insights underscore a clear shift in enterprise expectations: from experimenting with AI tools to partnering with AI Builders that can design, build, integrate, and operate AI systems at scale—in alignment with client governance, security, and risk-management frameworks and with lasting business impact. These findings align with recent remarks by Babak Hodjat, Chief AI Officer at Cognizant, who noted that enterprises are far from being able to rely on AI “out of the box.” In interviews with Fortune and Reuters, Hodjat emphasized that while agentic and generative AI systems are advancing rapidly.

# Iran's new supreme leader vows to keep blocking Strait of Hormuz in first statement released by regime

The fact that Mojtaba Khamenei has not yet been seen on state media has led to widespread speculation on social media, particularly among the Iranian diaspora, about whether Iran's new supreme leader has been injured, or even whether he is still alive. What we know so far is limited. Iran's state TV news channel has referred to him as a "veteran of the Ramadan war", without providing any further confirmation as to whether he has been injured. Reuters has reported that he was "lightly injured", citing an unnamed Iranian official. In addition to his father, the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Mojtaba Khamenei's mother and wife were also killed in the US-Israeli strikes. We have yet to see him in public, or in videos or photographs on state media, even though it has now been almost four days since he became Iran's third supreme leader on 8 March. Iran's supreme



leader is elected indirectly by the Assembly of Experts, a constitutional body consisting of 88 members responsible for both the election and supervision of the supreme leader. One thing that caught my attention in Mojtaba Khamenei's first message was his claim that he learned he had become the supreme leader of Iran via the country's state TV channel. "I learned about the result of the vote of the

esteemed Assembly of Experts at the same time as you and through the Islamic Republic's television," Khamenei said in his message, which was read aloud a presenter. Iran is hitting out in many directions to try to damage sectors crucial to the West, targeting oil, shipping and banking. Dubai is one of the places in the firing line. A drone came down near the international financial district earlier. It didn't

injure anyone, but has provided a symbol for how business and banking here is being impacted by the war. Tehran says it will hit western banks in retaliation for US-Israeli attacks on Iranian banking. Citibank has said it is temporarily shutting most of its branches in the United Arab Emirates, with staff now working remotely. Other banks and businesses across the region have taken similar measures already.

There was no alert in Dubai when this morning's drone flew through - an indication of how some incoming Iranian fire can pass under the radar. Donald Trump has claimed repeatedly that he's on the verge of victory but Iran is inflicting pain - financial and otherwise - on the US and its Gulf allies, which find themselves engulfed in a war he started. Around the same time as the supreme leader's statement was broadcast by Iran, we also heard from Donald Trump, who writes on social media that the US stands to profit from soaring global energy prices. He says on his Truth Social platform: "The United States is the largest Oil Producer in the World, by far, so when oil prices go up, we make a lot of money. "BUT, of far greater interest and importance to me, as President, is stopping [sic] an evil Empire, Iran, from having Nuclear Weapons, and destroying the Middle East and, indeed, the

World. I won't ever let that happen!" In the last few minutes, a statement purportedly from Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since succeeding his father, has been read out on state-controlled television. It includes a vow to continue blocking the Strait of Hormuz and says the regime will "avenge the blood" of those killed in US and Israeli attacks. Three more civilian cargo ships were attacked in the Gulf earlier, while oil prices hit almost \$100 a barrel. One person was killed on a US-owned tanker off the coast of Iraq, which was reported to have been hit by an unmanned speed boat carrying explosives. Photos show the extent of the damage. Another tanker was attacked while heading to an Iraqi port. Both ships reported fires on board. A Chinese vessel was struck by an unidentified projectile near the Strait of Hormuz.

## NINETEEN JAILED OVER DEADLY MOSCOW CONCERT ATTACK



Nineteen people have been jailed over an attack at a concert hall near Moscow that killed 149 people and left more than 500 injured - the deadliest mass shooting in Russia in two decades. A Russian military court handed life sentences to four gunmen and 11 accomplices. Four other defendants were given between 19 and 22 years, state media reported. The attack at Crocus City Concert Hall on the outskirts of Russia's capital on 22 March 2024 began with gunmen shooting before setting fire to the venue. An Islamic State (IS) group affiliate admitted it had carried out the attack

and posted video evidence. Moscow has repeatedly accused Ukraine of involvement - an allegation strenuously denied by Kyiv. Some 6,000 people had been at the auditorium in Krasnogorsk for a rock concert on the evening of the attack when gunmen burst into the complex and started shooting randomly. The attackers then set fires which engulfed the venue and caused the roof to collapse. Many of the victims died from bullet wounds and some from smoke inhalation. The four men convicted of carrying out the shooting have all been identified as citizens of Tajikistan.

