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VAIRAMUTHU SELECTED FOR JNANPITH AWARD



Poet and lyricist Vairamuthu has been selected for the prestigious Jnanpith Award, becoming the third Tamil writer to receive the country's highest literary honour.

The 72-year-old author follows in the footsteps of late novelist Akilan (1975) and Jayakanthan (2002). Congratulating the lyricist, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin expressed immense joy over the announcement. Taking to X, Stalin noted that he had met the poet earlier in the day and the news arrived shortly after, enhancing the joy of their meeting. The CM said that Vairamuthu, who has mastered both traditional and modern poetry, truly deserves this honour for his innovations in Tamil literature. "If Kalaigarnar Karunanidhi were alive today, he would have embraced and celebrated the poet. I stand in his place to congratulate him; all of Tamil Nadu celebrates this achievement," the CM added.



Middle East Crisis Won't Shake India: Goyal

MONEY MATTERS 09

Raftaar: Rajkumar Rao, Keerthy Join Forces



BOX-OFFICE 12

NEW DELHI

SHORT TAKES



Is Everything We Know about Fat Wrong?

The updated U.S. food pyramid has renewed discussion around what it means to consume healthy fat. There are also lots of misconceptions about being fat but fit or being 'skinny fat'.

FOCUS POINT 10



TG sets up 24/7 command centre to track lpg supply

In response to global crude oil constraints and LPG supply disruptions, the Telangana Civil Supplies Department has established a 24/7 multi-agency Command and Control Centre to monitor LPG distribution across the state and ensure uninterrupted supply to consumers.

SPECIAL 02



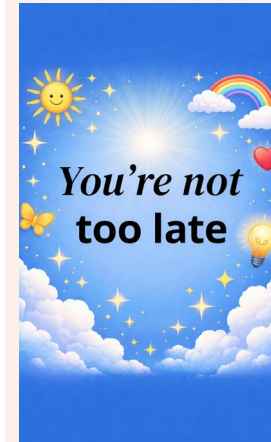
The Great Mis- communication..

It's about miscommunication and unfathomed losses. Never has the Gulf wars jolted India so hard. India's recent anxiety over a supposed petroleum and LPG "shortage" is less a story of actual scarcity and more a case study in poor official communication.

OPINION 06

THE DAILY MANTRA

BETTER LATE
THAN NEVER



You're not
too late

"Better late than never." You've already achieved a lot — but your story isn't finished yet. Whether you're changing direction or building what's next, this moment is still yours.

Collected by

Venna Srinivasa Reddy

KTR Calls Musi River Project a 'Land Grab Scheme'



MUSI PROJECT A LAND GRAB, NOT BEAUTIFICATION

DEVELOP MUSI WITHOUT
DEMOLISHING HOUSES

BRS WILL OPPOSE
CORRUPTION IN
MUSI PROJECT

KTR ACCUSES CONGRESS OF
REAL ESTATE AGENDA
BEHIND MUSI PLAN

HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) alleged that the Congress government's proposed Musi River project is not a genuine beautification initiative but a massive land grab scheme targeting valuable lands along the river.

Addressing a programme titled "Musi Rejuvenation

PowerPoint Presentation vs Public Point" held at Himayat Sagar, KTR stated that the Musi can be developed without causing harm to the public. He recalled that the previous BRS government had already developed nearly six kilometres of the Musi river stretch in Uppal and Nagole successfully without demolishing a single house.

KTR said the earlier BRS

government had prepared a comprehensive Musi development plan with an estimated cost of ₹16,000 crore, which included an expressway along the river and several infrastructure improvements. However, the current Congress government under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has proposed a project worth ₹1.5 lakh crore, which he alleged is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Vakiti Srihari Invited to Sri Rama Navami Brahmotsavams

Hyderabad, March 14: Officials and priests of the Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam invited Vakiti Srihari, Telangana Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Fisheries, Youth Services and Sports, to attend the Sri Rama Navami Brahmotsavams scheduled to be held on March 27.

The temple's Executive Officer and a team of priests met the minister at

the Ministers' Quarters in Hyderabad and formally presented an invitation, requesting him to participate in the Brahmotsavam celebrations.

On the occasion, the temple priests offered Vedic blessings to the minister and his wife with traditional chants.

Temple authorities stated that the Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam Mahotsavam conducted at the temple during

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Bandi Sanjay's padayatra to Kondagattu successful

KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 14

The one-day foot march (Padayatra), undertaken by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar alongside BJP public representatives under the banner "Anjanna Ashirvada Yatra" (Anjanna's Blessing Journey), concluded successfully on Saturday. He fulfilled the vow he had made during the municipal elections that if the BJP were entrusted with the Mayor's seat in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

FORMER DGP HJ DORA LAID TO REST WITH FULL STATE HONOURS IN HYD

HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The last rites of former DGP of United Andhra Pradesh state H.J. Dora were performed with full state honours at Mahaprasthanam in Jubilee Hills here on Saturday, as police officers, officials and admirers bid an emotional farewell to the veteran officer. The funeral procession began from his residence in

Jubilee Hills, with a large number of police personnel participating. Several senior officials and dignitaries paid floral tributes after viewing the mortal remains earlier in the day.

State DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy paid his last respects by personally shouldering the bier of his mentor. Hyderabad police commissioners

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BJP condemned behaviour Cong MPs

HYDERABAD, MAR 14

Telangana BJP today burnt an effigy of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his commendable behaviour.

In a strong protest against the conduct of Rahul Gandhi and Congress MPs, who allegedly violated parliamentary rules and insulted democracy, BJP leaders led by State President N. Ramchander Rao burnt an effigy of Rahul Gandhi in front of the BJP Telangana State Office here.

Later, addressing the media he noted that despite clear rules prohibiting gatherings at the entrance of the Parliament building, Congress leaders treated the Parliament stairs like a "picnic spot," sitting there to have tea in total disregard of the regulations.

Rao alleged that the act of Congress MPs is an insult to the temple of democracy. He empha-



sized that Parliament is a sacred institution intended for debating public issues. He criticized the behavior of the leaders—joking and sitting with their legs crossed as a direct insult to the democratic system.

They lack the courage to debate inside the House and the patience to follow rules outside. For Rahul Gandhi, Parliament has become a picnic spot," Rao remarked.

He accused Congress of spreading lies about an LPG shortage. He pointed out that even after the Union Minister

provided a detailed explanation with data confirming ample reserves of petrol, diesel, and gas, Congress leaders refused to listen. Instead, they joined suspended MPs to eat biscuits and drink tea on the premises, violating parliamentary protocol.

BJP state chief recalled the statesmanship of former PM P.V. Narasimha Rao, who sent opposition leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee to represent India at the United Nations, proving that national interest once stood above politics. He lamented that the current Congress leadership has completely abandoned the national interest.

Rao said the actions of Rahul Gandhi and Congress leaders on the Parliament stairs are a testament to their negligence toward democratic systems. He stated that the effigy burning was a protest against this perceived insult to the Indian people.

Cocaine Seized at Ex-MLA's Farmhouse Raid

HYDERABAD, MAR 14

The EAGLE team conducted a major raid at the farmhouse of former BRS MLA Pilot Rohith Reddy in Moinabad, leading to the seizure of approximately 2 grams of cocaine. The operation saw police personnel surrounding the property as part of an investigation into alleged drug-related activities at the location. Sniffer dogs were deployed at the site to trace any hidden substances that might have been concealed on the premises.

During the raid, several prominent political figures were reportedly present at the farmhouse. Former MLA Pilot Rohith Reddy, Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar, and a Jaipur MLA were allegedly found at the location during the enforcement action. The presence of multiple political leaders at the scene has raised questions about the nature of the gath-



ering and the involvement of high-profile individuals in the alleged drug party.

Authorities have confirmed that the search operation was part of a coordinated effort to crack down on drug-related activities in the region. The EAGLE team, known for conducting enforcement operations against illegal activities, acted on specific intelligence inputs that led them to the Moinabad farmhouse. The seized cocaine has been sent for forensic analysis as part of the ongoing investigation.



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Prashanth Reddy met BRS chief



HYDERABAD: "On the occasion of his birthday, former minister, senior party leader, and MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy met BRS chief KCR and received his blessings. On this occasion, KCR conveyed his birthday wishes to Vemula Prashanth Reddy."

Revanth attends Gadwal MLA's son wedding



HYDERABAD: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy attended the wedding ceremony of MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy's son in Gadwal on Saturday. Attendees at the event included Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Vakiti Srihari and Jupally Krishna Rao, MP Vem Narendar Reddy, and MLA Yennam Srinivas Reddy.

BJP launches 15-day statewide protest against Cong govt

HYDERABAD: The Bharatiya Janata Party has announced a 15-day agitation across Telangana against the state government, party state president N. Ramchander Rao said on Saturday. Releasing a poster highlighting alleged "Congress failures", Rao said the protest campaign would begin immediately and include demonstrations across the state. As part of the first phase, BJP workers will stage protests at mandal offices on March 16 and submit memorandums to local authorities. On March 20, demonstrations will be organised in front of District Collector offices in all district headquarters. Rao said the movement aims to highlight public issues and pressure the Congress government to address the concerns of people in Telangana. He appealed to the public to support the party's campaign, stating that the BJP would continue to fight for the rights and welfare of citizens. Additional protest programmes scheduled for March 19 and 20 will be announced shortly, he added.

When Young Minds Write a 10th-Grade Telugu Exam: A Bold Message from Lotus Lap Public Schools



HYDERABAD

At a time when concerns about declining reading abilities among students are being widely discussed across the country, Lotus Lap Public Schools in Dil-sukhnagar and Boduppal, Hyderabad, have taken a bold and inspiring step to strengthen language learning and restore pride in the Telugu language.

In a remarkable academic initiative, the schools conducted a Telugu examination based on the SSC Board question paper pattern on the very day the official exam was held. What makes this initiative extraordinary is that students from Grade 4 to Grade 9 were encouraged to attempt the same level of Telugu question paper that is normally meant for 10th-grade students.

In today's education system, language learning is often overshadowed by marks, competitive exams, and career-oriented subjects. However, educators believe that language is the foundation of thinking, communica-

tion, and cultural identity. By allowing younger students to attempt a higher-level Telugu examination, Lotus Lap Public Schools have sent a strong message: language proficiency must begin early and be nurtured with confidence and courage.

The initiative also brought parents directly into the learning process. In an unusual yet meaningful arrangement, parents themselves served as invigilators during the examination. Watching their children attempt a 10th-grade level paper with enthusiasm filled them with pride and optimism. Many parents felt that such initiatives not only strengthen academic skills but also build confidence and remove the fear associated with examinations.

The program was organized under the guidance of eminent educationist and environmentalist Dr. Lion Vid-yaratna Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, Chairman of Lotus Lap Public Schools, and was initiated by Director Komatireddy Abhishek Reddy.



Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Gopal Reddy emphasized the deeper purpose behind the initiative: "Language is not just a subject in a textbook; it is the soul of our culture and the foundation of thought. When children develop strong language skills at an early age, they gain the confidence to think clearly, express freely, and learn effectively."

The need for such initiatives becomes even more important in light of recent educational observations. Several studies indicate that many students in Grade 8 struggle to read Grade 6 level textbooks, while some Grade 6 students find it difficult to read Grade 4 material fluently. This learning gap highlights a growing concern about foundational literacy skills.

By encouraging students to attempt advanced-level Telugu questions, Lotus Lap Public Schools aim to strengthen reading habits, improve comprehension, and nurture a deep respect for the mother tongue.

The success of the initiative was made possible through the collective efforts of Vice Principal Mrs. Madhavi Sanghi, Central Office Admin Officer Swarna Latha, in-charges Manjula, Shanu,

and Nandini, along with dedicated teachers and staff who guided and motivated the students throughout the process. Students participated with enthusiasm and determination, demonstrating that when young minds are trusted with challenges, they often rise beyond expectations.

In an era where regional languages sometimes struggle to find space in modern education, the initiative by Lotus Lap Public Schools stands as a powerful reminder: preserving and strengthening our mother tongue begins in the classroom—and with courage to innovate. If replicated widely, such initiatives could transform language education and inspire a new generation to read, write, and think proudly in Telugu.

TELANGANA SETS UP 24/7 COMMAND CENTRE TO TRACK LPG SUPPLY

HYDERABAD

In response to global crude oil constraints and LPG supply disruptions, the Telangana Civil Supplies Department has established a '24/7 multi-agency Command and Control Centre' to monitor LPG distribution across the state and ensure uninterrupted supply to consumers.

The facility, launched on Saturday, uses real-time GPS tracking to monitor gas transportation, stock levels and district-wise distribution. It functions as the central hub for identifying supply bottlenecks and coordinating swift corrective measures.

Civil Supplies Commissioner M. Stephen Ravendra is overseeing the operations, with officials maintaining continuous coordination with district authorities to track logistics and verify stock availability.

To enhance transparency, the state government has directed Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to provide officials with immediate access to their fleet GPS tracking systems.

Representatives from Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL), along with police, industries department officials and distributor representatives, will be stationed at the centre on a rotational basis to ensure rapid response to any disruptions.

The toll-free helpline 1967 has also been integrated into the Command Centre. Officials said the system will enable round-the-clock tracking of LPG transportation, prevention of diversion or transit delays, and quick resolution of localized supply shortages. (NSS)



IRISSET organized a blood donation camp

HYDERABAD

Indian Railways Institute of Signal Engineering and Telecommunications (IRISSET), Secunderabad organized a Blood Donation Camp on 14 March 2026 at its premises as part of its social responsibility and commitment to community welfare. The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers, trainees and staff members of the institute who voluntarily came forward to donate blood and support this noble cause. The initiative aimed to promote awareness about the importance of blood donation and to contribute towards society through voluntary

service. A total of 60 persons participated in the program.

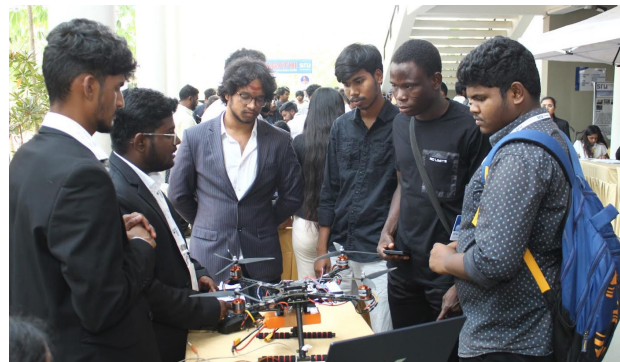
The blood donation camp was conducted in collaboration with Indian Red Cross Society and Central Hospital, South Central Railway under proper medical supervision by their team. Shri Sharad Kumar Srivastava, Director General appreciated the spirit of voluntary service displayed by the participants and emphasized that a single unit of donated blood can help save multiple lives. Such initiatives reflect the institute's commitment not only to technical excellence but also to humanitarian values and social responsibility.

Innovations Take Center Stage at SR University's National Project Expo

By Yamsani srinivas

WARANGAL

Young innovators from across South India converged at SR University for 'PRAGATHI - National Level Project Expo 2026,' a premier technological showcase featuring over 100 working prototypes. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from 23 universities and engineering colleges, with students presenting solutions across diverse domains including Artificial Intelligence, healthcare technology, robotics, and sustainable engineering. The expo was inaugurated by Raj Samala, Founder of Revalys Technologies, who served as the Chief Guest. In his keynote address, Mr. Samala emphasized the critical role of practical learning and industry-academia collaboration in modern engineering education. He commended the



participants for their technical expertise and urged them to bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world application. Santhi Kumar N., Assistant General Manager and Regional Head of Canara Bank, Hanamkonda, attended as the Distinguished Guest, encouraging the students to transition their innovative ideas into entrepreneurial ventures. Following a rigorous evaluation by a panel of industry experts and academic jury members,

the top honors were awarded to projects demonstrating high degrees of technical design and practical implementation. The first prize was bagged by a team from Woxsen University for their sophisticated project on the "Implementation of Swarm Robots for Pattern Formation Using Algorithms." The second prize was secured by B. Sathish and MD Luqman of the host institution, SR University, for their "Gesture-Based Emergency Alert System for

Health Monitoring," a project noted for its potential impact in the healthcare sector. The third prize was awarded to a team from the Sreenidhi Institute of Science and Technology for their project titled "Supernova." The winners were awarded cash prizes totaling ₹1.5 lakh. The event was organized under the leadership of Dean (Projects) CH Hussaia Basha, along with Co-Convenors Markala Karthik Reddy and Suresh Kumar Mandala. The university's top leadership, including Vice-Chancellor Deepak Garg and Registrar P. V. Ramana Rao, were in attendance to support the budding engineers. University authorities stated that the primary objective of the PRAGATHI expo remains the promotion of a robust research culture and the cultivation of entrepreneurial thinking among the next generation of engineers.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

KTR Calls Musi River Project a 'Land Grab Scheme'

FROM PAGE 1

aimed at demolishing thousands of homes and facilitating large-scale corruption. He criticised the government for moving ahead with the project without a Detailed Project Report (DPR), Social Impact Assessment, or Environmental Impact Study, and without conducting consultations with affected communities. According to him, the government is spreading fear among thousands of residents by threatening large-scale demolitions.

KTR stated that BRS is not opposed to Musi development, but will strongly resist any attempts to carry out corruption or demolish people's homes in the name of the project. He alleged that the government's real intention is to acquire around 3,300 acres of land along the Musi, whose total value is estimated at nearly ₹1.5 lakh crore.

He further remarked that if the Namami Gange project, which covers hundreds of kilometres, was executed with a cost of around ₹42,000 crore, the state government must explain why ₹1.5 lakh crore is required for develop-

ing just 55 kilometres of the Musi river.

KTR also accused the Congress party of historically neglecting the Musi river and turning it into a polluted drain during decades of its rule. He demanded that the Congress leadership apologise to the people of Hyderabad for the environmental damage caused in the past. Highlighting the BRS government's approach,

KTR said the previous administration had planned several measures such as construction of sewage treatment plants (STPs), expressways, walkways, cycling tracks, parks, bridges, and check dams, along with initiatives to prevent sewage from entering the river. The government had also planned to bring fresh water into the Musi through the Kaleshwaram project, with an estimated cost of around ₹1,100 crore.

He alleged that the Congress government is ignoring these practical and cost-effective plans and instead pursuing a massive project aimed at benefiting real estate interests along the river. KTR also questioned the

selective implementation of buffer zone regulations, asking why the government is targeting ordinary citizens while ignoring properties belonging to influential individuals, including political leaders and ministers.

He assured the affected residents that the BRS party will stand firmly with the victims and support them in their struggle. KTR stated that if the people collectively oppose the current plan, a future BRS government would reverse the "bulldozer politics" of the Congress and ensure protection of people's homes and lands. Several Musi residents who attended the event expressed strong concern and anger over the government's proposed plan and appealed for protection of their homes and livelihoods.

The programme was attended by Whip Vivekananda Goud, former minister Sabitha Indra Reddy, MLA Laxma Reddy, MLC Shambhuraju Raju, former Legislative Council Chairman Swamy Goud, and R.S. Praveen Kumar, among other BRS leaders, who expressed solidarity with the affected residents.

