

# THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES

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NATIONAL DAILY NEWSPAPER



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Tonsures: 36,705  
Hundi kankalu: 3.45 Cr  
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### AP will become a key player in gold production: CM Naidu



Puttaparthi, AP (TSIT): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday exuded confidence that in the coming days, the state will become a key player in gold production. He stated that Jonnagiri Gold Fields in the Kurnool district is projected to produce 600 kilograms of gold this year. The production in its second year is expected to reach 1,500 kilograms. "In the past, the mention of gold brought to mind KGF; now, it signifies JGF—the Jonnagiri Gold Fields," he said while speaking at an event to lay the foundation stone for various defence projects. The Chief Minister, along with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, laid the foundation for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme facility being developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency under the Defence Research and Development Organisation. Naidu stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is rapidly advancing towards self-reliance in next-generation defence technologies. The AMCA programme will strengthen indigenous capabilities in stealth systems, advanced avionics, and integrated combat aviation, he said. He claimed that the foundation laid for key defence projects across the region and the signing of nine MoUs with companies in the defence and aerospace sectors will further position Andhra Pradesh as a major hub for strategic manufacturing and innovation. He described "Operation Sindoor" as a proud example of India's growing technological strength and the success of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative in the defence sector. The Chief Minister noted that the AMCA project, being established with an investment of Rs 15,803 crore across nearly 650 acres in Puttaparthi, would pave the way for the development of a dedicated township and generate employment opportunities for around 7,500 people. He believes that Puttaparthi is set to transform into a strategic defence hub that will be a source of pride for the nation. Through the AMCA project, Andhra Pradesh will play a pivotal role in realising the objectives of "Atmanirbhar Bharat", he said. "We were able to lay the foundation stone for this project in a mere 36 days—granting the necessary approvals with jet speed. This pivotal project in the aerospace sector is expected to pave the way for the arrival of several other defence-related projects."

## Youth Congress stages protest in Mangaluru, slams Centre over alleged NEET paper leak



Mangaluru, May 15: The Dakshina Kannada District Youth Congress staged a protest near Kadri Circle on Friday evening condemning the alleged NEET question paper leak and accusing the central Bharatiya Janata Party government of failing to ensure transparency in national-level examinations.

The protest witnessed the participation of several political leaders, students, and members of the public. Among those present were B Ramanath Rai, K Harish Kumar, and Appi S, along with Youth Congress leaders who voiced concern over repeated irregularities in competitive examinations. Speaking at the protest, B Ramanath Rai criticised the government, stating that repeated assurances alone are not enough when students' futures are at stake. He said that despite promises of strict

action in the NEET paper leak case, no meaningful punishment has been seen so far, which has weakened public trust in the system. He further said that recurring examination leaks such as NEET and recent concerns surrounding CET point to a deeper failure in governance and policy implementation. Calling for immediate and long-term reforms, he stressed that the issue cannot be treated as a temporary political controversy, as it directly affects thousands of students and their aspirations. Ramanath Rai also alleged that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government has failed to take decisive action against those responsible and is responding only with statements before the media. He said that instead of introducing real reforms or reviewing policies seriously, the government is allowing such issues to fade from public attention, while students continue to suffer uncertainty over their academic future.

## India ready to extend all possible support for peace in West Asia: PM Modi in UAE

ABU DHABI (TSIT):

India is ready to extend all possible support to bring peace in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday during his talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The Modi-Al Nahyan meeting took place shortly after the prime minister landed in the Gulf nation in the first leg of his five-nation tour that also includes four European countries. We condemned the attacks on the UAE, Modi said in his opening remarks in the meeting with the UAE leader. The UAE, which hosts a prominent US military base, has been at the receiving end of Iranian strikes during the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran. Modi further said, "The way UAE has been targeted is not acceptable" but "the way UAE has handled the current situation with restraint is praiseworthy." The prime minister highlighted how the impact of the West Asian conflict is being felt globally, adding: "India is ready to extend all possible support to bring peace in



In talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Modi condemns attacks on the UAE and praises the nation's restraint, emphasizing strengthened ties in energy, investment, and trade.

West Asia. The prime minister was received at the airport by the UAE President, reflecting the importance attached by the country to Modi's visit. The Indian leader was also accorded a guard of honour. I extend my thanks to my brother Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his "gracious gesture" in receiving me at Abu Dhabi Airport, Modi said on social media. "And I look forward to our discussions aimed at strengthening the ties between India and the UAE across key sectors, such as energy, investment, supply chains, and more," he said.

## NEET-UG re-exam on June 21; computer-based test from next year, says Dharmendra Pradhan

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday announced that the NEET-UG re-examination will be held on June 21, and said the medical entrance exam will be computer-based test from next year onwards as part of reforms in view of allegations of irregularities linked to it.



Addressing a press conference, Pradhan said

the government's "topmost priority" remains students and their future. He said strict action is being taken against irregularities found in the conduct of the NEET-UG. "Our topmost priority is the future of the students. We will not let malpractice happen this time. The government is with you," he said.

## Petrol, diesel prices hiked by Rs 3/litre after elections as crude costs bite



NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by Rs 3 per litre each on Friday, the first rate increase in more than four years, amid mounting losses of fuel retailers due to surging global crude prices. The increase comes 16 days after assembly elections concluded in Assam, Kerala, Tamil

Nadu and West Bengal. Fuel prices had remained unchanged through the polling period despite a sharp rise in international oil prices triggered by the West Asia conflict. Petrol price was hiked to Rs 97.77 per litre from Rs 94.77 in the national capital. Diesel now costs Rs 90.67 as against Rs 87.67 per litre previously, industry sources said.

## Straits of Hormuz open to all except hostile countries: Iranian FM Araghchi

New Delhi (TSIT):

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on Friday said that the Strait of Hormuz remains open to all vessels, except for those belonging to countries engaged in a conflict with Iran.



Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Araghchi said Iran continues to facilitate the passage of vessels, noting that it had already done so for several Indian ships. He said safe passage of all vessels is Iran's policy and interest and that Tehran is ready to assist those seeking secure transit.

## As India Sends New Envoy, Bangladesh's Anti-India Chorus Grows Louder

New Delhi: As a new high-powered Indian envoy prepares to take charge in Dhaka, the second political appointee to serve as India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, a familiar and potentially dangerous political pattern appears to be resurfacing across the border.

In recent weeks, leaders of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and figures associated with the National Citizen Party (NCP), widely believed to be ideologically aligned with Jamaat circles, have sharply raised the issue of alleged persecution of Muslims in Assam and West Bengal following the BJP's victory in the Bengal assembly elections.

Jamaat Amir Shafiqur Rahman publicly referred to the political shift in West Bengal and urged India to ensure that "no harm is done by targeting any religion, caste, or ethnic group." NCP leader Nahid Islam went further, alleging that Muslims and Matua community voters had been denied voting rights and warning that reports of "persecution" in Assam could have repercussions inside Bangladesh itself.

While the language may have sounded cautionary, even threatening at points, the broader significance lies elsewhere -- these statements are part of a steadily expanding anti-India rhetorical space in Bangladesh at a highly sensitive diplomatic moment. "This partisan anti-Indian rhetoric is disturbing, as several key takeaways from our relationship, such as the Ganges water treaty, are to be negotiated. However, the BNP government there has made it clear that they are not



party to this narrative," pointed out Pinka R Chakravarty, former Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka. Dhaka officially has attempted to maintain balance even as it gears up to welcome former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi as India's envoy. The Bangladesh government has stated clearly that there is no evidence of systematic persecution of Muslims in India.

Simultaneously, however, it has strongly opposed any Indian attempt to extend border fencing beyond the agreed 150-year limit. This comes after the West Bengal cabinet transferred several unfenced land parcels to the Border Security Force to complete fencing work along stretches of less than 4,000 km-long India-Bangladesh border.

The cumulative effect is politically significant. Border fencing, minority rights, river waters, and regional security are increasingly being woven together into a larger narrative that risks hardening public opinion against India inside Bangladesh. "The timing of coming up with an anti-Indian narrative is significant. Though the government has distanced itself, we cannot rule out a tacit approval to keep India under pressure while

accusing New Delhi of drying up the Padma river and causing ecological devastation in Bangladesh. The current rhetoric emerges against a backdrop of shifting regional alignments. Bangladesh's ties with China have deepened substantially over the past decade. Around 70 per cent of Bangladesh's military hardware reportedly originates from China, and bilateral military engagement has expanded steadily.

At the same time, exchanges between Bangladesh and Pakistani military establishments have visibly increased, with several Pakistani military delegations visiting Bangladesh in recent months. A delegation from Jamaat-e-Islami also recently met Bangladeshi Jamaat leaders in Dhaka.

None of this necessarily means Bangladesh is moving into an overtly anti-India strategic camp. Bangladesh's economic and geographic realities still make stable ties with India indispensable. "However, it does suggest that anti-India narratives are becoming increasingly useful as instruments in Bangladesh's domestic political contestation," pointed out Mukharji. Other officials added that this is happening "particularly ahead of sensitive negotiations over water sharing, border management and regional influence." For India, the challenge is not merely diplomatic. It is about recognising how historical grievances, identity politics, regional geopolitics, and great-power competition that are beginning to converge in Bangladesh's public discourse.

## Sridhar Babu lays foundation for Rs.651 Cr KJS India Unit-II

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU

Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Friday laid the foundation for KJS India Private Limited Unit-II at Thogarpally village in Kondapur mandal, Sangareddy district. The Rs.651 crore project will be set up on 44 acres using advanced technology and is expected to boost Telangana's food processing and FMCG manufacturing sector. Speaking at the event, the Minister highlighted Telangana's investment-friendly policies, world-class infrastructure, and proactive government support as factors attracting national and interna-



tional companies. He emphasized the State Government's commitment to promoting industrial growth beyond Hyderabad and ensuring balanced regional development across districts. KJS India currently co-manufactures and co-packs

for brands like Nestlé, Hindustan Unilever, Mayora, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories. The new unit is expected to generate 1,551 direct jobs and nearly 5,000 indirect employment opportunities, supporting local economic growth and livelihoods. Officials said the project will further strengthen the "Made in Telangana" brand in the global food processing and FMCG markets, enhancing the state's reputation as a fast-growing industrial hub. The event was attended by Health Minister Damodar Raja Narsimha, MPs Jagga Reddy and Nirmala Jaggareddy, senior officials, company representatives, and local stakeholders.

# CJI Surya Kant flags 'parasites' attacking institutions through social media

New Delhi, May 15: The Supreme Court on Friday came down heavily on what it described as a growing culture of attacks on the judiciary and the legal system, with Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant warning against "parasites" seeking to undermine institutions through social media and other platforms. The strong oral observations came from the Bench, also comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, while hearing a petition filed by an advocate challenging the Delhi High Court's refusal to consider him for senior designation — the third such application filed by the lawyer.



"There are already parasites in society who attack the system," the CJI orally observed, cautioning members of the Bar against "joining hands" with such elements. The CJI further made sharp observations about certain individuals active on social media and other platforms, remarking that some "youngsters like cockroaches", who fail to find a footing in any profession, end up becoming "media, social media, RTI activists, or other activists" and begin targeting everyone. "There are youngsters like cockroaches, who

don't get any employment and don't have any place in the profession. Some of them become media, some of them become social media, some of them become RTI activists, some of them become other activists, and they start attacking everyone," he said. The CJI also expressed concern over certain lawyers active on online platforms. CJI Surya Kant said he had serious doubts about the genuineness of the law degrees of some Delhi-based lawyers and orally remarked that he was awaiting an appropriate case to con-

sider ordering a probe into the issue. Referring to content posted online, the CJI orally observed that the top court was aware of material being circulated on platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. When the bench initially dictated an order that the petitioner did not deserve senior designation in view of his conduct and repeated filings, the lawyer apologised and requested that the remarks be withdrawn. Thereafter, the apex court recalled the dictated portion and eventually dismissed the plea as withdrawn.

# Central Bank of India engages corporates, exporters in Hyderabad



Hyderabad, May 15: Shri M. V. Murali Krishna, Executive Director of Central Bank of India, engaged with leading corporates and exporters in Hyderabad to strengthen the Bank's ties with key business sectors. During the Corporate Customers' Meet, he interacted with representatives from infrastructure, renewable energy, trading, manufacturing, healthcare, and power sectors, discussing tailored financial solutions

and long-term business partnerships. At the Exporters' Meet, he emphasized the Bank's capabilities in trade finance, forex services, and working capital support, underlining the importance of timely banking assistance in enhancing Indian exporters' competitiveness in global markets. Mr. Vasti Venkatesh, Chief General Manager, Treasury and ID, Central Office, highlighted innovative banking products and customized solutions catering to export-ori-

ented businesses. The meetings drew enthusiastic participation from industry representatives, reflecting the Bank's customer-centric approach to business growth and sectoral expansion. Senior officials present included M. Pichayya, Zonal Head-Hyderabad; A. V. Ramana Murthy, Deputy Zonal Head-Hyderabad; Gajendra Singh Chouhan, Regional Head-Hyderabad; and V. Devendra, DGM - Corporate Finance Branch, Hyderabad.