## Hozier, Jessie Buckley and Bruce Springsteen record Shane MacGowan tribute album



Three years after his death, some of music's biggest names have combined to record a tribute album to Pogues frontman Shane MacGowan. The album, titled 20th Century Paddy - The Songs of Shane MacGowan, was announced on Thursday, alongside the first single, Bruce Springsteen's cover of A Rainy Night In Soho. In an accompanying essay, Springsteen described the Irish musician's songwriting as "raw, hilarious, no apologies and profound". The album, which will be released in November, also includes a duet between Hozier and Oscar nominee Jessie Buckley, as well as songs by Tom Waits, Primal Scream, Steve Earle and David Gray. Actor Johnny Depp has a duet with singer Imelda May, while the album will also feature The Jesus and Mary Chain, The Libertines and Kate Moss. MacGowan died in November 2023 at the age of 65, following a period of ill health. He left a peerless catalogue of songs articulating the life of working class Irish immigrants, with tales of finding love in the slums lit-

tered with references to literature, mythology and the Bible. In his essay, Springsteen recalled spending an afternoon with MacGowan shortly before his death. "He was not well but he and his wife, Victoria, proved warm and gracious hosts. As I left, I thanked him for his beautiful work, his music, his songs, his life. I stood in his warmth, kissed him and told him I loved him." Springsteen called the musician a writer in the lineage of "geniuses" and "natural rebels" like Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams, Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin and Bob Dylan. "Shane was all naked bottomless humanity. Threatening to force us to ask ourselves if we were living deeply, authentically," he continued. "[His] voice was so deeply real, profane and honest, his writing so flashing, alive and historically rich its genesis appeared as a mystery to all including, I believe, its creator," Springsteen added. "His soul was filled with the transgressive and ecstatic properties of the saints. "I don't know who'll be listening to my music in 100 years but I know they'll be listening to Shane's."

## NOMA HEAD CHEF RESIGNS FROM RESTAURANT AMID ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

The head chef of Noma, one of the highest-rated restaurants in the world, has resigned amid allegations of abuse. René Redzepi announced his exit on social media, saying: "After more than two decades of building and leading this restaurant, I've decided to step away and allow our extraordinary leaders to now guide the restaurant into its next chapter." Former employees had accused the chef of creating a toxic work environment, including verbal and physical abuse, according to media reports. The fine-dining establishment, which is based in Denmark, has been preparing for a Los Angeles residency, but corporate sponsors pulled out after the abuse claims and protests



outside his pop-up location. In a statement posted on Instagram, Redzepi said: "An apology is not enough; I take responsibility for my own actions. "For anyone wondering what this means for the restaurant, let me say it clearly: the Noma team today is the strongest and most inspiring it has ever been," he added. "We've been open for 23 years, and I'm incredibly proud of our people, our creativity, and the direction Noma is heading."

## 'FINGERS ON THE TRIGGER': DEADLY WARNINGS FOR IRANIANS BEING URGED TO TAKE ACTION

When US President Donald Trump began strikes on Iran, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the process, he told Iranians to "take over your government". "It will be yours to take," Trump said. "This will be probably your only chance for generations." But as the war between the US and Israel and Iran has deepened over the past two weeks, Iranians have received sharply different messages about what may happen if they do take action. Encouragement from figures outside Iran has come as reports have emerged of an increased security and police presence in cities across the country, with officials of the Islamic Republic warning against any possible gatherings or protests. "We will come after you" Earlier this



week, Iran's Police Chief, Brigadier General Ahmadreza Radan, warned that his forces would treat anyone who takes to the streets "at the enemy's request" as an "enemy". "All our forces have their fingers on the trigger and are ready to defend the revolution and support their people and their country," Radan added. Separately, a presenter on Iran's state television

Channel Three addressed opponents of the Islamic Republic and those who might protest against the government. "When the dust of this sedition settles, we will come after you," the presenter said. "Confiscating your property will be the least of it. We will make you and your families pay, whether you are inside the country or abroad." And on 8 March, Iran's Prosecutor General Office

issued a statement warning Iranians living abroad that if they cooperate with what it described as "hostile enemies", they could face severe punishment. Citing Iran's law on the "intensification of punishment for espionage and cooperation with Israel and hostile countries", the statement stressed that any "operational activity, intelligence cooperation or espionage" for such countries could result not only in the confiscation of property but also the death penalty. These threats are a stark reminder of the threats faced by Iranians if they do protest against the government. During weeks of anti-government protests in December and January, at least 7,000 protesters were killed in an unprecedented crackdown by security forces, human rights groups say.

