

TWO INDIANS AMONG FOUR INJURED BY MISSILE DEBRIS IN DUBAI



TRUMP TELLS THE UK AND OTHER COUNTRIES 'GO GET YOUR OWN OIL' FROM STRAIT OF HORMUZ



THE FALLOUT AND KEY QUESTIONS FROM THE IOC'S BIOLOGICAL FEMALE DECISION



IN BRIFS

ASSAM: INDIAN ARMY NEUTRALISES WORLD WAR II-ERA BOMBS



Guwahati, March 31 : The Indian Army successfully neutralised World War II-era unexploded bombs in Assam's Tinsukia district, averting a potential threat to civilian lives, officials said on Tuesday.

VIR VIKRAM YADAV APPOINTED NEW DGCA CHIEF

New Delhi, March 31 : In a major bureaucratic reshuffle, the government has appointed Vir Vikram Yadav as the new Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), replacing Faiz Ahmed Kidwai.

Yadav, who is currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, will now head India's aviation regulator at a time when the sector is expanding rapidly.

Meanwhile, Kidwai has been moved to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) as Additional



Secretary. He had taken charge as DGCA chief in January 2025 and served in the role for a little over a year. The reshuffle comes at a critical juncture for the aviation sector. The DGCA is closely monitoring airline safety, fleet expansion, airport infrastructure and compliance with regulations as both domestic and international air travel continue to grow.

Mahalakshmi Scheme Saves Women Rs.10,000 Cr: Bhatti



Hyderabad TSIT: Telangana government's flagship Mahalakshmi free bus travel scheme has significantly boosted women's empowerment, with beneficiaries saving nearly 10,000 crore so far, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said on Tuesday.

Addressing a felicitation programme to mark women completing around 290 crore free bus journeys, the Deputy CM said the scheme was implemented within 48 hours

of the formation of the government, fulfilling a key promise.

He noted that the savings made by women are being utilized for household needs, children's education, and improving family welfare. The government, he said, is committed to economically empowering women and plans to extend interest-free loans exceeding 1 lakh crore to women's groups over the next three years.

Transport Minister Ponnambhakkar credited RTC staff

for the success of the scheme, stating that nearly 40 lakh women out of 65 lakh daily passengers are benefiting from free travel. He assured that while implementing welfare measures, the government is also strengthening RTC by introducing new buses, expanding routes, and clearing pending dues.

Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka said the government aims to make one crore women financially strong, adding that women should respond to criticism of the scheme through their continued participation and success. On the occasion, ministers presented a symbolic cheque of 10,000 crore representing the total savings of women to RTC MD Y.Nagi Reddy.

MLA Malothu Ramdas, former Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi, Women & Child Welfare Secretary Anitha Ramachandran, SERP CEO Divya, Hyderabad Collector Hari Chandana Dasari, RTC officials, and thousands of women attended the programme.

Congress acts like 'political vultures' while nation handles crises: PM Modi



Vav-Tharad (Gujarat), March 31 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday highlighted India's stability amid global energy and geopolitical challenges, particularly in West Asia, while sharply criticising the Congress for "undermining" national unity and "spreading rumours".

Speaking after launching projects worth over Rs 19,800 crore in Vav-Tharad, the Prime Minister referred to the turbulence in West Asia and its impact on energy supplies worldwide.

"We can see how many countries are facing uncertainty and instability due to the war. The impact is felt everywhere due to challenges in global energy flow. Diesel, petrol, and gas problems exist in many countries. However, India has controlled the circumstances, thanks to successful foreign policy and the unity of our people," he said.

PM Modi contrasted India's position with the actions of the Congress. "Unfortunately, some political leaders are still playing politics. In this,

Congress is at the forefront. Today, when the country needs unity, they are dividing it. When assurance is required, they are spreading fear and rumours. When patience is needed, they are provoking. Like political vultures, they wait for turmoil in the country to gain electoral benefit," he said.

He highlighted rising global fuel costs, saying that from small countries to superpowers, diesel and petrol prices

have surged by 10 to 25 per cent. "India is not letting its citizens be affected. Congress cannot see that. They are spreading rumours continuously and trying to make people stand in queues to take electoral advantage," he added.

The Prime Minister further said he was pleased that his flight landed for the first time at Deesa airbase. "This airbase is just 130 kilometres from the international boundary and is vital for national security," he said. He recalled that the project's vision started when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, and land was acquired for the airbase to ensure security along the western border.

"Those who ruled in Delhi... don't know what hatred they had for Gujarat. They stalled the project for years, leaving files pending. When you sent me to Delhi, I got out those files, and as a result, Deesa now has an Air Force base," PM Modi said. He added that the facility is not just an airstrip, but a centre for various activities contributing to the region's development.

PM MODI WANTS RULING LDF TO WIN, CLAIMS RAHUL GANDHI



Gandhi said it was "surprising" to see a Left party aligning with an "extreme right" force, alleging an unprecedented CPI(M)-BJP partnership in Kerala. He framed the election as a battle between the UDF's ideology and the combined forces of the LDF and the BJP. He further claimed that Modi prefers an LDF victory, as the BJP cannot influence a UDF government, and argued that only the Congress effectively challenges the BJP nationally.

Kannur (TSIT) AICC leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleged on Tuesday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) to win the Kerala assembly elections.

Addressing an election rally for 11 Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) candidates of the district at Kannur Police ground, here, he claimed the BJP and Left parties were colluding in the state.

Questioning the alleged alliance, he asked how the Left could join hands with the BJP while abandoning its ideological values. He pointed to veteran CPI(M) leaders T K Govindan and V Kunhikrishnan contesting as UDF-backed independents in Taliparamba and Payyanur.

He also alleged that both CPI(M) and BJP have become "corporate parties" and claimed that US President Donald Trump influences Modi, who in turn influences the LDF government in Kerala.

Amaravati to Launch India's First Quantum Computer on April 14



Amaravati (TSIT): N. Chandrababu Naidu has announced that Amaravati is poised to emerge as India's first quantum computing hub, with the country's first quantum computer scheduled to be launched on April 14. The Chief Minister stated that this landmark initiative will place Andhra Pradesh at the forefront of next-generation technologies.

Speaking at a roundtable conference on the quantum hardware manufacturing ecosystem held at the State Secretariat, he emphasized the urgent need to establish a robust domestic quantum hardware ecosystem within the next two years. He noted that the proposed Amaravati Quantum Computing Valley would provide a new direc-

tion to the nation in the ongoing technological revolution. Reaffirming the state's proactive role in implementing the National Quantum Mission, the Chief Minister said Andhra Pradesh is among the leading states driving this initiative, with Amaravati set to become a future-ready global innovation hub.

He called upon all stakeholders to collaborate in building a self-reliant quantum ecosystem, reducing dependence on imports and positioning India as a global leader in quantum technology. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, including representatives from IBM, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Centre for Development of Telematics (CDOT),

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, along with industry leaders and academic experts from Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati and Indian Institute of Technology Madras, who participated virtually. Outlining a comprehensive roadmap, the Chief Minister stressed the importance of developing quantum computing hardware, components, and algorithms within the state. He highlighted the need to build a strong ecosystem encompassing cryogenics, photonics, and power electronics, while encouraging startups, innovation, and research collaborations to promote "Made in Amaravati" quantum products.

TELANGANA SEEKS URGENT ADDITIONAL AUTO LPG SUPPLIES FROM CENTRE

Hyderabad, March 31 : The Telangana government on Tuesday requested the Centre for urgent additional supply of auto LPG to the state to overcome the daily deficit. Minister for Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday sent a letter to Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri stating that the state is currently facing a daily shortage of 55 MTs. The state government called for ramping up the auto LPG availability at public sector undertakings (IOCL, BPCL & HPCL) outlets. Stating that the auto LPG segment in the state has been significantly impacted, Reddy



wrote that this has hit nearly one lakh autorickshaws plying on LPG in the state, disrupting the public transport services, and affecting the livelihoods of auto drivers and their families. He urged Puri to issue immediate instructions to PSUs to support the private marketing companies by supplying the deficit LPG to private entities engaged in auto LPG distribution. He pointed out prices have surged to Rs 93 per litre at private pumps against Rs 75 at PSU stations and called for regulatory measures to prevent unwarranted price increases by private entities during the crisis. Uttam Kumar Reddy urged the Central minister to boost supply, support private distributors and curb price spikes. He conveyed that the state is strictly adhering to the directives issued by the Centre to manage the current LPG supply situation arising from the ongoing Middle East crisis.

CM Siddaramaiah Slams BJP, Says K'aka Economy Strong; Budget Itself a "White Paper"



Bengaluru (TSIT): CM Siddaramaiah said, that The demand by BJP State President B. Y. Vijayendra to release a white paper on the State government's financial condition reflects his lack of understanding of economics, lack of administrative experience, and political frustration.

In his press statement he stated that, Just last month, I presented the Budget for this financial year. It is not merely a bundle of numbers, but an honest account placed before the seven crore people of Karnataka. That Budget has been discussed and approved by both Houses of the Legislature. That itself is our white paper.

There has been a detailed discussion on this in both Houses of the Legislature. A total of 21 Opposition members, including those from Vijayendra's party, spoke and raised questions, all of which I have duly answered. If there are still any doubts, I am ready

to provide further clarification. I am even prepared for an open debate with you in the by-election arena. Please do not attempt to undermine the sanctity of the Budget merely for the sake of political rhetoric. The allegation that the State is in a bankrupt condi-

tion stems from the helplessness, frustration, and jealousy of BJP leaders who are unable to politically confront our government. No department is in a situation where it cannot pay salaries to its employees. Our government is stable not only economically but also politically. The people of the State are living in peace.

Mr. Vijayendra, Karnataka's financial position is better than that of the Union Government governed by your party. Our Budget this year stands at Rs.4,48,004 crore, which is Rs.38,455 crore higher than last year - reflecting a growth of 9.4%. In contrast, the Union Government's Budget has grown only by

5.6% compared to the previous year. While the Union presented a Budget of Rs.50.66 lakh crore last year, it has increased to Rs.53.47 lakh crore this year. Our Budget size reflects economic progress. If there was an economic slowdown, would such growth have been possible?

In 2025-26, while the country's GDP growth stands at 7.4%, Karnataka's GSDP has recorded a higher growth of 8.1%. This clearly reflects the strong economic stability of our government. This year, our GSDP stands at Rs.33,05,500 crore. Across all the seventeen Budgets I have presented, I have consistently maintained fiscal discipline.

Never disrespected Biju Babu: Nishikant Dubey defends remarks, targets Nehru-Gandhi family

NEW DELHI: BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Monday refuted allegations that he disrespected Biju Patnaik, asserting that he always held the former Odisha chief minister in high regard.

"There has never been any lack of respect for Biju Patnaik. When the Congress treated Biju Babu unjustly, it was the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party that stood by him. What I said that day, and what I repeat again today, is that I am running a continuous series exposing the deeds of the Nehru-Gandhi family and the Congress," Dubey told reporters in the Parliament House complex.

"What allegation did I make against Biju Babu? ...I was speaking about the actions of the Nehru family, and that is all I said. If anyone has been hurt by it, I can only try to explain my

position to them," he added.

Dubey said the country's biggest problem is the tendency to view people through the prism of region and caste, arguing that even great personalities have been reduced to narrow identities.

"What is the biggest problem in this country? People divide everything based on region and caste. Even great personalities are pushed into such narrow categories. Was Biju Babu not a matter of pride for Bihar as well? In 1936-37, when Odisha was separated from Bihar, does that mean he is not a source of pride for Bihar too?"

"For your information, Bidhan Chandra Roy, who became the first Chief Minister of Bengal, was born in Patna. He was Bihari," Dubey said.

This came after the Biju



Janata Dal (BJD) on Monday staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha, protesting purportedly disparaging remarks by Dubey against Patnaik.

Soon after the official listed papers were laid on the table, BJD leader Sammit Patra rose to record a "serious protest against the disparaging, false and

concocted statements made by MP Nishikant Dubey against Biju Patnaik".

"He (Dubey) has called Biju Patnaik a CIA agent. This is the level to which the ruling party has fallen," Patra said.

"This is utterly shameful. Biju Janata Dal strongly opposes it and in protest we are walking out."

Delhi govt releases Rs 20 crore for cow welfare, 10 'modern' gaushalas envisaged

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday released Rs 20 crore for cow welfare and said her government will develop 10 "modern" gaushalas.

At an event at her official residence, Jan Seva Sadan, Gupta handed over lease extension certificates to gaushala (cow shelter) managers.

Funds were provided for setting up modern biogas infrastructure at these facilities, according to a statement from the Chief

Minister's Office.