# Vishaka City Police Crack Woman Murder Case Within Two Hours

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam: City Police successfully cracked the sensational murder and robbery case reported at Akkayyapalem within just two hours and arrested the accused. The details were disclosed by Visakhapatnam Crime DCP K. Latha Madhuri during a media conference held at the Police Commissioner's Office on Friday evening. According to the police, the victim,



Pilla Parvathi (53), a resident of PRK Naga Anand Apartments in Srinivasa Nagar, was brutally murdered on Thursday evening. The accused was identified as Gannavarapu Ramu (53), who had rented

a shop belonging to the victim's husband and was running a salon business there. The DCP stated that immediately after receiving information about the incident, police teams led by ACP Crimes Bhavya Reddy, along with East Zone Crime staff and the Clues Team, rushed to the spot and launched an investigation. Based on CCTV footage from the apartment premises,

# India's domestic defence production grows to Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 10 years: Rajnath Singh



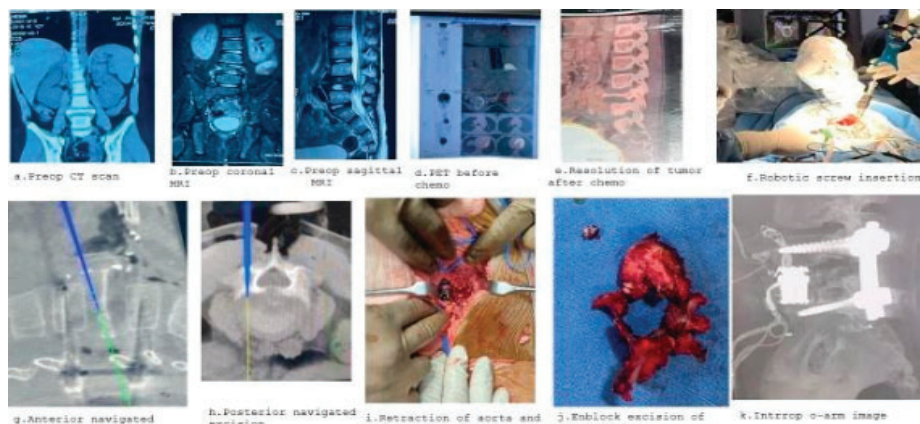
Puttapparthi (Andhra Pradesh), May 15: India's domestic defence production has reached a record high of Rs 1.5 lakh crore from a mere Rs 46,000 crore in 2014, Defence

Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday. He exuded confidence that domestic defence production would go up to Rs 1.75 lakh crore in a couple of months.

The minister was speaking at the foundation laying of various defence projects in this town in the Sri Sathya Sai district. The defence minister stated that India's defence exports up to 2014 were very low. "We were able to sell weapons and equipment worth less than Rs 1,000 crore to the world, but today that has risen to a record Rs 38,424 crore. We have achieved many such accomplishments," he said. Rajnath Singh said the government was working towards the goal of self-reliance in the defence sector.

"Our goal is absolutely clear. We are moving forward with the aim of complete self-reliance in the defence sector so that none of our forces is left behind and all our forces prove to be one better than others," he said. He expressed delight over the public and private sectors standing shoulder to shoulder in this effort. He noted that over the past 10 years, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the country has almost bridged the gap between the public sector and the private sector.

# Rare Spinal Cancer in 10-Year-Old Treated Successfully at KIMS Kondapur



Hyderabad, May 15, 2026: Doctors at KIMS Hospitals, Kondapur, have successfully treated a 10-year-old boy suffering from a rare form of spinal cancer, giving him a new lease of life through advanced robotic spine surgery. Consultant Spine Surgeon Dr. Krishna Chaitanya explained that the boy, Hima Sai from Hyderabad, initially complained of abdominal pain and severe lower back pain. After preliminary evaluations at local clinics failed to provide a clear diagnosis, he was brought to KIMS Hospitals, Kondapur, for further assessment.

firmmed the condition as Ewing sarcoma, a rare bone cancer commonly seen in children and adolescents. Under the supervision of the oncology team, the child first underwent two cycles of chemotherapy and responded well to the treatment. Following this, doctors performed a highly complex robotic-guided L4 vertebra en-bloc excision and spinal fixation surgery.

Doctors stated that this was the En Bloc resection is done rarely as it's very complex with multiple complications, marking a significant milestone in spinal cancer treatment. The surgical procedure was led by Dr. Krishna Chaitanya and Dr. Harsha Vikram, with expert support from Oncologist Dr. Priyanka. Ewing sarcoma is a cancer that mainly affects children and adolescents. Doctors noted that a combination of chemotherapy, surgery, and radiotherapy, when required, can provide effective outcomes. They added that robotic-assisted surgery helped identify and remove the complex spinal tumour with greater precision while enabling faster recovery for the child.

# KIMS Kurnool Doctors Save Kidney Failure Patient Using CRRT

Kurnool, May 15, 2026: In a remarkable medical success, doctors at KIMS Hospital, Kurnool, saved the life of a critically ill kidney failure patient using Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT), a highly advanced dialysis technique. The case is notable as the patient's blood pressure had dropped to dangerously low levels, making conventional treatment extremely risky. According to Dr. K. Anantha Rao, Consultant Nephrologist and Transplant Physician, the patient, Mallikarjuna (47) from Adoni, had been suffering from kidney failure for the past six months and was undergoing regular dialysis while awaiting a kidney transplant. He was also battling severe diabetes. During the course of treatment, the patient's blood pressure, which is normally expected to be around 120 mmHg, suddenly plummeted to 60 mmHg, leading to septic shock — a life-threatening condition. He also developed seizures and had to be placed on a ventilator. At the same time, rising acid levels in his body necessitated urgent dialysis. "Performing conventional dialysis in such critically low blood pressure conditions can trigger cardiac arrest and

prove fatal. Therefore, we opted for CRRT, which allows slow and continuous dialysis without causing further hemodynamic instability," explained Dr. Anantha Rao. The patient underwent continuous dialysis for nearly 48 hours using CRRT, which gradually stabilized his condition. Following improvement, he was weaned off ventilator support and has since recovered well. He has now been discharged in a stable condition. The complex procedure was carried out by a multidisciplinary team including critical care specialists Dr. Rajesh Reddy, Dr. Shyam, and Dr. Ravindra. Doctors highlighted that CRRT is particularly beneficial for ICU patients with septic shock and kidney failure, where conventional dialysis may pose significant risks. Until recently, this advanced facility was largely available only in metro cities. With its availability at KIMS Kurnool, critically ill patients in the Rayalaseema region can now access life-saving treatment locally without the need to travel. This case once again underscores that timely intervention and expert medical care can save lives even in the most critical conditions.



# The Role of CCTV Cameras is Crucial in Crime Control.

The South Indian times, Husnabad May 15. Additional DCP Kushalkar stated that the role of CCTV cameras is crucial in controlling crime. On Friday, 30 CCTV cameras were installed at the Gram Panchayat office in Shanigaram village, Koheda Mandal, Siddipet district, through the courtesy of White Field Bio Product Pvt. Ltd. and Greenways Bio Energy Pvt. Ltd. Additional DCP Kushalkar participated as the chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of these CCTV cameras, held as part of the 'Suraksha Netra' program. Speaking on the occasion, he informed that these modern, technologically advanced CCTV cameras have been strategically installed at key junctions within the village — specifically at the bus station, as well as at the village's entry and exit points. He noted that this initiative would facilitate the prevention of the illicit trafficking of banned substances, such as ganja (marijuana), and ration rice from the state border regions into the Husnabad constituency of Siddipet district. He urged the residents and public representatives of all

villages falling under the jurisdiction of the Koheda Police Station to come forward and make it mandatory to install CCTV cameras in their respective villages. He emphasized that installing CCTV cameras is

essential for self-protection. He also advised the youth to stay away from anti-social activities and warned them against ruining their bright futures by falling prey to ganja addiction.

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E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.			
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Protium Finance Ltd. the same shall be referred hereafter as Protium Finance Ltd. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis through E-Auction.			
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1	Account Number	GS07EEL2319455	
2	Name of Borrower, co-borrower, Mortgagors	(A) H K Arcanats through its Proprietor Karibasappa S/o Siddappa W/o Karibasappa (B) Halamma S K W/o Karibasappa (C) Karibasappa S/o Siddappa All having address at 37 Hunasaghatta Kyanakere Honnali Tq Sasvehalli Karnataka 577224 Davanagere, Karnataka 577224 Also Add, 37, Nayakar Street, Hunasaghatta, Kyanakere, Honnali Davanagere, Karnataka 577224 Also Add, 65, Hunasaghatta, Davanagere, Karnataka 577224	
3	Date of Demand Notice	Date: 27th Oct 2025	
4	Amount as per Demand Notice U/s 13(2)	Rs. 11,10,026.16/- (Eleven Lakh Ten Thousand Twenty-Six Rupees and Sixteen Paise Only) as on 27th Oct 2025.	
5	Date of Symbolic Possession	12-Jan-26	
6	Amount as on	Rs. 12,31,356.11/- (Twelve lakh thirty-one thousand three hundred fifty-six and eleven rupees only) as on date 09th May 2026	
7	Descriptions of the property/Properties	All that piece and parcel of the property including RCC residential house property bearing Hunasaghatta Grama Panchayathi Property No. 139, [11B Rule 30(7)]; E-Swathi Property bearing No. 15120050460050174 measuring East to West: 12.192 meters and North to South: 24.384 meters in all total measuring 297.29 Sq. Meters situated at Thygadakatte Village, Hunasaghatta Grama Panchayathi, Honnali Taluk, Davanagere District, bounded by East: House belongs to Kenchamma West: House belongs to Rangeshappa North: Hattihal Land South: Grama Panchayath Road	
8	Reserve Price	Rs. 18,55,000/- (Eighteen lakh fifty-five thousand only)	
9	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,85,500/- (One lakh eighty-five thousand five hundred)	
10	Bid Increment Amount (in Rs.)	(Bid Incremental Value: Rs. 5,000/-)	
11	E-Auction Date and Time	18-Jun-26 at 11:00 am to 2:00 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 min each)	
12	EMD Submission Last Date	17-Jun-26 up to 5:00 PM	
13	Inspection Date	08-Jun-26 BETWEEN 11:00 AM TO 5:00 PM	
1. All interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website <a href="https://bankauctions.in/">https://bankauctions.in/</a> & <a href="https://protium.co.in/">https://protium.co.in/</a> For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may Contact Mr. Nitesh D Pawar Contact number: 8142000725 / 8142000666, email id: nitesh@bankauctions.in / info@bankauctions.in			
For further details on terms and conditions please visit <a href="https://bankauctions.in/">https://bankauctions.in/</a> & <a href="https://protium.co.in/">https://protium.co.in/</a> to take part in e-auction.			
THIS IS ALSO A STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6)/ Rule 9 (1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002			
Date: 16.05.2026		Sd/-, For Protium Finance Limited	
Place: KARNATAKA		Authorised Officer	

# Shivakumar Says Kumaraswamy Criticism Needed for Political Survival

Bengaluru : Taking a dig at Union Minister and JDS leader H D Kumaraswamy for his criticism of Bidadi township plan, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar today said criticizing him was essential for Kumaraswamy's political survival.

Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, he said, "If Kumaraswamy does not criticize us, he cannot survive politically. We do good work, and he opposes it. We are only continuing the project that he himself started. I will fix a date and time to go speak with the farmers." He was replying to questions on Kumaraswamy's criticism of the Bidadi Township project.

"Farmers might hit me a couple of times — so what? They might tear my clothes, throw stones, or raise slogans against me. Should I be afraid of all that? What matters is their future, their children's



future, and the future of their properties. Not today, but 20 years from now, the people of Bidadi and South Bengaluru will remember me," he said.

"C o u l d n ' t Kumaraswamy himself have de-notified this project's land? Why didn't he? I am not ready to de-notify it. He knows very well what he went through after de-notifying land. Yediyurappa knows it, and so do I," he shot back.

Price Rise is Modi's

## Contribution

"Price rise is Modi's contribution. He has not maintained good relations with other nations. Modi has failed to handle the international crisis situation. That is why he is now asking people to save electricity and avoid using petrol. How can one live daily life without using fuel? Many have reduced their convoy vehicles — that is possible. But how can ordinary people stop traveling? Don't people need to

travel to make a living? He has asked people not to buy gold — how is that possible? Married women need a mangalsutra. In such circumstances, how can one be asked not to buy gold?"

Congratulations to the New Kerala CM

When asked about the newly elected Kerala CM, he said: "I congratulate him. There are many senior and deserving leaders in the party. The party high command has given the opportunity to Satheesan. I sincerely wish him well. I thank all the alliance parties. We will work in accordance with the aspirations of the people." When asked about the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) being taken up in Karnataka: "We are aware of this. Party leaders have been informed about it. All parties are doing this work. BJP, Janata Dal — everyone is working to protect their votes."

Land Guarantee for Bengaluru Residents

"We have launched 'Bhoo Guarantee' as our sixth guarantee to ensure that ordinary people's properties are provided with proper documentation. We have arranged for e-Khatas to be delivered to people's doorsteps. We are facilitating the conversion of B-khata to A-khata as well," he said responding to a question.

I Myself Have Had Many Banners Removed

"I had warned that banners should not be put up, or cases would be filed. Even so, supporters put them up out of admiration. I have personally instructed many people and had banners removed. About 50 banners have been taken down. Putting them up is wrong. I have also instructed the Corporation to remove them immediately. BJP leaders have also put up banners for their leaders' visits and those will be removed too."

# D.K. Shivakumar is the main reason for the party organization and the Congress party coming to power in the state: Ramalinga Reddy

Bengaluru: D.K. Shivakumar is the most prominent person in the party organization and the main reason for the Congress party coming to power in the state, said Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy.

On the occasion of the birthday of KPCC President, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at the Maurya Hotel auditorium, KPCC General Secretary and MEI President S. Manohar cut a cake with blind children and distributed assistance to the blind organization and the disabled, as well as students. Speaking on the occasion, Ramalinga Reddy said,

"The Congress party will come to power in the 2028 and 2033 assembly elections. Instead of doing SIR, a new voter list should be prepared and elections should be held, he said.

BJP leaders and central ministers spoke in jest and said that petrol and diesel prices have been increased after the elections.



The central BJP government is at the forefront of cheating the people of the state. They are increasing prices every day, they said that they are cheating the people by increasing prices after the elections are over.