## China approves 'ethnic unity' law requiring minorities to learn Mandarin

China has approved a sweeping new law which claims to help promote "ethnic unity" - but critics say it will further erode the rights of minority groups. On paper, it aims to promote integration among the 56 officially recognised ethnic groups, dominated by the Han Chinese, through education and housing. But critics say it cuts people off from their language and culture. It mandates that all children should be taught Mandarin before kindergarten and up until the end of high school. Previously students could study most of the curriculum in their native language such as Tibetan, Uyghur or Mongolian. The law was



approved on Thursday as the annual rubber-stamp parliamentary session drew to an end. "The law is consistent with a dramatic recent policy shift, to suppress the ethnic diversity formally recognised since 1949," Magnus Fiskesjö, an associate professor of anthropolo-

gy at Cornell University said in a university report. "The children of the next generation are now isolated and brutally forced to forget their own language and culture." However, Beijing argues that teaching the next generation Mandarin will help their job prospects.

It also says the law for "Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress" is crucial for promoting "modernisation through greater unity". The law was voted and passed on Thursday at the National People's Congress in Beijing, which has never rejected an item on its agenda. The law also provides a legal basis to prosecute parents or guardians who may instil what it described as "detrimental" views in children which would affect ethnic harmony and it calls for "mutually embedded community environments" which some analysts believe could result in the break up of minority-heavy neighbourhoods.

## EPSTEIN USED MODELLING AGENT TO RECRUIT GIRLS, BRAZILIAN WOMEN TELL



In 2004, as a 16-year-old living in the Brazilian countryside, she was taking her first steps in the modelling world. She says French modelling agent Jean-Luc Brunel visited her family home, to persuade her mother to let her go to a modelling contest in Ecuador. He later killed himself in prison, accused of rape, sexual assault and recruiting girls for the late US financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Back then, they didn't know who Brunel was; they had been introduced by a famous Brazilian scout. A BBC News Brasil investigation has found evidence that Brunel used modelling agencies linked to him at the time to actively seek out young women and girls from South America for Epstein, and to arrange visas for them to travel to the US. Another Brazilian woman, who says she had a relationship with Epstein, showed the BBC her US visa. It named one of Brunel's agencies as her sponsor, even though she says she never did any modelling work for him and the travel documents were arranged solely so that she could visit Epstein. Gláucia's mother was suspicious of Brunel,

but he seemed "very charming" and eventually she agreed her daughter could go to Ecuador without her. The teenager travelled with Brunel's team to Guayaquil for the Models New Generation competition. At the time, local newspapers reported that the participants were between 15 and 19 years old. Gláucia says the competition passed without any major problems, although she grew suspicious when she was not allowed to contact her family. Another contestant, from Western Europe, who was 16 at the time, remembers how Brunel's behaviour struck her as odd. She asked not to be named, so we are referring to her as Laura. "It was weird how he behaved and was always hanging out with the young Brazilian girls... He was behaving like a clown and only hanging out with quite young girls," she says. Laura believes that while the competition was "legit" and well organised, "he knew exactly which girls were vulnerable". "He seemed to control their finances," she says. "The girls from Brazil and East European countries seemed to be the prime target."



Death toll from Ethiopia floods and landslides rises to more than 60

## Nasa spacecraft weighing 1,300lb re-enters Earth's atmosphere



The Van Allen Probe spacecraft weighing more than 1,300lb (600kg) has re-entered Earth's atmosphere, almost 14 years after its launch.

The US Space Force confirmed the probe's re-entry on Wednesday over the Eastern Pacific region around 06:37 EDT (10:37 GMT), roughly 12 hours later than originally predicted but within the

expected margin of error. Most of the probe, which launched in 2012, was expected to burn up as it travelled through the atmosphere, though some components may have survived.

The space agency said there was a one in 4,200 chance of being harmed by a piece of the probe, which it characterised as "low" risk.

# IPL 2026 Schedule Announced By BCCI: RCB vs SRH On Day 1, MI vs KKR On Day 2

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Wednesday announced the schedule for the first phase of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, to be played from March 28 to April 12, 2026. As three states are scheduled to undergo State Assembly elections during this period, the full schedule of the tournament will be announced once the poll dates are announced.