Vakiti Srihari Invited to Sri Rama Navami Brahmotsavams

FROM PAGE 1

Sri Rama Navami is one of the most significant spiritual celebrations for devotees across the country. Accepting the invitation, Minister Srihari expressed hope that with the blessings of Lord Sri Rama of Bhadrachalam, peace and prosperity would prevail among the people of the state. Those who extended the invitation included temple Executive Officer Damodar, Deputy Chief Priest Srinivasa Ramanujam, Ramayana Parayanam scholar Antardevi Krishnamacharya, and Assistant Executive Officer Bhavani Ramakrishna.

Former DGP HJ Dora laid to rest with full state honours in Hyd

FROM PAGE 1

V.C. Sajjanar and Cyberabad police commissioner M. Ramesh also joined in carrying the bier, reflecting the deep respect the police fraternity held for the late officer.

Recalling Dora's guidance during his early career, the DGP said the former police chief had encouraged him as a young

Bandi Sanjay's padayatra to Kondagattu successful

FROM PAGE 1

Karimnagar, he would walk all the way to the shrine of Lord Anjaneta at Kondagattu—accompanied by all the BJP public representatives elected within his parliamentary constituency—to offer his prayers and fulfill his vows.

Undeterred even by the scorching heat hovering around 40 degrees Celsius, he walked a continuous stretch of nearly 40 kilometres over 11 hours to reach Kondagattu. Despite encountering minor hurdles along the way—including a chaotic disturbance caused by honeybees—he remained unshaken and undaunted, overcoming every obstacle to finally reach the Anjaneta temple.

Together with the newly elected public representatives from the Karimnagar parliamentary constituency—including ward members, Deputy Sarpanches, Sarpanches, Councilors, Corporators, the Deputy Mayor and the Mayor—he performed special rituals and offered prayers at the Anjaneta temple. (NSS)

Democracy is only path to lasting change: Seethakka

HYDERABAD

Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Seethakka has articulated that her personal journey, marked by a transition from "bullet to ballot," exemplifies the profound influence of democracy.

She underscored that genuine and lasting change can only be achieved through democratic processes. The Minister recounted a significant personal milestone: progressing from being an accused individual in a courtroom to later presenting legal arguments as a lawyer within the same judicial setting.

Seethakka attributed this remarkable personal evolution to the opportunities afforded by the Indian Constitution. Her remarks were delivered on Saturday at the "SheSparks 2026" event, a platform that convened prominent women leaders from diverse professional spheres across the nation.

This event, organised by a prominent national media entity at IIT Delhi, provided a platform for Seethakka to share her insights on her life experiences and key ministerial decisions in response to questions from the organizers.

During the gathering, Seethakka highlighted the indispensable role of women in catalyzing societal transformation. She expressed appreciation for the organisers' initiative in bringing together influential women leaders who are making significant contributions in various fields.

The Minister found the presence



of women from a broad spectrum of sectors—including entrepreneurship, research, IT, writing, the arts, and public administration—to be highly inspiring, asserting that such platforms are instrumental in bolstering women's leadership capabilities.

Furthermore, Seethakka detailed the Telangana government's current initiatives aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment. She noted that through the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), approximately 46 lakh women statewide have formed Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and are actively participating in socio-economic development.

The Minister elaborated that by facilitating access to banking services, providing loans for small and medium-sized enterprises, and creating market access, the Telangana government is enabling women to become creators of employment opportunities rather than solely recipients of jobs.

Complete 80% Finished Welfare Hostels on a War Footing

- **Hostel Repair Bills to Be Cleared Every 15 Days**
- **Promote Medicinal Plants Under Employment Guarantee Scheme**
- **Develop Tourism to Encourage Protection of Forests**
- **Focus on Development of Heritage Temples**
- **Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu at Pre-Budget Meetings**

HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu directed officials of the welfare departments to complete, on a war footing within the next three months, the buildings being constructed for welfare hostels that have already achieved 80 percent completion, so that they can be made available for use in

the upcoming academic year. On Saturday, at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat, he reviewed the budget proposals of the SC and ST Welfare Departments along with Welfare Minister Adhuri Laxman. Later, he also conducted review meetings with officials from the Medical and Health Department and the Endowments Department.

The Deputy Chief Minister instructed officials to appoint a senior officer responsible for ensuring that hostel repair bills are submitted regularly to the Finance Department every 15 days so that they can be cleared without delay. He emphasized that repair works of welfare hostels must be completed during this summer and warned that negligence by officials in this regard will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

He further directed that officials of the welfare departments must send bills to the Finance Department on time for hostel rents, electricity bills, cosmetic charges, and salaries of outsourcing staff, as the government is



committed to paying these expenses every month. The Deputy Chief Minister recalled that during the previous government, such bills were cleared only once in seven months.

He also advised that a dedicated mechanism should be established to check the quality of materials supplied to welfare hostels, and regular reviews should be conducted.

Highlighting the government's initiatives, he stated that diet charges have been increased by 40 percent and cosmetic charges by 200 percent, and that

bills related to welfare hostels are being treated as a top priority for payment. In this context, officials were instructed to regularly visit the hostels, inspect the quality of teaching, food, and facilities, and submit periodic reports to higher authorities.

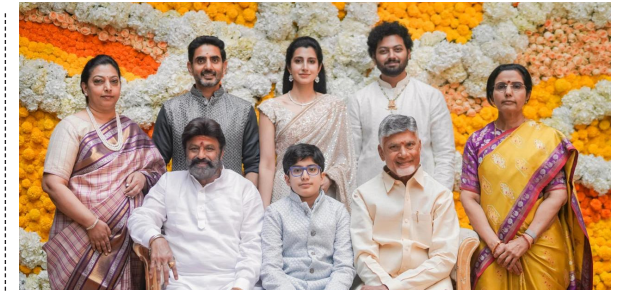
In a review meeting with the Medical and Health Department, the Deputy Chief Minister noted that the entire world is increasingly turning toward Ayurveda. He instructed the AYUSH Department to prepare proposals to promote medicinal plant cultivation

under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, and to take steps to grow medicinal plants in large numbers in villages as part of the programme.

He also advised Forest Department officials that developing the tourism sector would encourage local communities to protect forests. Expansion of tourism would provide employment and income opportunities for local people, he said. The meeting also discussed the risks posed by pollutants and the measures that need to be undertaken by the Forest Department to control them.

During the Endowments Department review meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister directed officials to focus on the development of temples that have been inherited and preserved across generations.

The meetings were attended by Finance Department Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultana and senior officials Sabya Sachi Ghosh, Krishna Aditya, Christina, Suvarna, Hanumantha Rao, and others.



Traditional Ceremony for Devansh's New Clothing Ritual

HYDERABAD

The Nara and Nandamuri families are at the forefront of honoring culture and tradition. Nara Lokesh and the beloved son of Brahmin parents, Devansh, had his dhoti ceremony conducted in a simple and classical manner within the family. Grandfather's affection... Grandmother's bless-

ings... Parents' love... Uncle's warmth...

With the blessings of relatives and friends... Devansh's new clothing ritual was celebrated. At the Hyderabad residence, family members and close ones ceremoniously presented Devansh with new clothes. They blessed him with wishes for a happy, healthy, and joyful life.

Telangana offers tech partnership to support Tanzania's digital economy transition

Minister Sridhar Babu

HYDERABAD

Telangana has offered technological cooperation and institutional support to assist Tanzania in its efforts to transition into a digital economy, State IT and Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu said on Saturday.

The Minister made the offer during a meeting with a high-level delegation led by Mudrick Ramadhani Soraga, Tanzania's Minister for Communication, ICT and Innovation, at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat here. During the meeting, both sides discussed opportunities to strengthen cooperation between Telangana and Tanzania across a range of sectors. Mr. Sridhar Babu said Telangana would prepare a roadmap for strategic collaboration in areas such as information technology, tourism, healthcare, life sciences, emerging technologies, digital governance, digital public infrastructure, startups, innovation ecosystems, and skill development.

Highlighting the State's progress in digital transformation, he said Telangana had built a strong reputation for technology-driven governance and innovation. "Digital transformation has become a key driver of inclusive social and economic growth. Telangana is willing to share its experience, technical expertise and institutional knowledge to support Tanzania's



efforts to build a digital economy," he said.

The Minister said the State would also examine the feasibility of establishing a pharmaceutical distribution hub in Tanzania to support the supply of medicines and healthcare products.

He noted that Telangana could serve as a knowledge partner in areas such as citizen service delivery through MeeSeva, promotion of women entrepreneurship through WE Hub, and strengthening startup and innovation ecosystems. Support could also be extended for skilling, reskilling and upskilling programmes through the Young India Skills University, he added.

Mr. Sridhar Babu also said Telangana would study best practices adopted by Tanzania in sectors such as the blue economy and tourism and explore their relevance

for the State. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Soraga said Tanzania was keen to work closely with progressive regions such as Telangana to advance its digital economy ambitions. He said the State's achievements in IT, healthcare, medical tourism, digital governance, startups and life sciences were inspiring.

He added that Tanzania would soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Telangana to formalise cooperation. The meeting was attended by Fatma Mabrouk Khamis, Principal Secretary, Tanzania Ministry of Communication, ICT and Innovation; Shukuru Awadh Suleiman, Chief Executive Officer, Zanzibar ICT Authority; John Mahundi, Head of Technology and Investments, President's Delivery Bureau; and other senior officials.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY				
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT				
AUCTION PROGRAMME APRIL-2026				
NOTICE NO:04/2026				
E-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches & Locos, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way scrap material.				
Sl. No.	E-Auction Conducted By	Date of auction for the month of April - 2026		Material for auction
1	GSD/PER	09/04/26	23/04/26	-
2	CSSD/GOC	08/04/26	22/04/25	-
3	SSD/PTJ	06/02/26	20/02/26	-
4	MAS	08/04/26	22/04/26	-
5	SA	07/04/26	21/04/26	28/04/2026
6	TVC	13/04/26	27/04/26	-
7	PGT	09/04/26	23/04/26	-
8	TPJ	10/04/26	24/04/26	-
9	MDU	13/04/26	27/04/26	-
Total no. of auctions for APRIL 19				
For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site http://www.ireps.gov.in -> E-Auction->Sale->Live Auctions.				
Principal Chief Materials Manager				

SOUTHERN RAILWAY				
E-TENDER NOTICE				
1. Tender Notice No. 43-CECNMS-2026-E-632653 DATED 09-03-2026				
2. Tender Notice No. 44-CECNMS-2026-E-635744 DATED 11-03-2026				
3. Tender Notice No. CAO-CN-MS-PSS-01-2026 dated 11-03-2026				
For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai 600 008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal www.irepa.gov.in . The tenderers/Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal www.ireps.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted.				
NAME OF THE WORK				
Augmentation of Infrastructure facilities at Carriage & Wagon Works Perambur for NMG POH & NMGH/NMGHS Conversion and Perambur (Coach) Workshop Augmentation / Upgradation of Wagon Maintenance Infrastructure. (TWO PACKET SYSTEM)				
Creation of Trip Maintenance / Advance inspection centre at Podanur - proposed Construction of Trip Shed of size 65m x 16m with Service building of size 48m x 5.50m Reconstruction of Kalayanamandapam and track work.				
cash value (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Period of completion (months)	Closing date @ 15.30 Hrs.	
328319663.00	1791600	24	31.03.2026	
84758284.69	573800.00	16	07.04.2026	
NAME OF THE WORK				
Request For Proposal for providing "Project Supervision Services (PSS) for Various Construction Projects / Sites / Section in the jurisdiction of Deputy Chief Engineer/CN/SA, Southern Railway.				
Cash Value (Cr.)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees)	Period of Completion (Months)	Closing Date 15.30 Hrs	Pre-Bid Conference Dt. @ 11.30 Hrs.
8.40	570000.00	36	23-04-2026	24-03-2026
For further details, please refer to web site portal www.ireps.gov.in or contact Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, E.V.R. High Road, Egmore, Chennai-600 008.				
for Chief Engineer (Construction), Egmore, Chennai-600 008, for and On behalf of President of India				



Geetha Murthy Attended to Bandi Sanjay" Ashirvada Yatra"

HYDERABAD

On 14.03.2026, as part of the "Ashirvada Yatra" undertaken by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar from Karimnagar to Kondagattu, a

large number of party workers participated. Along with BJP National Council Member Geetha Murthy, BJP leaders from Neredmet and Bhayaganagar - Sudhakar, Mallikarjun, Raji Reddy, Shyam, and Srinivas - also took part in this padayatra

(foot march). During the march, devotional songs dedicated to Lord Rama and Lord Hanuman were played. Along the route, Bandi Sanjay Kumar interacted with people in every village, inquiring about their well-being while continuing the journey.

Civil Defence Volunteer Training Underway at GITAM



HYDERABAD

The Telangana Fire, Disaster Response, Emergency and Civil Defence Department is conducting a week-long Civil Defence Volunteer Training Programme at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad Campus, from March

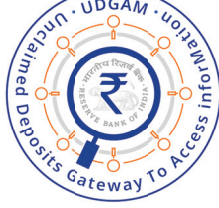
12 to March 18, 2026. The initiative aims to prepare youth to serve as first responders during emergencies before the arrival of official rescue services.

About 100 GITAM students are participating in the training, which covers essential areas such as civil defence and

disaster mitigation, basic fire science and firefighting, search and rescue operations, and first aid with basic life support. Participants are also receiving practical exposure to the use of rescue equipment, firefighting systems, and emergency response techniques. Speak-

ing at the inaugural session, B. Nageshwar Rao, District Fire Officer, Sangareddy, highlighted the importance of building a strong network of trained volunteers to assist authorities during disasters and emergency situations. K. V. Nagendra, Station Fire Officer, Patancheru, noted that the programme would equip students with vital skills to support line departments during emergencies such as fires, accidents, and natural or man-made disasters.

The training also focuses on coordination with agencies such as the National Disaster Response Force, police and fire services, ensuring an organized and effective response during crises. The initiative reflects a collaborative effort to strengthen community preparedness and promote volunteerism in disaster management.




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SHORT TAKES

Massive Influx into BJP from Maheshwaram Constituency

HYDERABAD: In a significant political development, hundreds of workers and members from various Federations of Colonies under the Maheshwaram Assembly Constituency today joined the BJP. The joining took place at the BJP State Office under the leadership of O Narsimha Reddy, in the presence of State President N Ramchander Rao, who formally welcomed them by draping the party scarf. The leaders observed that people are increasingly attracted towards the BJP due to the visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi and the party's uncompromising struggle against the "anti-people policies" of the Congress government in Telangana. They expressed confidence that the BJP is emerging as an unstoppable force in the Maheshwaram constituency. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, BJP state chief denied rumors that there was shortage of gas cylinders. Despite PM Modi's assurance that there is no gas shortage in the country, the Congress party is deliberately spreading misinformation to create an "artificial scarcity", he alleged.

Government taking steps to develop Telangana as an Oil Palm Hub: Minister Tummala

- Construction of a 300 crore state-of-the-art palm oil factory in Narmetta
- Factory completed in just 18 months - Minister Tummala
- Narmetta factory to be inaugurated soon by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy
- Oil palm cultivation provides long-term income to farmers - Minister Tummala
- Narmetta factory to increase farmers' income and employment opportunities

HYDERABAD

State Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao stated that the Telangana government is taking key initiatives to develop the state into the country's oil palm hub. Under the leadership and encouragement of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government is expanding oil palm cultivation across the state to provide farmers with stable and long-term income.

He said oil palm is a crop that offers long-term financial security to farmers, as once planted it can provide continuous income for 25 to 30 years, offering a promising future for Telangana farmers.

On Saturday, Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, along with Minister Ponnann Prabhakar, Oil Fed Chairman Janga Raghava Reddy, and officials, inspected the state-of-the-art oil palm processing factory constructed at Narmetta in Nangunur Mandal of Siddipet district under the Telangana Oil Fed at a cost of ₹300 crore.

The minister congratulated the officials and staff after the factory's trial run was successfully completed and said the facility would usher in a new phase for oil palm cultivation in Telangana. Built with advanced Malaysian technology, the factory is one of the most modern in the country. It has the capacity to process 30 to 120 tons of oil palm bunches per hour, which will significantly benefit farmers.

He said the government began these oil palm projects soon after coming to power and completed the factory works in a record time of 18 months. The factory will soon be inaugurated by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

The Narmetta factory includes facilities for producing crude palm oil and palm kernel oil, along with a 4-megawatt bio-power plant and a zero liquid discharge water treatment system. Waste generated during oil extraction will also be used for electricity generation, making the plant environmentally efficient. The factory is expected to



increase farmers' income and create local employment opportunities.

Minister Tummala said crop diversification is now necessary. He noted that farmers in Telangana largely depend on paddy cultivation, and due to government policies and bonuses on fine rice varieties, the state has become one of the largest paddy-producing states in the country. However, as the Central Government is imposing limits on paddy procurement, farmers should also cultivate horticultural crops, vegetables, and commercial crops like oil palm. Oil palm, he said, is a profitable alternative crop.

He added that farmers can grow intercrops such as cocoa, nutmeg, and macadamia in oil palm plantations to generate additional income. From a market perspective,

oil palm is also farmer-friendly because farmers receive payment within three days after selling their harvest to the factory, unlike paddy where payments may sometimes be delayed.

The minister also noted that oil palm crops are relatively less affected by monkeys, wild boars, and adverse weather conditions compared to other crops.

Farmers interested in oil palm cultivation are being provided subsidies of up to ₹50,921, and saplings are supplied free of cost. The government is also providing drip irrigation equipment.

When he assumed office as minister, the price of oil palm was ₹12,000 per ton. After discussions with the central government to increase import duty, the price has

now risen to ₹21,546 per ton. The state government is requesting the Prime Minister to increase it further to ₹25,000 per ton.

The minister expressed confidence that the construction of the Narmetta palm oil factory will boost farmers' confidence in oil palm cultivation and play a key role in expanding its cultivation across Telangana. He also announced that the Chief Minister will soon lay the foundation stone for an oil refinery unit to be set up at the same location.

Currently, oil palm is cultivated on about 2.91 lakh acres in Telangana, and 14 companies are working in the sector across the state. Under Telangana Oil Fed alone, about 42,758 farmers cultivate oil palm on 1.8 lakh acres. In Siddipet district, 4,469 farmers cultivate oil palm on 14,361 acres, while in Jangaon, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Gadwal, Narayanpet, and Mahabubabad districts, 13,479 farmers cultivate the crop on 49,376 acres.

The minister said that due to high demand for edible oils in India, the country imports about 16.4 million tons of edible oil every year, with palm oil accounting for nearly 59%. Last year alone, India imported edible oils worth ₹1.38 lakh crore, a large share of which was palm oil. To reduce this dependence and achieve self-sufficiency, expanding oil palm cultivation is essential.

Before the inauguration of the

Narmetta factory, the minister directed officials to organize a three-day farmer visit program to create awareness. Stalls will be set up at the factory to explain oil palm cultivation and processing methods, and direct interaction sessions with progressive farmers and scientists will also be arranged.

He said oil palm is a crop that ensures long-term income for farmers. Around 57 plants need to be planted per acre, and yields begin from the fourth year. Once established, the crop can produce yields for 25 to 40 years. Farmers can also earn additional income by growing intercrops such as cocoa, nutmeg, and macadamia.

Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said the Telangana government aims to bring a major transformation in farmers' lives through oil palm cultivation. With the encouragement of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government plans to expand oil palm cultivation to 10 lakh acres in the coming years. If achieved, Telangana will not only lead the country in oil palm cultivation but also become a model for the nation.