The Delhi government released Rs 20.26 crore — Rs 7.64 crore towards pending liabilities for the period from June 2024 to March 2025, and Rs 12.62 crore towards fodder expenses from April 2025 to January 2026.

The initiative also aims to promote clean energy (biogas) generation through the use of cow dung, the statement said.

Gupta said that in the first phase, focus will be on developing 10 modern

gaushalas where protection and welfare of stray cows will be ensured.

According to the statement, the government will equip 40 gaushalas with all necessary facilities, such as clean energy generation and sanitation.

The chief minister distributed orders related to fodder payments, clearance of pending dues, and renewal of licences and lease agreements to representatives of four gaushalas operating un-

der the Delhi government's Animal Husbandry unit.

These gaushalas in Sultanpur Dabas, Rewla Khanpur, Harewali, and Surhera are responsible for the care, feeding and medical treatment of stray cattle brought in by local bodies.

The chief minister stressed that the management of gaushalas cannot rely on government funding alone and requires sustained cooperation from society.

Foundation stone laid for one megawatt solar power plant at IIT Indore

INDORE: The foundation stone for a one megawatt solar power plant was laid at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Indore campus on Monday.

Once operational, the plant will lead to savings of approximately Rs 75 lakh annually in electricity bills, an IIT Indore release said.

"The foundation stone for the solar power plant was laid during a ceremony chaired by Dr K Sivan, chairperson of Board of Governors of IIT Indore. The one megawatt solar plant is being set up on a 3.15 acre plot," it said.

Sivan, former head of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), laid the foundation stone for a 63,840 square foot Kendriya Vidyalaya building on the IIT campus, and also inaugurated a research complex spread over 1,662 square feet that includes 10 advanced laboratories, it added.

The complex, estimated to cost approximately Rs 11.8 crore, will provide a conducive environment for high-level scientific research, the release said.

MCD Standing Committee meeting adjourned amid opposition protest

NEW DELHI: The meeting of Municipal Corporation of Delhi's Standing Committee, in which nine members were set to retire, was adjourned on Monday amid protests by opposition councillors.

The Aam Aadmi Party councillors alleged that the House did not provide minutes of the last Standing Committee meeting, which was in violation of rules.

They also alleged Rs 650 crore corruption in the extension of bio-mining contracts at the landfill sites of Okhla, Bhalswa and Ghazi-ur, saying that the Standing Committee has not given

financial approval for such extensions.

AAP councillor and Standing Committee member Praveen Kumar alleged that the committee's rules were violated as minutes of the last meeting were not provided, and the extension of contracts was provided without taking up the matter in the Standing Committee.

Officials said the adjournment of the Standing Committee meeting has left them in a fix, as half of the members were set to retire in the current meeting, and that not happening leads to a violation of the law.

Woman Maoist surrenders before Police in Rourkela

ROURKELA: A woman Maoist surrendered before Odisha Police on Monday, a day ahead of the March 31 deadline to make India "Naxal-free", officials said.

The 19-year-old, identified as Mongdi Honhaga, is a native of Marangponga village within Chhotanagpur police station limits in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district.

She initially worked as a logistics supplier for Maoists operating in the Saranda forests along the Odisha-Jharkhand border before being recruited into the outlawed outfit by a leader identified as Anmol, who was recently killed, police said.

DIG, Western Range, Brijesh Rai, said Honhaga was involved in the Banko stone quarry loot case, in which Maoists looted

Retired Army brigadier killed in cross firing in Dehradun road rage

DEHRADUN: A retired Army brigadier was killed here after he was caught in cross firing between two car occupants during a road rage incident on Monday, police said.

The incident took place in Johri village on Mussoorie Road when an argument broke out between the occupants of a Delhi-registered Fortuner and a Scorpio N over giving way, they said.

As the argument escalated, the occupants in the Scorpio allegedly chased the Fortuner and opened fire at its tyres, but a bullet struck retired Army brigadier Mukesh Joshi (74), who was out for his morning walk, police said.

Joshi was taken to a hospital, where he died during treatment, they added.

According to the police, after a bullet hit the Fortuner's tyre, the driver lost control of the vehicle and crashed it into a roadside

tree near the Government Primary School in Johri.

The occupants of the Scorpio then assaulted the people inside the Fortuner and vandalised the vehicle, police said.

Two occupants of the Fortuner were injured in the incident and were taken to a hospital by their co-passengers. After the incident, all the accused travelling in the Scorpio fled the scene, a senior police officer said.

Upon receiving information, Dehradun Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pramendra Singh Dobal, along with other officials, visited the spot to take stock of the situation and then visited the hospital to gather details from the victims.

Dehradun Superintendent of Police (City) Pramod Kumar said roadblocks have been set up across the entire district, and an intensive search operation is underway to arrest the accused.

IN-SPACE opens applications for Model Rocketry, CAN-7USAT competitions

NEW DELHI: The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre or IN-SPACE has opened applications for the second edition of IN-SPACE Model Rocketry and the third edition of CAN-7USAT India student competition 2026.

The competitions involve the design, development and launch of a model rocket and a can-size satellite of 1 kg, which must reach an altitude of 1,000 metres above the launch site.

Undergraduate student teams from engineering and science streams across India can apply for the competitions, with April 30 as the last date for submitting applications.

In a statement, Vinod Kumar, director, promotional directorate at IN-SPACE, said, "The Model Rocketry and CAN-7USAT competitions are designed

to give students a realistic exposure to the challenges of building and executing space missions.

"By working on real engineering problems, students will develop technical capabilities and learn the value of teamwork, project management and problem solving."

Constituted in June 2020, IN-SPACE, a nodal agency under the Department of Space, is responsible for the promotion, enabling, authorisation and supervision of various space activities of non-governmental entities (NGEs).

In the 2024-25 edition of the competitions, 67 student teams comprising nearly 600 students, faculty members and mentors qualified for the national finale, with 36 teams competing in the CAN-7USAT category and 31 in Model Rocketry.

36 injured as private bus plunges off bridge

SHIVAMOGGA: Thirty-six people were injured on Monday after a private bus allegedly went out of control and plunged off a bridge in the district, police said.

The incident occurred at around 1.30 pm near Kagehalla in Veerapura village of Bhadravati taluk, they said.

According to police, the bus was travelling from Channagiri in Davanagere district to Bhadravati when the driver allegedly lost control of the vehicle near a bridge across a stream. The bus hit the bridge's side barrier and overturned into the stream below, which had a very low water level. A total of 36 people, including the driver and conductor, were injured in the accident, a senior police officer said. Of them, 25 sustained minor injuries and were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment, he added.

Mahua Moitra's remark about role of Gujaratis in freedom struggle 'ridiculous display of wisdom': BJP

GANDHINAGAR: The BJP on Monday launched a scathing attack on Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra over her statement comparing contributions made by Bengalis and Gujaratis to the freedom struggle, accusing her of questioning India's integrity with a "ridiculous display of wisdom".

The Gujarat BJP said that although the Opposition party has ignored Sardar Vallabhai Patel's role in the freedom struggle, insulting Mahatma Gandhi, who hailed from the state, is an insult to the entire country.

"People of every state, language and community fought for the freedom of the country, and more than six lakh people were martyred. This statement made by Moitra ji is baseless and

a ridiculous display of her wisdom," the BJP's state vice-president Gautam Gediya said.

During a recent press conference in Kolkata, the Lok Sabha MP from Krishnanagar had said that Bengalis are a very proud race who led the "war for independence" against the British, and claimed that not a single Gujarati was at Kala Pani, the Cellular Jail built by the British in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, except for their "big hero" V D Savarkar, who only wanted to sit and write apology letters.

Gediya alleged that Moitra had a habit of asking questions in Parliament for money, and asked if she had made the statement comparing Gujaratis with Bengalis after taking money.

"Moitra ji has a history of asking questions in Parliament based on the money she receives for them. She has a divisive mindset. I wish to ask her whether this statement has also been made after taking money," he said, apparently referring to the cash-for-query scandal she was embroiled in.

"This is a question of the country's integrity. And it is important. This is not for politics, but for the unity and integrity of India," he said.

Gediya said Sardar Patel launched the freedom movement from Bardoli in present day Gujarat, which led to different movements across the country.

"It is obvious that the Congress has neglected and insulted him. Still, after the independence, people



revere Sardar Patel, who dreamt of an undivided India by uniting 562 kings (princely states)," he said.

Apart from Sardar Patel, many freedom fighters from Gujarat made valuable contributions to the freedom struggle, but many incidents from the state were not included in books.

"We are all familiar with the Jallianwala Bagh

Mamata accuses BJP of stoking fight among different sections of society to loot country

BELDA: Trinamool Congress supreme Mamata Banerjee on Monday accused the BJP of stoking fights among all sections of society and claimed the saffron party wants to loot the country by taking advantage of such situations.

Addressing a rally here, the chief minister expressed strong reservations about Union Home Minister Amit Shah's political "chargesheet" against the TMC government.

"The first chargesheet should be filed against (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi and Amit Shah, who came to power by stoking riots," she said.

"The BJP is stoking fights among all sections of society. It wants to loot the country by taking advantage of the situation evolving from such strife," she alleged while addressing the rally in Paschim Medinipur district.

She accused the BJP of trying to divide all -- from Hindu and Muslims to the administrative and police services. Several government officers, including members of the civil service, who "used to work brilliantly", are now humiliated, Banerjee said.

The West Bengal chief minister has been claiming that several senior officers have been "arbitrarily" removed to other poll-bound states by the poll panel on the insistence of the BJP, and has termed it



a "political interference of the highest order".

"We love and respect all faiths, but the BJP is a hypocrite. It does not love any religion," the TMC supremo said. "The way they are running the country, I feel they will have to flee Delhi within another one or two months."

She alleged that nearly 200 people died while waiting in queues during the 2016 demonetisation process.

Banerjee also claimed that the names of a large number of Muslims were deleted from the voter list during the SIR exercise. "Even Hindus and tribals were not spared," she alleged.

The TMC supremo reiterated that her party will provide free legal assistance to those whose names have been deleted from the electoral rolls.

Listing the development works undertaken by her government in the past 15

years, the chief minister claimed the BJP-led Centre has stopped funds for welfare schemes like 100-day job guarantee, pucca house construction and roads.

Banerjee said her government continued these projects with its own funds and sought to know why the Centre has "not released the Rs 2 lakh crore due to the state".

Addressing an election rally in Panskura Paschim constituency, the TMC chief took umbrage over Shah's political chargesheet against her party and said, "The party of thieves has come with thousands of crores of rupees (for the polls). But the people will give a charge sheet against you."

Banerjee said that her government has introduced several welfare schemes, and maintained that it does not differentiate between any religion while giving such benefits.

She asserted that the Rs 1,500 monthly financial assistance to the unemployed youths under the Banglar Yuva Sathi scheme was not a dole, but "pocket money" for them till they find employment.

"They (BJP) had promised two crore jobs every year. In reality, joblessness has risen by 40 per cent in the country, while in Bengal we have reduced it," Banerjee said. She told the gathering that the TMC's loss in the polls "will mean the BJP will snatch everything from you".

Bihar CM inaugurates newly built Admin, Arts faculty building of Patna University



PATNA: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday inaugurated the newly built administrative and arts faculty buildings at Patna University. The buildings were constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 147.29 crore.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, Kumar said, "Strengthening the foundational structure of the university will help improve the education system and ensure organised operation of administrative work."

Students will also be provided with quality educational environment and amenities, he added.

Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, Education minister Sunil Kumar, and other officials were present during the occasion.

Meanwhile, student union leaders and several students raised slogans against Samrat Choudhary and Sunil Kumar for not formally inviting Vice Chancellor Ajay Kumar Singh, Shantanu Shekhar, president of Patna University Students' Union (PUSU), said, "We have come here to protest because our vice chancellor was not invited formally at the event, and his name is not there on the inauguration stone."

The VC said, "Everything happened on short notice, and communication was made through mobile phones."

Centre's Ujwala scheme has become a 'Firewood stove scheme': DCM D K Shivakumar

RISING PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES INCLUDING CEMENT AND IRON: IS THIS 'ACCHE DIN' OR 'KACCHA DIN'?

CENTRE SHOULD CREATE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS LIKE THE GUARANTEE SCHEMES

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IS FOOLING THE PEOPLE

Bengaluru : Lashing out at the BJP government in the Centre for rising prices amid fuel shortage, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said that the Ujwala scheme has become a firewood stove scheme. Addressing a joint press conference at the KPCC office, the DCM, who is also the KPCC President, questioned, "What happened to Acche Din? Should we now

call what we have 'Kaccha Din'? I want to ask BJP leaders this question." Elections are underway in five states. Hotels are shutting down and people are being forced to use electric stoves. Over the last fifteen days, electricity consumption in the state has risen by 10%. The Central government has given people a 'firewood blessing', but where will the firewood come from?" he said.