The 19th edition of the T20 league will commence when defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) host Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. A total of 20 matches will be played across 10 venues: Bengaluru, Mumbai, Guwahati, New Chandigarh, Lucknow, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. During this period, the tournament will feature four double-



headers, with the afternoon matches beginning at 03:30 PM IST and the evening matches commencing at 07:30 PM IST. Following the opening encounter on Saturday, Mumbai Indians will take on Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium

in Mumbai on Sunday. The first double-header of the season will take place on April 4, 2026, when Delhi Capitals face Mumbai Indians in the afternoon match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi, followed by Gujarat Titans taking on

Rajasthan Royals at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. Rajasthan Royals will begin their home campaign in Guwahati, where they will host Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians. Punjab Kings (PBKS), meanwhile, will

play their early home fixtures at the PCA Stadium in New Chandigarh.

During the season, Royal Challengers Bengaluru will play five home matches in Bengaluru and two in Raipur. Punjab Kings will play four home matches in New Chandigarh and three in Dharamshala, while Rajasthan Royals will play three home matches in Guwahati and four in Jaipur.

Note: The matches scheduled in Bengaluru are subject to clearance from the Expert Committee constituted by the Government of Karnataka. The committee will conduct a meeting and inspection of the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on March 13, 2026, during which a full-scale mock demonstration of match-day arrangements will be carried out to assess the stadium's preparedness for hosting IPL matches.

# Gulf Conflict, Ramzan Take Huge Toll On World Para Athletics Grand Prix

The escalating conflict in West Asia has dealt a major blow to the ongoing World Para Athletics Grand Prix, with participation shrinking drastically as only six foreign nations ultimately made it to Indian shores, despite nearly 30 countries having earlier confirmed their presence. Coaches associated with the Indian team said the war, coupled with the holy month of Ramzan, played a significant role in drastically reducing participation numbers, adding that that while 18 foreign nations had travelled for India's inaugural edition of the World Para Athletics Grand Prix at the same venue last year, the organisers could not replicate those numbers this time. A total of 257 athletes are competing in the Grand Prix, the second leg of the season, with India fielding a massive 219 participants across multiple track-and-field events and sport classifications. Russia has the second-largest contingent with 40 para athletes, while the remaining countries account for only a minuscule presence in comparison.



"The event has been hit hard by the ongoing conflict in the Gulf as well as Ramzan. Around seven to eight Muslim countries could not make the trip because of that (Ramzan). Several International Paralympic Committee officials were also unable to travel and had to be replaced at the last minute as they were not getting flights into India," said a coach of a renowned para athlete on condition of anonymity. "Most of the connecting

flights come via Dubai and the Gulf and with the disruptions they (athletes) had to cancel their trips," said the coach. The inaugural World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai last month featured athletes from 53 nations, lending the competition a truly international flavour, but the event in India has been largely dominated by the hosts, with several clean sweeps owing to the limited participation from foreign countries.

# Pakistan Get Startling 'Shoot The Man' Message After Devastating Bangladesh Loss In 1st ODI

Pakistan are in a rebuilding phase after their T20 World Cup 2026 Super 8 exit. They chose six new faces for the ODI series against Bangladesh, but the start to that rebuilding phase was disastrous. Fast bowler Nahid Rana grabbed a maiden five-wicket haul as Bangladesh handed Pakistan a new low in white-ball cricket with a dominant eight-wicket win. Rana picked up 5-24, and captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz took 3-29 with his off-spin, as Pakistan were blown away for 114 all out in 30.4 overs. It was Pakistan's lowest-ever ODI score against Bangladesh, eclipsing the previous



mark of 161 during a 62-run loss at the 1999 World Cup. Bangladesh galloped to 115-2 in only 15.1 overs, powered by a blazing unbeaten 67 off 42 balls. Former Pakistan player Basit Ali was furious after the result. "First, shoot the man who told them to score a minimum

of 60 runs in the ten powerplay overs," he said on The Gameplan, as quoted by The Indian Express. From 41/0 in 9.5 overs, Pakistan collapsed to 92/9 in 23.5 overs. "He never played cricket on a ground. He just hands over a piece of paper. Did he not see what the condi-

tions are like here? Did he not know that even India have lost in Bangladesh?" Former Pakistan wicket-keeper Kamran Akmal also came down hard on the side.

"It felt like one team was international and the other was a club side playing a practice match before a World Cup," he said. "I called Basit and couldn't find words to describe what kind of cricket we were playing. I swear to God, batting like this doesn't even happen in club cricket. Club cricketers don't play this badly." The second and third games of the ODI series will also be played in Dhaka on Friday and Sunday.