The minister concluded that the development of Telangana's farming community is the government's primary goal, and expanding oil palm cultivation will increase farmers' income and strengthen the rural economy.

Telangana Power Department Creates History

- All-time Record in Power Consumption
- 341 Million Units Supplied in a Single Day on March 13
- State Prepared for Future Power Requirements
- Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Congratulates Power Employees

HYDERABAD

Telangana power utilities created history by supplying the highest-ever electricity in a single day, delivering 341.08 Million Units (MU) of power. On March 13, 2026, at 11:17 AM, the state successfully met a peak demand of 18,228 MW.

On March 13, 2026, electricity consumption in Telangana reached the highest level in the state's history. On that day, the state supplied 341.08 Million Units of electricity, surpassing the previous record of 335.19 Million Units recorded on March 18, 2025. Similarly, the state successfully met a peak demand of 18,228 MW, exceeding the earlier record of 17,162 MW recorded on March 20, 2025.

The increase in electricity demand and peak load is attributed to rising tempera-



tures and higher agricultural power requirements.

Preparedness for Future Requirements

The state's power utilities will continue strengthening their systems to efficiently meet the growing electricity demand in the coming days. Telangana is prepared to handle daily energy requirements exceeding 350 Million Units and peak loads of around 19,000 MW. With a robust power grid and coordinated operational planning, the state has the capability to manage future demand.

The Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka appreciated and specially congratulated the employees of all power utilities for maintaining uninterrupted power supply during this period of high demand.

Musi rejuvenation will protect health of 40 lakh people: Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

HYDERABAD

State Roads & Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Saturday said that the proposed rejuvenation of the Musi River would bring long-term relief to nearly 40 lakh people suffering due to polluted waters and improve public health in the region.

Responding to questions from the media after launching development works at Hayathnagar, Minister Komatireddy said people in several areas, particularly in Nalgonda district, have been facing severe health issues for years because of contaminated water and many residents were battling serious ailments such as kidney problems and cancer.

Urging critics to look at the issue with humanity, Minister Komatireddy said the decision of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to take up the Musi rejuvenation project would benefit future generations. "Nearly 40 lakh people are suffering because of polluted waters. The hardships of these people must be understood with compassion," he said.

Minister Komatireddy noted that major rivers like the Ganga River and the Yamuna River were being cleaned under national initiatives and questioned why



efforts to restore the Musi should be opposed. While about 10,000 families may be affected by the project, he assured that the government would provide proper rehabilitation and alternative arrangements.

Earlier, Minister Komatireddy laid the foundation stone for widening the road from Saibaba Temple (Thorrur X Roads) to ZEE School in Hayathnagar from two lanes to four lanes at an estimated cost of ₹10 crore. The works are expected to

commence on Monday. Minister Komatireddy said the government has initiated several road development works to address rising traffic and meet the needs of fast-growing suburban areas. A large number of people from rural areas have settled in Hayathnagar for education and employment, making infrastructure upgrades essential.

Minister Komatireddy also announced that a double-decker corridor from LB Nagar to Hayathnagar Radio Station is

being planned at a cost of around ₹940 crore. The State Government has already agreed to contribute ₹200 crore towards the project.

The corridor will have a Metro Rail line and National Highway on the upper deck, while the lower level will have vehicle underpasses to facilitate safe local traffic movement.

Minister Komatireddy further said the region is set to witness major infrastructure growth, including high-speed rail connectivity linking cities such as Chennai, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Pune. With these developments, areas like Hayathnagar, Ibrahimpatnam and LB Nagar along the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway are expected to see rapid growth and demand similar to Kokapet. Minister Komatireddy added that efforts were also under way to take up the 10-lane expansion of the Hyderabad-Vijayawada National Highway, with tenders likely to be finalised next month after receiving necessary approvals from the Centre.

Appealing to opposition parties not to politicise development initiatives, Minister Komatireddy said development and public welfare remain the government's core agenda and protecting people's health is its top priority.

UTTAM REVIEWS LPG SITUATION

Writes to centre for additional commercial LPG cylinders

HYDERABAD

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy said today that the state government is making all-out efforts to ensure stable LPG supplies, but the state continued to face a severe shortage of the Commercial LPG supplies. He wrote to the centre seeking additional commercial LPG cylinders.

He had detailed review of the LPG supply situation in Telangana with representatives of the Telangana LPG Distributors Association at his Secretariat chambers. Later talking to the media persons, he said that the commercial LPG supplies are currently meeting only about 20 percent of the demand, raising serious concerns from the key commercial LPG consumer segments.

The State government is working aggressively to safeguard stable supplies for domestic households. He confirmed that the state has formally escalated the commercial supply crunch by writing to the Central government, amid reports of panic bookings, supply pressures linked to geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

He noted that the domestic LPG supplies stand at near-normal levels with around 2.15 lakh cylinders being delivered per day through 8010 distributors.

So far as the commercial LPG supplies are concerned, the cur-



rent deliveries have dropped sharply to roughly 6,200 cylinders per day against a typical requirement of 23,000 cylinders.

Telangana has around 1.3 crore active domestic consumers and an estimated 1.5-7.5 lakh commercial users. The shortage stems from global disruptions, particularly geopolitical tensions in West Asia (including conflicts affecting supply routes), leading oil marketing companies to prioritize domestic and essential sectors such as hospitals, schools, colleges, welfare institutions, and government bodies.

Hotels and restaurants across Hyderabad and the state have reported acute difficulties, with some trimming menus, tempo-

rarily closing outlets, or facing potential shutdowns as stocks deplete rapidly. The Hotels and Restaurants Association of Telangana has raised formal complaints about non-availability, with smaller establishments hit hardest.

Command and Control centre

The Minister said that a command and control centre set up at the Civil Supplies Bhavan as become functional with round the clock operations and a help line (toll free no- 1800-428-00-333 or 1967. He assured stringent action and black marketing of the LPG cylinders and misuse of the domestic cylinders for commercial uses. Panic overbooking in

the domestic segment has also strained systems, causing temporary crashes in online booking portals, though the government intervened to restore them.

He appealed the public not to panic-buy or overbook domestic refills, emphasizing adherence to waiting period guidelines. Contingency measures initiated include making some 1,740 KL of kerosene available as backup. A state-level committee under the Chief Secretary and district-level committees led by Collectors have been formed to monitor the situation daily. The Minister assured the LPG Distributors Association, who feared panic-driven customer influx and law and order issues, of all possible help and protection.

TGLSA procures two Mobile Lok Adalat Vans

Dr Srinivas Vooradi

HYDERABAD

Telangana State Legal Services Authority (TGLSA) has procured two 'Mobile Lok Adalat Vans / Multi-Utility Vehicles' with an objective of expanding legal services outreach to the remote corners of the districts of Telangana State. TGLSA has only 04 Mobile Vans for 34 DLSAs and is being utilized on a monthly rotation basis by the DLSAs for conducting Legal Literacy Camps, Publicity of Legal Services Activities, Jail visits etc. in the State of Telangana.

In order to reach out to the common man in the villages to bring an awareness on various laws and guide the litigants or public, as per the directions of NALSA and as per the note file Orders of Chief Justice, High Court for the State of Telangana & Patron-in-Chief, TGLSA Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh, and the Judge High Court for the State of Telangana and Executive Chairman, TGLSA Justice P.Sam Koshy, the TGLSA has purchased two Multi Utility Vehicles with necessary fabrication from the NALSA Grants.

The Mobile Lok Adalat and Legal Service Vehicle is designed to meet the multiple needs. i.e. one cabin is designed for the purpose of conducting Lok Adalat, video conference fully furnished and equipped with Computer, LEDTV, Web Camera, LAN with high-speed internet connectivity, Split AC, Mike system, CCTV and power back-up (including a UPS and generator). While the second cabin is designed for traveling purposes of the Judicial Officer, Panel Lawyers, PLVs and staff for

reaching the destination for conducting legal literacy camps, awareness program etc., in the nook and corner of the districts. These vehicles will help in addressing the legal needs of the public, especially people living in remote areas. By using modern technology, these vehicles will provide quick access to legal assistance and justice for victims.

The vehicles will also provide Free Legal Aid without any cost and legal support to litigants conduct legal awareness camps in villages, especially for weaker and vulnerable sections of society, guide the affected individuals about their legal rights, entitlements, and the steps required to seek compensation or relief, bring public awareness of Government schemes, promote the schemes launched by NALSA and the Government of Telangana for poverty alleviation and public welfare, awareness through short films displaying short films produced by TGLSA on various legal topics to create awareness among the public, conduct Mobile Lok Adalats to help resolve disputes quickly and amicably, besides video conferencing facility and legal consultation and providing video conferencing facilities so that victims in remote areas can consult lawyers easily.

These vehicles will serve as mobile legal service units, bringing justice and legal awareness closer to the people. Mode of Functioning: The monthly schedule of the Mobile Lok Adalat Van to cluster districts will be prepared and communicated to the DLSAs in advance for implementation of Nalsa Schemes, Legal Awareness Camps etc.,

Judge, Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, National Legal

Services Authority (NALSA), New Delhi Justice Vikram Nath on Saturday inaugurated these two (2) Mobile Lok Adalat Vans /Multi-Utility Vehicles at Novotel HICC, Near Hitex, Hyderabad in the presence of Judge of Supreme Court of India, Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh, Chief Justice, High Court for the State of Telangana & Patron-in-Chief, Telangana State Legal Services Authority, Justice Aniruddha Bose, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India Director, National Judicial Academy, Justice P.Sam Koshy, Judge, High Court for the State of Telangana & Executive Chairman, Telangana State Legal Services Authority, Justice K.Lakshman, Judge High court for the state of Telangana and Chairman of High Court Legal Services Committee, and Judges of High Court for the State of Telangana, Hyderabad and other Judicial dignitaries.

Aparesh Kumar Singh, the Chief Justice, High Court for the state of Telangana cum Patron in Chief of TGLSA; Justice P.Sam Koshy, Judge High court for the state of Telangana and Executive Chairman of TGLSA, Hyderabad are concentrating on the legal services authority activities and directing to reach out the public to guide them in getting justice and sensitize public on various legal complications and issues, then only, they can live peacefully and a healthy society will be built. The Telangana State Legal Services authority, Hyderabad has been striving hard to reach out to the people in rendering services to people. The Member Secretary, Telangana State Legal Services Authority Ch.Panchakshari and other staff of the TGLSA, have participated in the programme.

Patnaik Alleges Horse Trading in RS Polls

BHUBANESWAR: (MAR 14)

BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Saturday accused the BJP of being involved in "horse trading" in the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls in Odisha, and asserted that such a practice is an "offence" in a democratic process. His comment comes amid fear of cross-voting during the March 16 biennial polls in which five candidates are contesting for four seats in the state. Senior BJP MLA and former minister Jaynarayan Mishra rejected Patnaik's allegation, claiming that there was no such "horse trading".



Naidu Blesses Bhatti Vikramarka's Son, Daughter-in-law

HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

N Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, visited Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad on Saturday and blessed the son and daughter-in-law of Telangana Deputy

Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka — Surya Vikramaditya and Sakshi. On his arrival at Praja Bhavan, Chandrababu Naidu was warmly welcomed by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and his wife Nandini Bhat-

ti, who presented him with a bouquet. On the occasion, Chandrababu conveyed his best wishes to the newly married couple and blessed them, wishing them a happy and prosperous future. It may be recalled that Surya Vikrama-

ditya's wedding ceremony was held on March 5. At that time, Bhatti Vikramarka personally visited Andhra Pradesh to invite Chandrababu Naidu to the wedding. However, due to urgent engagements and a busy schedule, Chandrababu Naidu

could not attend the ceremony then. In this context, he visited Praja Bhavan today to personally convey his congratulations to the newly married couple. State ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Vakiti Srihari also attended the program.



TN Gives ₹2 Power Subsidy for Electric Stoves

CHENNAI, MARCH 14

The Tamil Nadu government on Saturday announced a Rs 2-per-unit subsidy on electricity for hotels, tea stalls and cloud kitchens that switch to electric stoves instead of LPG cylinders, as the state moves to address an emerging fuel shortage triggered by the ongoing war in West Asia.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, where officials reviewed the impact of disruptions in LPG supply on commercial establishments and the hospitality sector across the state. According to an official press release, the electricity subsidy will remain in force until

restrictions on the use and availability of LPG cylinders are lifted. The government said the measure is intended to encourage eateries and small businesses to temporarily shift to electric cooking methods while ensuring that their operating costs remain manageable. In addition to the power subsidy, the state government announced the allocation of 3,228 kilolitres of kerosene for distribution to ration card holders to ease the burden on households during the fuel shortage. To further support businesses adapting to the crisis, the government said micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) would be eligible for loans to purchase electric stoves and heaters.

Abhishek Slams Attack on Minister Panja's House

KOLKATA: (MAR 14)

Senior Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee alleged that West Bengal minister Shashi Panja was injured in Saturday's attack by BJP workers at her residence in the city ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally, and called the incident an assault on every woman of the state.

The TMC national general secretary claimed that Panja's house was vandalised and party workers and supporters were beaten up during the alleged attack.

Clashes broke out between TMC and BJP supporters in central Kolkata on Saturday, barely half an hour before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at the Brigade Parade Ground, leaving a police officer and a leader of the saffron party injured, officials said.

Vijay's TVK dismisses talks of joining NDA in Tamil Nadu

Sources told India Today TV that TVK district secretaries had discussed joining a pre-poll alliance during a recent meeting. However, many functionaries opined that the party must either go solo or join an alliance led by the actor-turned-politician.



Actor Vijay-led Tamilagam Vetrri Kazhagam (TVK) has put an end to speculation around the party joining the AIADMK-led NDA alliance, ahead of the Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu. In a post on 'X' (formerly Twitter), TVK General Secretary CTR Nirmal Kumar blamed the ruling DMK for using news outlets and social media to spread rumours about a possible tie-up with the AIADMK-BJP alliance. "Their intention is to divert everyone's attention from public issues," he claimed. Kumar also urged party members to only follow official announcements made at events and not in-

tervention led to the Congress patching up with its long-time Dravidian ally. Interestingly, TVK had also supported the Congress's demand for more power in Tamil Nadu. The move, which came amid the seat-sharing talks between the Congress and the ruling DMK, created a flutter in political circles. Recalling the political scenario after the 2006 Assembly results, Kumar had said, "It was a minority government. Kalaingar promised power-sharing and formed the government, but Sonia Gandhi forgave it. Had Sonia Gandhi wanted, she could have ended the government then. If not for the Congress, the DMK could not have come to power."

Formed in February 2024, the Vijay-led party has added a new dimension to Tamil Nadu's bipolar and Dravidian-focused political system. Tamil Nadu, which has 234 Assembly constituencies, is expected to vote in April or May this year.

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Kerala govt softens stance on Sabarimala women entry issue; Congress, BJP slam U-turn

In its latest affidavit before the Supreme Court, the Left Front government said that the court must decide on the matter only after assessing the opinions of social reformers, legal experts and religious scholars. It has also urged the Supreme Court to consider the feedback received from devotees, especially women worshippers.



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Earlier, the Left Front government had supported the entry of women of all age groups into the prominent temple

in Kerala. Traditionally, females aged between 10 and 50 were barred from entering the temple dedicated to Lord Ayyappa. Only girls who had not hit puberty and women above the age of 50 were allowed entry into the temple.

A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, will commence the hearing on April 7. The apex court will review the 2018 verdict that had lifted the prohibition on women between the ages of 10 and

50 years from entering the temple.

CONGRESS, BJP SLAM U-TURN

Meanwhile, the Congress-led Opposition has slammed the Left Front government for taking a U-turn on the matter. Speaking to ANI, Congress MP K Suresh claimed that the Pinarayi Vijayan government has softened its stance due to the upcoming Assembly elections.

"Hindu organisations protested when the Left Front government implemented the Supreme

Court judgement in 2018. In the 2019 elections, the LDF lost 19 out of the 20 seats. The Left Front government has made this U-turn to appease voters. After the elections, the alliance may change its stance once again," he said.

BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar argued that the Left Front government had to revise its affidavit following pressure from the BJP-led NDA and from lakhs of Ayyappa devotees. "Everyone in Kerala knows that this is not out of respect for Ayyappa devotees, but merely a political drama born out of fear of a severe electoral backlash," he said.

The Left Front government has remained silent on the matter. However, CPI(M) state secretary MV Govindan said that the party has always supported a decision after discussions with experts and "pundits" in the field.

Will Raise Journalists' Pension with Modi: Naik

Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy

Goa: Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shripad Naik said that the central government is determined to provide social security to senior journalists across the country. He stated that he would discuss the issue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and work towards ensuring that all eligible senior journalists receive pensions.

He attended as the chief guest at the first National Committee meeting of the Senior Journalists Federation of India, which began on Saturday at the Goa Science Centre. Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated the leaders of journalists' organizations who are bringing the problems of senior journalists across the



country to light. Goa Information Department Director Deepak Bandekar said that the Goa government has a clear understanding of journalists' issues and is moving forward by implementing several social security programs for them. The program was presided over by Sandeep Dixit, and N. P. Chekutti along with several association leaders from across the country participated in the meeting.

Udhayanidhi Stalin to inaugurate slew of public welfare projects in Tirupattur today

TIRUPATTUR, MARCH 14

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin will inaugurate a series of public welfare projects in Tirupattur district on Saturday, including a dedicated lounge for construction workers, a Village Knowledge Centre, and an integrated seva centre for persons with disabilities. Movie reviews platform The initiatives are aimed at improving welfare services, skill development, and access to government schemes for workers and marginalised communities in the district.

One of the key projects to be inaugurated is a ₹34.29 lakh construction workers' lounge, established by the Labour Department at the Tirupattur taluk office, located about one kilometre from Pudupalayam Main Road where workers traditionally gather in search of employment.



Officials said that many construction workers currently wait for work under trees or beneath bridges before trade unions assign them jobs.

"The new lounge will provide a safe and comfortable waiting area for workers, particularly women, before they proceed to work," said S. Gnanavel, Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Tirupattur.

The prefabricated container facility has been designed to be accessible to persons with disabilities, with ramps and other supportive features. Spread over 350 square feet,

the lounge is equipped with benches, fans, drinking water facilities, and mobile phone charging units. It can accommodate around 15 workers at a time and will operate between 6 A.M. and 10 A.M. every day except Sundays. Officials noted that the facility will also help streamline the hiring process and improve safety, as workers previously stood on busy carriageways while waiting for employment, exposing themselves to the risk of accidents. Labour Department officials said that over 1.18 lakh construc-

tion workers in Tirupattur district are registered with the Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board, and trade unions can also utilise the new lounge facility. During his visit, Udhayanidhi will also inaugurate a ₹1.27 crore Village Knowledge Centre (VKC) at Keel Mittalam village near Tirupattur town. The centre, established by the Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation, will offer skill training programmes, digital literacy courses, and community-based learning opportunities aimed particularly at empowering Adi Dravidar youth. The facility can accommodate up to 40 participants at a time. Meanwhile, Tirupattur Collector K. Sivասundaravalli has declared the district a no-fly zone on March 14 as part of security arrangements for the Deputy Chief Minister's visit.