The people of the country are observing the misuse of the BJP, and in the coming days, the people are convinced that the Congress party is a party that has done as it promised. He said that the Congress party will continue

to be in power in all the coming elections with the blessings of the people and will serve the people as usual, and the Congress party government will regain the trust of the people by serving them as usual. KPCC General Secretary and MEI President S. Manohar and Congress party leaders A. Anand G. Janardhan, Prakash, Chandrashekar, Kushal Aruvagouda, Puttaraju, and workers were present at the event.

# SSCBL Launches "SSCBL Mpassbook App" to Enhance digital Banking Services

D.R. VIJAYASARATHI INAUGURATES MOBILE BANKING INITIATIVE



Bengaluru : Shri Subramanyeshwara Co-operative Bank Ltd. has taken another significant step towards strengthening its digital banking services with the official launch of the "SSCBL Mpassbook App". The app was inaugurated by the Bank Chairman, D.R. Vijayasarithi, at a programme held at the bank's Head Office in Bengaluru.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman D.R. Vijayasarithi said that adopting modern technology and providing customers with secure, convenient, and user-friendly banking services remain one of the bank's top priorities. He also delivered a motivating and guiding message to the bank staff, emphasizing the importance of strengthening customer trust through efficient digital services.

The newly launched SSCBL Mpassbook App enables customers to conveniently access their banking information 24/7, including account balance enquiry, mini statement viewing, and downloading detailed account statements. The application is currently available for Android smartphone users and, in the initial phase, services are being offered in View Only Mode.

Bank Vice Chairman Dr. M. Rangadhama Shetty was present during the launch programme.

Directors including Venkatachalapathi B.L., P. Rudramurthy, S. Sathyamurthy, M.C. Phalanetra, Lohith G., Nanjagowda, P.K. Ravindra, N. Mahalakshmi, H. Maruthi, Annapoornamma, and Jayalakshmi G. Thotagere participated in the event.

Congress leader Sanjay Gowda and Chand Pasha offered prayers to D.K. Shivakumar to become the Chief Minister in the near future



Bengaluru: Congress leader of Padmanabhanagar assembly Sanjay Gowda and state secretary of street vendors of Banashankari ward of KPCC Chand Pasha made special decorations and offered prayers at the Narasimha Swamy temple to wish Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar to become the Chief Minister in the near future.

On this occasion, special prayers and food distribution were performed at the Venkateshwara temple in Pragathiapura. Clothes were distributed to about 200 people in Sarabade Palaya of Padmanabhanagar constituency.

Former MP LR Shivaram Gowda, Congress leader Sanjay Gowda, state secretary of street vendors of Banashankari ward of KPCC Chand Pasha and social media president of Bengaluru South Assembly Girish Kumar were present on this occasion.

# Kamal Haasan: Every Rupee spent must serve the film and not merely the appearance of scale!

Chennai, May 15: Pointing out that India too, like the rest of the world, was feeling the impact of rising fuel, energy, logistics, and production costs as a result of the continuing crisis in West Asia, actor and parliamentarian Kamal Haasan on Friday underlined the need for the Indian film industry to evolve practical and sustainable operating practices for efficient filmmaking and urged the different stakeholders of the Indian film industry to have a conversation on how to collectively navigate the economic challenges that lay ahead.

"Taking to his X timeline to share his thoughts on the issue, Kamal Haasan said, "The continuing crisis in West Asia is deepening and the world is facing growing pressure on energy, trade, logistics, and economic stability. India too is inevitably feeling the impact of rising fuel, energy, logistics, and production costs."

The versatile actor went on to add, "For the Indian film industry, this comes at a time when budgets are already escalating and market recoveries remain uneven. Rising costs will not affect film production alone. Consumer spending patterns for entertainment may also change in the months ahead due to inflationary pressures. The burden will inevitably fall on producers, workers, theatres, distributors, financiers, and the entire ecosystem. If cinema must continue to grow, we must ensure that every rupee spent serves the film, and not merely the appearance of scale."



However, the actor was clear that any correction in cinema economics must never come at the cost of workers' wages, safety, dignity, food, transport, accommodation, or humane working conditions.

"The burden cannot fall on those who labour the hardest. The correction we need is elsewhere: in avoidable waste, poor planning, inflated entourage culture, unnecessary foreign travel, production delays, and the growing disconnect between spending and purpose." Calling for a meeting between the different stakeholders of the Indian film industry, Kamal Haasan said, "I believe this is the right time for a meeting of minds across the Indian cinema industry. I urge an industry-wide conversation between producers, actors, directors, unions, studios, exhibitors, distributors, OTT platforms, and guilds towards an industry-wide dialogue on how we collectively navigate the economic challenges ahead."

He went on to say, "Together, we must evolve practical and sustainable operating practices for efficient filmmaking: better shooting discipline, tighter schedules, reduced luxury and entourage expenses, limiting avoidable foreign travel where suitable local alternatives exist, conserving energy across sets and studios, and encouraging sustainable set construction and reuse of materials."

Stating that extravagance had often been mistaken for scale, the veteran actor, director and producer pointed out that some of our greatest films had been made not with excess, but with "clarity, discipline, and conviction."

"The national call for responsible consumption and collective discipline is a timely reminder that every sector must act with foresight and restraint in periods of global uncertainty. The Indian film industry too must rise to the occasion. This is a time for national interest over personal interest. Our industry shapes culture, influences thought, and reaches millions of people every single day; cinema carries responsibilities beyond entertainment alone. Those of us who have received the most from this industry must lead by example first. If we protect the economics of cinema today, we protect the future of cinema tomorrow," he said.

**Protium** (Formerly known as Growth Source Financial Technologies Ltd.)  
 Registered & Corporate Office Address: 7th Floor, Block B2, Phase - 1 Nirlo Knowledge Park, Pahadi Village, Off. Western Express Highway, Cama Industrial Estate, Goregaon(E), Mumbai - 400063, Maharashtra.

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**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES**

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1	Account Number	GS041EEL199891
2	Name of borrower, co-borrower, Mortgagees	(A) KRS Brik Work through its Proprietor Thimmappa Mala W/o K.V Mahesh (B) Thimmappa Mala W/o K.V Mahesh (C) S Venkatesh S/o Sonnappa (D) K.V Mahesh S/o S Venkatesh (E) Nagamma D/o Kariyappa All having address at Kallahalli (V), (H) Chintamani, Karnataka 563125 Also Add, Kallahalli Chintamani, Chikaballapura, Karnataka 563125 Also Add, Kasaba Kallahalli Madhnapalli Road, Bangalore by Pass Chintamani, Chikballapur, Karnataka 563125 Also Add, Kallahalli Village Kallahalli Post Chintamani Taluk Chikaballapura Dist Kolar Chintamani Nadampalli B.O, Karnataka 563125 Also Add, Number 5 Kallahalli Chintamani Chikaballapura, Karnataka 563125 Also Add, No 5 Kallahalli Chintamani Chikaballapura, Karnataka 563125
3	Date of Demand Notice	Date: 27th Oct 2025
4	Amount as per Demand Notice U/s 13(2)	Rs. 16,97,130.28/- (Sixteen Lakh Ninety Seven Thousand One Hundred Thirty and Twenty Eight Paise Only) as on 27th Oct 2025.
5	Date of Symbolic Possession	27-Jan-26
6	Amount as on	Rs. 18,77,821.87/- (Eighteen lakh seventy-seven thousand eight hundred twenty-one and eighty seven only) as on date 09th May 2026
7	Descriptions of the property/Properties	All that piece and parcel of Property bearing No. 136, As per Panchayath Raj E Khatha No. 152800301400600150, Situated at Kallahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Chintamani Taluk, Chikballapur District, Presently within the Limits of Munaganahalli Village Panchayath, Measuring East to West 30 Feet (9.144 Meters), and North to South 40 Feet (12.192 Meters), in all measuring 1200 Square Feet (111.48 Square Meters), along with building constructed thereon, and bounded on: East by: Vacant Site West by: Property of Munimayana North by: Others as Property South by: Road.
8	Reserve Price	Rs. 13,56,500/- (Thirteen lakh fifty-six thousand five hundred Only)
9	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,35,650/- (One lakh thirty-five thousand six hundred fifty)
10	Bid Increment Amount (In Rs.)	(Bid Incremental Value: Rs. 5,000/-)
11	E-Auction Date and Time	18-Jun-26 at 11:00 am to 2:00 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 min each)
12	EMD Submission Last Date	17-Jun-26 up to 5:00 PM.
13	Inspection Date	08-Jun-26 BETWEEN 11:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

1. All interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website <https://bankauctions.in> & <https://protium.co.in> For details, help, procedure and online training. Contact number: 8142000725/ 8142000666. email id: [nitesh@bankauctions.in](mailto:nitesh@bankauctions.in) / [info@bankauctions.in](mailto:info@bankauctions.in)

2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit <https://bankauctions.in> & <https://protium.co.in> to take part in e-auction.

**THIS IS ALSO A STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6)/ Rule 9 (1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002**

Date: 16.05.2026 Sd/-, For Protium Finance Limited  
 Place: KARNATAKA Authorised Officer

# D.K. Shivakumar is the only person who treats everyone and all classes equally and loves everyone without any discrimination: Soumya Reddy



Bengaluru: Karnataka Congress Women's State President Soumya Reddy has expressed her appreciation for President D.K. Shivakumar, who is the only person in the Congress party who treats everyone and all classes equally and loves everyone without any discrimination.

Speaking at the D.K. Shivakumar birthday celebration function, organized at the Katriguppe

# Turning Downtime into Opportunities for Personal Growth



Bengaluru: In an age where children and teenagers are constantly surrounded by screens, schedules and academic pressures, the idea of "downtime" is often misunderstood. For many students, free time quickly turns into hours spent scrolling through gadgets or watching television. While relaxation is necessary, downtime can also become a powerful opportunity for personal growth. Focus on health & fitness. Encouraging children to play outdoor games, cycle, practise yoga, or participate in sports helps maintain physical health and emotional well-being.

interests and develop skills. Small, meaningful activities can turn ordinary moments into valuable learning experiences.

Reading is one of the simplest and most effective ways for students to use their free time productively. A good book can transport young minds to different worlds, introduce them to inspiring people and expand their imagination. Reading also strengthens vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Learning a new skill is another excellent way to make the most of downtime. Whether it is drawing, playing a musical instrument, photography, cooking, coding or learning a new language. These activities allow students to discover their talents and interests beyond textbooks. Focus on health & fitness. Encouraging children to play outdoor games, cycle, practise yoga, or participate in sports helps maintain physical health and emotional well-being.

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1	Account Number	GS079EEL2354938
2	Name of borrower, co-borrower, Mortgagees	(A) Green Masalapur Chats Through Its Proprietor Pradeep Ayyajjanavar (B) Guttemma Ramesh Ayyajjanavar W/o Ramesh Ayyajjanavar (C) Pradeep Ayyajjanavar S/o Ramesh Ayyajjanavar (D) Ramesh Ayyajjanavar S/o Hanumanthappa All Having Address At Talavur Oni Ranbenur (Rural), Ranbenur, Ranbenur Haveri, Karnataka 581115 Also Add, 18/0130/2 Talavur Oni Ranbenur Haveri, Karnataka 581115 Also Add, HNo18/0130/2 Ranbenur Town Talavur Oni Ranbenur Dharwad Haveri, Karnataka 581115 Also Add, 18/0139/2 Talavur Oni Ranbenur Rural Haveri Haveri, Karnataka 581115 Also Add, 18/0130/2 Ranbenur Rural Haveri 678 Karnataka Haveri, Karnataka 581115 Also Add, At Post Ranbenur Ranbenur Tq Haveri Dharwad Haveri, Karnataka 581115
3	Date of Demand Notice	Date: 24th Oct 2025
4	Amount as per Demand Notice U/s 13(2)	Rs. 12,00,833.86/- (Twelve Lakh Eight Hundred Thirty Three Rupees and Eighty Six Paise Only) as on 24th Oct 2025.
5	Date of Symbolic Possession	27-Jan-26
6	Amount as on	Rs. 13,39,625.05/- (Thirteen lakh thirty-nine thousand six hundred twenty-five and five rupees only) as on date 09th May 2026
7	Descriptions of the property/Properties	Old Assessment No V/363CTS No 1700B, Assessment No 37/2, measuring 7.315215 X 3.657607 Mts. i.e. 26.76 Sq. Mts, situated at 37/2, Talavur Oni Ranbenur, Haveri, bounded by East: Conservancy West: Sri Huligamma Devi Temple North: Property of Parneshwarappa Hanumanthappa Ajajya South: Property of Sharada Shikarpura
8	Reserve Price	Rs. 9,46,100/- (Nine lakh forty-six thousand one hundred Only)
9	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 94,610/- (Ninety-four thousand six hundred ten)
10	Bid Increment Amount (In Rs.)	(Bid Incremental Value: Rs. 5,000/-)
11	E-Auction Date and Time	18-Jun-26 at 11:00 am to 2:00 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 min each)
12	EMD Submission Last Date	17-Jun-26 up to 5:00 PM.
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## EDITORIAL

### The Inescapable Curse Of Being A Woman Politician In India

I know this is not an uncommon question, but it is an uncomfortable one. And that is precisely why it refuses to go away. There is something about powerful women in Indian politics that unsettles the public imagination. The discomfort rarely announces itself openly. Instead, it reveals itself slowly, through primetime ridicule, casual sexism disguised as humour, relentless commentary on appearance and temperament, and the tendency to scrutinise a woman's personality long before her politics are taken seriously. What makes this phenomenon particularly revealing is that it transcends party lines and ideology. India does not reserve this hostility for one kind of woman politician. Eventually, almost every woman in public life encounters it, regardless of where she stands politically.