# India's Yuki Bhambri Reaches Indian Well Quarters With Andre Goransson In Men's Doubles Category

India's top doubles player Yuki Bhambri and his partner Andre Goransson advanced to the quarterfinals of the men's doubles event at the Indian Wells Masters after registering a straight-set win over the pair of Sander Arends and Jiri Lehecka. Bhambri and Goransson produced a solid performance to defeat Arends and Lehecka 6-4 6-4 in the pre-quarterfinal clash that lasted one hour and 14 minutes. They did not face any break point in the match and broke their rivals twice. The Indo-Swedish pair maintained control through most of the match, securing a crucial break in each set to seal the contest in straight sets. Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com Bhambri and Goransson will



take on Alexander Erler of Austria and Andrea Vavassori from Italy in the last-eight stage of the prestigious ATP Masters 1000 tournament. India's Yuki Bhambri and his Swedish partner Andre Goransson have sailed into the semifinals of the Indian Wells Open on Thursday morning, dismantling the Austrian-

Italian pairing of Alexander Erler and Andrea Vavassori. Bhambri and Goransson registered a 6-3, 7-6(2) win over Erler and Vavassori. This is Bhambri's maiden semifinal at the ATP Masters 1000 level, having made the doubles quarter-final at the Masters 1000 level twice. His previous two quarterfinal appearances were at Indian Wells

came in 2025 (with Goransson) and Miami Masters 2025 (with Nuno Borges). Notably, the unseeded duo has yet to drop a single set in the tournament. In the Round of 16, Bhambri and Goransson defeated the pair of Sander Arends and Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 after launching their campaign with a resounding victory, defeating the duo of David Pel and Fabrice Martin in straight sets 6-1, 6-3. They will face await the winners of Khachanov/Rublev and Rinderknech/Vacherot with a place in the final at stake. Last month, Bhambri climbed to a career-high ranking of world No. 20 in the latest ATP Rankings, making him the first Indian men's doubles player to break into the Top 20 after Rohan Bopanna.

# THE REALITY IS MOST MMA DREAMS FAIL - HARDWICK

When Harry Hardwick was working at his dad's cafe in Middlesbrough to fund his dream of becoming a UFC fighter, the bright lights of Las Vegas felt a world away. "It's not a sensible idea, pursuing MMA," he says. But in September 2025, on just five days' notice Hardwick stepped in to face Brazil's Kaue Fernandes for his UFC debut - over 10 years after his first professional MMA fight. Unfortunately for Hardwick, the fight didn't go to plan - he suffered a painful first-round loss and left the octagon in a wheelchair. Now the 31-year-old has a second chance to prove himself as he faces the undefeated Marwan Rahiki on Saturday at the Meta Apex in Las Vegas.



After a full camp and back at his preferred weight class of featherweight, Hardwick is expecting a better performance this time round. A second defeat could see him cut from the UFC - but after a career filled with highs and lows, he still feels thankful to be "one of the few MMA fighters that has escaped the rat race". "I

pinch myself because I'm very fortunate to be where I am," Hardwick tells BBC Sport. "I've still got a lot I want to do, and I'm still very much looking forward, but this is mad. "The harshest reality is that most dreams fail." Hardwick is a former Cage Warriors featherweight champion and entered his UFC debut undefeated in his last nine fights, with eight wins and one draw. He's spent most of his career fighting alongside part-time jobs, including night shifts as a support worker and in his dad's local cafe. In the early days, Hardwick would often turn up to training without any sleep, and admits that at times the experience could be "miserable".

# DE BOINVILLE DENIES 'RACIAL SLURS' TOWARDS QUEALLY

Nico de Boinville has "categorically" denied using any "racial slurs" towards Irish jockey Declan Queally during the opening race on day two of the Cheltenham Festival. The English jockey was accused of "abusing" the amateur jockey before the start of the Novices' Hurdle on Wednesday, as it was held up due to a false start. Queally later told The Racing Post, external he had received "repeated racist abuse" from his rival. The Irishman, riding I'll Sort That, and De Boinville on Act Of Innocence could be seen exchanging words at the start line, but the Englishman denies any wrongdoing. De Boinville told BBC Radio Sports Extra: "It is an ongoing



investigation. "The stewards are gathering all the evidence they can from all the video footage. "From my point of view, I deny all the allegations against me. "I can categorically say there weren't any racial slurs or anything like that. Let's let it play out." Queally, 37, appeared to topple off his horse before

the race started and had to be checked over by a doctor. He was given the all clear to race, along with Ballyfad, who was kicked pre-race and assessed by a vet in a chaotic few minutes. A number of false starts to the planned rolling start meant the horses were moved to a standing start at the tape-leaving jockeys jostling for position. Queally, who finished fifth in the race, told ITV Racing before entering the weight room post-race: "Being abused by an English rider, Nico de Boinville, not very nice.