Two B'deshi nationals arrested in West Bengal for illegal entry

KOLKATA, MARCH 14

Two Bangladeshi nationals have been arrested at the India-Bangladesh international border in North 24 Parganas district for allegedly entering the country illegally, a senior district police officer said on Saturday. According to the police, the two individuals were apprehended near the frontier in the Hakimpur border area under the jurisdiction of Swarnapagar Police Station in North 24 Parganas district. The accused have been identified as Vivek Mandal and Nazrul Islam. Police said the two individuals drew the attention of patrol personnel while they were allegedly loitering in the border area late at night. Becoming suspicious of their movements, the police detained them for

questioning. During interrogation, the two reportedly admitted that they were from Bangladesh and had crossed the border illegally to enter India. Following the questioning, the Swarnapagar Police arrested them. The arrested individuals were produced before the Basirhat Sub-divisional Court on Saturday. "Two persons have been arrested. They hail from Bangladesh and came to the country illegally. Following questioning, they confessed that they entered the country illegally. Investigation is on," said an officer of the North 24 Parganas district police. Notably, several Bangladeshi nationals have been arrested in West Bengal amid the backdrop of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of the state's electoral rolls.

Bijapur Gets New Anti-Naxal Camp

RAIPUR/BIJAPUR, MARCH 14

In a significant stride towards eradicating Naxalism and bringing development to one of Chhattisgarh's most remote and Maoist-affected regions, security forces have established a new security and public amenities camp in Village Bade Gundem, under the jurisdiction of Farsegarh Police Station in Bijapur district. Online news portal

The establishment of the camp falls under the Chhattisgarh Government's flagship 'Niyad Nella Nar' scheme, which integrates intensified anti-Naxal operations with the delivery of essential public services to interior tribal



areas. The camp is poised to serve as a forward base to curb Maoist activities, restrict their mobility, and create a secure environment for lasting peace. The camp was set up through a coordinated operation involving joint teams from the District Reserve Guard, district police force,

and the Chhattisgarh Armed Force. This initiative was carried out despite challenging geographical terrain, inaccessible routes, and harsh natural conditions, highlighting the forces' remarkable courage, determination, and high morale. Beyond security, such camps promise transformative benefits for local villag-

ers. These camps will enable access to critical amenities including healthcare facilities, quality education, electricity, clean drinking water, public distribution system outlets, improved mobile network coverage, roads, bridges, and culverts. This marks a key advancement in connecting Bhopalpatnam with Farsegarh and linking remote villages, particularly those in the Indravati National Park area, to broader road networks and administrative reach.

Since 2024, Bijapur district has seen an impressive roll-out of 37 new security camps amid similar adversities.

These efforts have yielded substantial results in the fight against Naxalism.

According to senior police officials, 955 Maoists have been rehabilitated and reintegrated into mainstream society, 234 have been neutralised in encounters, and 1,184 arrested through sustained operations. The camp's inauguration was overseen by senior officials, including Sundarraj P, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range), Jagdalpur and a team of senior police officials. By blending robust security measures with inclusive growth, the initiative aligns with the broader national goal of ending Left-Wing Extremism by March 2026, paving the way for tribal communities to embrace development, trust in governance, and a violence-free future.

Faridabad to Become World-Class City: Vipul Goel

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 14

Haryana Revenue and Urban Local Bodies Minister, Sh. Vipul Goel on Saturday inaugurated the Faridabad Flower Festival-2026 in Faridabad as the chief guest. Appreciating the efforts of officers of the Municipal Corporation Faridabad and public representatives, he said that reviving the flower festival at Town Park, which used to be organised several years ago, is a commendable initiative. He said that the successful organisation of the programme was made possible due to the collective efforts of the Municipal Corporation team, elected representatives and various sections of society. The Minister

Chief Minister to visit Faridabad; major programme in Sector-12 on April 4

said that the people of Faridabad are committed to the development of the city. Referring to earlier tree plantation drives, development of Town Park, Eco-Van, Nano-Van, and beautification of parks, he said that the development works approved for Town Park will bring about even more visible changes in the coming years. He also informed that there are plans to introduce facilities such as a water canal and boating for children. Highlighting improvements in sanitation arrangements, he said that systems such as waste collection, door-to-door collection, mechanised and manual

cleaning, and night sweeping are being further strengthened and the city will witness significant improvements in the coming months. Sharing the details about the proposed visit of the Chief Minister, Sh. Vipul Goel said that a programme of the Chief Minister has been scheduled at Sector-12 on April 4 at 11 am. He said that the Chief Minister has announced several important initiatives for Faridabad in the Budget. He urged citizens to participate in large numbers in the programme so that issues related to the city's development can be presented effectively.

EDITORIAL

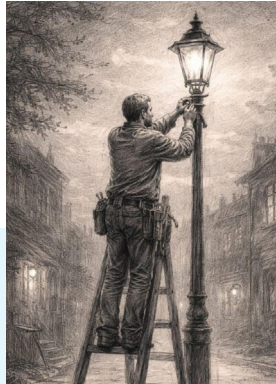
**FROM FAULT TO FAIRNESS:
SC MANDATES NO-FAULT VACCINE
INJURY COMPENSATION**

The Supreme Court of India's directive in Rachana Gangu to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to design a no-fault compensation scheme for serious adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) arising from India's COVID-19 vaccination campaign marks a shift from a fault-based liability system to a no-fault one in state-run public health programmes. The case arose from writ petitions filed in various courts by families claiming that their relatives had died or suffered serious injury after receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Rachana Gangu was over the deaths, in 2021, of two women aged 18 and 20, allegedly from vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT), a rare complication of the Covishield vaccine. Affected families contended that India had no dedicated mechanism to compensate those harmed in a state-run programme. For several years, the government resisted establishing a compensation policy because it held that vaccination was voluntary, serious AEFI rates were extremely low, and aggrieved citizens could sue vaccine manufacturers in civil court — a position the Court has since rejected as being impractical for ordinary individuals. The new ruling also builds on Jacob Puliyl (2022), in which the Court rejected challenges to emergency vaccine approvals but emphasised the need to make AEFI data publicly available.

In 2024, a few years after scientists had established the same concern in medical literature, AstraZeneca acknowledged in a U.K. court document that Covishield could, in rare instances, cause VITT. Since most Indians were vaccinated with Covishield, the admission further undermined the government's position that links between the vaccine and certain deaths were unproven or coincidental. Despite operating one of the world's largest immunisation efforts, India has historically lacked a dedicated national vaccine injury compensation programme. Many countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., have such vaccine injury compensation programmes where claimants need not prove negligence, but only a plausible link to vaccination. Even the global COVAX facility established a no-fault mechanism for 92 low- and middle-income countries. During the pandemic, the government had reported over 1,100 deaths following vaccination across 219 crore doses administered. The Court ruled that for a welfare state, these represent individual human lives and that the absence of a formal policy left affected families in a legal vacuum. It has also been clear that its directive is not based on adjudicating whether the vaccines caused specific injuries or deaths nor does it replace all fault-based liabilities in public health. However, it sets an important precedent for future vaccination drives, including the new one for HPV, affirming the state's duty of care when endorsing medical interventions for the public good.



JUST TIME PASS



They love you loud but not for long,
You're needed till they feel strong.
When thirst is quenched, they fade away,
Like twilight lost to breaking day.

In borrowed light, they hail your flame,
But once fulfilled, forget your name.
Not soul nor friend you're just a role,
A shadow cast, not seen as whole

A child must learn with careful guide,
A youth with fire but shaped with pride.
The old deserve a safer shore,
A gentle hand, a little more

Yet wisdom's truths are swept aside,
Where hollow hearts and silence bide

Don't voice your pain to empty skies
They only blink with practiced lies.
They'll smile, they'll nod but never stay,
Just passing clouds in your dark day

Your tears may shine, but none will see,
Beyond their shallow empathy.
A hundred ears may hear your cry
But only one may ask you why

So guard your grief, and speak with care,
To hearts that feel — not those that stare.
The world is loud with hollow cheer,
But truth walks lonely, year to year

It crowns the fake, exalts the lie,
And lets the honest bleed and die.
So walk alone with head held high,
Let silence be your soft reply

Give wisely — not for love or praise,
But for the joy of lighter days.
Live true, though all the world is wrong
For you were born to stand, not belong



...: Dr. Peruka Raju ...
7810032847

Economic Highlights

**The Great
Miscommunication**

**TRIGGERS
STUNNING LOSSES**

IN MODERN ECONOMIES, CRISES ARE OFTEN TRIGGERED NOT BY SHORTAGES BUT BY SIGNALS. INDIA'S RECENT LPG SCARE ILLUSTRATES HOW A SINGLE ADVISORY, POORLY COMMUNICATED, CAN RATTLE MARKETS, DISRUPT BUSINESSES AND CREATE BILLIONS IN ECONOMIC LOSSES—LONG BEFORE ANY REAL SHORTAGE APPEARS.

It's about miscommunication and unfathomed losses. Never has the Gulf wars jolted India so hard. India's recent anxiety over a supposed petroleum and LPG "shortage" is less a story of actual scarcity and more a case study in poor official communication. There may well be supply pressures in parts of the system, but the situation was far from a nationwide crisis. Communication builds trust. Yet an ill-timed advisory reportedly restricting LPG supplies to industrial and commercial users triggered widespread panic.

Restaurants, roadside eateries, school canteens, Ayodhya temple prasad and small kitchens suddenly feared shutdowns. The warning travelled faster than the clarification. Hoarding began, black-market prices surfaced and parts of the hospital-ity sector faced disruption. It is estimated to cause a loss of Rs 1200-1300 crore a day to restaurateurs alone.

It's further accentuated. Iran denies reports that it opened the Strait of Hormuz exclusively for Indian oil tankers, a speculation that followed External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's talks with Iran foreign minister Abbas Araghchi. About 28 Indian ships and 778 Indian sailors are stuck in the Strait. Is it a new "message" to the neighbour, India?

Since 1914, most wars affecting Asia have been driven by Euro-American power rivalries, and the present conflict carries similar overtones. Yet Asian nations, including Iran and Afghanistan, are unlikely to remain passive. At this juncture India has to be observant and call the shots for Asia. Communication is the key. Whosoever masters it may lead the world. The reckoning for Asia has arrived.

For India, this is a moment to act with clarity and leadership. Communication will shape outcomes. Energy disruptions are

already hurting industries and eateries, revealing excessive dependence on petroleum. Poor messaging has worsened the situation, turning a manageable strain into a deeper economic anxiety costing billions.

Hits Logistics

Communication failures can inflict real economic damage. Supply chains run not only on fuel and inventory but also on confidence. A rumour of shortage can stall logistics faster than an actual disruption. When businesses fear that cylinders may not arrive tomorrow, they curtail operations today. In that sense, a poorly framed message can create the very crisis it seeks to prevent. Pre-war LPG bookings were 55.7 lakhs. Current bookings 75.7 lakh.

Financial markets understand this instinctively. They react to signals, expectations and credibility. A careless statement by a regulator or corporate leader can wipe out billions within minutes. Investors watch not just data but tone, clarity and reliability—hence the extreme caution in market-sensitive communication. Misstatements can trigger swift and costly reactions.

The country may never know the economic loss caused by the recent "gassing" of fuel communication. Yet chaos was evident. Some LPG distributors quoted sharply higher prices, others withheld cylinders below certain rates, and black-market premiums appeared almost overnight.

To make matters worse authorities warned commercial establishments and eating joints of punitive action against 'unauthorised' use of cylinders.

The enforcement uses this as an avsar (opportunity), in apada (distress-rent-seeking) and harassment. Protests and panic soon spilled into public spaces, aggravating law and order pressures beyond fuel markets.

Investors also sensed policy confusion. The stock market has struggled to maintain sustained positive trading momentum since the beginning of the year, reflecting broader economic anxieties and uncertainty about energy security.

No Q - Shooting the Messenger

Communication missteps can magnify the problem further when officials appear to blame the messenger. At one point, a senior communicator reportedly advised the media not to "create panic". The remark overlooked the fundamental role of the press. Journalism reports facts and ground realities, not calm or panic. When people see queues or hear traders speak of shortages, the media will report it. Asking the press to stay silent rarely restores confidence; it deepens suspicion.

Credibility is central to governance. When those in authority appear evasive, the trust deficit widens rapidly. The situation worsened when an official addressing the media on March 11 regarding LPG availability began with the remark: "No questions, please." Preventing questions defeats the very purpose of communication. The result was predictable — more speculation, more rumours and a further erosion of credibility.

Contrast with US

The contrast with other global political figures is instructive. Even controversial leaders

often understand the importance of constant engagement with the press. The US President Donald Trump is frequently facing aggressive questioning from reporters. His answers were sometimes combative or nuanced, but the interaction itself signalled openness. International media outlets, including the BBC, reported these exchanges in detail, ensuring that markets and citizens heard the government's version directly.

Financial markets respond instantly to such signals. During a period of geopolitical tension in West Asia, crude oil prices briefly surged toward \$120 per barrel. But Trump's comments suggesting a de-escalation helped calm traders, bringing prices closer to \$90. Whether one agreed with the politics or not, the communication itself influenced market sentiment.

Critical moments require careful communication. India's "no-questions" moment did the opposite, weakening official assurances as the messenger lacked credibility. What the petroleum ministry meant as a call to boost LPG production instead signalled shortage and restrictive controls—ironically echoing the very "socialistic" measures the present dispensation criticises.

The problem is not policy alone but messaging. A habit of blunt, poorly framed statements has turned a manageable situation into unnecessary confusion, pushing markets and citizens toward panic rather than reassurance. Complicating matters were reports that a major supplier like Qatar had disrupted or slowed LPG flows. Without clear explanations, rumours multiplied — including

speculation that petrol or diesel supplies might soon face similar disruptions.

Crisis Needs Care for Words

Such rumours expose deeper weaknesses in India's official communication system. Crisis messaging should anticipate concerns, offer transparency and provide credible timelines. Instead, responses are often delayed, information restricted and questions avoided, leaving a vacuum quickly filled by speculation.

India has seen similar lapses before—from poorly handled messaging during the Kargil conflict to confusion surrounding the Pulwama attack, the Galwan Valley clash and even the COVID-19 crisis. In information warfare on 'Operation Sindoor' too, narratives have often slipped despite ground successes. Clear communication could also have explained policy options like greater use of low-sulphur diesel to ease LPG pressure. Sound policy alone is insufficient; credibility and timely explanation are equally essential. Communication builds trust; silence or confusion breeds hostility. Effective governance requires more than sound policy; it requires credible explanation. Markets, citizens and businesses can handle difficult realities — even shortages — if they are told the truth clearly and promptly. What they cannot handle is uncertainty created by silence or mixed signals



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Open Forum

**Consumer Rights:
A Shield Against Fraud**

Today's consumer is far more active and aware than before. However, the changing structure of markets and the rapid expansion of consumerist culture have also created new challenges. Problems such as hoarding, black marketing, adulteration, irregularities in weights and measures, arbitrary pricing, sale of substandard products, misleading advertisements, online fraud, and denial of service despite guarantees or warranties continue to trouble consumers. In such circumstances, consumer rights act as a strong shield that protects consumers from exploitation and deception. To raise awareness about these rights and empower consumers, World Consumer Rights Day is observed every year on 15 March. This year, the day is being celebrated with the theme "Safe Products, Confident Consumers," highlighting the importance of consumer safety, product quality, and effective regulatory mechanisms.

World Consumer Rights Day is not merely a symbolic observance; it is an important occasion to remind consumers of their power and rights. The foundation of the consumer movement was laid on 15 March 1962, when the then President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, delivered a historic speech in the US Congress recognizing four fundamental consumer rights. This initiative later became the basis of the global consumer movement. In India too, the consumer movement developed gradually. It began in the 1960s, and in 1966 initial efforts were made in Mumbai to promote consumer protection. Later, the establishment of 'Graahak Panchayat' in Pune in 1974 gave new direction to the movement. Over time, numerous organizations and institutions related to consumer welfare were formed in various states, playing a significant role in spreading awareness about consumer rights. These efforts eventu-

ally led to the development of laws and institutional mechanisms for consumer protection.

In reality, exploitation of consumers in market systems is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, consumers have faced various forms of fraud and unfair trade practices. In modern times, the expansion of markets, globalization of trade, and the growing influence of digital platforms have made consumer protection challenges more complex. Therefore, the need for effective laws and a quick justice system was strongly felt to safeguard consumers. To address this, the Consumer Protection Act was implemented in India, providing consumers with a pathway to obtain justice quickly and at a relatively low cost. To further strengthen consumer rights, the Government of India implemented the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 on 20 July 2020, replacing the nearly three-and-a-half-decade-old Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The new law provides broader rights to consumers and includes several important provisions such as regulation of misleading advertisements, accountability of e-commerce platforms, product liability, and online redressal of consumer complaints. Under this Act, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has also been established to take action in cases involving violation of consumer rights.

According to India's consumer protection laws, any person who purchases goods or services by paying money, or promises to pay for them, is considered a consumer. If there is any defect in the product or deficiency in service, or if the consumer suffers any loss due to it, the consumer has the right to seek justice and demand compensation. These rights protect consumers from exploitation in the marketplace. The system of consumer courts has proved extremely important in this regard. Through these courts,

consumers can obtain relatively simple and speedy justice. In many cases, consumers have successfully defended their rights with the help of consumer forums. For instance, a consumer once purchased an electric fan from a shop with a one-year warranty. After some time, the fan stopped working, but the shopkeeper refused to repair or replace it. Ultimately, the consumer approached the consumer court. The court not only ordered the replacement of the fan but also directed the shopkeeper to pay compensation for mental distress and inconvenience. Such examples clearly demonstrate the important role consumer courts play in protecting consumer rights.

However, it is also true that at some point in life almost everyone faces minor or major consumer problems, yet most people hesitate to raise their voices for their rights. One major reason is that a large section of the population still lacks adequate knowledge about their rights and the legal procedures involved. Surprisingly, even educated individuals often remain indifferent toward consumer rights and ignore small instances of fraud. If consumers become more alert and aware, many problems in the marketplace can automatically be controlled. One of the most important steps is to always obtain a receipt while purchasing any product or service. A receipt is the most crucial document that provides a legal basis for protecting consumer rights. Without proof of purchase, it becomes difficult to present a complaint effectively in consumer courts.

In today's digital age, the importance of consumer rights has increased even further. Online shopping, digital payments, and the expansion of e-commerce platforms have certainly increased convenience for consumers, but they have also introduced new risks such as cyber fraud, fake websites, and misleading online advertisements. Therefore, con-

sumers must not only be aware of their rights but also exercise caution and vigilance. One of the biggest advantages of consumer courts is that they do not require consumers to go through long and complex legal procedures. Consumers can file complaints themselves, and generally there is no mandatory requirement to hire a lawyer. Moreover, the process of resolving cases is comparatively simple and inexpensive. This is why consumer courts have become an accessible means of justice for ordinary citizens.

A strong and aware consumer forms the foundation of a healthy market system. When consumers remain vigilant about their rights and raise their voices against injustice, transparency, quality, and accountability in the marketplace are ensured. World Consumer Rights Day conveys the message that we are not merely consumers of goods and services but also citizens endowed with rights. Today, there is a need for consumers to be aware not only of their rights but also of their responsibilities. Through awareness, vigilance, and legal knowledge, consumers can protect their interests. If every consumer becomes alert and exercises their rights, not only can fraud and exploitation be controlled, but the marketplace can also become more just, transparent, and trustworthy.