Looking at a few more prominent women politicians of India, the first name that inevitably comes to our mind is that of Indira Gandhi. There are many valid criticisms of her politics, and there always will be. The Emergency alone ensures that her legacy will remain complicated forever. But if you go back and really examine the public language around Indira Gandhi over the decades, you realise people were reacting not only to her decisions but also to the sheer fact that a woman leader was occupying that seat of power. India had elected a woman Prime Minister long before many countries that now lecture the world about progressiveness. Yet, there was always an undertone of discomfort around her authority. Men with absolute political confidence are often described as commanding. With Indira Gandhi, the same traits came to be known as dangerous, power-hungry, and so on. At the height of her authority, she was described by political opponents and admirers alike as "the only man in the cabinet", as though strength, decisiveness, and political control could be understood only through masculinity. Another prominent leader that comes to mind is the former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee. Whether people support her or dislike her politically is irrelevant here. What matters is the way public discourse around her often becomes intensely personal in a way that feels disproportionate even by Indian political standards. And perhaps the clearest example of this came the moment she lost politically, because the mask fell almost immediately. The political criticism did not merely intensify, it became personal with startling speed. The language became crueler, uglier, and more mocking.

# How Vijay Is Redefining The 'Visual Language' Of Chief Ministership

In the 2018 political thriller *Sarkar*, which was the story of one man taking on the ruling political party in Tamil Nadu, Vijay played a CEO of an American multinational company, who is considered an expert in branding. Eight years later, reel morphs into real, where the first three days in office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu have seen Vijay upping his branding game. If you analyse all that he has done since taking the oath of office and secrecy on Sunday, every step has been tailor-made to elevate Brand Vijay. By strategically moving away from traditional political tropes, Vijay, who is an outlier in the Tamil Nadu political theatre, is attempting to redefine the visual language of leadership in the state. It started with Vijay swapping his white shirt and beige trousers look that Tamil Nadu had seen him in during the election campaign, for a sharp, dapper black suit. It was a look inspired by his character Veera Raghavan, a RAW field agent in the 2022 movie *Beast*. The sleek matte black suit was specifically crafted for Vijay for his appearances at the swearing-in ceremony and the assembly session. It enabled him to stand out in a sea of white. Trust an actor to know what looks best on camera. But beyond the look on camera, the sartorial shift conveyed the power of the blazer as executive authority. In Tamil Nadu, the white shirt and veshti have been the uniform of the political establishment. In fact, in 2016, when political strategist Sunil Konagolu made MK Stalin discard his veshti for the trousers, the makeover became the talk of the town. By opting for the black suit look, Vijay has executed a brand differentiation. As if to say he is not an archetypal politician and more like the CEO of Tamil Nadu. It is also important to remember that the Gen-Z vote

played a major role in getting Vijay the top job. The smart look appeals to this constituency of the aspirational youth and the urban professional. No offence meant to the dignified veshti, but the blazer look signals efficiency, modernity and a 'let's get down to work' corporate ethos rather than the red tape of traditional bureaucracy. Brand Vijay is communicating to the New India, distancing himself from the old guard. Then came the oath. Most swearing-in ceremonies are solemn occasions, bordering on the sombre. Ministers-designate in many states have fumbled and stuttered in the past, prompting the Governor to come to the rescue. On May 10, at the Nehru Indoor Stadium, Vijay introduced a different vibe. The chief minister-elect came well-rehearsed and read the oath in an energetic manner, in one take. The message was: "I am prepared for the job." While purists may have wanted the oath to be read with unexcited tonality, the experienced actor's throw of voice, dynamic body language, and voice modulation were impressive. Vijay owned the stage, showing that he treated the oath as a high-stakes performance, ensuring a flawless take. Brands that convey clarity are always appreciated, and he demonstrated both command and control. In corporate terms, it reassured his stakeholders - the citizens of Tamil Nadu - that he is in charge. Meeting political rivals at their home was a political masterstroke, the likes of which Tamil Nadu had not seen since 1967. That year, after vanquishing the Congress, DMK leader CN Annadurai had visited former chief minister K Kamaraj at his residence before taking the oath of office. Now Vijay extended the olive branch to his predecessor MK Stalin and other political rivals like Anbumani Ramadoss, Seeman, Vaiko. From a branding point of view, Vijay was telling the world that talking only to your own echo chamber does not help you grow. If you

competitors. So Vijay the brand is a collaborator - or at least, gives that impression during his honeymoon period - instead of a hard-nosed competitor. Vijay conveyed inclusivity by visiting rivals on their home turf. In the process, he humanised his brand, signalling that Brand Vijay is secure, mature and confident of his place in the political ecosystem despite making a lateral entry. Usually, politicians are cagey about asserting their power in public, choosing instead to play the humble neta. Vijay was blunt, declaring himself as the sole power centre in the TVK. By doing so, he eliminated the brand dilution that often plagues coalition governments. His message was, "You voted for Vijay, you will get Vijay." That is brand clarity. Finally, Minister KA Sengottaiyan, who has been an MLA under the leadership of M G

Ramachandran and J Jayalithaa, continues to carry the latter's photograph in his shirt pocket. Any other leader would have felt insecure, but Vijay apparently insisted that Sengottaiyan should not change the practice. Most brands try to erase their predecessors, but Vijay allowed the legacy brand of Jayalithaa to coexist within his TVK ecosystem.



## Yahya Khan To Munir, The Curious Pak Factor In Every US-China Thaw

After nine years, US President Donald Trump was in China for a state visit to meet President Xi Jinping, whom he called a "great leader", marking a dramatic shift in the choice of words he generally uses for China and its President. The shift may be driven by several factors: the conflict in the Gulf, the concurrent ascent of India and decline of Europe, a widespread energy crisis, the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine, and the presence of an unpredictable American President. The outreach, however, has also brought to mind an old geopolitical pattern: whenever Washington seeks strategic space with Beijing, Pakistan suddenly regains relevance. The events leading to Trump's visit to China and the growing Pakistan-US ties call for comparisons with 1970. Surely, in 56 years, the global political landscape has flipped 180 degrees. The Cold War The Sino-Soviet split in 1961 marked a turning point in US-China relations, and US President Richard Nixon and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were quick to grab the opportunity; however, the problem was how to start talks. In the fall of 1970, Pakistan's military dictator General Yahya Khan agreed to act as a secret mediator between China and the US, helping Kissinger arrange a secret trip to Beijing in July 1971 in return for military aid and turning a blind eye to the genocide in East Pakistan by the army. According to an unclassified report from the US State Department and Department of Defence, the US made an exception in October 1970 to an arms embargo placed on India and Pakistan after 1965. The US "offered to sell armoured personnel carriers, and some aircraft in response to long-standing requests from



Pakistan". The US exemption for Pakistan happened around the time when Yahya Khan was secretly negotiating talks with China to bring Washington and Beijing (formerly Peking) together. In a memorandum from the US President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon on 'Arms Supply Policy for South Asia', a recommendation was made to approve Secretary of State William Rogers' advice to make a one-time exception for Pakistan and approve the sale of tanks and B-57 Canberra tactical bombers. The recommendation was approved in October 1970, when Yahya Khan visited the Oval Office. He thanked President Nixon for the sale of B-57s and a \$100 million loan aid to Pakistan while it was negotiating a \$125 million standby agreement with the IMF, subject to changes in its foreign exchange system. After the 1970 elections in Pakistan, in which Mujibur Rehman's Awami League gained a majority, a civil strife began in the country, followed by a genocide. Archer Blood and American diplomat posted in the consulate in Dhaka (earlier Dacca), wrote a telegram to

Nixon and Kissinger, asking them to act. Though the US imposed an embargo on the sale of lethal weapons to Pakistan, it did not ban the sale or exports to Pakistan on licenses issued on or before March 25, 1971, the day when Operation Searchlight began, resulting in the export of munitions worth \$3.8 million between March and September 1971 and contracts worth \$10 million. It is a recurring phenomenon in US-Pakistan relations, which was once again observed in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor in 2025. On May 9, a day before the ceasefire, the IMF agreed to disburse a \$1 billion relief package for Pakistan. Islamabad is too important to fail for the US and the rest of the world, primarily because of nuclear weapons and the presence of Islamist radicals in the country, a conundrum beautifully exploited by Islamabad. A polarised and politically fractured Pakistan threatens global stability, and, therefore, it needs to be secured. 2026 To 1970 Before heading to China, Donald Trump reaffirmed his support for Pakistan to serve as a mediator between Iran and the US after Senator Lindsey Graham, an ally of Trump,

discredited Islamabad's ability to act as a mediator over news reports on how Pakistan parked Iranian jets at the Nur Khan air base. But Trump said, "Pakistanis have been great, and I think the field marshal and prime minister have been absolutely great." Last month, a US intelligence assessment said that Field Marshal Asim Munir is a red flag for the US and a liability because of his close ties with Iran's military and the IRGC. It appears strange, but in the US-Iran conflict, Pakistan emerged as the only party that maintains close ties with both countries. The context of Trump's China visit is certainly not similar to 1970 because trade war and US sale of weapons to Taiwan are on the agenda of the 2026 meet; however, the presence of Pakistan is common. Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's former Ambassador to the US and UK, summarises Islamabad and Rawalpindi's relationship with Washington. She says the "recent warmth shows that a hopeful beginning has been made for a reset in Pak-US ties, but one should avoid hastily concluding ties are on a sustainable upswing".

## Garbage, polythene and animals

*"Cities standing on heaps of garbage and animals swallowing polythene"*

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

These days, cities are overflowing with garbage. Rotting heaps on the roadsides, foul smells permeating the streets, filth trapped in drains, and animals searching for food among them—this scene not only reflects the failure of the sanitation system, but also our collective social consciousness. Often, when sanitation workers go on strike in the city, the entire discussion is limited to the conflict between the administration and the workers. But behind this filth lies another major issue, one that society conveniently maintains silence on—polythene and its associated waste management. Ironically, polythene is banned by law. The Municipal Corporation periodically issues fines, raids shops, and runs awareness campaigns. Yet, the most common item in every garbage dump in the city is polythene bags, packaging, and plastic waste. It's natural to ask: how is this widespread when it's banned? And if it's so prevalent, why is the ban limited to paper? In fact, instead of understanding the root of the problem, our system has accepted symbolic action as the solution. Municipal officials occasionally issue challans to shopkeepers, assuming their responsibility is fulfilled. Campaigns last for a few days, photographs are taken, news is published, and then the situation returns to normal. Almost every item in the market, from milk to pulses, snacks to vegetables, online delivery to household items, is available in some form of plastic or polythene packaging. This means that the same system that banned polythene has failed to provide alternatives to the market. The truth is that polythene isn't just a shopkeeper's

problem. It's a result of our consumerist habits. The culture of convenience has accustomed us to such an extent that we consider carrying a cloth or jute bag a "goddamn habit." Carrying a new bag for every small item has become the norm. The market thrives on this mentality. If consumers demand, there will be supply. Therefore, society cannot absolve itself of its responsibility by simply blaming the shopkeeper or the corporation. The most worrying aspect is that this very polythene has now become a death trap for animals. The city may have been declared "animal-free," but the reality is that cows, bulls, dogs, and other animals are seen wandering every street and garbage heap in search of food. They ingest polythene along with rotten food. According to veterinarians, kilograms of polythene have been removed from the stomachs of many cows during operations. This is not just cruelty to animals, but the height of our insensitivity. The irony is that while society pays emotional respect to the cow by calling it "mother," it abandons it to die on garbage heaps. Such a stark contrast between religious belief and actual behavior is rarely seen in any other subject. Animals are treated with sentimentality during festivals and events, yet their lives are sustained by garbage and plastic in the city streets. This is not only a failure of the administration, but also a moral failure of society. The polythene crisis isn't limited to animals. It has become a serious threat to the environment, health, and urban life. Plastic stuck in drains causes waterlogging during the rainy season. Rotting waste releases toxic gases. Burning plastic increases air pollution. Gradually, this microplastic

is mixing with soil and water and reaching the food chain. Scientists are constantly warning that microplastic has now entered the human body as well. This means that the polythene, which we consider a convenience, could become a health crisis in the future. The other side of the problem is the failure of waste management. In our cities, even today, waste from most households ends up directly on the streets or in dumping sites without proper segregation. Separating wet and dry waste has been advocated for years, but in practice, this practice is virtually nonexistent. Unless waste is segregated at the household level, recycling cannot be effective. Municipal corporations consider mere garbage collection to be cleanliness, whereas true cleanliness implies scientific waste disposal. It's also worth noting that while cities frequently announce bans on single-use plastic, industries and large brands remain largely unaccounted for. Most products sold in the market come in plastic packaging. If we truly want to eliminate polythene, cracking down on small shopkeepers alone won't be enough. Large companies must also be forced to adopt alternative packaging. Unless changes occur at the production level, both consumers and shopkeepers will be left without a choice. Additionally, the administration must realign its priorities. Cleanliness can't simply be a photo campaign. The city's sanitation system must be sustainable and technically robust. Solid systems for door-to-door collection, waste segregation, recycling units, composting organic waste, and safe disposal of plastic waste are essential. Imposing fines alone won't solve the problem. Unless the system pro-

vides practical alternatives, restrictions will fail. The role of education and public awareness is also crucial. Schools, colleges, and social organizations must focus on behavior change rather than simply running formal campaigns. If children are taught from an early age to use cloth bags, reuse materials, and protect the environment, the next generation can mitigate this crisis. Society must foster an understanding that cleanliness is not just the responsibility of sanitation workers, but of every citizen. The need today isn't just to rid the city of garbage, but to change mindsets. No city can be truly clean if citizens continue to throw garbage on the streets, markets continue to sell plastic, the administration continues to take superficial action, and society continues to allow animals to forage in the garbage. We must acknowledge that garbage isn't just filth, it's the result of our habits. Polythene isn't just a bag; it's an environmental crisis created in the name of convenience. And animals rummaging through garbage aren't just stray animals, but the silent questions of an insensitive society that, amid claims of development, has forgotten its basic responsibilities. If we don't wake up now, cities will become not just concrete jungles but heaps of plastic and garbage, where both humans and animals will be deprived of their right to a clean life. The dream of a clean city won't be achieved simply by government slogans. It requires a confluence of administrative will, social responsibility, and personal discipline. Only then will cities be truly clean, animals safe, and the environment protected for the future.