# Verstappen wishes F1 was 'more fun'

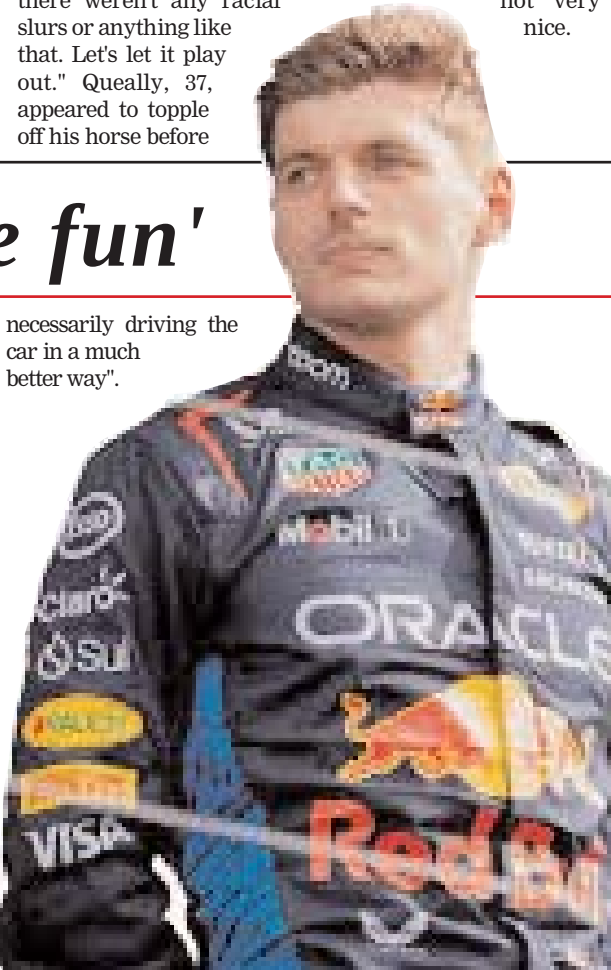
Max Verstappen says he wishes the new Formula 1 was "more fun" but is hopeful the sport is heading towards changes that will "improve everything". The four-time world champion is among many drivers who find the increased amount of energy management required for the engines this year is taking away enjoyment and some elements of their skill. "I am a bit conflicted, because I don't really enjoy to drive the car but I do enjoy working with the team," Red Bull's Verstappen said. "I don't want to leave [F1] but I also hope of course it gets better. I have had discussions with F1 and the [governing body] FIA and we are working towards

something that will hopefully improve everything." There are concerns over the unusual techniques required of drivers to ensure that the new engines, which have a 50-50 split between internal combustion and electrical power, have sufficient battery charge for optimum performance. F1's bosses initially agreed to take stock of the rules after the first three races and analyse whether changes could be made. It now seems there is a chance modifications could be made after this weekend's race in China, the second of the season after Sunday's opener in Australia. The main issue is that the overriding requirement to ensure the battery is fully charged at the most per-

formance-sensitive parts of the circuit is reducing the driving challenge, especially in the most demanding high-speed corners. Aston Martin's two-time champion Fernando Alonso said: "It is a different challenge. That's where you put the line, if these cars are more fun or less fun, and everyone will have their own opinion. "We used to 'fight for our life' in Turn 12 in Bahrain, Turn Nine and 10 in Melbourne, sector one and 130R in Suzuka, Turn Seven and Eight here in China. "There were always certain corners that in Formula 1 were challenging the limits of the physics, and the driver had to use all the skills and be brave in some of the moments as

well. "When you put new tyres and you go through the corner at a speed that you've never been before in any of the free practices, that challenge is gone in a way. "You use those corners to charge the battery, not any more to make the lap time. "Still fun? Yes, we love racing. Because I grew up on the other, and I was challenging myself in the corners, I probably prefer the other one. But I was super-lucky to race in that era and I still feel lucky that I race now, so I like both." World champion Lando Norris said the "very, very different style of driving" now needed meant "you can still make a difference as a driver by driving the power unit in the correct way, but not by

necessarily driving the car in a much better way".