YOGESH KUMAR GOYAL

(Author is a senior journalist and has been active in literature and journalism for 36 years)

Chief Justice of India urges graduates to server society

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 14:

The 12th convocation ceremony of the Central University of Haryana (CUH) was held with great enthusiasm at the university campus on Saturday, celebrating academic achievements and institutional progress. Justice Surya Kant, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, attended the ceremony as the Chief Guest and addressed graduating students, faculty members, parents and invited guests. Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, and Rajeev Ahuja, Director of the Indian Institute of Technology Ropar, attended as Guests of Honour. Several other dignitaries were present, including Justice Sanjay Vashisth and Justice N. S. Shekhawat of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Registrar General Chandra Shekhar, and Narender Sura, District and Sessions Judge of Karnal. Officials from the district administration, including Deputy Commissioner Capt Manoj

and Superintendent of Police Pooja Vashisth, also attended the ceremony along with senior university functionaries.

Vice Chancellor Prof Tankeshwar Kumar welcomed the Chief Guest and honoured the dignitaries with mementoes. Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Pawan Sharma, members of the University Court, Executive Council, Academic Council and Finance Committee, along with deans, directors, heads of departments, faculty members and administrative staff, were present. The convocation brought together students and families from different parts of the country and marked an important milestone in the academic journey of graduating scholars. Addressing the gathering, Justice Surya Kant said the occasion held special meaning for him because he grew up and studied in Haryana. Recalling the early phase of his career, he said he did not have strong professional networks or influential connections. He told students that people from modest or middle class



backgrounds often succeed because they learn resilience, discipline and persistence while facing challenges.

He also praised the rapid development of the Central University of Haryana and said the institution had earned recognition within a short period. Congratulating medal winners, he noted that thirty of the fifty gold medalists were women, which he described as a strong sign of expanding opportunities for women in higher education.

He emphasized that character, integrity and sound judgment shape a person's future more than mere academic

success. According to him, education carries responsibility and graduates must use knowledge to serve society. He urged students to remain humble, remember the values taught by parents and teachers, and continue working with dedication for national development. Speaking on the occasion, IIT Ropar Director Rajeev Ahuja said convocation marks the transition from student life to professional responsibility. He advised graduates to maintain honesty, integrity and ethical conduct. Success achieved through shortcuts, he said, rarely lasts, whereas perseverance

and consistent effort create lasting achievements. He also highlighted the growing role of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. Such tools, he said, could transform agriculture, healthcare and industry, particularly in states like Haryana. He encouraged graduates to pursue innovation, entrepreneurship and collaborative work for the broader development of society. Earlier, Vice Chancellor Prof Tankeshwar Kumar presented the annual university report highlighting achievements in research, academics and infrastructure. He said CUH has improved its posi-

tion in national and international rankings and currently stands forty fourth nationally in the World University Rankings while remaining among the leading universities in Haryana. He noted that faculty members have published more than three thousand research papers in reputed indexed journals and secured over one hundred fifteen patents. The university is running several research projects with national and international agencies while modern laboratories and academic facilities are being expanded across the campus. According to Controller of Examinations Dr Rajeev Kaushik, a total of 1,462 students received degrees during the convocation, including postgraduate, undergraduate and doctoral scholars. Fifty students were awarded gold medals for outstanding academic performance, including thirty women and twenty men, highlighting the increasing participation of women in higher education and research. Among all recipients, 797

were men and 665 were women. Students from Haryana as well as many other states graduated, reflecting the national character of the university community. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Registrar Dr Suneel Kumar.

The convocation celebrated academic excellence, research achievements and the aspirations of young graduates preparing to enter professional life. Speakers encouraged students to remain committed to learning, innovation and service so that their knowledge contributes not only to personal success but also to the broader progress of society and the nation. Leaders said universities must nurture curiosity, ethical values and social responsibility while preparing students for rapidly changing global challenges and opportunities. They expressed confidence that CUH graduates will contribute to innovation, governance, industry and community development across India in the years ahead with dedication.



Opposition Played Vote-Bank Politics: Adityanath

KAITHAL (HARYANA): (MAR 14)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday took a dig at the opposition parties, saying they ruled the country for many years, but they only indulged in appeasement and votebank politics. He said that after Independence, the opposition ruled the country for several years.

"But why did they not think about your 'astha' (belief)? Because they did not have time, and only indulged in appeasement and votebank..." Adityanath said while addressing a gathering of saints in Haryana's Kaithal district.

Rail Safety Push on Northeast Railway

GORAKHPUR, 14 MARCH 2026:

To ensure the safe and secure operation of trains on Indian Railways, the installation of the Kavach system is being carried out on a priority basis. In this sequence, the system is also being implemented on the Northeast Railway to further strengthen railway safety. The Kavach system is a highly complex technology that includes five major subsystems such as optical fiber cables, telecom towers, station data centers, track-side equipment, and on-board locomotive systems. **There are two main components of the system: On-board Equipment (also called Loco Kavach):** This includes vital computers, brake interface units, loco pilot machine interface, RFID readers, pulse generators, and radio antennas installed on



the locomotive.

Track-side Component (Stationary Kavach Unit): This includes the station master's operation and indication panel, RFID tags installed on concrete sleepers, and towers and antennas about 40 meters high. RFID tags are installed at intervals of 1 km, with one set (two RFID tags) placed at each location. In station yards, an RFID tag is installed for every

signal. The indigenously developed Kavach Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system has already been approved by the Ministry of Railways for installation over 1,441 route kilometers on the Northeast Railway at an estimated cost of ₹492.21 crore. Giving priority to the installation of Kavach, the work has been approved on the following sections of Northeast Railway:

- Lucknow Division:** Lucknow Junction-Manak Nagar, Lucknow Junction-Malhaur, Barabanki Junction-Burhwal Junction, Sitapur City-Burhwal Junction, and Burhwal Junction-Gorakhpur Cantt.
- Varanasi Division:** Gorakhpur Cantt-Goldinganj, Gorakhpur Cantt-Valmikinagar Road, Bhatni Junction-Varanasi Junction, Varanasi Junction-Prayagraj Junction, and Aunrihar Junction-Chhapra Junction.

- Izzatnagar Division:** Rawatpur-Farrukhabad Junction, Farrukhabad Junction-Kasganj Junction, and Kasganj Junction-Mathura Junction. In the first phase, Kavach will be installed on 551 route kilometers of major railway routes of the Northeast Railway. These include:
- Lucknow Division:** Sitapur City-Burhwal Junction, Burhwal Junction-Gorakhpur Cantt, Manak Nagar-Lucknow Junction-Malhaur, and Barabanki-Burhwal Junction. Varanasi Division: Gorakhpur Cantt-Goldinganj section.
- A total of 108 towers will be installed on these sections, and the survey work has already been completed. At present, tower installation work is in progress on the Chhapra-Barabanki main route, and 20 towers have already been installed on the Gorakhpur-Basti section.

Modi Inaugurates Six Amrit Stations

MALIGAON, 14 MARCH, 2026:

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today dedicated, inaugurated various infrastructure development projects and flagged off new train service in West Bengal, further strengthening connectivity and railway development scenario in the state. As part of the railway initiatives, six redeveloped railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme i.e. Kamakhya, Tamluk, Haldia, Barabhum, Anara and Siuri Amrit stations were inaugurated along with dedication of two key infrastructure projects to the nation, marking a significant step towards enhancing passenger amenities and modernizing station infrastructure. A new train service between Purulia-Anand Vihar Terminal (Delhi) was also flagged off by the Hon'ble Prime Minister further improving the connectivity in the region. These

Also Dedicates Multiple Infrastructure Projects and Flags off new train in West Bengal



projects and services reflect the continued focus on expanding capacity, improving travel experience through modern rail infrastructure. The Prime Minister stated that a vigorous campaign is underway across the country to modernize the Indian Railways. He also pointed out that the Central Government is rapidly expanding the railway infrastructure in West Bengal. He emphasized that these projects will give new momentum, boosting trade and industry and making life easier for lakhs of people by providing

them new opportunities. Among the newly redeveloped stations that have been inaugurated, Kamakhya Railway Station, has been provided with upgraded facilities and modern passenger friendly infrastructure. The redevelopment includes a new station building with an improved entrance lobby and circulating area, renovation of platforms with Kota-stone surfacing and construction of a 12-metre wide Foot Overbridge (FOB) equipped with lift facilities to enhance passenger convenience and accessibility. Passenger

amenities such as waiting halls, toilet blocks, parking facilities and modern signage systems have also been upgraded. In addition, multi-theme lighting and beautification works incorporating local art and cultural elements have been carried out to enhance the overall aesthetics of the station and its surroundings, thereby improving the passenger experience. The redevelopment of Kamakhya station reflects Indian Railways' continued commitment to modernising railway infrastructure and providing enhanced travel facilities to passengers. Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, a total of 92 railway stations across Northeast Frontier Railway are being redeveloped in phases, including 25 stations in West Bengal, which will significantly improve passenger amenities and contribute to better connectivity and regional development.

Global Outreach Helped India Get LPG: Jitendra Singh

JAMMU: (MAR 14)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global stature helped India safeguard its energy supplies amid the escalating military conflict between Iran and the US, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Saturday. He said that LPG and gas supplies to many nations were either reduced or completely halted due to the war situation, leading to a major crisis in several parts of the world.

'Modi Govt Exposed': Kejriwal on Wangchuk Case

The veiled swipe referenced Arvind Kejriwal given a clean chit by a court in Delhi in the liquor policy case last month. During the hearing, the judge tore into the CBI and said the entire case was based on conjecture and surmise, lacking any admissible evidence.



Am Aadmi Party supreme and ex-Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal slammed the central government on Saturday following the cancellation of detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk after nearly six months. Taking to X, Kejri-

wal said that the turn of events caused the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-headed government to stand "exposed once again". "A scientist and climate activist who had dedicated his life to the nation was arrested without any evidence. The months he spent in jail were not only a personal loss for him

but also a loss to the country. This sheer dictatorship must be called out and stopped immediately," the AAP chief tweeted. The veiled swipe referenced Kejriwal given a clean chit by a court in Delhi in the liquor policy case. During the hearing, the judge tore into the CBI and said the entire case was based on

conjecture and surmise, lacking any admissible evidence. Wangchuk was detained in September last year under the stringent National Security Act (NSA), two days after protests over statehood demands for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution triggered massive unrest in the Union Territory. Over 45 people were wounded, including 22 police personnel. He was kept in Jodhpur Central Jail, where he had already undergone almost half of the detention under the NSA, according to the Centre's statement. He was released at around 1.30 pm earlier in the day. In its statement, the cen-



India repatriates Iranian ship's non-essential crew from Kochi amid Iran war

India has repatriated the non-essential crew members of an Iranian warship that docked in Kochi on March 4 amid the escalating military conflict between Iran and the United States, people familiar with the matter said on Saturday.

IRIS Lavan has been stationed in Kochi since March 4 after developing urgent technical issues. The ship was granted emergency docking approval on March 1 following a request from the Iranian side. It is learnt that the Iranian sailors of IRIS Lavan will travel to Iran by road from Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. The repatriation comes at a time when New Delhi is making efforts to ensure safe passage for over two dozen Indian-flagged merchant vessels currently stationed on either side of the Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Thursday night. The conversation marked the fourth such exchange between the two leaders since the West Asia crisis erupted.

Over 50 of the 183 crew members have stayed back in India as the ship, IRIS Lavan, continues to remain in Kochi, they said. The non-essential sailors left India on a Turkish airline aircraft. The aircraft landed in Kochi late last night after picking up the bodies of over 80 Iranian sailors from Colombo. The sailors were from another Iranian warship that was sunk by a US submarine off the coast of Sri Lanka on March 4.

LPG rush sparks govt move: 25-day refill cycle, push for piped gas

In her press briefing, Sujata Sharma, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Petroleum, expressed her concerns over the panic booking of LPG cylinders. She said that the bookings have increased from 76 lakh on March 13 to 88.8 lakh on March 14.



The Ministry of Petroleum spokesperson, Sujata Sharma, in a joint press conference on Saturday, said that the government has decided to issue piped natural gas connections for the consumers who are facing difficulties with LPG supply. She also said that the government has decided on a 25-day refuelling/reordering cycle for urban areas and a 45-day refuelling/reordering cycle for rural areas, on the basis of the consumption patterns. "Wherever commercial consumers are facing difficulties or disruptions in their LPG supply, they should be transitioned to PNG

connections. In furtherance of this objective, GAIL (Gas Authority of India Limited) held a meeting with various CGD operators and advised them to expedite the provision of PNG connections to all eligible commercial consumers wherever feasible," Sharma said during the press conference. She added that the government would start working on the transition of LPG to PNG, a few days after a request has been made by a consumer. In the press briefing, Sharma further mentioned that no stockout of LPG cylinders had been reported in the country to date. However, she expressed her

concerns about the nationwide LPG supply and the "excessively high" nature of panic booking. She highlighted that the booking of LPG cylinders increased to 88.8 lakh from 76 lakh a day before. Amid the fear of a nationwide supply shortage, Rajesh Sinha, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Port, Shipping, and Waterways, said that two vessels named Nanda Devi and Shivalik are en route to India with 92,700 metric tons of LPG cylinders. These vessels have successfully passed through the Strait of Hormuz and are expected to arrive in India on March 16 and 17.

100+ Cops Fall Ill in Bihar, Food Poisoning Suspected

More than 100 policemen were taken ill after consuming food at a mess in Bihar's Banka district, prompting their hospitalisation. Officials suspect food poisoning, though authorities said the condition of all the personnel is stable, and an enquiry has been ordered.



More than 100 police personnel fell ill after consuming food prepared at the police line mess in Banka district of Bihar, officials said on Friday. Following the incident, the affected personnel were rushed to Banka Sadar Hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment. Authorities said the policemen complained of health issues shortly after eating the meal at the mess, triggering concern among officials and prompting immediate medical

attention. District Magistrate Navdeep Shukla visited the hospital soon after the incident and directed doctors to ensure proper treatment for the affected personnel. Later, Bhagalpur Range Inspector General of Police Vivek Kumar reached the hospital to review the situation. He interacted with the policemen and sought details from doctors treating them. Speaking to reporters, Kumar said all the affected personnel were receiving treatment at the hospital and their condition was stable. Kumar said that some of the policemen may be dis-

charged soon as their condition improves. He added that steps would be taken to ensure that better quality food is served to personnel at the police mess in the future. The incident will also be investigated, he said, adding that the district police chief has been asked to look into the matter. Banka Civil Surgeon Jitendra Kumar said preliminary findings suggest that the policemen may have suffered from food poisoning. He added that all the affected personnel were currently out of danger and were responding well to treatment.

LPG Crisis Disrupts Prasad at Annapurna Temple

VARANASI/ SULTANPUR: (MAR 14) Distribution of prasad at the Annapurna temple in Varanasi has been impacted due to a perceived shortage of LPG cylinders, even as authorities in Uttar Pradesh reiterated that there is no

supply crunch and warned of strict action against hoarding and black marketing. Mahant Shankar Giri Maharaj claimed the temple's 'ann kshetra' is facing a severe shortage of cooking gas, making it difficult to prepare the prasad for devotees.

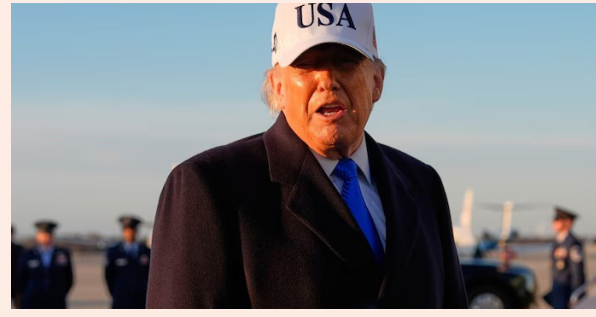
Iran is totally defeated, wants a deal I won't accept, claims Trump

As the US-Israel war against Iran entered Day 15 on Saturday, President Donald Trump claimed that Tehran has been "totally defeated" by ongoing military operations and is now seeking negotiations, though he said he would refuse any agreement proposed by the Islamic regime.

In a post on the social media platform Truth Social, the US president praised the performance of American forces in the conflict and accused media outlets of downplaying the scale of their success. "The Fake News Media hates to report how well the United States Military has done against Iran, which is totally defeated and wants a deal - But not a deal that I

would accept! Thank you for your attention to this matter. President DJT," Trump wrote. His remarks come as tensions remain high across the Middle East after two weeks of a widening conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran. On Friday, the US carried out strikes on Iran's Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf, a location central to the country's oil export network. Trump said US forces destroyed military targets on the island but deliberately avoided damaging oil facilities for now.

However, he warned that Iran's energy infrastructure could be a target if Tehran continues to interfere with international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz - one of the world's most critical oil transit routes. Roughly a fifth of globally



traded crude passes through the narrow waterway. Iranian officials have warned that attacks on strategic islands such as Kharg could provoke stronger retaliation. Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf previously said strikes on the country's southern maritime frontier could push Tehran to abandon restraint.

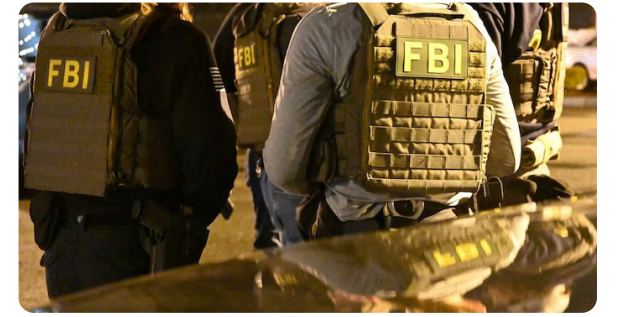
THAT ENGULFED THE GULF

The conflict has expanded

beyond Iran itself, with missile and drone attacks reported across several gulf countries. Iran has launched repeated barrages against Israel and neighbouring Gulf states, while Israeli and US aircraft continue to strike military and infrastructure targets across Iran. Meanwhile, Washington is reinforcing its military presence in the region. According to US officials, about 2,500 additional Marines and the

amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli are being deployed to the Middle East. The reinforcements include elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, a rapid-response force capable of conducting amphibious operations, securing embassies, evacuating civilians and responding to humanitarian emergencies. US naval forces are already operating extensively in the region. Earlier this week, a fleet of around a dozen ships - including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln - was reported to be active in the Arabian Sea. US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the scale of military operations has been significant since the conflict began, stating that more than 15,000 targets inside Iran have been struck. Israeli officials separately

said their air force hit more than 200 sites in a single day, including missile launchers, air defence systems and weapons manufacturing facilities. Despite fears that the Strait of Hormuz could remain blocked, US officials say they are managing the situation and monitoring shipping security in the area. Beyond Iran, the broader humanitarian impact of the conflict is also growing. In Lebanon, Israeli strikes targeting Iran-backed militants have left nearly 800 people dead and forced around 850,000 residents to flee their homes. With missile exchanges continuing and military deployments increasing, the situation across the Middle East remains volatile, even as Trump insists Iran has been decisively weakened and is seeking a deal.