"Due to Central government's wrong decisions and policies, people across the country are suffering from price rise. It's not just cooking gas cylinder prices, toll charges and railway ticket fares have all gone up. Everyone knows how much criticism was directed at the state government when it was compelled under certain unavoidable circumstances to raise prices. The Central



government is waging a price war against ordinary people," he said. "The Central government is fooling the people. When we undertook a padayatra, we saw how distressed people were due to price rise. To

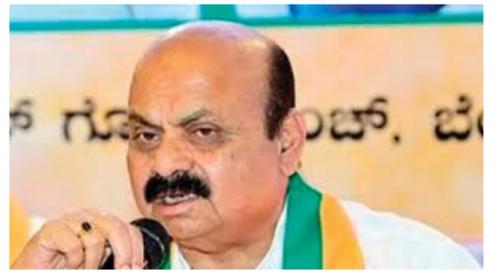
strengthen their financial position, our government gave them five guarantee schemes. Now our guarantee schemes are providing financial protection to the people," he said.

"Prices of 900 medicines have been increased. 12% GST has been imposed. Through NPPA price revision, tax on these medicines has been hiked from 10.7% to 12%. Prices of essential items including plastic pipes have been raised by Rs.7,000 per tonne. Tenders have already been called by the Public Works Department for laying bitumen, and work has already begun. I have informed contractors and officials in Bengaluru that rather than halting work due to price increases, the government will directly supply bitumen," he said.

Cement and Iron Price Hike

"Cement prices have also risen by Rs.50 to Rs.100 per bag. There is a big cement mafia behind this, everyone knows who is controlling it. Iron prices have gone up from Rs.47,000 to Rs.59,000 per tonne. How can ordinary people build homes under these circumstances? This is also causing setbacks to government construction works. On top of this, airfare has been suddenly increased by 18%," he hit out. "Since people have been told not to enter forests, the shortage of firewood will genuinely worsen. Even in villages, gas usage has increased and people have stopped using firewood. If consumption suddenly spikes, there will be a shortage. The black market is already active — domestic gas prices have gone up to Rs.2,000 and commercial gas to Rs.4,000," he said.

Tax Terrorism Has Begun in the State: MP Basavaraj Bommai



Davanagere: Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai alleged that a kind of "tax terrorism" has begun in the state. In the first budget itself, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah increased excise duty, and later hiked milk prices, electricity tariffs twice, stamp duty, and motor vehicle taxes. In the last three years, the government has imposed new taxes worth Rs.60,000 crore.

Speaking at a press conference in Davanagere, he further alleged that the CM has taken nearly Rs.5 lakh crore in fresh loans over three years, earning a reputation as a "record borrower." The corruption is rampant across all departments and added that he had never seen such a corrupt government.

He claimed that even for basic land registration in villages, bribes have to reach Bengaluru; otherwise, the process does not move forward. "For converting one acre of land in remote villages, a bribe of Rs.10 lakh is being demanded," he alleged. He also accused irregularities in the distribution of rice under gov-

ernment schemes, stating that even ration shop owners have complained. "They say the less rice distributed each month, the more it benefits the state government," he said. Bommai further alleged that corruption starts right from hospitals to ministers' offices and even the Chief Minister's office. "Transfers have become a business. Even officers who pay huge sums to get postings have no assurance of how long they will stay. The administration has completely collapsed," he charged. He also alleged corruption in electricity billing, claiming that out of charges collected for 8,000 electricity meters by a private company, Rs.6,000 involved corrupt practices.

Bommai said that contractors from departments like PWD, Excise, and KEB have themselves raised allegations of corruption in the state government. "To cover this up, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is trying to blame the BJP. But in three years, his misgovernance has reached every household in the state," he said.

Corruption Has Turned Transfers into an Industry

Census-2027 Preparatory Meeting: Commissioner directs officials for comprehensive readiness

Bengaluru: A preparatory meeting was held at the 3rd floor conference hall of Yelahanka Mini Vidhana Soudha under the Chairmanship of Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar, Bengaluru North City Corporation, to ensure smooth and accurate conduct of Census-2027 operations.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held with officials regarding all necessary preparations for the successful implementation of the census. Key directions issued by the Commissioner:

Charge Officers and Additional Charge Officers must thoroughly understand the roles and responsibilities of enumerators and ensure proper execu-



tion of duties Enumerators should be provided with adequate training to avoid any errors during the census process

Officials must discharge their duties with additional responsibility during the census period. The Commissioner stated that the census is a significant exercise that provides foundational data for national development, and participating in it is both a matter of pride and responsibility.

Distribution of groceries to Asha Niketan Mentally Handicapped Home: Vijayanagar Sports and Cultural Association



Bengaluru: Vijayanagar Sports and Cultural Association of Rajarajeshwarinagar donated groceries to FMR India Asha Niketan Mentally Handicapped Home

President Kodandaram said that Vijayanagar Sports and Cultural Association has been doing social work with the aim of children's education and health, environment and freedom from

hunger. Every year, it provides food to orphanages and old age homes in Bangalore. As if Kayakave Kailash, a small part of our hard-earned money is being spent for the

development of society. The organization's objective is to do social work by Vijayanagar Sports and Cultural Association, as if I am ego, if we all give, then heaven is happiness.

President B.T. Kodandaram, Vice President L. Jagadish, Secretary Dinesh G.S., Office Bearers B. Kottreshappa, Srinivas Dinesh B.C. (Contractor) Y.S. Shivaraju, Bhimappa Dashyala Kishore B.Desai, Smt. Harini, Antony Mendonsa Naveen Kumar Gowda, Vijayakumar Sulikere Gram Panchayat President Ramachandra B.V., Koramangala Inspector Reddy, Club staff Nagaraj, Pratap, Mahesh, Naveen, Pandu Venkatesh were present.

PM Modi calls close timing of two semiconductor facilities 'proof of India's speed'

Sanand (Gujarat), March 31 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that the start of production at Kaynes Semicon's OSAT facility in Sanand demonstrates the speed and growth of India's semiconductor ecosystem and its increasing integration with global supply chains.

Speaking at the inauguration of the plant, the Prime Minister noted the close timing of developments in the sector.

"On February 28, production began at Micron Technology's facility, and today, on March 31, production will start here at Kaynes," he said.

"This is not a coincidence but proof of the speed of India's semiconductor ecosystem." He recalled his visit to Sanand at the end of the previous month, saying, "I was in Sanand on the last day of last month, and today I am here on the last day of this month as well." He added, "Earlier today, I attended a 'divine' programme, and now I am present at a 'digital' programme."

PM Modi said it is encouraging that an Indian company has entered semiconductor manufacturing. "I am



pleased that an Indian company has shown interest in making semiconductor chips, and Kaynes will become a participant in the global supply chain," he said, adding that in the coming days, many Indian companies will collaborate globally to build resilient semiconductor supply chains.

He said the initiative aligns with "Make in India, Make for the World"

modules manufactured in Sanand will reach US companies and contribute to global industrial and electric vehicle ecosystems.

"These Intelligent Power Modules will give strength to the electric vehicle ecosystem and heavy industries in India and across the world," he said, calling the global partnerships "the strongest foundation for the world's better future". Set up with an investment of about Rs 3,300 crore, the facility is an outsourced semiconductor assembly and test (OSAT) plant with a planned production capacity of 6.3 million units per day. PM Modi highlighted India's domestic capabilities, mentioning the development of advanced microprocessors such as 'Dhruv64' for sectors including 5G infrastructure, automotive electronics and industrial automation.

He also described efforts to build a skilled workforce, noting that more than 85,000 design professionals will be trained, over 400 universities and start-ups have access to advanced design tools, and more than 55 chips have been designed.

and strengthens India's role in the global market. Describing the development as a "new bridge between Sanand and Silicon Valley," he said the plant will supply Intelligent Power Modules (IPMs) to a California-based company. "A major chunk of the chips being produced is already booked for exports," he said. The Prime Minister noted that

No more cash at Toll Plazas: NHAI to enforce 100 pc digital payments from April 1

New Delhi, March 31 : Road users across India will no longer be able to pay toll fees in cash from April 1 as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) shifts to a fully digital payment system.

In a major step towards modernising highway travel, NHAI will implement a complete ban on cash pay-



ments at toll plazas across the country. From April 1,

commuters will have to pay toll charges only through

digital modes such as FASTag or UPL. The move is aimed at improving efficiency and bringing more transparency to toll collection on national highways and expressways. Officials believe that a fully digital system will help vehicles pass through toll plazas faster, reducing long queues and saving travel time.

Table with 4 columns: Name of the shareholder, Folio No. (s), Certificate No. (s), Distinctive No. (s), Total No. of shares. Includes shareholders like NAVARATAN DUNGARWAL.

INVENT ASSETS SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION PRIVATE LIMITED. SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTIES - DATE & TIME OF AUCTION 20-Apr-26 AT 10:00 AM. Includes details of properties for sale and auction terms.

EDITORIAL

WHAT A 'NEW MIDDLE EAST' COULD LOOK LIKE AFTER IRAN WAR

This isn't just the worst ever energy crisis in history. What we are witnessing is nothing less than the First Energy World War. No country - well, almost - is left unaffected. Energy superpower Saudi Arabia is in the deepest economic and geopolitical pain ever. Even Norway - far away, super rich and the key supplier of energy to Western Europe - is in crisis. Because soaring petrol and electricity prices are hurting the ordinary people in the scenic kingdom. In the Global South, the poor are being told to go back to kerosene for cooking. In India, too, kerosene is re-entering many kitchens.

Israel is relentless in its long-cherished plan to demolish Iran, which it has deemed an existential threat for decades. The United States has long refrained from being militarily involved in any such Israeli adventure. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after two decades of persistent scheming, finally had his way in dragging the US into his biggest ever war project. The US is now not only trapped but is forced to lead one of the fiercest external aggressions against one of the oldest living civilisations on the planet, Iran. America's vulnerabilities and weaknesses are for the entire world to see. Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG got bombed by Iran. The US, despite its big military base there, could not protect the tiny kingdom's economic lifeline. The stories from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other hydrocarbon-rich kingdoms in the Gulf are similar. They depended on the US for their defence. But they have never felt more defenceless. There is now a growing realisation that the United States may no longer be the force it used to be, that it is now a rapidly declining power, and that they need to rework the way they have looked at its defence frameworks all these years.

Hence, hush-hush parleys have begun all across the Gulf Kingdoms to rethink their security architecture. Many have begun to look at India, China, Europe and Japan with a fresh lens. The Middle East, or West Asia as we prefer to call it, will never be the same again. The UAE, Qatar, or, for that matter, even Saudi Arabia, have begun to play the role of new catalysts - ones with the potential to transform and modernise the entire region and, even beyond - for all Muslim societies across the world. A New Middle East in this scenario would be less dependent on the US and would actively seek deeper energy and security engagements with emerging powers like India. China would also be there, probably bigger and deeper than ever before, but to believe that it would replace the US in the region is a misplaced belief. Most Arab countries do not trust China enough to engage with it exclusively in matters like security. The New Middle East will most likely follow an India-like policy of multi-alignment and multipolarity. Would the New Middle East also open up new opportunities for India in terms of securing oil and gas and reconstruction opportunities? Absolutely, yes. However, our approach should be building interdependence, not just buying oil and gas from there. India must insist on buying stakes in producing oil and gas assets in the region, including in post-war Iran. India should also insist on higher FDI by energy-exporting Gulf countries in the country, especially in oil and gas exploration and production, oil and gas strategic and commercial storage, and oil, LNG and LPG shipbuildings in the country.