## BIGGEST MASSBUSTER “Collar Ey Etthara” from Ustaad Bhagat Singh Launched

The hype surrounding Ustaad Bhagat Singh is reaching new heights, with every song and teaser receiving a tremendous response from audiences. Taking the excitement a notch higher, the team has now launched the third single “Collar Ey Etthara”, and the buzz has intensified even further. Mounted on a grand scale, the song looks spectacular with its massive sets, vibrant visuals, and electrifying energy on screen. Pawan Kalyan looks terrific in the number, lighting up the screen with his trademark style, energy, and dance moves. The pulsating beats by Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad, energetic vocals by Ram Miryala, and powerful lyrics penned by Kasarla Shyam come together to create a song that perfectly captures the film’s mass appeal. The team is all set to unveil the trailer on March 14, followed by a grand pre-release event on March 15. Director Harish Shankar is leaving no stone unturned to make Ustaad Bhagat Singh a memorable cinematic experience for audiences. Ustaad Bhagat Singh is prestigiously being produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y.Ravi Shankar under Mythri Movie Makers and is slated for a grand release on March 19th.



## RASHMIKA MANDANNA’S OLD PRIVATE AUDIO LEAKED, ACTRESS WARNS LEGAL ACTION



Actor Rashmika Mandanna on Thursday said she will take legal action against those publishing an “old private conversation” that is being circulated now to create controversy just after her marriage. Mandanna was previously engaged to Kannada actor Rakshit Shetty but they called off the engagement in 2018, just a year later. The “Thamma” star tied the knot with fellow actor Vijay Deverakonda in a lavish ceremony in Jodhpur recently. “To my dearest people who have

been with me through this incredible journey so far. And to others concerned with this matter. It has been 8 years since a sustained campaign of misinformation, harassment, and targeted attacks from a section of the media and individuals online had started against me,” Mandana wrote on X. The actor said she chose patience and silence despite being at the end of “unfair criticism” but not anymore. “...What has happened in the last 24 hours crosses a line that can’t be ignored.

## Carmeni Selvam Telugu Teaser: A Contemporary Drama Rooted in Money, Family, and Modern Aspirations



Pathway Productions has unveiled the teaser of Carmeni Selvam. The film brings together a strong ensemble cast – Samuthirakani, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Lakshmi Priyaa Chandramouli, and Abhinaya, and a theme that feels strikingly relevant to today’s times - setting the stage for what could become a talking point this Diwali. Today, makers unveiled the teaser. The teaser begins with a voiceover from Samuthirakani: “There are many means to make money.” From there, different voices chime in with contradictory advice on overspending, bold loans, cryptocurrency bets, and even dubious shortcuts offering a witty reflection of how money and success are viewed in modern society. Rather than presenting a heavy-handed take, the teaser hints at a film with a light tone, sprinkled with irony and humor, making its social observations both sharp and entertaining. It suggests that the story could

revolve around the financial needs and decisions that shape people’s lives, a theme that resonates strongly in today’s credit-based economy and EMI driven lifestyle. Visually, the teaser showcases Samuthirakani as a family man with Lakshmi Priyaa Chandramouli as his wife and a young son. In contrast, glimpses of him abroad, seemingly alone, raise questions about his journey. Gautham Vasudev Menon’s presence in an undisclosed role further adds to the intrigue, leaving audiences speculating about his importance in the story. The teaser concludes with Samuthirakani’s memorable line: “If you want to be rich, learn to spend like a rich man. If you don’t have the money, borrow and spend.” a provocative note that lingers with the audience long after the teaser ends. With an ensemble of powerhouse performers, Samuthirakani, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Lakshmi Priyaa Chandramouli, and Abhinaya, the film promises

to deliver compelling characters, brought alive through performances of intensity and depth. The crew comprises Ram Chakri, who brings a fresh vision as both writer and director, and Yuvaraj Dakshan, whose cinematography delivers visuals as compelling as the story itself, with the music crafted by Music Cloud Technologies. With its timely theme, relatable premise, and a light yet thought-provoking tone, Carmeni Selvam is shaping up to be a film that will spark conversations among audiences. The makers’ confidence in the film reflects in its theatrical release strategy, positioning it as an engaging entertainer that blends family dynamics with contemporary reflections on money and lifestyle. Releasing in theatres on April 03, 2026, Carmeni Selvam aims to connect with viewers through a story that balances entertainment with meaningful moments.

## Action entertainer movie Bullet Reddy which is shooting regularly at a fast pace

Aadi, Megha and Hanika are acting as heroines in the movie Bullet Reddy. This film is being produced by Aadi Darshan under the banner of Shree Lakshmi Films. Currently this movie is in regular shooting. Director-producer Hero Aadi announced the details of this film in a press meet held at Hyderabad Film Chamber today. Fight Master Khayyum participated in this program. On this occasion \*Director Producer Hero Aadi said -\*This is an action oriented film. Bullet Reddy, the hero of the film, is a zamindar of a thousand acres. How some greedy people tried to get the treasure worth lakhs of



crores of rupees due to him. How the hero copes with those attempts is always interesting. My proficiency in martial arts helped me to act in this movie. Qayyum Master supported me well. Our film is currently in regular shooting. We shot the song in the forests of Adilabad. Also we made fight

sequences in Nizamabad. We will start shooting for the next schedule from 23rd of this month in the surrounding areas of Rajahmundry and Amalapuram. This schedule will continue till April 5. After that, we will shoot the songs in the schedule in Goa and the final schedule will be done again in