# DEFENCE DEALS, LPG SUPPLY, \$5 BILLION INVESTMENTS

## MODI'S UAE VISIT BRINGS BIG RETURNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United Arab Emirates on Friday produced a string of agreements spanning defence, energy, maritime infrastructure and banking, with a UAE investment commitment of \$5 billion announced in the presence of both leaders. Modi held delegation-level talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi, where he was accorded a guard of honour on arrival. The meeting, witnessed by both delegations, saw the exchange of several agreements and MoUs.



**Defence Partnership, Formally Framed**  
The most significant agreement signed was the Framework for a Strategic Defence Partnership between the two countries. This formalises and elevates what has been a growing security relationship, giving it a structured basis for cooperation in defence manufacturing, procurement and strategic coordination. The signing comes at a time when the West Asia region is under acute stress from the

ongoing US-Iran conflict and the near-closure of the Strait of Hormuz.  
**Energy Cooperation At The Centre**  
Two energy agreements were inked. The first is an MoU on Strategic Petroleum Reserves — significant for India, which imports nearly 85 per cent of its crude oil and has been working to build buffer stocks against supply shocks. The second is an agreement on LPG sup-

plies, which will help India secure cooking gas imports as global energy markets remain volatile. The UAE is among India's key energy suppliers in the Gulf.  
**Ship Repair Cluster At Vadinar**  
In the maritime sector, both sides signed a MoU for setting up a ship repair cluster at Vadinar in Gujarat. Vadinar is home to one of India's largest private oil terminals and is well-posi-

tioned to become a hub for maritime services in the region. The cluster is expected to create jobs and reduce India's dependence on foreign shipyards for repair and maintenance work.  
**5 Billion Into Indian Infrastructure**  
A major financial announcement, UAE investments worth USD 5 billion were committed — directed at Indian infrastructure, RBL Bank, and Sammaan Capital. This adds to the sub-

stantial UAE investment presence in India, which has grown steadily under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership the two countries elevated in recent years. The UAE is India's third-largest trade partner and its seventh-largest source of cumulative investment over the past 25 years. More than 4.5 million Indians live in the UAE, making people-to-people ties another anchor of the relationship.

# Kalasalingam University hosts International Conference on "Computational Robotics"



Srivilliputhur, Kalasalingam University, Department of Computer Science Engineering, organised two days International Conference on "Computational Robotics," Testing and Engineering Evaluation (ICRTEE 2026), Co-sponsored by IEEE, Madras & IEEE Robotics and Automation Society. Pro Chancellor Dr. S. Arivazhagi Sridharan and The Vice President Dr. S. Shasi Anand presided and addressed. The Vice Chancellor Dr. S. Narayanan and The Registrar Dr. V. Vasudevan felicitated. Dr. R. Raja Subramanian, HoD, IEEE

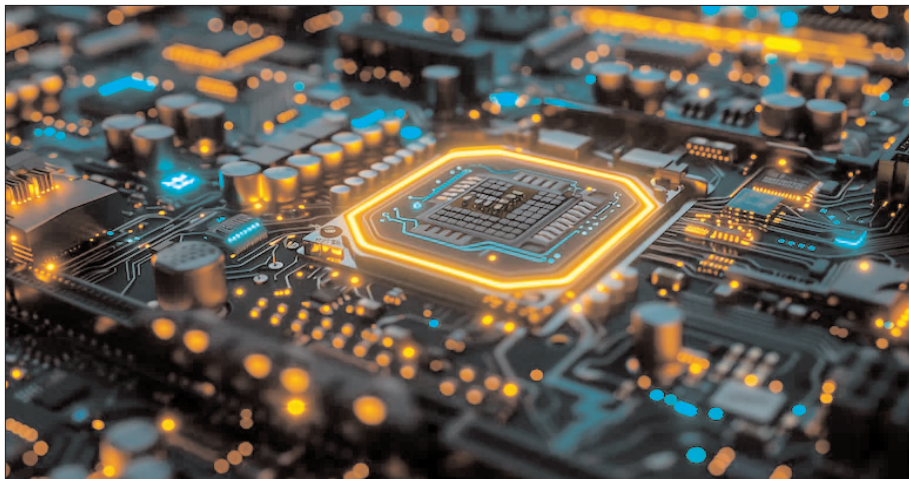
SB Counsellor & Organising Chair welcomed and said 125 research papers selected for publishing from 1305 papers received across the globe. The Chief Guest Dr. Muhammad Ali Fauzi, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia inaugurated the Conference and spoke on "AI for Autonomous System" and released the Conference Souvenir. Dr. Sardar M. N. Islam, Victoria University, Australia, Dr. Abdelmonim M. Artoli, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, Mr. Vish R a j a l i n g a m , Multicoreware India, Dr. P. M. Durairaj, VIT,

Vellore and Industrial Experts from US and Malaysia delivered keynote addresses on Computational Robotics, Cross-Cohort Vision transformer, Embedded Intelligence and AI for Agriculture. Dean Dr.P. Deepalakshmi, Sr. Prof. Dr. Deveraj, and Director-R&D, Dr. M Pallikonda Rajasekaran spoke on IEEE chapter activities. Certificates distributed to participants in a Valedictory function. Faculty members, Researchers, Industrial Experts and Students participated and benefited. Dr. K.Venkatesh delivered vote of thanks.

## CHIP STOCKS TUMBLE:

### Nvidia, AMD, Intel Down Up To 7% As Xi-Trump Summit Fails To Impress Silicon Valley

Global semiconductor stocks slid sharply on Friday after a summit between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping ended without major announcements on semiconductor trade or expanded market access for US chip-makers. The selloff intensified across Wall Street and global markets as investors unwound bets that the high-profile meeting would pave the way for fresh AI chip deals with China. Shares of Nvidia fell more than 2.5% in premarket trade before extending losses after the opening bell. By 9:45 a.m. EST, Nvidia was down 4.12% at \$226.02. Intel declined 6.8% to \$107.97, while Advanced Micro Devices, or AMD, traded 4.8% lower at \$430.84 around 9:46 a.m. EST. Memory-chip maker Micron Technology also came under pressure, opening nearly 6% lower at \$730.01. The weakness spilled into Asian and European semiconductor counters. South Korean chip-maker SK Hynix, a key Nvidia supplier, closed 7.7% lower. In Europe,



STMicroelectronics dropped 4.8%, while Infineon Technologies and ASML Holding each fell 4.7%. Investor expectations had risen ahead of the summit after Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang joined a delegation of US business leaders traveling to China alongside Trump. The delegation also included Tim Cook of Apple and Elon Musk of Tesla. According to a report by The Wall Street Journal, the US has already authorised Nvidia to export its H200 chips to China, though

Beijing has yet to formally approve shipments. "Investors were betting on the trip for tangible news that could lift Nvidia's sales even further," Danni Hewson, head of financial analysis at AJ Bell, said in market commentary. However, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer told Bloomberg that semiconductor and Nvidia "weren't front and centre" during summit discussions. The pullback marks a rare pause in the AI-driven rally that has propelled chip

stocks in recent months amid surging demand for data centre infrastructure and artificial intelligence computing. The broader backdrop remains dominated by rising technology tensions between Washington and Beijing. The US has tightened export restrictions on advanced semiconductors over concerns tied to military and AI applications, while China has accelerated efforts to build domestic alternatives and reduce reliance on foreign chipmakers.

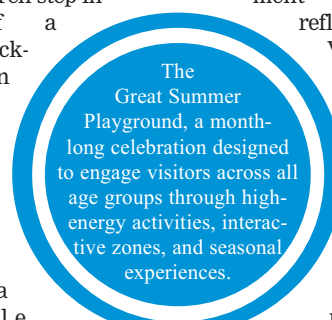
### Inorbit mall cyberabad turns summer into an action-packed playground with ninja adventures, mango indulgences & lego experiences

Hyderabad, May 2026: This summer, Inorbit Mall Cyberabad is transforming into a vibrant destination of play, creativity, and immersive family entertainment with The Great Summer Playground, a month-long celebration designed to engage visitors across all age groups through high-energy activities, interactive zones, and seasonal experiences. Taking centre stage from May 9 to 17 is the much-anticipated Ninja Castle, an adrenaline-fuelled, ninja-themed experience set up at the Central Atrium. Designed as an interactive training ground for children, the activation blends physical play with engaging skill-based challenges focused on agility, speed, reaction time, and coordination. From the moment kids step into the arena and are welcomed by a traditional "Rei" greeting from the Sensei, they are also presented with authentic Japanese Hachimaki bandanas, instantly immersing

them into their playful ninja-training journey filled with action and adventure. The Ninja Castle features multiple immersive zones, each designed to create a unique challenge. At the high-energy Ninja Slash Zone, children step in front of a motion-tracking screen to slash flying fruits in a thrilling 45-second challenge. The Ninja Obstacle Zone encourages kids to jump, climb, and navigate their way through a specially designed obstacle course with enhanced safety measures including soft base surfaces and rubber grips. Creativity meets adventure at the Ninja's Workshop, where children participate in colouring activities and puzzle-based engagements designed to spark imagina-

tion and interactive play. Meanwhile, the Ninja Shuriken challenge lets participants test their precision through safe, target-based dart games, while the interactive Ninja Reaction Game adds another layer of excitement with quick reflex-based play. Visitors can also dress up in ninja costumes at the dedicated Ninja Photo-Op Zone, creating memorable moments for families and young participants alike. As a special takeaway, every child completing the experience receives an "Inorbit Certified Ninja" certificate, turning the activation into both a playful and rewarding summer adventure. Keeping the summer spirit alive, the celebrations continue from May 22 to 24 with the vibrant Mango Fest at Level

1. Designed as a sensory celebration of India's favourite summer fruit, the festival will bring together a thoughtfully curated selection of regional favourites and innovative mango-inspired delicacies, blending nostalgia with novelty through immersive food experiences, interactive installations, and seasonal indulgence. With colourful carts, curated brand experiences, and a dedicated mango-themed photobooth, the festival transforms the mall into a lively summer marketplace celebrating flavour, discovery, and the joy of the season. Closing out the summer line-up, the Central Atrium will host the LEGO x Hamleys Play Zone from May 29 to June 7, offering children a hands-on world of creativity and imagination. Designed as an open play and exploration space, the experience encourages kids to build, create, and experiment through interactive LEGO challenges and free-play activities.



### What's Really Brewing in Your Chai: Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini Raises Awareness on Loose Tea Adulteration in Andhra Pradesh

15 May, 2026: Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini, Andhra Pradesh's most trusted and beloved tea brand, has launched an awareness initiative to educate consumers about the importance of tea quality and the potential food safety risks associated with adulterated or artificially coloured loose tea. According to advisories highlighted by the Tea Board of India, chemically coloured teas continue to remain a concern in parts of the market, with reports indicating the use of extraneous colouring substances such as bismarck brown, potassium blue, turmeric, indigo, and plumbago to improve the appearance or glossiness of standard tea leaves. Such colouring agents are not permitted under food safety regulations and are classified as adulterants. Through this ini-

tiative, Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini aims to encourage consumers to make informed choices and shift towards safe, high-quality packaged tea brands. Ref: https://www.teaboard.gov.in/pdf/pfa\_act\_and\_rules\_pdf4214.pdf As part of the initiative, Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini is spreading awareness among consumers in Andhra Pradesh about the food safety risks associated with artificially coloured tea and how to distinguish between adulterated and unadulterated tea. The brand has also reached over 30,000 households in the region through a door-to-door awareness campaign featuring its cold water test, a simple method commonly recommended to identify signs of adulteration in tea. The initiative reinforces

the brand's commitment towards not only delivering a quality cup of tea but also safeguarding consumer trust and well-being. By educating consumers on the risks associated with adulterated tea and encouraging informed purchasing decisions, Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini aims to drive awareness around the importance of choosing safe, trusted, and high-quality packaged tea. Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini is part of the trusted Tata Tea family and is known for its premium blend crafted from some of the finest tea leaves sourced from the lush valleys of the Brahmaputra River in Assam. Through this initiative, the brand aims to continue building awareness around tea purity and support a safer, more transparent tea ecosystem for consumers.

## TATA STEEL Q4 RESULTS:

# Profit Up 9%, Revenue Tops Rs 63,000 Crore; Dividend Declared

Tata Steel Ltd.'s net profit for the fourth quarter of FY26 rose nearly 9% sequentially, according to an exchange filing on Friday. The tata-group steel maker posted a consolidated bottom-line of Rs 2,926 crore compared to Rs 2,689 crore in the previous quarter. Besides this, the steel manufacturer has also declared a final dividend of Rs 4 per share of face value Rs 1 each. The record date to determine eligible shareholders has been set as Friday, June 12, 2026. If approved, the dividend will be paid on or from Monday, July 6, 2026, the company informed. Tata Steel's revenue from operations came in at Rs 63,270 crore, up 11% from Rs 57,002 in the preceding quarter. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation expenses rose 19.9% to Rs 9,829 crore from Rs 8,200 crore on a quarter-on-quarter basis. On the operational front, Ebitda margin expanded to 15.5% from 14.4% in the third quarter of FY26. Separately, the company has also announced plans of acquiring 23% stake in TM International



Logistics Ltd for Rs 335 crore.