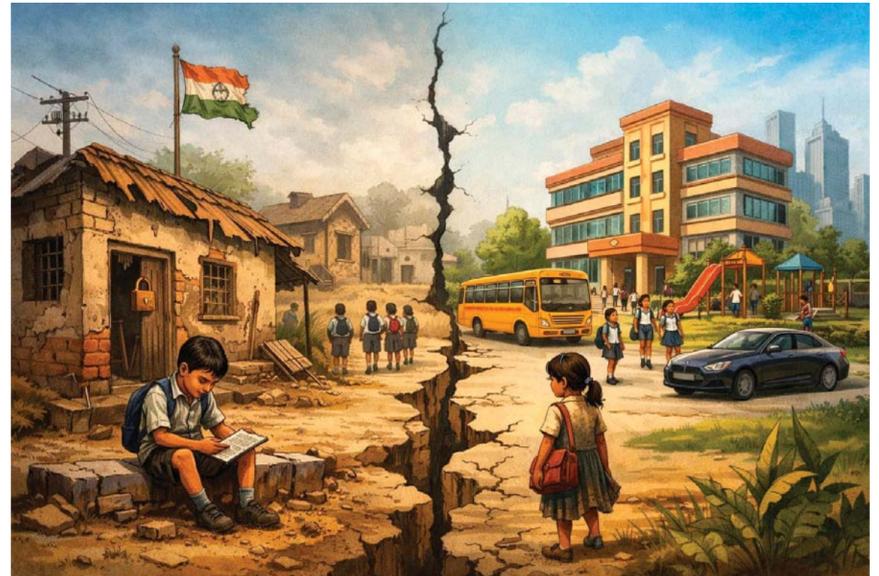
This would also be the time for India to push ahead with the India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC) and look at it in the context of the inevitable new security architecture of the region. Such a framework would be more multinational and collaborative, with the US still playing a big role but also vacating space for other powers, including the likes of France and Germany. India should support any such new architecture that does not let China mushroom in the region. However, the immediate challenge is how to deal with the escalating energy war. We should be prepared for a \$150-per-barrel scenario if the US moves into Iran's oil export hub, the Kharg Island. The world is already witnessing some destruction in the demand for oil due mainly to the disruption in supply.

Privatisation takes hold: Government schools face deepening crisis

(In a decade, 94,000 government schools closed, 51,000 private schools opened, every fifth school-going child is out of school.)

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

India's education system is facing a serious crisis. Nearly 94,000 government schools have closed in the past decade, while over 51,000 private schools have opened during the same period. This situation not only exposes the weaknesses of the government education system but also exposes the social inequality caused by increasing privatization. Article 21A of the Indian Constitution guarantees every child the right to free and compulsory education, but under current circumstances, this right appears to be gradually eroding. Between 2014-15 and 2023-24, the number of government schools declined from 1,107,101 to 1,017,660, a decrease of approximately 89,441 schools, while the number of private schools increased from 2,88,164 to 3,31,108. This trend is particularly worrying for rural India, where access to education is becoming increasingly difficult for children from poor and disadvantaged sections. A major cause of the crisis in government schools is the "School Merger Policy," under which small schools with low enrollment are merged into larger ones. This has made access to school difficult for children in rural and tribal areas. Thousands of schools have closed in states like Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, accounting for a large portion of the total closures. Furthermore, teacher shortages, poor infrastructure, and the ineffective implementation of schemes like the Mid-Day Meal are also major reasons for the decline in enrollment. Certain provisions of the National Education Policy 2020, such as discouraging single-teacher schools, also contribute to this process, resulting in a sharp decline in enrollment in government schools, while the number of students in private schools has increased rapidly. Children from poor families are now forced to turn to private schools, but high fees become a major barrier.



The number of private schools is rapidly increasing, and a large number of children are studying in private schools in urban areas. However, this growth also raises several concerns. Private school fees are increasing significantly, making it increasingly difficult for low- and middle-income families to access education. This increasing privatization of education is turning it into a business rather than a social service. Under the Right to Education Act, 25 percent of seats are reserved for poor children, but its effective implementation is not being implemented, further deepening social inequality. While the affluent receive education in private schools with better resources and facilities, the poor are confined to government schools with limited resources. This imbalance is also having a direct impact on dropout rates. Millions of children have dropped out of school in recent years, a large number of them adolescent girls. This is due to several factors, including poverty, child labor, family migration, dis-

tance to schools, and lack of security. Girls, especially in rural areas, find it more difficult to access education. When families cannot afford private school fees and government schools are not available nearby, children are almost certain to drop out of education. This situation could further exacerbate unemployment and social inequality. Privatization of education is not just an educational problem, it also deepens social and economic inequality. When all sections of society do not have equal educational opportunities, the imbalance in opportunities in society increases. In India, only about 3 percent of GDP is spent on education, while the target of increasing it to 6 percent remains unfulfilled. This impacts women's empowerment, employment opportunities, and the country's overall economic development. If this situation continues, it could also pose a threat to democracy, because an educated society produces informed and responsible citizens. To address this crisis, the govern-

ment must take concrete and effective steps. The school merger policy should be reconsidered and small schools in rural areas should be protected. Vacant teaching positions should be filled promptly, and special attention should be paid to teacher training. Basic amenities such as toilets, clean drinking water, and digital resources should be ensured in all schools. The quality of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme should be improved, and private school fees should be controlled and monitored. The provisions of the Right to Education Act should be strictly enforced, and public investment in education should be increased to 6 percent of GDP. In conclusion, the growing influence of privatization has become a serious challenge for government schools. The declining number of government schools and the increasing number of private schools indicate that education is gradually shifting from a fundamental right to a business. This is having the greatest impact on the poor and disadvantaged.

When Maoists Tricked Police Onto A Booby-Trapped Road, Killed 16 In Gadchiroli



Left-wing extremism was one of the biggest challenges to India's internal security and neutralisation of almost all armed cadres of the guerrilla movement means people can move around freely in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli. As a reporter who covered some of the heinous attacks on security forces by these armed guerrillas, a visit to Gadchiroli now brings relief, given the government's assurance that the Maoist violence has been eradicated. On May 1, 2019, as news came in of a Maoist attack in Gadchiroli's Jambhulkhedha, I was assigned to cover it. We left for Nagpur immediately. As we boarded the flight, we saw the state's Director General of Police, Subodh Jaiswal and then Minister of State in Home Department Deepak Kesarkar also taking the same flight to Nagpur. Earlier in the day, we had interviewed the police chief who had promised that the Maoists would face the full force of the law. The Maoists had set 36 vehicles on fire, knowing

well that the police would respond. The response team was the actual target. A Quick Reaction Team left for the village and they were ambushed by the Maoists. The private vehicle they travelling in was blown up by an Improvised Explosive Device near the Lendali Nullah in Jambhulkhedha. The Naxals also stole weapons from the QRT team. One of the stolen AK-47 guns was found in September 2025, beside the body of known Maoist Sumitra Veladi. The Maoist was eliminated after a two-hour encounter in the foothills of the Abujmahad hills - around 100 km from the 2019 attack site. As we reached Jambhulkhedha the day after the attack, we realised the extent of the impact of the explosives. Pieces of clothing were strewn around and the road had a huge cavity that made it unusable. We chose to get off the main road and take an interior village road to head towards Dadapur village. That's where I learnt that

Milind Teltumbde was in the area and had been spotted at Dadapur a day before the attack. Others like Mannu Sulge Pallo, who had also planned the attack, were seen in the area as well. Dadapur village was deserted. But the 30-plus vehicles the Maoists had set ablaze were still smoking. It was eerie. We could see people watching us from slightly opened windows and my cameraperson Sanjay Mandal and I decided to start filming the damage. The Maoists here had opposed any road or construction projects to ensure that government benefits and forces not reach these remote areas of Gadchiroli. Just beyond Dadapur village, there was a forested hill and we noticed movement in the area right above the village. That's when we knew we were perhaps going to run into the Maoists responsible for the attack. As we approached some men coming from the hillside to get a comment, we were curtly told they did not want to speak to us.

One woman, Risubai, agreed to speak to us and one of the men in the group spoke to me off camera. He said the Maoists had drawn the police into the area and triggered the blast. They had targeted the vehicle the police were travelling in and watched the explosion from a distance. Asked if the Maoist was still around, he pointed towards the hill. That was the same area where my cameraperson and I had noticed movement a few minutes ago. Milind Teltumbde had held meetings in the area days prior to the attack and he was present for the attack too. Teltumbde was finally eliminated by the police in an encounter in November 2021. Known by his aliases 'Jeeva' and 'Deepak', Teltumbde was a hardcore Maoist who carried a bounty of Rs 50 lakh on his head. He was one of the 26 Maoists killed in an encounter and along with him other known Maoists like Lokesh alias Mangu Podiyam and Mahesh alias Shivaji Gota were also eliminated.

WHAT IS THE REAL WAY TO PROTECT WOMEN?



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(exploitation or volunteering)

Despite being educated and independent, many women are victims of exploitation. According to this school of thought, one reason for this is their emotional nature, which some people exploit. It argues that women are more trusting and sensitive by nature, which sometimes makes them vulnerable to the wrong people. In this context, the traditional social system is considered more secure, where women live under the care of their father in childhood, their brother in adolescence, and their husband after marriage. This system is associated with protection and guidance. Meanwhile, some consider modern freedom to be risky, arguing that it forces women to make decisions alone, making them more vulnerable to exploitation. The debate about the status of women in Indian society is nothing new. The question has been raised time and again as to whether the modern freedoms afforded to women are truly beneficial to them, or whether they are putting them at greater risk of exploitation. Recent events and societal reactions to them have reignited this debate. Some believe that women's increasing freedom is leading to their exploitation, while others consider this a narrow and misguided viewpoint. Therefore, it is essential to approach this issue with logic, facts, and a balanced perspective, rather than with emotions. First, it's important to understand the root cause



of exploitation. Can a woman's education, self-reliance, or independent living truly lead to exploitation? The simple and clear answer is no. Exploitation is always rooted in the mindset of the perpetrator. When someone mistreats a woman, the responsibility lies solely with that person. Linking this to a woman's freedom or behavior is not only wrong, but also akin to blaming the victim. There's a societal belief that women are safer if they are under the supervision of their father, brother, or husband. This idea stems from traditional thinking, where safety and control are considered synonymous. However, the reality is far more complex. Numerous cases have emerged where women have been abused by acquaintances or within their own families. This means that mere surveillance or control cannot guarantee safety. Safety is not about restricting individual freedom, but about strengthening justice, law, and awareness within society. It is also said that women are emotional by nature and therefore easily influenced. While this may be partially true, it is a grave mistake to consider this a

weakness. Emotions are part of human nature, whether male or female. The real problem arises when someone exploits these emotions. Therefore, the solution is not to suppress women's emotions or limit their freedom, but to take strict action against those in society who exploit others. In modern society, women have gained access to education, employment, and the right to make their own decisions. This is a positive change that has empowered them and made them self-reliant. However, it has also brought some challenges. It is every individual's responsibility to use freedom wisely. This applies not only to women but also to men. If a person makes a wrong decision, they may suffer the consequences, but this does not mean that freedom itself is wrong. It is important to understand the difference between the misuse of freedom and freedom itself. It's often argued that women were safer in earlier times because they lived within the confines of their homes. But this notion is not entirely accurate. Even then, women faced injustice and exploita-

tion, but they were unable to speak out. Today, at least, women can stand up for their rights, speak out, and demand justice. This change is a positive sign for society. The rising number of rapes and other crimes is certainly a cause for concern. But the reason for this is not women's freedom, but the mindset of the perpetrators, weak law enforcement, and the prevailing misconceptions in society. To find a solution to a problem, we must understand its true causes. Limiting women's freedom is not a solution; it is, in fact, a form of running away from it. On the contrary, we must envision a society where women are both safe and independent. This requires taking several important steps. First, the education system must incorporate the values of gender equality and respect. Children must be taught from childhood that it is important to respect every individual. Second, the legal system must be strengthened so that criminals receive swift and severe punishment. Third, women must be encouraged to develop self-defense and self-confidence, enabling them to face any situation.