Adilabad and Nizamabad. We will release our movie on October 16 on the occasion of Dussehra this year. East Godavari, West Godavari, Amalapuram Ambedkar district...we want to release the movie compactly in ten theaters in these three districts. Said. \*Fight Master Khayyum says -\* I am a martial arts trainer. Aadi used to be in our neighboring town. Aadi is my disciple. But I became a fan of him after seeing the hardships he went through for this film. In this movie, you will see how much Aadi worked hard on the screen. With good fights, entertainment and catchy songs, Bullet Reddy movie will be liked by all of you. Said.



## PRANITHA SUBHASH BRINGS MIDNIGHT GLAM IN SAREE LOOK



Pranitha Subhash recently sparked a debate on social media after expressing her support for the recently released film The Kerala Story 2. Through a strongly worded post, she spoke about the need to stand up against the exploitation and manipulation of young girls, stressing that such issues should no longer be ignored. Her comments quickly drew widespread attention online, with some people backing her stand while others disagreed with it. The discussion soon spread across social media platforms. and for a

brief period the actress became a trending topic. Amid the ongoing online chatter, Pranitha also shared a stunning new set of photographs that grabbed attention for her elegant fashion sense. In the pictures, she is seen wearing a striking black saree that perfectly blends sophistication with modern styling. The saree drapes beautifully, while the sleeveless blouse features intricate beaded and textured detailing across the neckline and bodice, adding a glamorous edge to the outfit. The subtle shimmer of the embellishments contrasts beautifully with the deep black fabric, giving the look a refined yet bold appeal. She kept the styling minimal with delicate earrings and a bracelet, while her straight hair and soft makeup enhanced her natural beauty.

## Kate Winslet in talks to star in ‘Lord of the Rings: The Hunt for Gollum’

Hollywood star Kate Winslet is moving from one fantasy land to another. The actor, who just recently reunited with her “Titanic” director James Cameron for “Avatar: Fire and Ash,” is in talks to star in “Lord of the Rings: The Hunt for Gollum”. Winslet will join Andy Serkis in the movie, who is directing and reprising his popular role from the original Peter Jackson trilogy, reported Variety. Warner Bros. hasn’t confirmed who will appear in the upcoming film, but Elijah Wood and Ian McKellen are reportedly reprising their roles as Frodo Baggins and Gandalf, respectively. Jackson, who originally adapted the J. R. R. Tolkien’s novel for the big screen, is producing the film with his creative part-

ners Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens. “The Hunt for Gollum” also reunites Winslet with Jackson after they last worked together in 1994’s “Heavenly Creatures.” The film is slated to release in theaters on Dec. 17, 2027. The story details are not out yet but it is most likely set between the events of “The Hobbit” and “The Fellowship of the Ring.” Both “Lord of the Rings” and its prequel series “The Hobbit” were major box office hits. The actor, who just recently reunited with her “Titanic” director James Cameron for “Avatar: Fire and Ash,” is in talks to star in “Lord of the Rings: The Hunt for Gollum” “The Hunt for Gollum” also reunites Winslet with Jackson after they last worked together in 1994’s “Heavenly Creatures.” The film is

slated to release in theaters on Dec. 17, 2027. The story details are not out yet but it is most likely set between the events of “The Hobbit” and “The Fellowship of the Ring.” Both “Lord of the Rings” and its prequel series “The Hobbit” were major box office hits. During a 2024 earnings call, David Zaslav, CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery, said the trio would be involved “every step of the way”. For Winslet, the project would also mark a reunion with Jackson, who directed her in the 1994 cult drama Heavenly Creatures — one of her earliest breakthrough roles. The upcoming film is currently slated to hit cinemas on December 17, 2027. While plot details remain under wraps, the story is believed to take place between the events of The

Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. The project arrives at a moment of corporate flux for the studio. Warner Bros. Discovery is in the process of being sold to Skydance Media in a deal backed by Paramount Global, a merger that could potentially reshape the company’s development slate. However, the Lord of the Rings franchise remains one of the studio’s most valuable properties. Both the Lord of the Rings trilogy and its prequel series, The Hobbit, were major global box office successes, with each trilogy earning roughly \$2.8 billion worldwide.