**Tata Steel Q4 Result Highlights (Cons, QoQ)**  
Net Profit rises 8.8% to Rs 2,926 crore versus Rs 2,689 crore.  
Revenue rises 11% to Rs 63,270 crore versus Rs 57,002 crore.  
Ebitda rises 19.9% to Rs 9,829 crore versus Rs 8,200 crore.  
Margin at 15.5% versus 14.4%.  
To pay final dividend of Rs 4 per share. To acquire 23% stake in TM International Logistics Ltd For Rs 335

crore. The company has recommended a dividend of ₹4 per equity share of face value Re 1 each, representing a 400% payout for FY2025-26. The proposed dividend is subject to shareholders' approval at the company's 119th Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is scheduled to be held on Thursday, July 2, 2026. The company said that, if approved at the AGM, the dividend will be paid on or after Monday, July 6, 2026, subject to deduction of applicable tax at source. Meanwhile, the Board has

fixed Friday, June 12, 2026, as the record date for determining shareholders eligible to receive the dividend for FY26. Tata Steel Q4 Results LIVE: FY26 net profit tops ₹10,000 crore For FY26, Tata Steel reported consolidated revenues of ₹23,32,140 crore, while EBITDA stood at ₹34,848 crore. Despite a challenging operating environment, the company's EBITDA improved 35% year-on-year, while the net profit jumped 215% to ₹10,793 crore. The India business reported revenues of ₹1,40,302 crore and EBITDA of ₹34,272 crore, translating into an EBITDA margin of 24%. EBITDA from the India operations increased 17% YoY, supported by the company's best-ever crude steel production of around 23.4 million tonnes and deliveries of nearly 22.5 million tonnes during the year. Meanwhile, the Netherlands business posted revenues of 6,028 million and EBITDA of 267 million, with EBITDA nearly tripling on a year-on-year basis. The UK business reported revenues of £1,978 million, while its EBITDA loss narrowly halved to £217 million during FY26.

# Saudi Arabia launched secret retaliatory airstrikes on Iran during regional war

**Saudi:** Arabia carried out a series of unpublicised airstrikes on Iran in late March in retaliation for attacks inside the kingdom during the Middle East conflict, according to sources cited by Reuters.

The strikes marked the first known case of Saudi Arabia directly conducting military action on Iranian soil, underscoring a major shift in the kingdom's approach toward its main regional rival.

The conflict began after the United States and Israel launched airstrikes on Iran on February 28. In the weeks that followed, Iran targeted all six Gulf Cooperation Council states with missiles and drones, striking US military bases, civilian sites, airports and oil infrastructure, while also closing the Strait of Hormuz and disrupting global trade.

Saudi Arabia, despite its close military relationship with the US, found itself vulnerable as attacks pierced the US security umbrella during the 10-week war.

The Saudi Air Force strikes were carried out as "tit-for-tat strikes in retaliation for when Saudi (Arabia) was hit," one Western official said.

The strikes reflected the widening scope of the conflict across the Middle East and revealed a regional confronta-



tion that had largely remained out of public view. The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday that the United Arab Emirates had also carried out military strikes on Iran.

Together, the Saudi and Emirati actions showed Gulf monarchies responding militarily after coming under Iranian attack. However, their approaches differed.

The UAE adopted a more hawkish position, seeking to impose costs on Iran and engaging only rarely in public diplomacy with Tehran. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, sought to contain the conflict and remained in regular contact with Iranian officials, including through Tehran's ambassador in Riyadh, who did not

respond to a request for comment.

According to the Iranian and Western officials, Saudi Arabia informed Iran about the strikes, leading to intensive diplomatic engagement and Saudi warnings of further retaliation. The exchanges eventually produced an understanding between the two countries to de-escalate.

Ali Vaez, the Iran Project Director at the International Crisis Group, said retaliatory Saudi strikes followed by de-escalation would "show pragmatic recognition on both sides that uncontrolled escalation carries unacceptable costs."

Such a sequence would reflect "not trust, but a shared interest in imposing limits on

confrontation before it spiraled into a wider regional conflict," he said, as quoted by Reuters.

The informal de-escalation took effect in the week before Washington and Tehran agreed to a ceasefire in their broader conflict on April 7. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

At a press conference in Riyadh on March 19, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said the kingdom "reserved the right to take military actions if deemed necessary."

Three days later, Saudi Arabia declared Iran's military attaché and four embassy staff members persona non gratae.

A senior Saudi foreign ministry official did not directly address whether a de-escalation understanding had been reached with Iran, but said, "We reaffirm Saudi Arabia's consistent position advocating de-escalation, self-restraint and the reduction of tensions in pursuit of the stability, security and prosperity of the region and its people." According to reports, more than 105 drone and missile attacks targeted Saudi Arabia during the week of March 25-31. Between April 1-6, the number dropped to just over 25.

# Hegseth pushes Trump's \$1.5 trillion defense budget for 2027 as Congress presses Pentagon over Iran war costs

**Washington, D.C.** US defense secretary Pete Hegseth defended President Donald Trump's proposed \$1.5 trillion military budget before House and Senate lawmakers on Tuesday, as Congress pressed the Pentagon over the rising cost of the Iran war, weapons stockpiles and the administration's long-term strategy in the conflict.

The hearings came as the Trump administration faces growing pressure from the economic impact of Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping corridor through which about 20% of the world's oil normally flows.

Hegseth told lawmakers that the ceasefire with Iran remains in effect despite recent exchanges of fire. He appeared before Congress after testifying in the Senate, where one Democrat warned that "you've achieved a series of tactical successes but are on the verge of a strategic loss."

While Hegseth adopted a softer tone than in previous hearings, lawmakers from both parties raised concerns about the war's expanding cost and its impact on military readiness.

Pentagon officials told Congress that the cost of the Iran war has now climbed to nearly \$29 billion, up from the \$25 billion estimate provided nearly two weeks ago. Pentagon comptroller Jay Hurst said roughly \$24 billion of the total is tied to replacing munitions and repairing equipment, while the remainder covers operational costs for deployed forces.

The estimate does not include the cost of repairing or rebuilding damaged US military sites in the region.

Lawmakers also questioned whether the conflict was straining US weapons supplies, a suggestion Hegseth rejected.

At the same time, Hegseth acknowledged that the administration is moving to increase weapons production to support the conflict



and prepare for future military operations.

The administration's proposed 2027 defense budget includes \$750 billion for the "Golden Dome" missile defense system, \$102 billion for aircraft procurement and research and development, nearly \$75 billion for drone and counter-drone technologies and \$65 billion to build 18 Navy warships and 16 support ships.

In January, Trump said he wanted to increase the US military budget by half next year to reach \$1.5 trillion.

"I have determined that, for the Good of our Country, especially in these very troubled and dangerous times, our Military Budget for the year 2027 should not be \$1 Trillion Dollars, but rather \$1.5 Trillion Dollars," Trump said on Truth Social.

"This will allow us to build the 'Dream Military' that we have long been entitled to and, more importantly, that will keep us SAFE and SECURE, regardless of foe," the president said.

Trump said the increase would be supported by revenue generated from tariffs introduced since his return to office.

The administration plans to allocate about \$1.1 trillion for defense through the regular appropriations process, with another \$350 billion expected through budget reconciliation, which would allow Republicans to pass measures without Democratic support. The proposal comes as the United States faces annual deficits nearing \$2 trillion and a national

# Who is Maya Higa? Twitch streamer makes history with first-ever TED Talk and standing ovation

**Washington, D.C.:** Maya Higa just reached a milestone no Twitch streamer has ever achieved before. The popular content creator and wildlife conservation advocate received a standing ovation after becoming the first Twitch streamer to deliver an official TED Talk. What began years ago as casual livestreaming has now evolved into one of the internet's most unexpected success stories, blending online entertainment with real-world environmental impact.

The emotional moment unfolded in Vancouver, Canada, where Maya stepped onto the TED stage to explain how livestreaming helped her build a global audience passionate about animal conservation. By the end of the presentation, the crowd rose to its feet, leaving the streamer visibly stunned as she quietly responded, "Thank you."

Maya Higa becomes first Twitch streamer to give TED Talk

During her speech, Maya reflected on how her career changed from gaming and variety streams into a mission-driven platform focused on wildlife education. She explained that traditional classroom outreach inspired her early goals,



but online content allowed her to reach people on a completely different scale.

"Instead of reaching 20 kids at a time in a classroom, I was reaching thousands of people at a time, all over the world. I wanted to do this for the rest of my life," she said.

That vision eventually became Alveus Animal Sanctuary, her Texas-based conservation centre that combines wildlife rescue efforts with livestream technology. The sanctuary broadcasts animals online around the clock while also supporting breeding programs for endangered species and educational outreach.

Maya revealed that her community has raised more than \$7.5 million for conservation causes since 2019. Even more remarkably, she said her streams reached over 250 million viewers in 2025 alone, which she compared to the

impact of millions of classrooms.

She also described Alveus as one of the most accessible zoo experiences in the world because anyone with an internet connection can learn about animals from anywhere.

Maya Higa's TED Talk standing ovation inspires Twitch fans

The standing ovation quickly became one of the most talked-about moments among Twitch fans and fellow creators online. Many praised Maya for helping change public perception around livestreaming and proving that content creators can make meaningful contributions far beyond entertainment.

After the event, Maya shared an emotional message on X, calling the experience "the most impactful experience" of her life. She added that it was "such an honor to share a stage and community with so many brilliant and thoughtful people. Later during a livestream, Maya explained that years of streaming helped her become comfortable speaking in front of large audiences. She also revealed that she wore a bracelet gifted by a fan during TwitchCon because she wanted her community to feel present beside her during the speech.

# US announces \$15 million bounty targeting Iran army funding mechanisms

**Washington, D.C.:** The US state department has announced a reward of up to \$15 million for information on financial networks linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), as part of expanded sanctions and enforcement actions targeting Iran's alleged illicit oil trade and funding systems.

The announcement comes under the US "Rewards for Justice" program, which is offering the reward for information that could help disrupt the IRGC's financial infrastructure, including its various branches such as the IRGC-Quds Force. State department spokesperson Thomas "Tommy" Pigott said the US is stepping up pressure under its "Economic Fury" sanctions framework. The Trump Administration is intensifying pressure on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) by targeting the financial networks that enable its illicit oil operations," the statement read.

The US also announced sanctions on a network it says is involved in selling and shipping Iranian oil to overseas buyers on behalf of the IRGC, along with three senior officials from the IRGC's Shahid Purja'fari Oil Headquarters. These individuals were described as being involved in coordinating oil-related



financial transactions.

According to the statement, the measures are aimed at cutting off funding channels that the US says are used to support proxy groups and military activities across the region.

"These actions disrupt illicit funding streams that finance Iran's support for terrorist proxies and regional aggression. These oil revenues belong to the Iranian people, who face daily economic hardship due to the Iranian regime's corruption, mismanagement, and prioritisation of funding terrorist militias and weapons programmes over addressing the basic needs of its citizens," the statement read. The Rewards for Justice program also said it is seeking information on IRGC-linked financing networks. This includes oil-for-money schemes, front companies, sanctions-evasion networks, financial institutions involved in transactions, and procurement channels for dual-use technologies.

# Putin hails Russia's test launch of a new ballistic missile and calls it the world's most powerful



**Washington, D.C.:** MOSCOW - Russia on Tuesday test-fired a new intercontinental ballistic missile as part of efforts to modernize the country's nuclear forces, a launch hailed by President Vladimir Putin just days after his claim that the fighting in Ukraine is nearing an end.

Putin said that the nuclear-armed Sarmat missile would enter combat service at the end of the year. It was built to replace the aging Soviet-built Voyevoda.

"This is the most powerful missile in the world," Putin declared, adding that the combined power of the Sarmat's individually targeted warheads is more than four times higher than that of any Western counterpart.

The Russian leader has repeatedly brandished the nuclear sword after sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022 to try to deter the West from ramping up support for Ukraine.

# Iran, US are at impasse ahead of Trump's China trip

**DUBAI:** Iran and the United States reached an impasse again Monday over how to end their war while their ceasefire grew increasingly shaky, with the two sides exchanging fire in recent days, ships and Gulf states being targeted, and fighting flaring between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

The volatility could tip the Middle East back into open warfare and prolong the worldwide energy crisis sparked by the conflict, with Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and America's blockade of Iranian ports still in place. US president Donald Trump is expected to use a trip this week to China to urge Chinese president Xi Jinping to pressure Iran into making concessions and end the current limbo. Beijing is the biggest buyer of the Islamic Republic's sanctioned crude oil, giving it leverage. But getting to any deal likely remains tough work. Iran insists it wants to see the American blockade end and sanctions lifted before beginning negotiations over its stockpile of highly enriched uranium. The US and Israel, want that material removed since it could be used to eventually build a bomb, should Iran choose to do so. Tehran



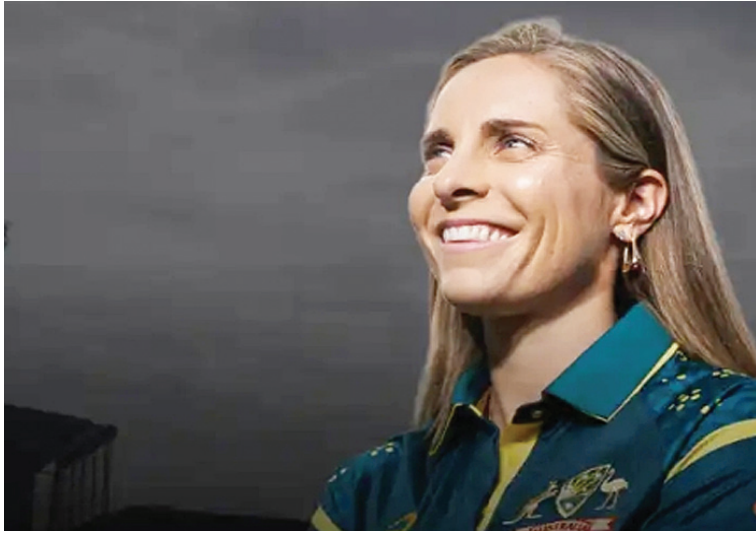
insists its program is peaceful, but it has enriched uranium beyond the levels needed for civilian power generation. Israel insists enriched uranium must be taken out of Iran

Trump said on Sunday that Iran's response to his latest proposal was "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!" Ending the blockade before discussing Iran's nuclear program would eliminate a major point of leverage for Trump in the talks.