Educated and employed but still struggling: India's middle class under strain

In a darkened control room in Navi Mumbai, 100 operators oversee bots monitoring 30,000 ATMs across India. Their cameras, sensors and bots do the work that 60,000 security guards once did. That control room is a small window into something much larger. Across India, the quiet machinery of automation has been reshaping - and in many cases, eliminating - the jobs that the middle class was built on. And the middle class is only now beginning to reckon with what that means. As stable incomes come under pressure, many are turning to riskier ways of making money to bridge the gap. Consider VS, a 27-year-old BTech graduate from a small town near Bhillwara city in western Rajasthan state. He earns 14,000 rupees (\$151; £113) a month as a freelance salesperson. Last year, he lost 1.3m rupees - nearly his entire family's savings - trading Futures and Options (F&O) on the stock market. He is one of nine million Indians doing the same thing - and are collectively losing over \$12bn a year. That figure is roughly equal to the federal government's entire annual education budget. These are not



gamblers. They are educated, aspirational people with nowhere else to put their ambitions. Or consider Rahul Singh, a delivery agent with a food delivery app. Singh explained that he borrowed money not just to finance his home renovation, which is a discretionary spend, but also for "covering essential expenses, such as rent, medical bills and any other unforeseen expenses, which were critical for survival". VS and Singh come from different layers of India's vast middle class and they are socially and economically different. But their predicament is anything but different.

ent. These are not cautionary tales about individual failure. They are portraits of a class under pressure - the 40 million income taxpayers who earn between 500,000 (\$5,283; £3,969) and 10m rupees annually, and who form the productive core of the Indian economy. Something is going wrong for them, as we discovered while researching our new book, and it is happening on multiple fronts at once. White-collar job creation - the kind of employment that an engineering or commerce degree was supposed to guarantee - has fallen from 11% growth before 2020 to just 1% today,

according to Naukri Jobspeak Index. The decline didn't begin with AI. Automation had been hollowing out middle-skill work since the early 2000s, quietly eliminating the clerical roles, bookkeeping jobs and sales positions that once absorbed India's graduates. But AI has dramatically accelerated the disruption. India's IT services sector - the country's largest graduate employer with eight million workers - is in active retrenchment. The government's own planning body, Niti Aayog, estimates that by 2031, AI could eliminate close to three million IT and customer service

jobs. The CEOs of India's most profitable companies speak openly to us about using AI to cut salary bills by a third. Into this contracting market, eight million new graduates arrive every year. The results are becoming hard to ignore. At IIT Bombay - one of India's top technology institutes that was once a near-guaranteed passport to prosperity - fresh graduates are leaving with lower salaries than their predecessors. Across IITs nationally, 8,000 of 21,500 graduates remain unemployed. The IIT degree, long India's most coveted credential, is beginning to look less like a golden ticket and more like a lottery. Even for those who find work, something has quietly gone wrong with the economics of middle-class life. Over the past decade, the average middle-class income taxpayer's annual income has grown by around 50,000 rupees - roughly the price of a decent smartphone. In isolation, that sounds like progress. Against the actual cost of living, it is a slow erosion. Recent research shows a vegetarian thali (an Indian meal comprising several small dishes) now costs 11% more each year.

INDIGO APPOINTS WILLIAM WALSH AS NEW CEO



New Delhi: The country's largest airline IndiGo on Tuesday, March 31, announced the appointment of former British Airways chief William Walsh as new CEO. Walsh, an airline industry veteran, is currently the Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Announcing the appointment of Walsh as the CEO, subject to regulatory approvals, IndiGo, in a release, said his tenure at IATA comes to a close on July 31 and is expected to join no later than August 3. The announcement comes less than three weeks after the sudden exit of IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers. Walsh, popularly known as Willie, was formerly CEO of British Airways and IAG (International Airlines Group, a holding company,

which owns Aer Lingus, British Airways, Iberia, Level and Vueling). "As we enter a new phase of transformation and growth, I am delighted to welcome Willie to IndiGo. "He is an iconic and accomplished aviation leader, and brings a rare combination of global perspective, operational expertise of having built strong customer-focused airlines, deep industry experience and a values-driven leadership, making him exceptionally suited to lead IndiGo at this pivotal cusp of growth," IndiGo Managing Director Rahul Bhatia said. His term at IATA ends on July 31 and he is expected to join IndiGo by August 3 at the latest, the airline said in a statement. "(Walsh's) experience in managing large scale airline operations and navigat-

ing complex market dynamics make him ideally suited to strengthen and lead IndiGo," chairman Vikram Singh Mehta said.

COMBATIVE LEADER
Before joining IATA, Walsh built a long career in commercial aviation, starting as a cadet pilot at Aer Lingus in 1979 before becoming its CEO in 2001. He became CEO at British Airways in 2005, steering the airline through the global financial crisis and overseeing its 2011 merger with Iberia to create IAG. Walsh earned a reputation as a combative leader during labour disputes at BA and later directed blunt criticism at governments over their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic after taking charge of IATA in April 2021.

Social media firms must better enforce Australia under-16 ban, watchdog says

The world's biggest social media companies are not doing enough to keep children in Australia off their platforms, the country's internet regulator says, despite a law that came into effect late last year. The legislation banned users under 16 from 10 platforms, but eSafety says it has "significant concerns" about the compliance of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube. Australia's ban - which is being closely watched by countries like the UK - was justified by campaigners and the government as necessary to protect children from harmful content and addictive algorithms. Firms like Meta and Snap believe the approach is flawed, but say they're doing the best they can to comply. In its first report since the ban was instigated in December, the regulator said it had identified "a number of poor practices" from the five platforms. These include: Giving children who had declared they were aged under 16 before the ban the chance to



show that they were, in fact, over 16. Enabling under-16s to repeatedly "attempt the same age assurance method". Insufficient measures to prevent new under-16s creating accounts. Not providing effective ways for parents and others to report under-16s who still had access to social media. Limited data has been released since the ban came into force. In January, the regulator said 4.7 million accounts had been restricted or removed in the first month since the law took effect on December 10. "While social media platforms have taken some initial action, I am concerned through our compliance monitoring that some may

not be doing enough to comply with Australian law," Australia's eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant said. The regulator - which had until now been monitoring the situation - says it will begin enforcing the restrictions and gathering evidence. "The evidence must establish the platform has not taken reasonable steps to prevent children aged under 16 from having an account," Inman Grant said. "That means more than simply demonstrating some children do still have accounts. Rather, the evidence must show the platform has not implemented appropriate systems and processes." The BBC has

Highlights
■ The world's biggest social media companies are not doing enough to keep children in Australia off their platforms, the country's internet regulator says

contacted all of the social media companies for comment. A spokesperson for Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Threads, said that the company is "committed to complying with Australia's social media ban". It also noted that accurate age determination is a "challenge for the whole industry" and argue that "robust age verification and parental approval" at the app store level is the most effective approach to protect young people. Snap, which developed Snapchat, said it had locked 450,000 accounts and "continue to lock more every day".

West Asia war can shave off 1 pc point from India's GDP growth projections: EY

New Delhi: India's real GDP growth for the next fiscal could erode by around 1 percentage point, while retail inflation could rise by about 1.5 percentage points from their baseline estimates if the Middle East conflict persists through the next fiscal, an EY report said. The EY Economy Watch report said that several sectors, including employment-intensive sectors like textiles, paints, chemicals, fertilizers, cement and tires, could be directly impacted. Any reduction in employment or incomes in these sectors may further dampen aggregate demand. As a result, both supply and demand conditions may be adversely affected by global oil market disturbances. It said the Indian economy, which imports nearly 90 per cent of its crude oil requirements, is also highly dependent on imports of natural gas and fertilizers, and is particularly vulnerable to such external shocks, with the adverse effects likely to cascade across multiple sectors through strong forward and backward linkages with crude oil and energy. The



ongoing conflict in the Middle East has significantly disrupted global crude oil and energy markets by affecting supply, storage, transportation and prices. Even if the conflict is resolved in the near term, some of these disruptions may take considerable time to normalise, it said. "If the impact persists throughout FY27, we estimate that India's real GDP growth could erode by around 1 percentage points, while CPI inflation could rise by approximately 1.5 percentage points from their baseline estimates of 7 per cent and 4 per cent respectively," the EY

Economy Watch report said. EY in its February report had projected India's GDP could be between 6.8 and 7.2 per cent in the 2026-27 fiscal. In response, the Government of India may need to deploy a substantive countercyclical policy. It may also be prudent for the GoI to co-opt larger and more industrialised states into this countercyclical effort. Additional provisions may be made to augment the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF) introduced by the GoI in FY26, EY said. The government has already set up a Rs 1-lakh crore ESF to act as a

financial buffer against global headwinds. Global crude prices have risen by almost 50 per cent since the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran on February 28, triggering sweeping retaliation from Tehran. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had last week projected India's GDP growth to moderate to 6.1 per cent in the next fiscal, from 7.6 per cent in the current financial year. EY in its February report had projected India's GDP could be between 6.8 and 7.2 per cent in the 2026-27 fiscal.

Worry-Free Retirement with Assured Income for Life with ICICI Pru GPP Flexi

According to UNDP's 2025 Human Development Report[1], India's life expectancy rose from 58.6 years in 1990 to 72 years in 2023. Interestingly, a government data on 'Elderly in India' suggests that by 2036 nearly one in seven Indians will be aged 60 years or older[2]. While these projections are good signs of the improving healthcare in India, an individual must be cognizant about the challenges posed by the rising life expectancy as well. As people live longer, individuals will face significantly higher living costs and soaring medical inflation during their retirement years. Understanding this challenge and to make retirement planning easy, ICICI Prudential Life has designed ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi which enables customers to effectively plan their retirement. This product allows individuals to systematically make contributions to build the required amount of savings and then receive guaran-

Highlights
■ According to UNDP's 2025 Human Development Report[1], India's life expectancy rose from 58.6 years in 1990 to 72 years in 2023.

teed regular income for life, which is the main goal of retired individuals. The rate of interest at which the regular income will be paid out is fixed at the time of purchasing the product, this means the guaranteed regular income does not fluctuate with interest rate movements. Commenting on the plan, Mr. Vikas Gupta, Chief Product Officer of ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "Retirement planning is driven by one core need - certainty of income for life. ICICI Pru Guaranteed

Pension Plan Flexi is designed to deliver this certainty through a simple and flexible structure. In fact, it offers 7 flexible options to customers to serve their different needs. Notably, this product offers the Joint Life with the 'Waiver of Premium' option which ensures all future premiums are paid by the Company in case of demise of the first holder and the guaranteed regular income is paid out to the second holder, ensuring their family's financial security. Also, if the policyholder is diagnosed with any of the specified critical illness or is permanently disabled, the product can be returned for a full refund. Other options such as increasing income, top-ups, and access to liquidity through loans makes ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi, a practical and relevant plan for real-life needs. Thus, enabling customers to plan early, stay in control and build a predictable and stable financial future with confidence."

Korean Air takes emergency action as fuel prices soar

Korean Air says it is moving into emergency management mode to buffer the impact of surging jet fuel costs as the global economy is rocked by the ongoing US-Israel war with Iran. A spokesperson for the national flag carrier said on Tuesday that it will implement "internal cost-reduction measures" to manage its finances to ensure the firm's "stability amidst rising fuel prices and global economic uncertainty". It is the latest Asian airline to announce measures to deal with the economic impact of the Iran war. The cost of crude oil has surged by more than 50% since the conflict began on 28 February, while global jet fuel prices have more than doubled. Airlines have adopted similar emergency protocols to protect their businesses during crises like the Covid-19 pandemic, said Tan Chi Siang from consulting firm PwC Singapore. Asian carriers, in particular, are dealing with a "double shock" of rising global oil prices and a regional jet fuel shortage that has forced them to take action, he



added. South Korea South Korea is especially vulnerable to energy supply disruptions from the Middle East as it is heavily reliant on oil from the Gulf. In recent days, several of the country's carriers - including Korean Air, Asiana Airlines and Busan Air - have entered emergency management mode. The measures are typically internal, such as slowing upgrades or other investments, but some airlines may reduce the number of flights to cut costs, Tan said. Korean Air employees were first notified about the emergency measures in a memo

that has been seen by the BBC. Vice Chairman Woo Ki-hong told staff members the airline is preparing for "a surge in fuel expenses". It will cut costs through measures based on the price of oil, Woo wrote, adding that the moves are "not merely a one-time" initiative but a chance to "strengthen our structural foundation". Mainland China and Hong Kong Despite being a major energy producer, China is the world's biggest importer of oil, making its aviation industry susceptible to global energy shocks. China Eastern Airlines, one of the

country's largest state-owned carriers, warned on Monday that global disruptions could weigh on its operations this year. The airline said trade conditions and "geopolitical conflicts or wars will have a relatively significant impact" on the aviation sector, which could affect its performance. Many Chinese airlines have raised their fuel surcharges on flights since the Iran war started. Authorities have also reportedly ordered China's oil refineries to stop exporting fuel in a bid to keep domestic prices under control. In Hong Kong,

Cathay Pacific said that a fuel surcharge has been included on all flights, with many of its fares rising sharply. Japan Japan is an international transport hub, as well as being a major manufacturer of plane parts. All Nippon Airways (ANA) has said it will not be raising fuel surcharges for tickets issued in April and May as prices were set before the Iran war. The immediate impact of rising energy costs is "limited" for now due to the existing surcharges and measures that the airline has taken to secure fuel prices in advance, a spokesperson for ANA said. Meanwhile, Japan Airlines said it had taken no specific actions yet regarding fuel shortages. Some prices of flights, such as trips between Japan and Europe, have risen due to an increase in demand after the closure of the carrier's Middle East routes, Japan Airlines said. India India's aviation industry has been hit hard by the cancellation of flights to the Middle East, the biggest market for its international airlines.