US charges 11 Indians for staging fake robberies to obtain U category visas

As many as 11 Indian nationals living illegally in the United States have been charged with conspiracy to commit visa fraud after allegedly staging armed robberies at convenience stores in an attempt to secure immigration benefits, US federal prosecutors said.

According to the United States Department of Justice, the accused allegedly organised fake robberies so that store clerks could falsely claim they were victims of violent crimes while applying for immigration relief. The individuals charged include Jitendrakumar Patel (39), Maheshkumar Patel (36), Sanjaykumar Patel (45), Dipikaben Patel (40), Rameshbhai Patel (52), Amitabh Patel (43), Ronakkumar Patel (28), Sangitaben Patel (36), Minkesh Patel (42), Sonal Patel (42) and Mitul Patel (40). Authorities said all were residing unlawfully in various states, including Massachusetts, Kentucky and Ohio.

ARRESTS ACROSS MULTIPLE STATES
Six of the accused - Jitendrakumar, Maheshkumar, Sanjaykumar, Amitabh, Sangitaben and Mitul - were arrested in Massachusetts

and appeared in federal court in Boston on Friday before being released. Rameshbhai, Ronakkumar, Sonal and Minkesh were arrested in Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio and are expected to appear before a federal court in Boston at a later date. Another accused, Dipikaben Patel, was deported to India after unlawfully residing in Weymouth, Massachusetts, the Justice Department said.

FAKE ROBBERIES ORGANISED TO CLAIM U VISAS

Prosecutors alleged that beginning in March 2023, a scheme was carried out in which staged armed robberies were organised at convenience stores, liquor shops and fast-food outlets in Massachusetts and other locations. During these incidents, a participant posing as a robber would threaten store clerks with what appeared to be a firearm, take cash from the register and flee while the encounter was captured on store surveillance cameras. The clerks or store owners would then wait several minutes before contacting police to report the incident. Authorities say the robberies were staged so that those present could claim they had been victims of violent crimes while applying for a U visa.

Nepal Assures Safety of Citizens in West Asia

KATHMANDU: (Mar 14): The government is serious and cautious about the Nepali nationals in West Asian countries amid the conflict situation and operating rescue flights for many of them, Minister for Foreign Affairs Balaananda Sharma said here Saturday. There are around 3 million Nepalese presumed to be residing in different countries in the Gulf region, the government said two days ago and added, Nepal is actively engaged in carrying out rescue operations for more than 5,000 of its citizens from the region. On Saturday, while speaking at the 12th Annual General Meeting of the Non-Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA) here, Sharma said the government is committed to the safety of each and every Nepali.

Iran's Araghchi Hits US on Russian Oil Plea

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused the US of double standards on Russian oil, saying Washington once pressured India to cut imports but is now urging countries to buy Russian crude.

If oil diplomacy had a sense of irony, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi believes the latest twist would qualify. Araghchi on Saturday accused Washington of hypocrisy over Russian crude, saying the US is now urging countries to buy the very oil it once tried to block. Araghchi criticised the US in an X post, claiming Washington had spent months pressuring India to stop importing Russian oil but is now encouraging countries to purchase it as the conflict with Iran strains global energy markets. "The US spent months on bullying India into ending oil



imports from Russia," Araghchi wrote on X. "After two weeks of war with Iran, the White House is now begging the world - including India - to buy Russian crude." Araghchi also accused European governments of backing what he called an "illegal war" against Iran in hopes of securing American support against Russia.

"Europe thought backing illegal war on Iran would win US support against Russia. Pathetic," he said. The Iranian Foreign Minister posted the remarks alongside a Financial Times headline reporting

that rising oil prices were delivering Russia a major revenue boost. His remarks come as the Trump administration on Thursday announced a 30-day waiver allowing countries to purchase sanctioned Russian oil cargoes currently stranded at sea, a move aimed at stabilising global energy markets after crude prices surged past USD 100 per barrel amid the war in the Middle East.

The waiver was introduced after benchmark crude prices surged above USD 100 per barrel amid supply disruptions caused by the

war and Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil shipping routes. According to the US Treasury Department, the temporary licence permits the delivery and sale of Russian crude oil and petroleum products that were already loaded onto vessels as of March 12. The authorisation will remain in effect until midnight Washington time on April 11. The move follows after a 30-day waiver issued on March 5 allowing India to purchase Russian oil cargoes stuck at sea, giving importers limited flexibility to secure supplies during the ongoing crisis. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the measure was "narrowly tailored" and temporary, stressing that it was designed to stabilize markets and would not provide significant financial benefit to Moscow.

IRAN ALLOWS INDIAN SHIPS SAFE PASSAGE

Despite the conflict, Iran has allowed two India-flagged liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, Reuters reported, citing four sources with direct knowledge of the matter. Iran's ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali, said Tehran would ensure safe passage for vessels bound for India through the strategic waterway. "Yes, because India and Iran are friends," Fathali said when asked whether Indian ships would be allowed safe transit. "We have common interests; we have a common fate," he added. The envoy's remarks came just hours after he indicated that Indian-bound vessels could receive safe passage through the strait within two to three hours, underscoring the longstanding economic and diplomatic ties between Tehran and New Delhi despite the broader regional turmoil.

North Korea Fires 10 Missiles During US-SK Drills

North Korea fired 10 ballistic missiles towards the sea on Saturday, according to South Korean and Japanese authorities, in a fresh show of force as the United States and South Korea conduct joint military drills. The projectiles were fired toward waters off North Korea's east coast, the South Korean military said in a brief message to reporters, without providing further details. The missiles are believed to have landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone, Japan's public broadcaster NHK reported, citing sources in the defence ministry. The launches came as the United States and South Korea are conducting their annual springtime military exercises involving thousands of troops. The drills, which the allies describe as defensive in nature, are aimed at testing readiness against potential threats from North Korea. North Korea has long denounced such exercises as rehearsals for an invasion



and often responds with its own missile tests or military demonstrations.

SEOUL BOOSTS SURVEILLANCE AFTER LAUNCH

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military has strengthened surveillance and remains on high alert for additional launches. Authorities are also closely sharing information with the United States and Japan. In previous years, North Korea has carried out multiple missile or artillery salvo launches during allied exercises, often describing them as simulations of nuclear strikes against targets in South Korea.

Afghanistan says drone hit Pakistan's 'Hamza' military center in Islamabad

Afghanistan's defence ministry said its air force carried out a drone strike on a Pakistani military facility in Islamabad on Friday, marking the latest escalation in growing tensions between the neighbouring countries.



In a post on X, Afghanistan's Ministry of National Defense said the Afghan Air Force targeted a strategic military center known as "Hamza" in the Faizabad area of the Pakistani capital at around 5 p.m. local time.

"At about 5:00 PM today, Afghan Air Forces carried out an airstrike on the Pakistani military's strategic center, 'Hamza' in Faizabad, Islamabad," the ministry said. The claimed strike came amid a sharp escalation of hostilities between

Afghanistan and Pakistan along the disputed Durand Line, following a series of air and mortar attacks in recent days. Earlier, Pakistan launched airstrikes on locations in Kabul, Paktia and Kandahar, saying the operation - dubbed "Ghazlil Haq" - targeted militant camps and terrorist infrastructure. Afghan officials said the strikes hit residential areas in Kabul, killing at least four civilians and wounding more than a doz-

en, including women and children. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said the airstrikes in the Pul-e-Charkhi area of Kabul caused civilian casualties, according to Reuters. Afghanistan's ruling authorities have condemned the Pakistani attacks as violations of their sovereignty. Taliban administration spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid warned earlier that Pakistan's actions would "not go unanswered." Pakistan has

not immediately confirmed the reported strike on the Hamza military facility. Security has been tightened in Islamabad following the incident. Pakistan's interior minister Mohsin Naqvi ordered stricter monitoring of entry points into the capital, reducing them from 109 to 25 and increasing security checks. Meanwhile, China has stepped up diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions between the two countries. Afghan acting Foreign Minister Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi held a call with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who urged both sides to avoid military escalation. Despite mediation efforts, clashes between the two neighbours have intensified in recent weeks, raising fears of a broader conflict along their 2,600-kilometre border.

US sends 2,500 Marines, warship to Middle East as Iran conflict intensifies

The United States has ordered about 2,500 Marines and an amphibious assault ship to move toward the Middle East as tensions across the region escalate amid the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel and several Gulf states. A US official told The Associated Press that elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli have been directed to head toward the region. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military plans, said the deployment represents a significant reinforcement of American forces.

"Roughly 2,500 Marines and at least one amphibious assault ship are headed for the Middle East," the official said, adding that the move would mark a major addition of troops in the region.

Marine Expeditionary Units are rapid-response forces trained to handle a wide range of missions. While they are capable of launching amphibious

assaults, they are also commonly used for securing embassies, evacuating civilians and responding to humanitarian emergencies.

Officials emphasised that the deployment does not necessarily signal an imminent ground operation. Instead, the forces are being positioned to support multiple possible missions depending on how the situation evolves.

The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, along with the USS Tripoli and other amphibious vessels carrying Marines, is based in Japan. Recent military images show the ships operating in the Pacific Ocean, meaning they are currently more than a week away from waters near Iran. The reinforcement comes as tensions across the Middle East intensify. Iran has launched missile and drone attacks targeting Israel and Gulf states, while also disrupting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical maritime trade routes.

NOPO: Secret Force Protecting Mojtaba Khamenei

The new Iranian Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, is severely wounded, and Israel has threatened to take him down. However, protecting Mojtaba is not the all-powerful IRGC or the Iranian army. That task lies with a secretive and elite security unit known as NOPO.

When the first wave of US-Israeli strikes wounded Iran on February 28, it wiped out Mojtaba Khamenei's immediate family, including his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his wife and his teen son. However, amid the devastation, the man who would soon emerge as Iran's new Supreme Leader survived - severely wounded, but alive. Behind that unlikely escape might be the shadowy hand of Iran's most secretive

and elite security unit, known as NOPO. Mojtaba, however, has not been seen in person since being named his father's successor. In his first statement on Thursday, the new Supreme Leader pledged that Iran would continue fighting. However, the statement was read by a news anchor. Latest reports claim Mojtaba is likely in a coma, with US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth asserting that he was "disfigured". But Mojtaba must be kept alive, and the task to safeguard him lies with NOPO.

NOPO is the Farsi acronym for Nirouyeh Vjeh Pasdaran Velayat. It roughly translates to a "special force tasked with protecting the regime". At a recent interview with Fox News, Ali Safavi, an official with the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), said the special force had been tasked with secur-



ing Mojtaba. "With Khamenei gone, NOPO will likely now be protecting Mojtaba Khamenei," Safavi said.

WHAT IS IRAN'S NOPO?

Established in 1991 during the regime of Iran's first Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, NOPO was carved out of the 28th Rohallah Division -- a unit tasked with

protecting him. It was kept separate from the Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Now, let us understand the security structure in Iran. There is the regular army, known as the Artesh, comprising the ground force, air force, navy, and air defence force. Then comes the IRGC, created after the 1979 revolution that saw the over-

throw of the Pahlavi dynasty. The IRGC, consisting of around 1.2 lakh personnel, reports directly to the Supreme Leader and operates independently of the regular army. Over the years, the IRGC has built a network of proxy militias in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. The NOPO is distinct from the IRGC. It is more lethal, ruthless, and better-trained than the IRGC, operating with considerable secrecy. While the force may not be as large as the IRGC, it is highly specialised. While four brigades protect the Supreme Leader, two others are based in Mashhad and Isfahan, a key nuclear site. The black-clad special force is specifically deployed to quell internal threats, protests, and in hostage situations. NOPO is believed to have been put in action during key phases of domestic unrest, from the

1999 student protests to the 2022 uprising that followed the custodial death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini. Amini was detained by Iran's morality police for not wearing her hijab "properly" and later died in custody.

Amini's death sparked protests unlike any Iran had seen before. A violent crackdown ordered by Khamenei killed more than 500 people. The NOPO has been key in such high-stakes scenarios. "This absolute loyalty is a crucial factor in high-intensity internal conflicts where the regime's survival is at stake," Safavi of NCRI told Fox News. In 2021, the US imposed sanctions on NOPO for committing "serious human rights abuses". However, in Iran, the elite counterterrorism unit continues to be a vital asset tasked with protecting the Supreme Leader for generations after generations.

Equipment shortage, delayed response by fire dept killed 73 in Karachi inferno: mall body chief

KARACHI: (MAR 14)

Inadequate equipment and delayed response by the fire department resulted in over 70 deaths and injuries in the January fire at a shopping complex in Pakistan's Karachi, an office-bearer of the mall association alleged Saturday.

At least 73 persons were killed in the massive fire that engulfed the Gul Shopping Plaza on January 17.

About two dozen people were injured due to the fire, smoke inhalation and structural failures after the blaze turned into an inferno that could be reignited in only after two days.

Gul Shopping Plaza Association president Tanveer Pasha, in a written statement submitted to the Judicial Commission said that the fire engine reached the site nearly 40 minutes after the fire broke out.

Pandey Calls for Discipline in Volatile Markets

Sebi chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey emphasized the resilience and depth of India's capital markets amid global uncertainties. He advised retail investors to maintain a long-term perspective, instead of indulging in 'impulsive' trading.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Saturday said India's capital markets are deepening and becoming increasingly resilient, even as global uncertainties continue to cause volatility markets.

Speaking at the second edition of the Moneycontrol Global Wealth Summit 2026 in Mumbai, Pandey advised retail investors not to react impulsively to short-term market movements and instead keep a long-term perspective while investing.

"For retail investors, the best strategy would be to remain patient," he said, adding that markets have historically recovered after major global disruptions.

His remarks come at a time when the Indian stock market has been reeling under the selling pressure for the last two weeks following the outbreak of the US-Iran conflict, which has triggered global risk aversion and volatility.

On top of that, the key benchmark indices of the Indian stock market have remained almost flat for the last 18 months, meaning an investor's

portfolio has either remained idle for the last 1.5 years or delivered zero returns during this particular period.

India's capital markets has become 'resilient'

Pandey added that the country's capital markets are expanding in scale, diversity and strength. "They are deepening, diversified and becoming increasingly resilient. But as markets grow in scale and complexity they also become more closely connected to global developments. And that brings us to the changing landscape in which today's market operates," he said.

Underlining the role of efficient markets, he said: "They enable transparent price discovery. They help absorb shocks without destabilising the broader financial system. And perhaps most importantly, they sustain investor confidence. Efficiency is the foundation of trust in the financial system. Without that, capital hesitates."

Pandey says volatility is natural

Acknowledging the headwinds in global markets, Pandey said a mix of geopolitical tensions, technological disruption and energy shocks is weighing on investor sentiment. "Geopolitical tensions are shaping economic relationships. Conflict in the Middle East has massively disrupted energy supplies. Inevitably, capital markets have been severely impacted," he said.

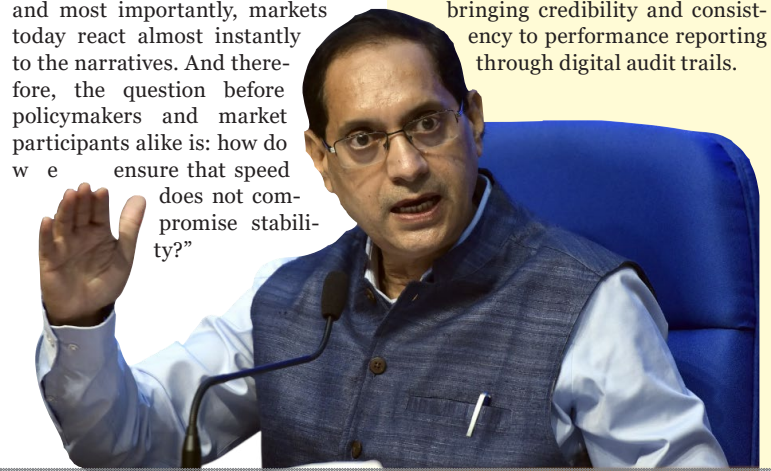
He added that volatility has become a normal feature of modern financial

markets, particularly as the information environment has evolved and shocks spread quickly across economies. However, he stressed that such phases are not permanent: "One lesson becomes clear: periods of extreme volatility don't last forever."

Sebi chief's take on how narratives drive markets

Pandey also pointed to the changes that are reshaping capital markets, saying factors such as economic fragmentation, shifting trade corridors and the growing role of technology are influencing how markets function today. "Algorithmic trading, artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics are accelerating the speed at which markets operate," he said.

He also flagged the rapid flow of information as a growing risk for markets, as he stated, "News travels quickly, opinions travel even faster, and most importantly, markets today react almost instantly to the narratives. And therefore, the question before policymakers and market participants alike is: how do we ensure that speed does not compromise stability?"



What investors should expect?

Setting the stage for what investors can expect going forward, Pandey said capital markets will play a bigger role as India continues its economic journey. "The next phase of development will require deeper bond markets, stronger institutional participation and continued technological innovation," he said.

He also highlighted steps taken by the markets regulator to protect investors, including monitoring misleading social media content and strengthening surveillance systems such as PaRRVA to detect potential market manipulation and misinformation.

The Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA) system announced in December last year, is a tech-driven initiative, aimed at bringing credibility and consistency to performance reporting through digital audit trails.

Akasa Air Announces RS.199-1,300 Fuel Surcharge

MUMBAI, MAR 14

Akasa Air on Saturday announced that it will introduce a fuel surcharge ranging from Rs 199 to Rs 1,300 on domestic and international flight tickets booked from March 15, citing a sharp rise in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices amid escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. In a post on X, the airline said the surcharge will apply to all bookings made from 00:01 hrs on March 15, 2026, and will not be applicable to tickets booked before that time. The airline said the additional charge will be levied per sector and will vary depending on the duration of the flight.

Akasa cites sharp rise in ATF prices

"There has been a significant increase in the price of aviation turbine fuel, driven by evolving geopolitical developments in the Middle East," Akasa Air said in its statement. "As fuel represents a significant portion of airline operating costs, this impacts the cost of operations across the aviation industry," it added. The airline said it remains focused on offering "warm and efficient customer service, reliable operations, and affordable fares while maintaining the high-

est standards of operational efficiency", and added that it will continue to monitor the operating environment and review the fuel surcharge periodically.

Move follows Air India, IndiGo fare actions

Akasa's decision comes after larger Indian carriers Air India Group and IndiGo



also moved to pass on part of the fuel cost burden to passengers. Earlier, IndiGo said it will levy an additional fuel charge of Rs 425 to Rs 2,300 on all new domestic and international bookings made from 00:01 hrs on March 14, citing "the significant surge in fuel prices following the ongoing geopolitical issues". IndiGo said IATA's jet fuel monitor showed an over 85% rise in fuel prices for the region, adding that ATF represents a major share of airline operating costs. Air India Group had earlier introduced a fuel sur-

charge ranging from Rs 399 to \$200 on flights beginning Thursday, saying that without the move, some services may not cover operating costs and could face cancellation.

The latest surcharge announcements come as the widening conflict in the Middle East continues to disrupt global oil supplies and push up jet fuel prices worldwide.



Attacks on commercial shipping and oil infrastructure in the Gulf region, along with disruption through the Strait of Hormuz, have tightened supplies and driven a steep increase in fuel prices. Airlines are also facing added operational costs due to airspace restrictions and longer rerouted flights, which burn more fuel. Industry experts said long-haul international routes are likely to feel the greatest impact, though domestic fares may also remain under pressure if fuel prices stay elevated.