In the meantime, the standoff over the strait, which is a key transit point for the world's oil and natural gas exports, has sent fuel prices skyrocketing and rattled world markets.



## Australia's Women's T20 World Cup 2026 squad announced; Sophie Malinckx fit, Darcie Brown out



He said, "Sophie is our captain and she will definitely play. Left-arm spin is considered very important in women's cricket. Georgia has long been the leading leg-spinner, and Alana has also performed exceptionally well. But for now, our priority is Ash, Sophie, and Georgia. Alana will get a chance when conditions are

favorable." She has played only one T20I, two ODIs, and one Test, but impressed everyone with her six-wicket haul on her Test debut against India.

Australia head coach Shelley Nitschke said, "Lucy extracts good bounce and has a unique strength in her bowling. She adds a unique personality to our bowling attack."

Grace Harris's return to the team is designed to bolster the lower-order batting. She scored a century to help Queensland win the WNCL final in March and also helped Royal Challengers Bangalore win the WPL title in February.

Australia have also been bolstered by the return of Annabel Sutherland, who was rested for the Caribbean tour.

Only Beth Mooney has been selected as the primary wicketkeeper in the team. She will take over wicketkeeping duties following Alyssa Healy's retirement. Talia Wilson will be sent with the team as a reserve player.

Australia will play three practice matches against South Africa at Arundel Castle on May 31, June 2, and June 4 before the World Cup. They will then begin their World Cup campaign against South Africa at Old Trafford on June 13.

Australia's Women's T20 World Cup squad:

Sophie Malinckx (captain), Ashleigh Gardner (vice-captain), Talia McGrath (vice-captain), Nicola Carey, Kim Garth, Lucy Hamilton, Grace Harris, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Beth Mooney (wicketkeeper), Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll, and Georgia Wareham.

**Melbourne, Agency:** Australia on Wednesday announced its 15-member team for the Women's T20 World Cup 2026. Captain Sophie Malinckx will return to the tournament after getting fit, while fast bowler Darcie Brown has been dropped from the team. 19-year-old left-arm fast bowler Lucy Hamilton has got a chance in her place. Grace Harris has also returned to the team.

Australian selectors have included two leg spinners Alana King and Georgia Wareham in the team. Apart from these, left-arm spinner Sophie Malinckx and off-spin all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner are also part of the team.

National selector Shawn Flegler, as quoted by Cricket Australia, stated that if needed, all four spinners could play in the playing XI, but Alana King is currently being considered as a fourth option for spin-friendly conditions.

favorable."

Darcie Brown's omission is considered quite surprising. She played a key role in Australia's title win at the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup. She took 2 for 18 in the semi-final against India, and 1 for 25 against South Africa in the final.

However, her performance has been lackluster recently. She played only three matches in the 2024 T20 World Cup and went wicketless in four T20Is against India and the West Indies this year.

Flegler said, "Darcy is disappointed, but we've tried to develop her into a key new-ball bowler over the past few years. She's still young and we're confident she has a bright future. This isn't the end of her career."

Lucy Hamilton's selection is a result of her impressive rise. She made her T20I debut in March during the Caribbean tour.

## IPL 2026: Sai Sudarshan finishes second in Orange Cap race, Rabada equals Bhuvneshwar Kumar for Purple Cap



and Sai Sudarshan have surpassed the 500-run mark.

Third on the Orange Cap list is SRH's Abhishek Sharma, with 481 runs. However, he managed just 6 runs against GT. Delhi Capitals' KL Rahul is in fourth place with 477 runs, while Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill is in fifth place with 467 runs.

Rabada equals Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the Purple Cap race.

**New Delhi, Agency:** for the Orange Cap and Purple Cap has become more exciting after Gujarat Titans (GT)'s victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Tuesday in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026. Many big changes have been seen in the list of batsmen and bowlers.

Sai Sudarshan's big jump in the Orange Cap race

Gujarat Titans' opening batsman B Sai Sudarshan made a big jump in the Orange Cap race by playing a brilliant innings of 61 runs against Sunrisers Hyderabad. This was his third consecutive fifty and fourth half-century innings in the last five matches.

Sai Sudarshan briefly became the leading run-scorer, but was later surpassed by SRH wicketkeeper-batsman Heinrich Klaasen. Klaasen scored just 14 runs in the match, taking his total to 508, allowing him to retain the Orange Cap. Sai Sudarshan is in second place with 501 runs.

So far this season, only Klaasen

South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada bowled brilliantly against Sunrisers Hyderabad, taking 3 wickets for 28 runs and equalling Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the Purple Cap race.

Rabada broke the back of SRH's batting by taking the wickets of Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, and R. Smriti in the powerplay. He now has 21 wickets, equalling Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

However, due to a better economy rate (7.46), Royal Challengers Bangalore's Bhuvneshwar Kumar still holds the Purple Cap, while Rabada's economy rate is 9.15.

Chennai Super Kings' Anshul Kamboj is in third place with 19 wickets. Meanwhile, Lucknow Super Giants' Prince Yadav, Gujarat Titans' Rashid Khan, and SRH's Ishan Malinga are tied for second with 16 wickets each. Rashid Khan took one wicket against SRH, while Ishan Malinga was unsuccessful.

## GT hand SRH their biggest IPL loss in terms of runs, continue dominant run against Men in Orange



**Ahmedabad ,Agency:** Gujarat Titans (GT) registered the biggest win in their Indian Premier League (IPL) history, beating Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by 82 runs at Ahmedabad, outdoing their two-day-old record.

While defending 169 runs, a sensational effort in the powerplay from Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj kept the pressure on SRH, who were skittled out for just 86 runs in 14.5 overs, without any of their batters touching the 20-run mark.

Just on May 9, GT had beaten Rajasthan Royals (RR) by 77 runs, bundling them out for 152 while chasing 230 runs, to register their biggest IPL win ever.

Also, this is the biggest loss for SRH in terms of runs, outdoing their 80-run loss to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) last season, skittled out for 120 runs in 16.4 overs while chasing 201 set by KKR, courtesy a three-wicket haul from pacer Vaibhav Arora.

For SRH, this is the first time since 2024 that they failed to

chase a sub-200 target in IPL. Being skittled out for 86 is their lowest all-out total in IPL history, 10 runs less than the 96 runs scored against the Mumbai Indians (MI) in 2019 at Hyderabad.

168 runs defended by GT is also the second-lowest total successfully defended in IPL 2026 after 159 by RR against LSG at Lucknow. This is the GT's sixth successive win against SRH in seven completed games, including four wins at their home turf of Ahmedabad.

Coming to the toss, SRH opted to bowl first and GT was reduced to 26/2, with Sai Sudarshan (61 in 44 balls, with five fours and two fifties) carrying out the repair job with Nishant Sindhu (22 in 14 balls, with three fours and a six) with a 38-run stand and then a 60-run stand with Washington Sundar (50 in 33 balls, with seven fours and a six). GT reached 168/5 in 20 overs, courtesy of fifties from Sudarshan and Washington.

Praful Hinge (2/17 in three

overs) and Sakib Hussain (2/37 in four overs) bowled superbly for SRH. Skipper Pat Cummins also had a four-over spell of 1/20.

During the chase, Mohammed Siraj (1/11 in three overs) started strong by removing Travis Head for a duck. Kagiso Rabada (3/28 in four overs) dismantled the top-order consisting of Abhishek Sharma (6), Ishan Kishan (11) and Smaran Ravichandran (9), reducing SRH to 32/4 in 5.5 overs.

Later, it was Jason Holder (3/20 in four overs) and Prasidh Krishna (2/23 in three overs) who skittled out SRH for just 86 runs, with SRH skipper Cummins (19) being the top scorer.

Rabada was adjudged to be the 'Player of the Match' for his sensational powerplay spell.

With eight wins and four losses, GT stays at the top of the table with 16 points, and SRH has slid to third with seven wins and five losses, with 14 points.

## Cristiano Ronaldo's wait for Saudi Pro League title extended after 1-1 draw against Al-Hilal

**Riyadh, Agency:** Iconic striker Cristiano Ronaldo's wait for his first Saudi Pro League title has been extended as an own goal from Bento led to Al Nassr fumbling their chance at winning the league early after a 1-1 draw against rivals Al-Hilal on Tuesday night.

The Sunday's top of the table clash ended in a draw after goalkeeper Bento put the ball in his own net as it slipped past his gloves in the eighth minute of the stoppage time, as per Goal.com. After 33 matches, Al Nassr still holds a five-point lead over Hilal with 83 points.

Earlier, it was the former Leipzig defender, Mohamed Simakan, who gave Al Nassr the lead in the 37th minute. As the scoreline stayed undisturbed till the stoppage time, the celebrations were on among the fans, but a mistake from Bento put Al Nassr's title win on hold.

Following the match,



Cristiano thanked the fans for their support, noting that the "dream is close".

"The dream is close. Heads up, we have one more step to take! Thank you all for the amazing support tonight!" he posted.

Next Thursday, Al Nassr will

face Damac FC in their final game of the season, while Al Hilal will take on NEOM SC on Saturday.

On May 16, Al Nassr will fight for the AFC Champions League Two title against Gamba Osaka in Riyadh

## ISL: Inter Kashi frustrate Mohun Bagan Super Giant in stalemate

**Kolkata Agency:** Mohun Bagan Super Giant were held to a goalless draw by a resolute Inter Kashi side in their Indian Super League 2025-26 clash at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata, on Tuesday.

Despite dominating possession for large spells, the Mariners were unable to break down a disciplined Inter Kashi defence, as both sides settled for a point. The result takes Mohun Bagan to 22 points from 11 matches, level with leaders East Bengal FC, but behind on goal difference, according to a press release.

Meanwhile, Inter Kashi remains 10th with 12 points. Mohun Bagan SG's Deepak Tangri was awarded Man of the Match

The Mariners made a lively start with midfielder Sahal Abdul Samad testing the Inter Kashi defence early on, but his two attempts in quick succession couldn't find the target.

Abhijit Mondal's side had a chance to take the lead in the ninth minute and disrupt Mohun Bagan's rhythm. An early opening fell to Mohammed Asif after a clever move involving Alfred Planas, Nauris Petkevicius, and Sergio Llamas, but his effort drifted narrowly wide, offering a glimpse of Inter Kashi's attacking intent. Mohun Bagan gradually assumed control of possession, with Sahal orchestrating play in midfield. The home side created half-chances through Sahal and Robinho, but Inter Kashi's compact defensive shape ensured clear opportunities remained scarce. Dimitrios Petratos and Jason Cummings tried to find a rhythm but lacked the final touches, and set-pieces proved to be Mohun Bagan's most consistent avenue. Yet Inter Kashi's backline, marshalled by Narender Gahlot and David Humanes, stood firm. At the other end, Planas came close late in the half, but his effort sailed over as the visitors continued to threaten sporadically.



### New Spider-Man: Brand New Day Poster Shows Tom Holland Suited Up For His Next Big Adventure



Spider-Man: Brand New Day is set to release on 31st July 2026 in India in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. Following the overwhelming response to the trailer of Spider-Man: Brand New Day, fans have been eagerly awaiting this exciting new chapter in Spider-Man's journey. And now, the makers of the highly anticipated superhero film have unveiled a brand-new poster that is sure to amplify the excitement even further. The newly released poster features Tom Holland's Peter Parker with the Spider-Man suit hidden beneath his hoodie, symbolising the hero is still here to protect everyone. The poster serves as a powerful reminder that while "the world has forgotten Peter Parker," he hasn't forgotten

them — or the responsibility that comes with being Spider-Man. The makers have also released a special featurette that offers glimpses of the making of Spider-Man: Brand New Day. Check it out below: After the record-breaking global success of Spider-Man: No Way Home, Spider-Man: Brand New Day marks an entirely new chapter for Peter Parker and Spider-Man. Four years have passed since the events of No Way Home, and Peter is now an adult living entirely alone, having voluntarily erased himself from the lives and memories of those he loves. Crime-fighting in a New York that no longer knows his name, he's devoted himself entirely to protecting his city — a full-time Spider-Man — but as the demands on him intensify.

### #RAPO23: RAM POTHINENI TURNS DIRECTOR FOR STYLISH PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER 'VEERA'

Energetic Star Ram Pothineni surprises the industry & cinema lovers by turning Director with #RAPO23, Introducing Veera through a Strikingly Stylish Poster. Produced by Krishna Pothineni on Rapo Cinematics. Energetic Star Ram Pothineni, a multi-faceted performer who has consistently showcased his versatility on screen, takes a Bold new step. After turning lyricist with his previous film Andhra King Taluka — a feat that earned him wide appreciation, he also surprised audiences by lending his vocals for the first time. Now, the talented star is ready to take a giant leap. With his 23rd film, #RAPO23, Ram steps into the director's chair, marking his debut as a filmmaker. The project, formally announced on the occasion of his birthday, is set to be a stylish Psychological Action Thriller. A genre that is barely explored in Telugu cinema. #RAPO23 will be produced by Krishna Pothineni under the newly formed Rapo Cinematics banner. Interestingly with this move, Ram joins the elite league of Stars-turned-Directors such as Sr. NTR, Krishna, and Pawan Kalyan. The makers have also unveiled a striking birthday special poster that introduces Ram



Pothineni's character, Veera. The poster radiates a dark, intense, and gritty tone featuring Ram from behind, clad in a leather jacket. His sharp, V-cut hairstyle amplifies the raw attitude of the character. Dominating the backdrop is a bold red "V", symbolizing both Veera and a sense of rebellion, danger, and dominance. The faint outlines of towering skyscrapers on either side evoke a cold, crime-infested cityscape. Adding to the

mystery, the tagline "The Story of a Lone Wolf" hints at a protagonist driven by solitude, instinct, and a complex psychological landscape. #RAPO23 promises a powerful and groundbreaking narrative conceived by Ram Pothineni himself for his directorial debut. He is set to portray Veera in a completely new, never-before-seen avatar, and the transformation is already evident in the announcement poster's styling and mood.