Trump tells the UK and other countries 'go get your own oil' from Strait of Hormuz

Hegseth claims that regime change has occurred in Iran and the country's leadership should be "wiser than the last". He warns that if they don't agree a deal with Trump, then the US military will continue with "even more intensity". Chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Dan Caine then picks up. He delivers an update saying over 150 ships have been taken out successfully by the Navy, and the US B-52 missions have started. Hegseth continues, saying US firepower is increasing and Iran's is decreasing, adding that President Trump is doing what no other president had the guts to do. The last 24 hours saw the lowest number of missiles fired by Iran and the morale of Iranian military is being damaged, causing desertions, and frustration among military leaders, Hegseth says. Hegseth begins the briefing, saying over the weekend he visited troops that are part of the military operation, but

won't say where he visited for security reasons. "The trip was an honour," he says, adding that he "witnessed the best of America". He describes meeting a female member of the military, who when he asked her what she needed for the job, she smiled at him and said "more bombs". The feeling among troops that he spoke to was the opposite to that during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan when they didn't know "when the operation would end", he continues. Hegseth says in this operation, he sees motivation, mission focus and an "urgency" to finish the job. I'm in the Pentagon press briefing room waiting for Pete Hegseth and Dan Caine. This is the first news conference they've held in 12 days. As I've mentioned before, these news briefings are tightly controlled in terms of access. We've just had a security official come in for a second time making us raise our hands to check we're all wearing a



bright green wristband that was issued as we entered the building. The briefings are usually highly choreographed with Hegseth tending to give priority to questions from outlets that signed a declaration last year to remain part of the Pentagon's resident press corps. Most major news organisations rejected this as it meant they wouldn't be able to freely report, and a judge this month ruled the Pentagon's policy unconstitutional. If there are some challenging questions, they might focus on the strategic impasse of this war, as the administration engages in threats to escalate as well as attempts to do a deal with the regime. President Trump has just called France "very unhelpful" for not letting planes heading to Israel with military supplies fly over French territory. Earlier, Italy reportedly denied a US

request to use the Sigonella air base in Sicily for military aircraft a few days ago, in a move that underscores Rome's cautious approach to involvement in military operations. Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Sera reported on Tuesday that Defence Minister Guido Crosetto denied authorisation after learning of a US flight plan involving aircraft that were due to land at Naval Air Station Sigonella, in the southern Italian region, before continuing towards the Middle East. The plan was reportedly communicated while the aircraft were already in flight, and no prior approval had been requested from Italian authorities. Checks suggested the aircraft were not carrying out routine or logistical operations covered by existing agreements between Italy and the US, according to the report. The request reportedly involved bombers, which require specific approval and parliamentary oversight.

The Italian government has not commented publicly on the episode. Contacted by the BBC, the defence minister's office was not immediately available for comment. In a follow-up post on Truth Social, Trump says France "wouldn't let planes headed to Israel, loaded up with military supplies, fly over French territory". He goes on to say France "has been very unhelpful with respect to the 'Butcher of Iran,' who has been successfully eliminated!" The post concludes with the US president saying: "The U.S.A. will REMEMBER!!!" US President Donald Trump says countries "like the United Kingdom" who can't get jet fuel because of the restrictions around the Strait of Hormuz should "build up some delayed courage, go to the Strait, and just TAKE IT!". In a post on Truth Social, he writes countries will "have to start learning how to fight for yourself, the U.S.A. won't be there to help you anymore."

Eurovision Song Contest launches first-ever Asia edition



Known for its glitzy stage costumes and sometimes outlandish performances, the Eurovision Song Contest is now launching its first ever Asia edition. Broadcasters from 10 countries in the region, including South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines, have confirmed that they will be taking part. According to the contest's website, which lists the participating countries, there are "more to follow". These countries will first host their own national selections before the grand final in Bangkok which will be broadcast live on 14 November. First held in 1956, Eurovision has grown into the world's longest running international music competition.

With 2026 marking its 70th anniversary, it felt "especially meaningful to open this next chapter with Asia, a region rich in culture, creativity and talent", explained Martin Green, director of the Eurovision Song Contest at the EBU, in a statement. The idea of an Asian version of Eurovision, conspicuously not named "Asiavision", has already generated some excitement on social media, with people rooting for their home countries to win the contest. "Philippines will win every year," read an X post, while another questions why major Asian markets such as China and Japan are not yet a part of the competition.

PALESTINIANS CONVICTED OF LETHAL ATTACKS FACE DEATH PENALTY UNDER NEW ISRAELI LAW



Israel's parliament has approved a law that would make the death penalty the default sentence for Palestinians convicted of deadly terror attacks. Critics have described the new law as discriminatory and several European nations warn it risks undermining "democratic principles". The new law passed its third and final reading in the Knesset by 62 votes to 48 on Monday, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voting in favour. The bill stipulates that Palestinians convicted in Israeli military courts of carrying out deadly attacks deemed to be "acts of terrorism" would be executed by hanging within 90 days, with a possible postponement of up to 180 days. In theory, Jewish Israelis could also be executed under the law - but in practice this almost certainly would not happen, as the death penalty could only be carried out where the intention of the attack was to "negate the existence of the state of Israel". The legislation was pushed hard by the far-right, with

the National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir its driving force. After the vote, he posted on X: "We made history!!! We promised. We delivered." A member of Ben-Gvir's party, Limor Son-Har-Melech, who survived an attack by Palestinian gunmen in which her husband was killed, argued that the law was necessary, citing the example of how one of her husband's killers was later released and went on to take part in the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel. During the debate in the Knesset, she said: "For years, we endured a cruel cycle of terror, imprisonment, release in reckless deals, and the return of these human monsters to murder Jews again." But Yair Golan, the leader of opposition Democrats party, criticised the legislation and said it would lead to international sanctions. "The death penalty law for terrorists is an unnecessary piece of legislation designed to get Ben-Gvir more likes," he said. "It does not contribute one ounce to Israel's security."

GAZAN MOTHER REUNITED WITH EVACUATED DAUGHTER AFTER TWO YEARS



At least eight children who were evacuated from Gaza as premature babies in the early weeks of the war, have returned from Egypt and been reunited with their relatives. The toddlers were among more than 30 severely ill newborns in incubators, who were evacuated from Gaza's Shifa Hospital in November 2023, during

heavy fighting. The hospital complex had earlier been occupied by Hamas. Sundus al-Kurd, a mother waiting for her daughter's return on Monday, said that she was "torn between fear and joy", as she worried that she would not be accepted as a parent after more than two years apart.

CHINA BANS STORING CREMATED REMAINS IN EMPTY 'BONE ASH APARTMENTS'

The Chinese government is set to ban people from storing the cremated remains of their loved ones in empty apartments instead of paying for expensive cemetery plots. The new law will put an end to "bone ash apartments", which have risen in popularity as spaces in cemeteries remain scarce. Low property prices in the country mean that for many, it is more affordable to entomb the ashes of relatives in an empty apartment than pay for funeral costs. The legislation prohibits the use of residential properties "specifically for the placement of ashes" as well as the burial of remains outside of cemeteries and areas where ecological burial is legal. Bone ash apartments are empty properties which are turned into ritual halls by



family members of the deceased. Their loved one's ashes are placed inside and the space turned into an ancestral shrine. The apartments are often identifiable by closed curtains or sealed-off windows, Chinese media has reported. Mourners are making the most of low property prices, which have fallen in China in recent years and were down 40% in 2025 from 2021. Meanwhile, ceme-

tery spaces are limited and only come with a temporary lease which must be renewed every 20 years. The price for a burial plot in Beijing's Changping Tianshou Cemetery ranges from around 10,000 yuan (£1,095) to 200,000 yuan (£21,917), according to its website. The cheaper options are "eco-friendly burial plots". A standard tombstone plot starts at

about 150,000 yuan (£16,400), with prices rising to 300,000 yuan (£32,841), which the website notes is "relatively high" in Beijing. The price of funerals is also high. In 2020, funerals cost nearly half of the country's average annual salary, according to a survey by British insurance firm SunLife. On social media, commentators have pointed out the cost of cemetery plots and queried how the new law will be regulated. One person wrote on Weibo, China's equivalent of X: "Who would resort to this if cemetery plots were affordable?" Another said: "How will those enforcing these rules know if the apartments are being used just to store ashes? And how will they deal with those cases?" The ban comes days before the Qingming Festival.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PART OF 'EVERYDAY LIFE' IN PARTS OF SUDAN, CHARITY SAYS

Rape and sexual violence remain "part of everyday life" in areas of Sudan even when fighting in the country's civil war has moved elsewhere, according to a new report by medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). Calling rape a "defining feature" of the conflict, it says sexual assault is overwhelmingly carried out by armed men and is often accompanied by acts of brutality and humiliation. But MSF says rape persists as an "insidious" part of life for communities in the western region of Darfur that are no longer on the front line. The report is the most comprehensive account yet on sexual violence in Sudan's nearly



three-year war. Warning: This article contains details of sexual violence that some people may find distressing. It is based on testimonies from 3,396 victims who sought treatment in MSF-supported facilities across North and South Darfur between January 2024 and

November 2025. The warring parties - Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - are both accused of sexual violence. But Darfur is the stronghold of the RSF and the vast majority of perpetrators identified by survivors were their fighters.

Many of the cases in the report took place in the conflict hotspot of North Darfur last year, following the RSF takeovers of the displaced persons camps of Zamzam and Abu Shouk, and of the city of el-Fasher in October, which MSF calls "one of the most shocking iterations, unfolding the most unimaginable brutality". The charity says more than 90% of victims it treated were assaulted while travelling from these areas to safety in the town of Tawila. The attacks often involved multiple rapists and included other forms of extreme violence and intimidation such as beatings or the murder of relatives.

Congressman writes to King Charles urging him to meet Epstein victims during US visit



A US lawmaker is calling on King Charles to meet the survivors of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein when the monarch visits the US. While not officially confirmed, the King and Queen Camilla are reportedly planning a visit at the end of April. Democratic Congressman Ro Khanna, who co-sponsored a law that compelled the US justice department to release the Epstein files last year, is calling on the King to privately meet victims to hear from them directly about "how powerful individuals and institutions failed them". "As you are aware, this is not solely an American matter," Khanna wrote in a letter to the King on Monday. The Palace has previously expressed that the King's "sympathies have been, and remain with, the victims of any and all forms of abuse". In his letter, Khanna said: "Epstein's network had significant ties to the United Kingdom through Ghislaine Maxwell, through Epstein's relationships with British public figures, and through the social and political circles in which he operated." These connections, he wrote, "raise broader questions about how Epstein was able to maintain influence,

credibility, and protection across borders for so long". Khanna said a meeting with survivors would give an opportunity to "identify any additional information British institutions and individuals may be able to share". He added: "It would also ensure that survivors are heard directly and that these matters are addressed with transparency, seriousness, and accountability." The California lawmaker also noted that members of Congress have sought testimony from the King's brother, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, as well as Peter Mandelson, the UK's former ambassador to the US, about their ties to Epstein. Mountbatten-Windsor, who was stripped of his titles last year due to his ties with Epstein, cannot be forced by a subpoena to go to the US. In his letter, Khanna said the former prince "did not respond" when Congress members sought testimony from him regarding his ties to the disgraced financier. Mountbatten-Windsor has consistently and strenuously denied any wrongdoing in his associations with Epstein. Mandelson, Khanna wrote, was asked to appear before a committee on the same matter.



Artemis II crew said they are going to the Moon

'A succulent Chinese meal' - iconic Australian quote immortalised in national film archive

A famously theatrical monologue, given by a man as police arrested him at a Chinese restaurant in Australia, has officially been preserved by the country's National Film and Sound Archive. The 1991 clip of Jack Karlson's arrest in Brisbane became an internet sensation when it was rediscovered in 2009. "What is the charge? Eating a meal? A succulent Chinese meal" Karlson - born Cecil George Edwards - dramatically shouted, while resisting the officers. "Gentlemen, this is democracy manifest" and "get your hand off my penis" were among his other, now immortalised, phrases that have been officially recognised by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) for their cultural significance. The



moment, now known as Democracy Manifest, became one of the most viral videos in Australia's history, and inspired thousands of memes, musical remixes, merchandise and even an orchestral piece. Describing his protest as "dramatic, indignant and unexpectedly articulate", NFSA said that "Karlson's words became shorthand for irreverent Australian humour".