Middle East Crisis Won't Shake India: Goyal

NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said India's economy remains resilient despite the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, though the situation may have a short-term impact on the economic activity. "India is a resilient country with strong fundamentals. While we have war raging on, Indians understand the challenges and are willing to work with the government," Goyal said.

The minister also stated that there will be a shortfall in economic activity in the short run, but "we will make up for it in the coming months".

Despite geopolitical tensions, India's growth outlook remains robust. The Indian economy is expected to grow at more than 7 per cent in the



next financial year, following an estimated growth of 7.6 per cent in the current year.

In addition, after posting GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in FY24-25, India's economy expanded by 7.8 per cent in the first quarter of FY2025-26, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

At a time when several major economies are slowing and revising growth forecasts downward amid policy uncertainties, India continues to

maintain strong momentum.

The IMF has positioned India as the fastest-growing major economy globally, ahead of China, whose growth is projected at 4.8 per cent.

The multilateral agency has also projected India's real GDP growth at 6.6 per cent for the full year, even under the assumption of prolonged tariff measures by the United States.

Earlier this month, the IMF said India is expected to contribute around 17 per cent to global real GDP growth in 2026, reflecting its continued status as the world's fastest-growing major economy.

The IMF also said that India is expected to contribute around 17 per cent to global real GDP growth in 2026, reflecting its continued status as the world's fastest-growing major economy.

Ignore Wrong Transaction Emails: Tax Dept

NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

The Income Tax Department on Saturday urged taxpayers to ignore certain emails containing incorrect details about "significant transactions" that were sent as part of the ongoing Advance Tax e-Campaign for the assessment year (AY) 2026-27.

In a post on X social media platform, the tax department said it has received reports from taxpayers about inaccurate information included in the communications and acknowledged the error.

"It has been reported that certain taxpayers have received emails containing inaccurate details regarding 'significant transactions' undertaken by them as part of the ongoing Advance Tax

e-Campaign for AY 2026-27 (Financial Year 2025-26)," the Department said.

The Department thanked taxpayers for bringing the issue to its attention and apologised for the inconvenience caused.

Officials said the matter is being addressed in coordination with the service provider responsible for the communication system.

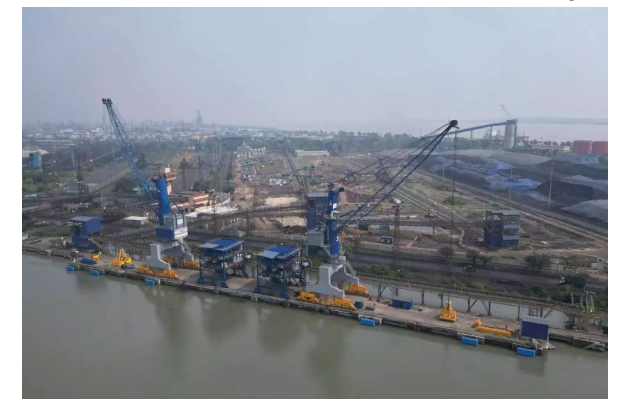
"We are actively working to resolve this matter in coordination with our service provider. In the meantime, taxpayers are requested to kindly ignore the earlier email communication related to the Advance Tax e-Campaign for AY 2026-27," the post said.

The Income Tax Department also clarified that such communications are meant

to serve as facilitative reminders for taxpayers to review financial information available on the Compliance Portal and ensure appropriate advance tax compliance where required.

Taxpayers have been advised to verify their transaction details through the e-Campaign tab on the Compliance Portal, which can be accessed through the Income Tax e-Filing portal. The department also sought taxpayers' understanding and cooperation while the issue is being resolved. The Central government's net direct tax collections touched Rs 18.37 lakh crore between April 1 and January 11 of the current financial year (2025-26), according to data released by the Income Tax Department in January.

Modi Launches Adani Ports' Haldia Facility



AHMEDABAD, MARCH 14

Setting a new benchmark for efficiency on India's eastern seaboard, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday commissioned the Haldia Bulk Terminal (HBT) and formally dedicated it to the nation. Designed to handle dry bulk cargo at an annual capacity of 4 million metric tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA), the terminal is a fully automated bulk facility on the Hooghly River with direct rail connections - a structural upgrade for bulk cargo movement through India's eastern maritime corridor. "The Haldia Bulk Terminal is a next generation facility that brings full mechanisation and direct rail evacuation to the Hooghly. By eliminating jetty dumping and lowering cargo loss through advanced automated systems, we are ensuring cleaner, safer and more sustainable operations," said Ashwani Gupta, Whole-time Director and CEO, APSEZ.

The terminal will play a pivotal role in strengthening industrial supply chains of West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand, while supporting the Prime Minister's Modi vision of lowering logistics costs through modern multimodal infrastructure," Gupta added.

The east coast accounts for about 60 per cent of India's dry bulk imports, including coal, bauxite and limestone, making Haldia the most efficient and direct maritime entry port for the steel, aluminium and power industries of West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand.

This capacity addition will materially reduce logistics costs and turnaround times

for these industries, said the company.

Located within the Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, the terminal has been developed under a 30-year concession through the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DB-FOT) model by HDC Bulk Terminal Ltd - and delivered within its construction window, from commencement on July 14, 2023 to commissioning readiness today. "This showcases the execution capability of APSEZ in executing projects on time, every time," the company noted.

Since commencement of construction, Adani Ports has installed a 2,000 T Railway Wagon Loading System (RWLS) and commissioned of a 1.54 km dedicated railway line, enabling direct ship-to-rail cargo evacuation; refurbished the existing jetty; installed advanced conveyor systems, automating the process; and deployed two stacker-cum-reclaimers for automated stockyard management.

The RWLS and the dedicated rail line are the terminal's most consequential features. Together they allow bulk cargo discharged from vessels to load directly onto railway wagons and connect to the main lines, reducing port dwell time, and cutting the delivered cost of raw materials for industrial consumers across three states.

The Haldia Terminal is a direct expression of India's 'Sagarmala' programme and the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, both of which prioritise multimodal port infrastructure to reduce India's logistics costs.

US Trade Probe Puts India, 15 Nations Under Scanner

On March 11, 2026, the US Trade Representative (USTR) has launched a fresh round of Section 301 trade investigations targeting the policies and industrial practices of 16 economies. This marks a significant escalation in trade scrutiny at a time when Washington's earlier tariff strategy has been outlawed by a US Supreme Court ruling.

Countries included are: China, the European Union, Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Mexico, Japan and India.

The probe covers sectors including steel, aluminium, automobiles, batteries, electronics, chemicals, machinery, semiconductors and solar modules.

India
The US investigation identifies several sectors in India where structural excess capacity or export surpluses may exist. These include solar modules, petrochemicals, steel, textiles, health-related goods, construction materials and automotive products.

According to the US notice, India's solar-module manufacturing capacity is already nearly three times domestic demand, suggesting the possibility of export-driven production surpluses. Similar concerns are raised about expanding capacity in petrochemicals and steel.



Investigation process

Under Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974, the US government may investigate whether foreign trade practices are unreasonable or discriminatory and harm American commerce. The investigations will examine whether policies such as industrial subsidies, state-supported manufacturing expansion, activities of state-owned enterprises, market-access barriers, currency practices or suppressed domestic demand have contributed to global manufacturing overcapacity that burdens US commerce.

If such practices are confirmed, Washington may impose retaliatory trade measures, including additional tariffs, quantitative restrictions or other trade barriers.

The investigation will follow a defined process. Public dockets for written submissions will open on March 17, 2026, allowing companies, trade groups and governments to submit comments. Written submis-

sions and requests to participate in hearings must be filed by April 15.

Public hearings will take place from May 5 to May 8 at the US International Trade Commission in Washington. Rebuttal submissions must be filed within seven days after the hearings conclude. After consultations with the governments concerned, the USTR will determine whether the practices under investigation warrant retaliatory action.

Background:
Tariff strategy collapse

The launch of these investigations comes just 20 days after a major legal setback for the Trump administration's trade strategy. On February 20, 2026, the US Supreme Court struck down the legal basis for the administration's "reciprocal tariffs," which had been used to pressure trading partners into making concessions in trade negotiations.

Within hours of the ruling, Washington imposed a uniform 10% tariff under Section 122 of the Trade

Act of 1974, replacing targeted tariff pressure with a flat duty applied to all countries. However, the shift created a new dilemma for the United States. Several countries had already negotiated trade arrangements with Washington under the earlier tariff framework. These agreements included higher negotiated tariff levels - around 15% for the European Union, Japan and South Korea, and 20% for Vietnam and Taiwan, and roughly 19% for Indonesia and Thailand. After the court ruling introduced a universal 10% tariff, those negotiated advantages effectively disappeared, prompting some governments to reconsider the value of trade deals with US.

Many of the countries now facing Section 301 investigations had already concluded some form of trade agreement or framework arrangement with the United States after April 2025. These include the European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Cambodia, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan and Bangladesh. China operates under a temporary tariff arrangement, while Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Thailand, Mexico and India remain in negotiations.

India, for example, signed a joint statement with the United States on February 6, 2026, committing to reduce tariffs on many goods, purchase more than \$500 billion of US products over five years, ease digital regulations affecting American tech-

nology firms and relax certain regulatory barriers for US exports.

US President Donald Trump has warned trading partners against attempting to renegotiate these arrangements.

Global Trade Research Institute (GTRI) notes that while Section 301 remains an important US trade tool, it is slower and more legally constrained than the reciprocal tariff system invalidated by the Supreme Court. Section 301 investigations require evidence of harm and must be tied to specific trade practices.

The United States may also consider tariffs under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which allows trade restrictions on national-security grounds. The provision has already been used to impose high duties on steel and aluminium and could potentially be extended to additional sectors. The revival of Section 301 investigations signals that US trade policy is entering a new phase following the court ruling that curtailed Washington's tariff powers.

With its earlier tariff strategy effectively dismantled, the United States appears to be turning to trade investigations and targeted measures to maintain leverage in negotiations with trading partners.

AJAY SRIVASTAVA
the founder of
Global Trade Research
Institute (GTRI).

IS EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT FAT WRONG? EXPERTS DEBUNK 4 MYTHS

The updated U.S. food pyramid has renewed discussion around what it means to consume healthy fat. There are also lots of misconceptions about being 'fat but fit' or being 'skinny fat'. Medical News Today speaks to experts to determine whether all fatty foods are harmful to health and whether certain body types or compositions are healthier.

For decades, adipose tissue (or, in other words, body fat) has been seen as merely a "storage depot" the body uses for insulation and fuel. However, with more research, it has become apparent that fat is akin to an organ, producing hormones and communicating with the brain and the immune system via signals.

Although most people worry about the fat you can pinch on the body, studies have uncovered that "hidden" fat, or visceral fat, is more detrimental to health. Trusted Source and can cause organs to age. This type of fat surrounds organs and drives chronic disease.

And when it comes to the type of fat we consume, the "cut (all) fat" message from health professionals has been a universal reality. Especially regarding saturated fat, such as butter, full-fat dairy, or red meat, guidelines have traditionally called for a limit of up to 10% of daily calories.

Recent studies have questioned this threshold, suggesting that for people who already have a low risk of heart disease and low cholesterol levels, consuming saturated fat may not have as big an impact as previously thought.

BUT THE REPLACEMENT FOR ONE FAT SOURCE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE FAT ITSELF

Medical News Today spoke to three experts — Michelle Routhenstein, MS, RD, CDCES, CDN, preventive cardiology dietitian at EntirelyNourished, Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS, RDN, and Hector Perez, MD, bariatric surgeon at Renew Bariatrics and advisor at Bestsurgeons, to learn more about which fat sources are the most healthy, how much fat people should consume, and whether looking "skinny" translates to being healthy.

All three experts agreed that pushing for low fat foods and limiting fat consumption excessively was outdated advice.

"The push to eat as little fat as possible is outdated. Research has updated guidelines to focus more on overall eating patterns and the type of fat consumed rather than minimizing total fat at all costs," said Routhenstein.

"Low-fat advice is both obsolete and naïve, in my opinion. So-called 'fat-free' foods are often laden with sugar to compensate," Perez chimed in.

HOW MUCH FAT SHOULD I EAT DAILY?

"Total fat intake is generally considered acceptable in the range of 20 to 35 percent of daily cal-



ories. Saturated fat limits depend on your cardiovascular risk, generally, they should account for less than 10% of your total calories per day."

— Michelle Routhenstein, MS RD CDCES CDN

"Basically, we spent 40 years stripping fat out of food and replacing it with refined starch and sugar, then acted surprised when obesity rates tripled, and type 2 diabetes skyrocketed. What makes 'low-fat' even more outdated is modern evidence, which shows that the type of fat matters far more than total fat intake. Healthy fats improve lipids, reduce inflammation, and stabilize appetite," Perez explained.

"The quality of the diet should really take center stage when we consider which dietary pattern is best. In fact, a recent study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology comparing low-fat and low-carb diets found that diet quality mattered more than the specific macronutrient ratio," said Kirkpatrick.

However, Kirkpatrick underscored that people with health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, fatty liver, or insulin resistance may benefit more

from a moderate-to-lower-carbohydrate approach, which could help improve blood sugar control.

Current research supports swapping saturated fats for polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, which can help decrease the levels of LDL or 'bad' cholesterol.

Underscoring that monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are beneficial for brain and heart health, Kirkpatrick gave examples of healthier alternatives for people looking to reduce their saturated fat intake.

"These healthier fats are found in foods like extra-virgin olive oil, avocados, nuts, seeds, and fatty fish such as salmon," she said.

Meanwhile, Routhenstein reminded that eliminating saturated fat completely from one's diet may not be feasible for most people.

"I would assess where saturated fat is coming from in your diet and intentionally swap it for an unsaturated fat source instead; swapping is more beneficial than eliminating the saturated fat altogether," she said.

Perez pointed out that making the right switch-

es in one's diet was important and that people should try to avoid replacements that are heavily processed.

"If you reduce saturated fat, replace it with monounsaturated and omega-3 fats like olive oil, nuts, fatty fish, instead of refined carbohydrates. Swapping steak for sugary cereal is not a win," he said.

Routhenstein also encouraged people to seek whole foods rather than focusing solely on fat content.

"For example, full-fat dairy (containing saturated fat) also provides protein and calcium, which can support satiety as well as bone and muscle health," she said.

"Rather than obsessing over fat, I think it's high time people educate themselves about nutrients that are actually good vs. bad for their bodies. I've seen people cut saturated fat and replace it with bagels and low fat snack bars, which just seems to me like changing the villain," Perez added.

"Of course, and that's why I ask my patients not to rely on just their BMI as a health indicator. I've seen 120-pound patients with fatty liver, insulin

resistance, elevated triglycerides, and metabolic syndrome," Perez said.

He also explained the difference between looking 'thin' and having healthy body fat.

"We now recognize the phenotype called 'TOFI' — Thin Outside, Fat Inside, where deep visceral fat accumulates despite a normal outward appearance. Just because the mirror looks OK doesn't mean your internal biology agrees," he said.

"Someone can appear thin but still have higher levels of visceral fat or metabolic risk factors. The number on the scale isn't always the best indicator of overall health or long-term disease risk," Kirkpatrick added.

This has also been referred to as "skinny fat" on social media.

Excess body fat is one of the primary drivers of metabolic syndrome, which can increase the risk of a range of conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and high cholesterol.

"Metabolic disease is an internal storm that often precedes external weight gain, especially in people with sedentary lifestyles, poor diets high in sugar and refined starches, or genetic predisposition," Perez explained.

"Being lean in appearance does not guarantee protection from cardiometabolic disease. This is why measuring cardiometabolic indicators such as waist circumference, blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and insulin levels, and inflammatory markers is more informative than relying on the scale alone," said Routhenstein.

Research has consistently shown that visceral fat, or fat that surrounds organs, is more detrimental to metabolic health.

Kirkpatrick said that where fat is stored in the body can matter for long-term health.

"Where fat is stored predicts your health far better than how much total fat you have. A lean BMI doesn't immunize you from fat-driven pathology if that fat is centrally deposited," Perez pointed out.

"[A] thin person with visceral belly fat is at higher metabolic risk than a heavier person with mostly subcutaneous buttock or thigh fat," he said.

The experts also explained the differences between visceral and subcutaneous fat and the biological mechanisms at play in both.

"Visceral adipose tissue sits deep, bathes the liver and organs in pro-inflammatory cytokines, worsens insulin resistance, and drives atherogenic profiles. Subcutaneous fat is more like insulation, bulky but less biochemically toxic," Perez said.

"Visceral fat [is] strongly linked to higher risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes. Subcutaneous fat, which sits just under the skin, does not carry the same level of metabolic risk," said Kirkpatrick.

"For this reason, waist circumference and certain metabolic markers are often more useful for assessing health risk than body mass index or weight alone," added Routhenstein.

CAN TAKING A DAILY MULTIVITAMIN HELP SLOW BIOLOGICAL AGING?

Over the last few years, researchers have been focusing on finding new ways for people to slow their biological aging — the process by which the body begins to age, which may not match a person's chronological age.

Past studies show that making certain healthy lifestyle choices, such as not smoking, being physically active, getting enough sleep, and eating a healthy diet may help slow the biological aging process.

"Living longer is one thing; living better is just as important," Howard Sesso, ScD, MPH, associate director of the Division of Preventive Medicine in the Mass General Brigham Department of Medicine, told Medical News Today. "More clinical trials are needed under the effects of lifestyle and pharmacologic interventions on biological aging captured through epigenetics and other biomarkers. Trusted Source."

Sesso is the senior author of a new study recently published in Nature Medicine that found that taking a daily multivitamin may help slow biological aging, including in older adults already experiencing accelerated biological aging.

THE COSMOS TRIAL

For this study, researchers analyzed data from blood samples of 958 randomly selected participants of the COcoa Supplement Multivitamins Outcomes Study (COSMOS), with an average chronological age of 70.

"COSMOS represents the first large-scale randomized clinical trial that examines the effects of a common dietary supplement on epigenetic clocks; we (hoped) to delve further into this in COSMOS," Sesso explained. "We previously reported benefits in the COSMOS trial for the benefits of the multivitamin intervention on (e.g.) cognition and the cocoa extract intervention on (e.g.) cardiovascular disease death, so we leveraged the longitudinal biospecimens collected in a large subset of COSMOS participants to determine whether these benefits extended to improvements in biological aging versus placebo."

For this study, Sesso said they used the standard Centrum Silver multivitamin formulation at the time the COSMOS trial began in the mid-2010s, which is sold in the United States.

"It contains all essential vitamins and minerals at lower amounts, along with a few other nutri-



ents," he explained. "Whether the COSMOS trial findings extend to similar broad-based multivitamin formulations is an important question; intuitively, it may, but we simply don't have data to address it directly."

2 EPIGENETIC CLOCKS SLOW DOWN WITH MULTIVITAMIN

Study participants were randomly selected to take daily either a multivitamin and cocoa extract, cocoa extract and placebo, a multivitamin and placebo, or just placebos over two years. The multivitamin contained vitamins A, C, D₃, E, and K, as well as B vitamins, and minerals such as magnesium, zinc, calcium, and others.

At the study's conclusion, researchers found that participants in the multivitamin group had slowed two of the five epigenetic clocks, compared with the placebo group. This translates to about 2.7–5.1 months of slowing after two years.