### 'M4M' Movie super hit success — Brilliant acting Jo Sharma, Superb direction Mohan Vadlapatla

Suspense thrillers have always enjoyed a special craze among audiences. Bringing a fresh and unconventional psychological crime thriller concept to the screen, 'M4M' (Motive for Murder) has been winning appreciation from viewers everywhere. Released last week, the film continues its successful run into the second week with highly positive word of mouth at the box office. The movie is also receiving impressive ratings on platforms like IMDb and BookMyShow. With its unique concept, gripping screenplay, and edge-of-the-seat narration, M4M has carved a distinct place for itself in Tollywood. Produced under the Mohan Media Creations banner in association with McWin Group USA, the film is directed by Mohan Vadlapatla. As a debut director, Mohan Vadlapatla has impressed audiences with his stylish execution and the way he maintains suspense throughout the film. Speaking on the occasion, director Mohan Vadlapatla said, "We are extremely happy that audiences are appreciating the film's concept and screenplay. The positive response from everyone is giving us even more encouragement." American actress Jo Sharma, who played the role of investigative journalist "Radha," is earning tremendous praise with her Telugu and Hindi movie debut. Her performance, balancing emotion, intensity, and courage, has



strongly connected with audiences. Veteran actor Subhalekha Sudhakar has also added great strength to the film with his experienced performance. Debut music director Issai Pettai delivered a powerful background score that has emerged as one of the film's biggest highlights. His music intensifies the thrilling atmosphere in every scene and keeps audiences deeply engaged in the story. The story revolves around a series of murders taking place in the city,

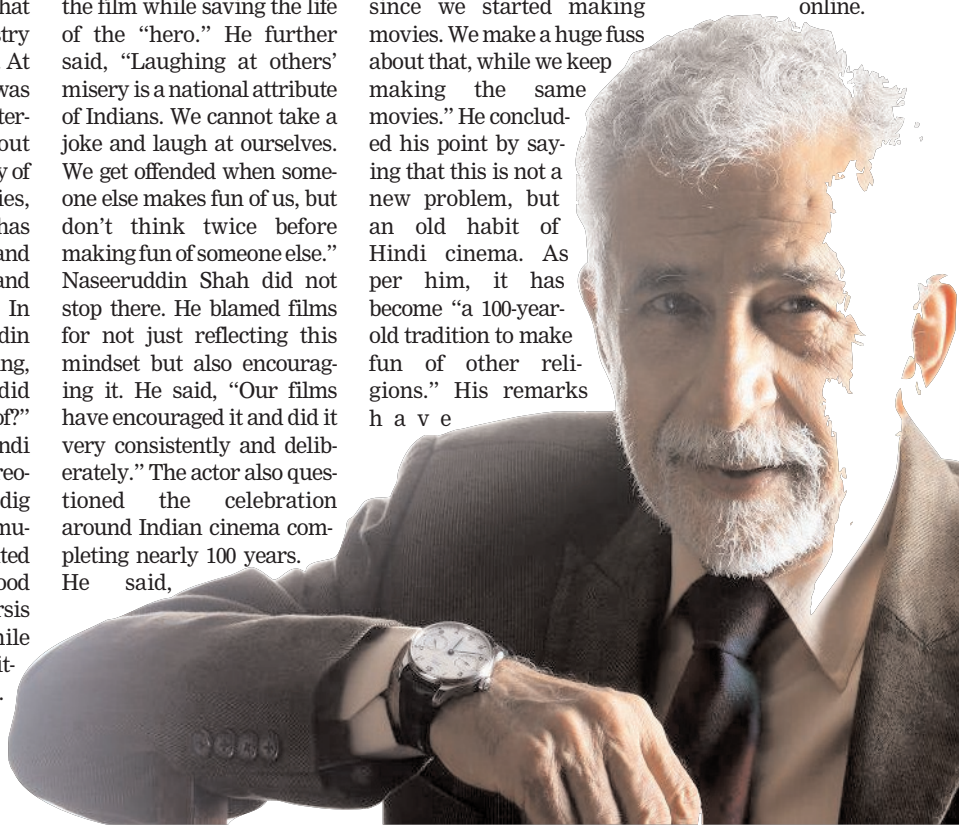
where the serial killer arranges the victims' bodies to resemble famous paintings after each crime. ACP Krishna and journalist Radha begin an intense investigation to uncover the truth behind these shocking murders. The film keeps audiences hooked from beginning to end by constantly raising the suspenseful question: "Who is the serial killer?" Maintaining that mystery until the climax has become one of the movie's strongest assets.

### Naseeruddin Shah slams Bollywood: 'Muslims always shown in fixed moulds'

Naseeruddin Shah has once again said what many in the industry would rather avoid. At a recent event where he was invited as a guest, the veteran actor spoke about Bollywood, its long history of stereotyping communities, and how Hindi cinema has repeatedly used religion and identity for jokes, drama and easy character writing. In the viral clip, Naseeruddin Shah can be heard asking, "Which religion did Bollywood not make fun of?" He then went on to call Hindi films "the masters of stereotyping." Taking a sharp dig at the way different communities have been represented on screen, he said Bollywood has made fun of Sikhs, Parsis and Christians, while Muslims were often written in a fixed mould. According to him, a Muslim character would usually be shown as the best friend of the protagon-

ist, only to die by the end of the film while saving the life of the "hero." He further said, "Laughing at others' misery is a national attribute of Indians. We cannot take a joke and laugh at ourselves. We get offended when someone else makes fun of us, but don't think twice before making fun of someone else." Naseeruddin Shah did not stop there. He blamed films for not just reflecting this mindset but also encouraging it. He said, "Our films have encouraged it and did it very consistently and deliberately." The actor also questioned the celebration around Indian cinema completing nearly 100 years. He said,

"It's been almost a 100 years since we started making movies. We make a huge fuss about that, while we keep making the same movies." He concluded his point by saying that this is not a new problem, but an old habit of Hindi cinema. As per him, it has become "a 100-year-old tradition to make fun of other religions." His remarks have now triggered a fresh debate online.



### Saif Ali Khan: Kartavya is one of best roles that have come my way

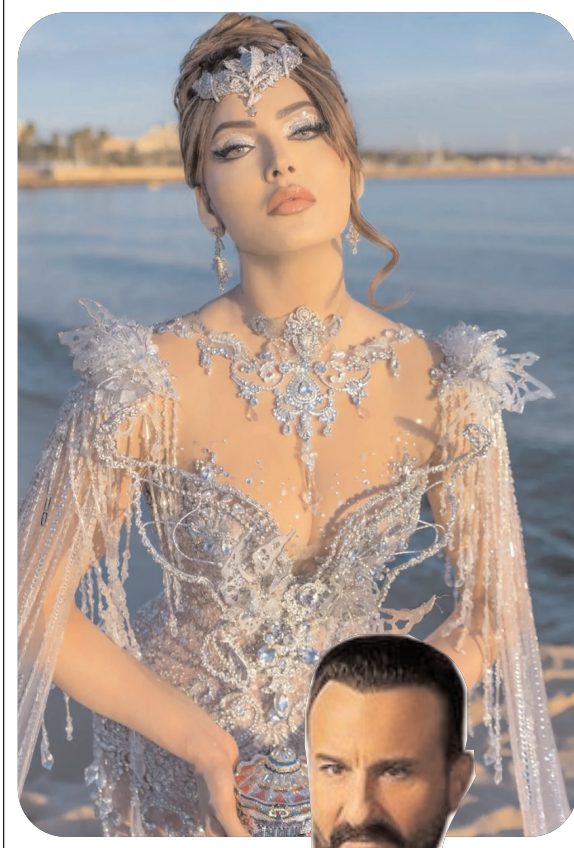
Actor Saif Ali Khan says he was instinctively drawn to the world of "Kartavya", which he described as a gripping, well-crafted story with compelling characters. Directed by Pulkit of "Bhakhshak" fame, the crime-drama follows a police officer (Khan), as he navigates rising threats while grappling with the weight of duty and the safety of his family. As the lines between right and wrong begin to blur, the film unfolds as a layered exploration of power, guilt, and the consequences of silence. "I dove into 'Kartavya' because I love the script. I think it is a great drama and a really interesting, almost international kind of piecing together of things. I had not read a script like this, and people who read it and discussed it at the

time said that this is one of the best roles that have come my way," Khan told PTI in an interview. The actor said "Kartavya" has an international feel, in which his character of a policeman, Pawan, is pushed to take extreme decisions. "The world is beautifully crafted, the kind of character he is, where he is from, how he speaks, the home, the things that are at risk, how it slowly establishes what is happening. He might be a bit fed up with the way life is going, and then it slowly builds. You add pressure in these scenes, and he starts reacting," the 55-year-old actor said. Khan also addressed comparisons between his role in "Kartavya" and his widely acclaimed performance as Langda Tyagi in 2006 movie, "Omkaara".

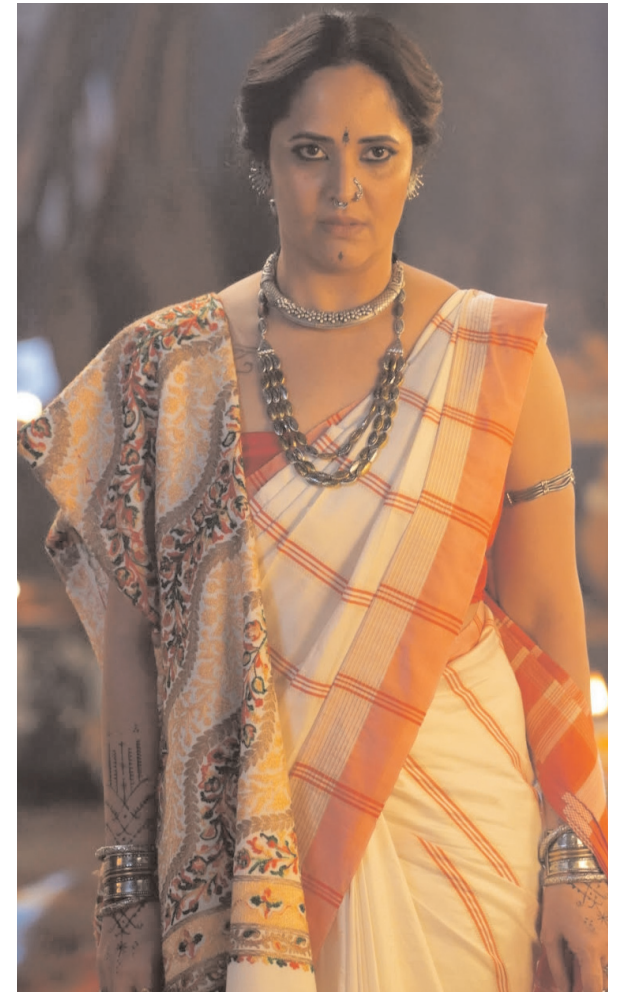
"Omkaara" is Hindi heartland. I think the voice might sound a little similar; the accent might be similar." When asked about choosing roles in an industry often dominated by larger-than-life spectacles, Khan said his approach has always been guided by instinct rather than scale. "I've tried to play whatever is the best of what I'm offered and how I'm feeling. My manager at the time had said, 'We're kind of platform agnostic, we will do anything with-in reason, if we like it,'" he said. Having straddled between mainstream cinema and offbeat films like "Agent Vinod", "Race", "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior", "Devara", "Ek Hasina Thi", "Being Cyrus", "Laal Kaptaan", he said he seamlessly moves between genres.

"I enjoyed playing the villain in 'Tanhaji', I loved playing 'Sacred Games' as a web show. So, you mix it up as much as you can, and I just get a lot of satisfaction and happiness from doing a good job." Produced by Gauri Khan under Red Chillies Entertainments, "Kartavya" is set to release on Netflix on May 15. It also stars actors Sanjay Mishra, and Zakir Hussain, among others. The actor said "Kartavya" has an international feel, in which his character of a policeman, Pawan, is pushed to take extreme decisions.

### BACK TO BACK ₹1000 CR COSTUMES FOR URVASHI AT CANNES



### Anasuya Bharadwaj's intense first look as Lilavati from Virat Karna, Abhishek Nama, Nick Studios' pan India project 'Nagabandham' released



Expectations are rising as Abhishek Nama's 'Nagabandham: The Secret Treasure', starring Virat Karna, is set to hit the theatres on July 3rd. With every update, the buzz around the film is reaching the next level. The teaser, glimpses and songs that have already been released have created a massive buzz around the film. Recently, the makers have released the first look of Anasuya Bharadwaj from the movie 'Nagabandham'. Her look in the role of Leelavathi looks powerful and mysterious. Anasuya's appearance in

a traditional white saree and tribal jewellery reflects the intensity of the character. The poster itself gives a clear feeling that Leelavathi's character is going to be very crucial in the story. The film stars Nabha Natesh, Aishwarya Menon, Rishab Sawhney, Jagapathi Babu, Garuda Ram, Mahesh Manjrekar, Jayaprakash, Murali Sharma, B.S. Avinash and others in key roles. 'Nagabandham', produced by NIK Studios and Abhishek Pictures, is a blend of mythology, history, and action. The film 'Nagabandham' will be released on a pan-India level on July 3rd.