The fallout and key questions from the IOC's biological female decision

"This is a question where there is no one-size-fits-all solution. It differs from sport to sport." The words of former International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach in July 2021, when claiming that sex eligibility criteria should be left to each individual sport to determine. A few months later, the organisation issued a new set of guidelines, reiterating that it was "not in a position to issue regulations that define eligibility criteria for every sport". And that "athletes should not be deemed to have an unfair or disproportionate competitive advantage due to their sex variations." Yet just five years on, Bach's successor Kirsty Coventry has announced a blanket ban on transgender women, as well as athletes with differences in sex development (DSD) who have gone through male puberty from female events, "to protect fairness,



safety and integrity". From the 2028 LA Games, eligibility for women's competition at all IOC events will be limited to biological females, and determined on the basis of a one time SRY gene screening, which detects the presence of a Y chromosome and male sex development. So what explains the IOC's dramatic change in approach? How divided has the reaction been? And what challenges and questions remain? BBC Sport takes a closer look. Why the IOC says its new approach is a reflection

of "relevant ethical, human rights, legal, scientific and medical developments, including stakeholder feedback", and that a review on the issue took into account "the state of the science, including developments since 2021, and reached consensus that male sex confers performance advantage in all sports and events that rely on strength, power, and/or endurance." It added this was irrespective of testosterone suppression, which until now has been relied upon by a number of sports when regulating the

inclusion of transgender and DSD athletes in female competition. The IOC has not published the scientific research it based its decision on, but has stated that at the elite level, there is a 10-12% male performance advantage in most running and swimming events, and that rises to 20% in most throwing and jumping disciplines, and 100% in sports such as boxing, that involve explosive power. Those who have long called for this change in policy argue that the science has shown such advantages for years, and some believe the IOC has been forced into this by a series of controversies, and the fact that a growing list of sports had already shown it was possible legally to introduce tougher eligibility criteria. After New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard became the first openly transgender woman to compete at an Olympics

in Tokyo in 2021, the governing bodies of swimming and cycling brought in transgender bans for women's events amid concerns among female athletes that they could also face biological males in elite competition. By then, World Athletics had tightened its rules after the 2016 Rio Olympics, when all three medalists in the women's 800 metre final were DSD athletes, introducing mandatory sex testing in 2025. World Boxing did the same after a major crisis at the women's boxing competition engulfed the 2024 Paris Olympics, where fighters Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting both won golds, despite being disqualified from the previous year's World Championships for allegedly failing sex eligibility tests conducted by then-governing body the IBA. Lin has since been cleared to compete in female competition by World Boxing.

Mumba TT Clinch Maiden Title With 8-4 Win Over Jaipur Patriots

U Mumba TT etched their name into the history books, clinching their maiden Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) title with a dominant 8-4 win over Jaipur Patriots in the Season 6 grand finale on Sunday, thanks to a stellar team performance. Wins for Lilian Bardet and Bernadette Szocs gave U Mumba an early lead, before Szocs and Akash Pal swept the mixed doubles 3-0 to take them to the brink. Teenager Abhinandh PB sealed the title with a clutch game win in the fourth match. Although Yashaswini Ghorpade didn't feature in the final, her standout semi-final display epitomised U Mumba's collective strength this season - hallmarks of a campaign expertly managed from the dugout by coaches John Murphy and Jay Modak. For their performances in the final, Akash and Szocs were named the Indian and Foreign Player of the Final, respectively, while Jeet Chandra claimed the Shot of the Final. Bardet set the



tone for U Mumba with a gritty comeback against Kanak Jha in the opening rubber, turning a one-game deficit into a 2-1 win. That momentum carried into a marquee clash between the league's top-ranked player, Szocs and India's highest-ranked paddler on the international circuit, Sreeja Akula. Szocs showcased elite defence and composure under pressure

to claim a hard-fought 2-1 victory, handing Sreeja her first loss of the season. Szocs returned alongside Akash to dominate the mixed doubles, cruising past Jeet and Britt Eerland in straight games. With each game increasingly one-sided, the U Mumba duo went from 5-5 to 11-5 in the second game and closed out the third with the same scoreline.

Yuvendra Chahal Claims He Slammed 20 Runs In One Over. Jos Buttler's Reply Breaks Internet

Punjab Kings spinner Yuvendra Chahal shared a hilarious banter with Gujarat Titans star Jos Buttler ahead of their IPL 2026 encounter in Mullanpur. It was a reunion of sorts for the two players who played together for Rajasthan Royals before getting released ahead of IPL 2025 mega auction. While Chahal was bought for a mammoth Rs 18 crore by Punjab Kings, Buttler joined Gujarat Titans for Rs 15.75 crore. Ahead of their match on Tuesday, PBKS shared a video where Chahal claimed that he once faced Buttler's bowling and slammed 20 runs in an over. "Two years back, I smashed Jos Buttler - one over, 20 runs," he said. Buttler



quickly responded - "(You) Can't get (the ball) outside the 30-yard circle." Meanwhile, Punjab Kings (PBKS) skipper Shreyas Iyer urged his side to move on from last season and embrace a fresh start, as he laid down a clear message ahead of their first match of

the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 to be played against the Gujarat Titans (GT) at the PCA New International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. "See, last season is history now. We start from ball one. It's important that we stick to the present and see to it that

we enjoy each and every moment," Iyer said in a video released by the IPL. Skipper also praised the love and support the team gets when they play at their home ground and expected the fans to continue cheering for them as they start their new season "It certainly feels like home. The love and the support the home team got last season it was phenomenal. And I'm hoping to see a lot of them coming in numbers this season and cheering us up. It doesn't really feel like an away game," Iyer added. Punjab Kings enjoyed a stellar campaign in IPL 2025, finishing as runners-up and marking one of their best performances in the tournament's history.

GHANA SACK MANAGER ADDO, 72 DAYS BEFORE WORLD CUP

India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Live Streaming: The focus will be on Australian-born winger Ryan Williams as India take on Hong Kong in their final match in the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers. It was a campaign to forget for the Indian football team as they failed to qualify and even suffered some unexpected losses. However, all eyes on the new No. 10 who will be starting a new chapter with the national side. The match will also mark the return of international football to Kochi after more than a decade. However, it will be an exceptionally tough challenge for Khalid Jamil's



side as Hong Kong have lost only once in their last 12 matches and even defeated India 1-0 in their last match. When will the India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match take place? The India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers

match will take place on Tuesday, March 31 (IST). Where will the India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match be held? The India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match will be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru

Stadium in Kochi, Kerala. What time will the India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match start? The India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match will start at 7 PM IST. Which TV channels will show the live telecast of the India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match? The India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match will not be televised live in India. Where to follow the live streaming of the India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match? The India vs Hong Kong, AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers match will be live streamed on the FanCode app and website.

WWE Raw Results, March 30: IShowSpeed Twist In Logan Paul vs LA Knight Fight

The road to WrestleMania 42 produced another dramatic turn of events at Madison Square Garden in this week's Monday Night Raw. The episode delivered a night of nostalgia, brutal brawls, and a massive twist involving YouTube streamer IShowSpeed. With heavy hitters like Stephanie McMahon and Triple H in the building, the final pieces of the puzzle for in the WrestleMania 42 story seem to be falling into place. The rivalry between Logan Paul and LA Knight reached a fever pitch at MSG, but it was the unexpected arrival of IShowSpeed that stole the headlines. As the tension boiled over between the two rivals - Logan Paul and LA Knight, IShowSpeed's interference

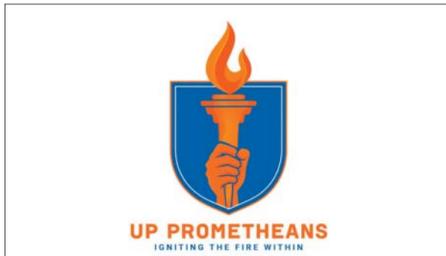


came as an unexpected twist, leaving even the most ardent WWE fans baffled. The YouTuber hit LA Knight with a brass knuckle, ensuring that their fight at WrestleMania will be one of the most talked-about spectacles on the card. CM Punk Sends Crystal Clear Message The evening's final segment saw a chaotic confrontation involving the biggest

names in the industry. In a visual that will be replayed for years, CM Punk asserted his dominance by powerbombing Roman Reigns through a table. The statement was clear: Punk is not just back, he is keen to dismantle the Tribal Chief's legacy. Triple H Restrains The Beasts Fans held their breath as Brock Lesnar and Oba Femi finally stood face-to-face.

Ultimate Table Tennis Reaches India's Heartland As UP Prometheans Join Line-Up for Season 7

Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) is set to add a strong new Uttar Pradesh flavour to Season 7 with the inclusion of UP Prometheans, bringing the energy and sporting passion of India's heartland into the league's mix. The upcoming season, scheduled to be played in July in Goa, marks another step in UTT's journey of building a dynamic and competitive league. Owned by first-generation entrepreneur and BITS Pilani alumnus Mukesh Sharma, UP Prometheans reflects a clear and long-term vision to strengthen India's high-performance sporting ecosystem. With the franchise coming into the line-up, UTT also sees a fresh regional presence added to its roster, as UP



Prometheans step in place of Chennai as part of the league's evolving team composition. The move strengthens representation from the northern belt while adding a new competitive dynamic, with Season 7 also set to feature a revised format with an expanded group stage. Commenting on the announcement, Ekansh

Gupta, CEO, Ultimate Table Tennis, said: "We are pleased to see UTT's footprint extend into Uttar Pradesh with UP Prometheans coming on board. As India's largest state, UP holds immense potential for sport, and this addition strengthens our ambition of building a league that truly represents the country."

MI FAN LOSES ENGAGEMENT RING WHILE PROPOSING TO GIRLFRIEND DURING IPL 2026 MATCH



The Mumbai Indians (MI) vs Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) IPL 2026 match at the Wankhede Stadium saw several high points on Sunday. KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane (67 off 40 balls) topped for his team, while youngster Angkrish Raghuvanshi (51 off 29 balls) showcased his potential. KKR posted a formidable 220 for 4 in 20 overs, but MI chased down the target in 19.1 overs. Ryan Rickelton (81 off 43 balls) and Rohit Sharma (78 off 38 balls) provided the fireworks for MI. There were fireworks in the stands as well. An MI fan proposed to his girlfriend, who was wearing a KKR jersey, during the match. However, to his shock, just as he opened the box, the ring fell off. Another spectator, however, managed to find the ring. Talking about the match, KKR were under pressure while defending the total. However, their star all-rounder Cameron Green

did not bowl. Cricket Australia on Monday said the Kolkata Knight Riders' management is "fully aware" of Cameron Green's injury status after KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane created a flutter by stating that only the all-rounder's home board knew why he could not bowl in their IPL opener against Mumbai Indians. Rahane deflected queries on Green's absence as a bowler in Mumbai by saying, "Ask Cricket Australia," triggering a mild controversy over the player's current fitness status. "Cameron has a lower back injury which is being managed but requires him to abstain from bowling for a short period," a Cricket Australia spokesperson told PTI. "Cameron is currently rebuilding his bowling loads in India with a view to returning in around 10-12 days' time. KKR has been communicated with and is fully aware of this information."

How Scotland found their base camp for 'travelling' World Cup

An Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman were waiting at the door of Charlotte FC's training ground for Steve Clarke's arrival. On his search for Scotland's World Cup base camp, the head coach found the one in North Carolina, with a wee hand from a few familiar faces. MLS side Charlotte are coached by Dean Smith, the former Aston Villa manager and pal of Clarke, his assistant is the Scotland boss' former Kilmarnock player, Gary Dicker and the club's technical director is Clarke's ex-Str Mirren team-mate, Tommy Smith. They say it's not what you know, but who you know. A few other



nations checked out the Atrium Health Performance Park, while the Scots searched "most of the East Coast", but Charlotte will be

their home from home when they compete in their first World Cup since 1990 - against Haiti and Morocco in Boston and Brazil in

Miami. With both cities around a two-hour flight away, Clarke said he is hopeful the "top" facilities will provide his side with

the "best possible conditions" as they make their long-awaited return to the biggest stage of them all. With the help of Charlotte assistant Dicker and Scotland assistant Steven Naismith, BBC Scotland gets the lowdown on "one of the best facilities in the MLS" and the national team's summer set-up. What goes into selecting a base camp? Unsurprisingly, a lot of conversations and a lot of checking places out. Fifa offers a selection of available facilities but each nation will naturally have their own plans and priorities. For Scotland, Naismith admitted getting it right for "travel and humidity" was paramount. "It's a travelling

World Cup," the assistant coach and SportsScene pundit said. "We've got two games in Boston, one in Miami, but there's only a limited amount of facilities around Boston." That was probably the biggest challenge. We've done a lot of work seeing a lot of training bases - there's a lot on offer but we're delighted with Charlotte." Clarke's former Killie midfielder Dicker agreed it's "a really good central base" with flights to both Scotland's match cities only a couple of hours. "I know it's difficult when at past tournaments it's easier to get around, but you do get used to it here, having an hour, two-hour flight and it not being a big deal."

Raakaasaa' releasing on April 3 will be thoroughly entertaining – Niharika Konidela at Pre-Release Event

The film "Raakaasaa", produced by Niharika Konidela in association with Umesh Kumar Bansal under the Pink Elephant Pictures banner and presented by Zee Studios, is directed by Manasa Sharma. Sangeeth Shobhan and Nayan Sarika play the lead roles. The glimpses, teaser, trailer, and songs released so far have impressed audiences. The movie is set to release on April 3. Ahead of the release, a grand pre-release event was held on Monday. Niharika Konidela said, "It gives me immense joy to collaborate with Zee Studios and Divya garu." Earlier, we produced a YouTube series titled Mad House, and it was during that time I first came across Manasa Sharma garu's writing. I later met her in person; she is someone who speaks very little, yet is constantly immersed in deep thought. She lives and breathes cinema and storytelling 24/7. I strongly believe Manasa garu is destined to reach greater heights. I take great pride in introducing talents like Manasa garu, Mahesh garu, and Yadhu Vamsee garu. When we were making Committee Kurrollu, many questioned why we were working with 11-15 newcomers. During Rakasa, people asked why we were attempting some-



The film "Raakaasaa", produced by Niharika Konidela in association with Umesh Kumar Bansal under the Pink Elephant Pictures banner and presented by Zee Studios, is directed by Manasa Sharma.

thing different instead of sticking to a safe path. Now, with Bhari, they question why we are working with family members. People will always have something to say but I will continue doing what I love. With every project, I learn something new. To me, the Konidela family and the Pink Elephant family are equally important. I am grateful to my parents for trusting me and giving me the freedom to pursue my passion. Mayam Ramesh garu has been a strong support system from the very beginning. Anudeep Dev garu is an exceptionally talented musician. Raju garu's visuals always receive immense apprecia-

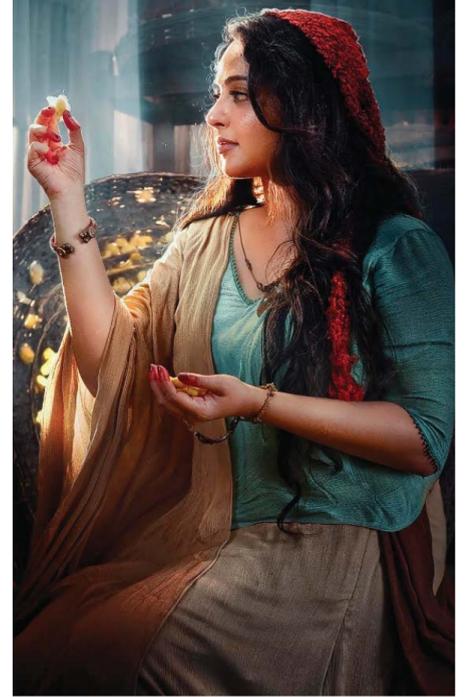
tion. Watching Vijay Master on set feels like seeing my own father. Anwar Ali garu goes far beyond his role as an editor, taking on multiple responsibilities. It is because of my father that I have met so many wonderful people Getup Srinu being one of them. He takes great care of me. Nayan Sarika is truly special and a wonderful person. Sangeeth is a rising star, and he deserves a major share of the credit for the success of Raakaasaa. We made this film with complete honesty and hard work, giving it our all to deliver a quality entertainer. My dream is that everyone associated with Pink

Elephant should own a house, a car, and enjoy life with their families. Rakasa, releasing on April 3rd, is a complete entertainer from start to finish," she said. Sangeeth Shobhan said, "Last April, Manasa garu, Niharika garu, and I took a picture together and shared it on Instagram." Now, our film is all set to release on April 3rd. From

last year itself, we were determined to come before the audience with a truly good film. Once the movie releases, I am confident that everyone will be talking about Raju garu's visuals and Anudeep garu's music. It was because of Mahesh garu that I got the opportunity to work on Oka Chinna Family Story. As a director, Mahesh garu is all set to deliver a blockbuster with Ithu Arjuna. We shot a large portion of the film during winter nights, and I sincerely thank every artist who supported us throughout this journey. Nayan Sarika is immensely talented, and it was a pleasure working with her. Getup Srinu garu is a wonderful human being. Niharika Konidela garu is a very sensitive person who is deeply passionate about cinema. I share a great bond with Manasa garu ever since Oka Chinna Family Story. She is someone who wants the audience to do more than just watch the film she wants them to take it home, cherish it, and feel that it has done complete justice to the money they

Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer" Trailer Promises a Grand Visual Spectacle Rooted in Myth and Magic

Mollywood seems ready to step onto a bigger stage with Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer, an ambitious period fantasy that aims to push the boundaries of Indian cinema. Directed by Rojin Thomas, best known for #Home, the film features Jayasurya in the role of Kadamattathu Kathanar the legendary priest from Kerala whose stories are steeped in myth, magic, and folklore. The recently released trailer, a little over three minutes long, gives a clear sense of the film's scale. It begins with the historic setting of Kanthalloor Saala and slowly moves into a darker, more atmospheric world set in ancient Venad. As a supernatural threat looms over the land, Kathanar emerges as its protector, setting up a narrative that blends legend with spectacle. Anushka Shetty's presence adds further weight to the project, marking her Malayalam debut. She plays Kalliyanakattu Neeli, a Yakshi whose haunting presence brings both mystery and tension to the story, standing in sharp contrast to Kathanar's spiritual strength. The film is backed by producer Gokulam Gopalan under the Sree Gokulam Movies banner and is mounted on a scale rarely attempted in



Malayalam cinema. The supporting cast includes Prabhu Deva, Sanoop Santhosh, Sandy, Devika Sanjay, Harish Uthaman, Vineeth, Nitish Bharadwaj, Srikanth Murali, and Kulprit Yadav. Rojin Thomas has co-written the screenplay with R. Ramanand, while Neil

D'Cunha handles cinematography and Rahul Subrahmanian composes the music. The film makes extensive use of virtual production and VFX, aiming for a visual standard that matches international projects. Production design by Rajeevan adds depth and authenticity to its world.

"Pallichattambi' is our dream project. From April 10, it will become everyone's movie": Hero Tovino Thomas at the Grand Release Press Meet

Malayalam star hero Tovino Thomas is starring in the big-budget film "Pallichattambi." The movie is being produced by Noufal, Brijeeesh, and Chanukya, Chaitanya, Charan under the banners of World Wide Films and C Cube Bros Entertainments. Directed by Dijo Jose Antony, the film features Kayadu Lohar as the heroine. The movie has created huge pan-India expectations and is set for a grand theatrical release on April 10 in five languages: Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada. A grand release press meet was held today in Hyderabad. Lyricist Rambabu Gosala said, "I wrote the songs for the Telugu version of 'Palli Chattambi.' This is my third film with Tovino Thomas. Earlier, I wrote songs for his films 'Mayanadhi' and 'Vyuham.' Tovino Thomas is famous across India. Kayadu's first



film was 'Alluri,' for which I wrote all the songs. Jakes Bejoy is a very talented music director. After 'Thudarum' and 'Kotha Lokah,' I am now writing lyrics for this film as well. I hope this movie becomes a big success." Actor Shatru said, "This is my first Malayalam film. I was surprised when the director narrated the story, it felt very interesting. I'm playing a key role in this movie,

and I dubbed for my character myself. It was a happy experience acting alongside Tovino." Associate Producer Meghashyam said, "I thank Eluru Sreenu, Bunny Vas, Maruthi, TG Vishwaprasad, Vivek, and all the elders who supported me and helped me stand on this stage. 'Pallichattambi' is an emotional action entertainer. Director Dijo Jose Antony has made it very

engaging. Our entire team worked very hard, and the output is excellent. This is my second film with Tovino and Kayadu. Bunny Vasu garu is supporting our Telugu release. I request the audience to watch and support our film in theatres." Distributor Vetri said, "'Pallichattambi' is a film that audiences must watch. Director Dijo has made it brilliantly. Jakes' music will be a major highlight.

Pithapuramlo' Top Director Koratala Siva Unveils the Song 'Pattuko Baba'

The film Pithapuramlo... Ala Modalaindi, directed by Mahesh Chandra, is gearing up for an April release. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Prudhviraj, Kedar Shankar, Mani Chandana, Annapurnamma, Sunny Akhil, Virat, Sai Praneeth, Srilu, Prathyusha, and Rehana constitute the film's main cast. The movie was produced by Dundigalla Balakrishna, Akula Suresh Patel, and F.M. Murali (Godavari Kittayya) under the 'Mahesh Chandra Cinema Team' banner. Top director Koratala Siva unveiled the song 'Pattuko Baba'—penned by Sriram Tapasvi—from this film and extended his best wishes to the entire team. Speaking on this occasion, Koratala Siva said, "I worked as a writing assistant for the blockbuster film Preyasi Rave, directed by Chandra Mahesh garu back in the day. Subsequently, I worked on several other films directed by him as well. That is why I



am extremely delighted to be unveiling this song today. It is truly commendable that this film has been made against the backdrop of relationships and mutual understanding, addressing the issues the current generation faces in matters of love,

as well as the communication gap that exists between them and their parents. Such films are very much needed in today's times. I am well aware of Director Chandra Mahesh garu's sensibilities; I witnessed firsthand during the making of

Preyasi Rave just how powerfully he can convey a specific emotion or sentiment. The climax of that film remains etched in everyone's memory to this day. I still cherish the memories of those days. I am confident that Pithapuramlo will capture that same emotional essence and feel, much like Preyasi Rave did. It is my sincere wish that Chandra Mahesh garu achieves massive success with this film." Director Mahesh Chandra stated, "The trailer released recently has received a phenomenal response. The film is now fully complete, including the final print. We plan to bring this movie to the audience in April." Mahesh Chandra expressed his gratitude to V.V. Vinayak, who released the first song; to the Preyasi Rave team—comprising Srikanth, Sivaji Raja, Prudhvi, and M.M. Srilekha—who released the trailer; and to Koratala Siva, who released the second song.

MANISHA KOIRALA KILLS IT IN SALT PEPPER



The character of Bullet Sunil in Biker will be very new in my career. The film has come in the Hollywood range. It will definitely be a super hit: Hero Rajasekhar

Charming star Sharva is all set to entertain with the high-octane racing drama 'Biker', directed by Abhilash Reddy and produced by UV Creations banner. Touted to be India's first motocross adventure film, Biker will be released in premium formats like Dolby Cinema, EPIQ, 4DX, PCX. Senior hero Rajasekhar plays a key role in the film. Already, glimpses, songs, teaser and trailer have created huge buzz about the film. The film will be grandly released in theaters on April 3. On this occasion, hero Rajasekhar shared the features of the film in a press conference. The movie Biker is coming to the audience in three days. Are you as tense as you are when a movie in which you play the hero is coming out or are you relaxed? -After a long time, my film is being released. The film I did and loved is Biker. I am waiting for April 3rd to arrive. I am very happy as the release date is approaching. This is

a film in which I acted. When will it be released like my film? How much will the audience appreciate it? I am eagerly waiting.

What was the main reason you accepted this film?

-First of all, whatever character I play, it should be good, I should like it. Only then will I be able to do it. Also, if the character is good, it is not enough. The film should also be amazing. The story should be good. When I heard the story of Biker, I liked both my character and the story, so I did this film. Biker will be a super hit in terms of the story. Also, my character turned out amazing. I am eagerly waiting for the release of the film.

Do you personally like bikes?

-I have been very fond of bikes since I was a child. My grandmother's house had a bullet wagon. Every time I went there on vacation, I used to travel around the whole village in the bullet. After

that, my interest in bikes grew. During the movie Seshu, I myself bought a Yamaha six fifty cc wagon and used it for the shooting. After that, I used to ride the same bike every day. Seeing the way I ride, Jeevita sold me that bike without knowing that you are riding with a lot of risk (laughs). My character's name in Biker is Bullet Sunil. You will see full details about this character in the movie.

About director Abhilash Reddy?

-Abhilash is a very good director. He has a lot of clarity about what kind of performance he wants from an actor. He has a lot of grip on the story and the character, but the director never compromises until he gets what he wants. He is a very involved director.

-He is very clear about everything regarding this character. He has shown me in a very new way in this film. The director's vision. It was possible because of the story. The audience who has seen the film will

definitely appreciate my character. -The bike racing scenes in this are amazing. It's like a Hollywood range movie. Also the father-son emotion is amazing. There are many sentimental scenes.

How was it working with Sharwanand? What kind of inputs did you give as a senior hero?

-I think a lot about my dialogue and my character. We all worked like good colleagues and friends.

Have you seen the movie?

-Not yet. I'm waiting to see it in the theater with everyone on the release day.

About UV Creations?

-UV Creations means royal treatment. They spare no expense. They are making this film with Hollywood quality and bringing it to the audience. They have spent a lot of money for the subject without compromising on quality. They should be congratulated for this.