The two specific "second-generation" epigenetic clocks that the multivitamin slowed were PCGrim-

Age and PCPhenoAge, while the other three, which the multivitamin had no significant effect on, were the Horvath and Hannum clocks or the DunedinPACE measure.

MOST BENEFIT SEEN IN BIOLOGICALLY OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Additionally, scientists reported that study participants who were biologically older than their actual age at the start of the COSMOS trial benefited the most from taking the daily multivitamin.

"We plan to delve more deeply into other epigenetic clocks from our DNA methylation data in COSMOS, plus have additional epigenetic data in two other large randomized clinical trials testing dietary supplements," Sesso said, when asked about the next planned steps for this research.

"More clinical trials are needed to (understand) the effects of lifestyle and pharmacologic interventions on biological aging captured through epigenetics and other biomarkers," he added.

EARLY RESEARCH STAGES OF A COMPLEX FIELD

MNT spoke with Zeeshan Khan, MD, chief of geriatric medicine at Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center in New Jersey, about this study, who commented that his first reaction to its findings was a bit of relief mixed with cautious optimism, as for years, patients have asked him if they should be taking a multivitamin.

"Before this article, the evidence has been somewhat ambiguous for generally well-nourished adults," Khan explained. "Now we have a high quality study which has found a safe, accessible, and affordable intervention that may slow down a key epigenetic aging clock."

"My optimism is cautious because we are still in the early stages of research in this complex field. We don't yet know if slowing an epigenetic aging clock will definitely translate to a longer/healthier life. However, this study gives me a concrete and evidenced-based point of discussion for patients who are proactive about their health and worry about aging."

— Zeeshan Khan, MD

Khan said while this study is a "great first step," to translate this into a firm clinical recommendation, several things need to happen next.

"First, we need long-term follow-up on clinical outcomes: do those patients with a slowed down epigenetic clock actually experience fewer age-related diseases (think heart attack, cancer, or dementia)," he detailed. "Next, what was the mechanism of action? Was it a specific vitamin or mineral in the supplement? Future studies could test different formulations to pinpoint the key ingredients and help us understand why it works."

"Finally, I would like to see the results replicated in diverse populations and see how well the intervention compares with other known interventions such as the Mediterranean diet," Khan added. "This would help us build a comprehensive and evidence-based toolkit to promote healthy aging."

MNT also spoke with Monique Richard, MS, RDN, LDN, a registered dietitian nutritionist and owner of Nutrition-In-Sight, for her tips on how readers can find a daily multivitamin to help them potentially slow their biological aging. Or, for those who prefer not to take a multivitamin, how can readers get those same vitamins in their diet, hopefully with the same benefit?

"I encourage clients to think 'food first, sup-

plements second, as necessary," Richard said. "Multivitamins can help fill nutrient gaps, but they cannot replicate the complex matrix of nutrients, fiber, and bioactive compounds found in whole foods that support healthy aging."

When selecting a multivitamin or any supplement, Richard said to look for quality and transparency.

"Choose brands that are third-party tested (i.e., USP, NSF, or ConsumerLab) to verify quality (high standard of ingredients) and purity (that what is described to be inside is actually inside)," she detailed. "Avoid common marketing red flags including vitamins and minerals in 'megadoses,' (i.e., 500% of the Recommended Daily Allowance), unsubstantiated health claims, and celebrity-type endorsements."

Richard said the supplement should also match the stage of life.

"Products formulated for older adults may include certain nutrients needed at higher levels, such as vitamin B12, vitamin D, and calcium, which can become more difficult to absorb with age, whereas a child will have entirely different needs, as will an athlete and so on."

RICHARD ALSO REMINDED READERS THAT MANY OF THE VITAMINS FOUND IN MULTIVITAMINS CAN BE OBTAINED THROUGH DIETARY PATTERNS ASSOCIATED WITH LONGEVITY, SUCH AS:

- B vitamins (leafy greens, legumes, whole grains)
- Vitamin C (citrus, berries, peppers)
- Vitamin D (fatty fish, fortified dairy, juice, plant milks, irradiated mushrooms)
- Vitamin E (nuts, seeds, wheat germ, vegetables and fruits)
- Magnesium (beans, nuts, legumes, vegetables)
- Various antioxidant compounds found in plants such as berries, colorful vegetables, herbs, and spices

"Healthy aging starts with what is on your plate from what was purchased in the grocery store, at the farmer's market, or harvested from the land, not from a bottle in the supplement aisle," Richard advised. "Prioritize investing your dollars on colorful produce and a good pair of walking shoes and then on appropriate supplements as needed and recommended by an RDN and/or your healthcare team."

'Champions don't stay down for long': Langer backs Pant to shine in IPL 2026



NEW DELHI

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) head coach Justin Langer believes that skipper Rishabh Pant will bounce back strongly in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, which will commence on March 28, saying champions like Pant do not remain down for long.

Pant, who is expected to play a key role for Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) this season, has been working hard in training after a challenging phase. He was recently seen practising under the guidance of India's champion player, Yuvraj Singh, in a short camp in Mumbai. Langer revealed that the 26-year-old is already showing promising signs ahead of the new season, and the team have great expectations for their leader.

"He'll be ready to go. He's training at the moment. We've got a camp going on at the moment, so I'll see him in a couple of days. He's firing, and as I said, with all champions, they don't stay down for long."

His last game last year in the IPL, we saw how brilliant he can be, so that's our expectation for him this year," Langer told ESPNcricinfo. Pant, who is the most expensive IPL player via a Rs 27 crore deal, has not played competitive cricket since suffering a side strain while batting on the eve of India's ODI series against New Zealand in Vadodara in January.

Pant endured a poor run in IPL 2025, scoring 269 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of 133.16, his lowest returns since debuting in the competition in 2016. Despite hitting an unbeaten 118 in LSG's final league game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, it didn't help the side's cause as they finished seventh in the points table. Despite poor form, Pant remains one of the most dynamic wicketkeeper-batters in the IPL and has built a reputation for his fearless approach with the bat. Pant has been a consistent performer in the tournament, amassing more than 3,200 runs in over 110 matches at a strike rate above 145, which includes two centuries and 19 fifties.

Triple jumper Abdulla Aboobacker wins gold in 5th Indian Open Jumps Competition

BENGALURU

Abdulla Aboobacker and Praveen Chithravel battled for the gold medal in the men's triple jump event on the opening day of the Fifth Indian Open Jumps Competition held at Anju Bobby George Foundation Campus here in Bengaluru on Saturday.

But Aboobacker had the upper hand in an exciting contest. The international jumper representing the Air Force got his rhythm right in his third attempt to take home the gold medal with a distance of 16.83m. His opening jump was 16.05m, and he recorded a jump of 16.57m in his second attempt. However, he didn't attempt the last three jumps. Praveen Chithravel settled for silver with a jump of 16.78m in the season-opening competition. Away from the triple jump arena, the army's international jumper, Sarvesh Anil Kushare, was the clear winner in the men's high jump. He cleared 2.16m on his third attempt to win gold. However, he failed to clear 2.19m.

It was a nail-biting contest in the men's pole vault. Training partners Dev Meena and Kuldeep Kumar aimed to raise the bar and improve the national record of 5.40m, which was set last year by Dev Meena. Both fell short of the national record, clearing 5.25m. Dev Meena was the first to clear the bar at 5.25m and walked away with the day's honour.



Results (day one):

- Men: High jump: Sarvesh Anil Kushare (Maharashtra) 2.16m, Aaditya Raghuvanshi (Madhya Pradesh) 2.13m, Swadhin Kumar Majhi (Odisha) 2.13m.
- Men: High jump U20: Basant (Rajasthan) 2.14m, Srivatsan N (Tamil Nadu) 2.09m, Afroz Ahmad (Jharkhand) 1.99m.
- Men: High jump U18: Devak Bhushan (Kerala) 2.03m, Zubin Gohain (JSW) 1.95m, Virendra Ranaware (Maharashtra) 1.85m.
- Men: Triple jump: Abdulla Aboobacker (Air Force) 16.83m, Praveen Chithravel (Tamil Nadu) 16.78m, Gailey Venister (Tamil Nadu) 16.48m.
- Men: Triple jump: U20: Dhanush Raj M (Kerala) 15.08m, Daksh Bishnoi (Punjab) 14.98m, Karthikeyan G (Tamil Nadu) 14.85m.

India's decision to stick with Samson in top three worked out really well, says Ponting



NEW DELHI

The legendary Ricky Ponting has identified India's decision to persist with wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson at the top of the order as one of the defining calls in their triumphant ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign, saying the faith shown in him by captain Suryakumar Yadav and the coaching staff proved to be the difference on the biggest stage.

Samson's tournament began in uncertainty - he had made only 46 runs in five T20s against New Zealand and only got to play in the league stage game against Namibia in New Delhi due to Abhishek Sharma's stomach infection. Samson was then recalled for a crucial Super Eights game against Zimbabwe, and from there, he responded with a campaign that ultimately earned him the Player of the Tournament award.

A blazing 97 not out in a virtual knockout game against the West Indies in Kolkata was followed by 89 in the semifinal against England in Mumbai and another knock of 89 in the final against New Zealand in Ahmedabad. His 321 runs across five innings are the most runs made by an Indian batter in a single edition of the Men's T20 World Cup.

"For India to stick with him at the top there, that was a big call to make. A big decision, but one that worked out really well in the end. If you get the backing of the coaching staff and the captain, then that's all you need."

"Just a pat on the back or an arm around the shoulder to say, 'we're sticking with you, we believe in you.' When you've got the quality that Sanju's got, and the confi-

dence of the captain and coach behind you, that's when great things can happen," said Ponting on The ICC Review show.

For Ponting, who captained Australia to the 2003 and 2007 ODI World Cup triumphs, Samson's resurgence, along with Abhishek coming good by hitting 52 in the final, also showed how good India captain Suryakumar Yadav's leadership skills were in bringing the best out of his players.

"It would have been really interesting to see how Surya has interacted with Abhishek (Sharam) and Sanju (Samson) over the last few weeks. That's where the real stories will come out on true leadership."

"It would have been really interesting to see how Surya has interacted with Abhishek (Sharam) and Sanju (Samson) over the last few weeks. That's where the real stories will come out on true leadership," he added.

Ponting also noted that Suryakumar kept himself calm despite ups and downs in his batting returns. Beyond an 84 not out off 49 balls against the United States of America (USA) in the opening game in Mumbai, the Indian captain managed to amass just 158 runs in his remaining eight innings, yet steered India to winning the title on home soil.

"It's about a lot more than what they do off the field, the things that people don't see and how they interact with their players. He didn't have a great time himself as a player, but still, he's standing at the end holding up a World Cup trophy."

"I know as a former captain, when you're not batting at your absolute best, captaincy can become really difficult. And when you are batting well, captaincy can become really easy," he concluded.



Theegala drops to Tied-28th at Players Championship

PONTE VEDRA (USA)

First-round co-leader Sahith Theegala slipped down the leaderboard after a challenging second round at the Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass in Florida on Friday. Theegala carded a 2-over 74 in the second round, which pushed him down the standings to T-23 despite his strong opening round performance. Meanwhile, Akshay Bhatia made a modest climb up the leaderboard with a steady 1-under 71, and he is T-28th. Among the other players of Indian origin in the field, Sudarshan Yellamaraju successfully made the cut after posting rounds of 73 and 72 to sit in tied 52nd place. However, Indo-British golfer Aaron Rai was unable to progress to the weekend after recording back-to-back rounds of 74, leaving him outside the cut line. Sweden's Ludvig Åberg produced the standout performance of the day, firing a superb 9-under 63 to take the outright lead by two strokes. Starting his round on the front nine, Åberg came out remarkably with three birdies and an eagle in his first four holes.

India lose 0-2 to England in final of Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

HYDERABAD

The Indian women's hockey team finished in second place at the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers, succumbing to a 0-2 defeat to England in the final at the G. M. C. Balayogi Hockey Ground in Hyderabad on Saturday. Grace Balsdon (13') and Elizabeth Neal (43') found the back of the net for England.

India began the game on the front foot with Navneet Kaur helping her side earn a penalty corner within the opening two minutes. However, her drag flick from the resulting set piece was kept out by the England goalkeeper. The hosts showed great discipline, maintaining a solid defensive shape while also making inroads on the end of the field. However, En-



gland grew into the game towards the end of the first quarter, earning a penalty corner with two minutes to go. Grace Balsdon (13') made the most of that opportunity, finding the back of the net with her drag flick and scoring her fifth goal from a penalty corner in this tournament, to give England the lead.

The second quarter began similarly to the first, with both teams not

giving much away in this engaging contest. With 8 circle penetrations in the first half, India were asking questions of the England defence but didn't really test the England goalkeeper, allowing the visitors to hold onto their one-goal advantage at half-time.

With the lead, England controlled the tempo of the game by neatly working the ball and maintaining possession. India had a few opportunities to pile on the pressure, but the visitors stood firm at the back. They eventually doubled their lead courtesy of Elizabeth Neal (43'). The midfielder was fortunate as her effort deflected off an Indian defender before finding its way past Bichu Devi, giving England a 2-0 lead at the end of the third quarter.

The Hockey World Cup 2026: qualifying matches held in Gachibowli, Hyderabad concluded successfully



HYDERABAD

These matches were inaugurated on the 8th of this month by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Along with India, teams from Austria, England, Italy, South Korea, Scotland, Uruguay and Wales participated in the tournament.

In today's final match, the teams of India and England faced each other. England defeated India with a 2-0 score. The final match was inaugurated by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, State Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari, and IT Minister Sridhara Babu.

Before the match began, the ministers met and introduced the players participating in the match and congratulated them. The game remained thrilling from start to finish, and in the end the England team emerged victorious. The ministers congratulated the winning England team and presented them with the award. Dep-

uty Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari also congratulated the Indian team, which finished as the runner-up. The ministers watched the match with great interest from start to finish.

They said it was commendable that such prestigious competitions were held in Hyderabad, a city gaining recognition as a global city. The ministers also honored the representatives of Hockey India for their support in organizing the tournament.

Among those who attended the event were Government Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey, Secretary Bholanath Singh, State Government Sports Advisor AP Jitender Reddy, Sports Authority Chairman Shivasena Reddy, Managing Director Dr. Soni Baladevi, and representatives from the Telangana Hockey Association and Hockey India, along with several others.

Bumrah doesn't allow batters to find their rhythm or flow

LAHORE

Pakistan selector and former fast bowler Aaqib Javed has lauded ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah, saying that he's someone who doesn't allow the batters to find their rhythm or flow in a match. Bumrah recently picked 14 wickets and became the joint leading wicket-taker in India's triumphant 2026 Men's T20 World Cup campaign.

Javed, a member of Pakistan's 1992 World Cup-winning squad under Imran Khan, made his admiration clear for Bumrah, terming him 'the Usman Tariq of fast bowlers'. "In today's era, across this entire World Cup, there is only one bowler like that-Bumrah. Because he is different. He is not a normal bowler. "Even his action is



unusual. When he comes in to bowl, I always say he is like the Usman Tariq of fast bowlers. He bowls so quickly and in such a unique manner that a batter never really finds any flow or rhythm against him. He simply doesn't allow it," Javed told re-

porters in a press conference on Saturday. He also felt Bumrah carries the aura that ex-Pakistan pacers Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis had in their playing days. "Other than him, tell me one more bowler in this entire World Cup, from any team, whom you can look at and feel satisfied that he carries the reflection of a Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, or anyone like that. You won't find one anymore," added Javed.

It was a press conference where Javed came out in support of Pakistan's recent performances in the last 18 months, where they have had early exits from the 2025 Champions Trophy and 2026 Men's T20 World Cup, including suffering defeats to India. With Pakistan currently in Bangladesh for an ODI series, Javed stated that

losses to their arch-rivals India on the big stage were now not an unfamiliar territory for the side. "The India-Pakistan match is important for us, but we have never (once) beaten India in a World Cup."

It is 8-0 (8-1 in T20 World Cups). The best captains from 1975 onwards have played them, including players from all generations, and we've never beaten India; the result is 8-0 (8-1). "Set that aside - we qualified for the second round, and we lost only one game against England. Did anything else happen? It was not possible to win by that margin against Sri Lanka, which we required. We lost just one game and only missed out due to the net run rate. It's not so big an issue to say our cricket has been destroyed," he concluded.



Buzz: Anushka Shetty to Marry a Businessman?

Rumours about the marriage of actress Anushka Shetty have resurfaced once again, creating fresh buzz in film circles.

For years, speculation about Anushka's wedding often revolved around her alleged relationship with Prabhas. However, both actors repeatedly clarified that they share only a close friendship, and the rumours never turned out to be true.

Now, the latest chatter suggests a different development. Industry sources claim that Anushka may be considering marriage with a businessman who is known to her family. According to reports, discussions are said to be happening at the family level, and if things move in the right direction, the actress could reportedly take this big step sometime this year. Anushka has al-

ways maintained a very private personal life and rarely reacts to speculation about her relationships. Because of this, rumours around her marriage tend to gain traction whenever new reports emerge.

While nothing has been officially confirmed yet, the fresh buzz has once again caught the attention of fans. After years of hearing different stories about her marriage, many admirers are hoping that this time the news might actually turn out to be true. On the work front, Anushka was seen in Miss Shetty Mr. Polishetty, which turned out to be an average grosser at the box office. Her last release, Ghatti, did not perform well commercially. The actress is also set to make her Malayalam debut with Katharan - The Wild Sorcerer.

THANKS ALLU CINEMAS, SHARWA'S BUSINESS BUZZ GROWS



The teaser of Ramayana's introduction, the glimpse of Varanasi, some parts of Hollywood film, Dune and another clip of Pushpa 2 were played at Allu Cinemas newly inaugurated Dolby theatre. However, more than all these teasers, the teaser that everyone was surprised by is none other than Sharwanand's Biker. While the teaser is known to everyone already, it looks like another magic happened inside Allu Cinemas.

As the sound design of the teaser was so stunning, the talk spread in no time that Biker is a film that shouldn't be taken lightly. Especially with the Dolby mixing, and amazing sound design as well as background score given by Ghibran, who has earlier given stunning songs and BGM for Sharwa's Run Raja Run, no doubt, Biker sounded like a Hollywood film inside Allu Cinemas' giant screen. As the music composer gives a premium Hollywood feel with his work, surely it would have stunned the viewers when they are watching the original Dolby Cinema version of the sound.

Guess what, in just a day, almost 5 top distributors from the Andhra and Karnataka region are said to be offering extra pay to grab the movie theatre rights, though the business was closed down by UV Creations some time ago. Needless to say, sometimes a good theatre elevates a well-made film, and that is happening in the case of this talented hero. Long delayed Biker is set for a grand release on April 3rd, 2026 in the Telugu states.

Raftaar: Rajkummar Rao, Keerthy Suresh Join Forces

Actors Rajkummar Rao and Keerthy Suresh will headline the upcoming film Raftaar, which is scheduled to release in theatres on July 24, 2026. Directed by Aditya Nimbalkar and produced by Patralekhaa under the banner of Kampa Film, the film was officially announced by the lead actors on social media on March 14.

Sharing the film's poster, the two actors confirmed the release date and teased the film's theme. "Ambition built it. Greed will test it. #Raftaar, releasing on July 24, at a theatre near you (sic)."

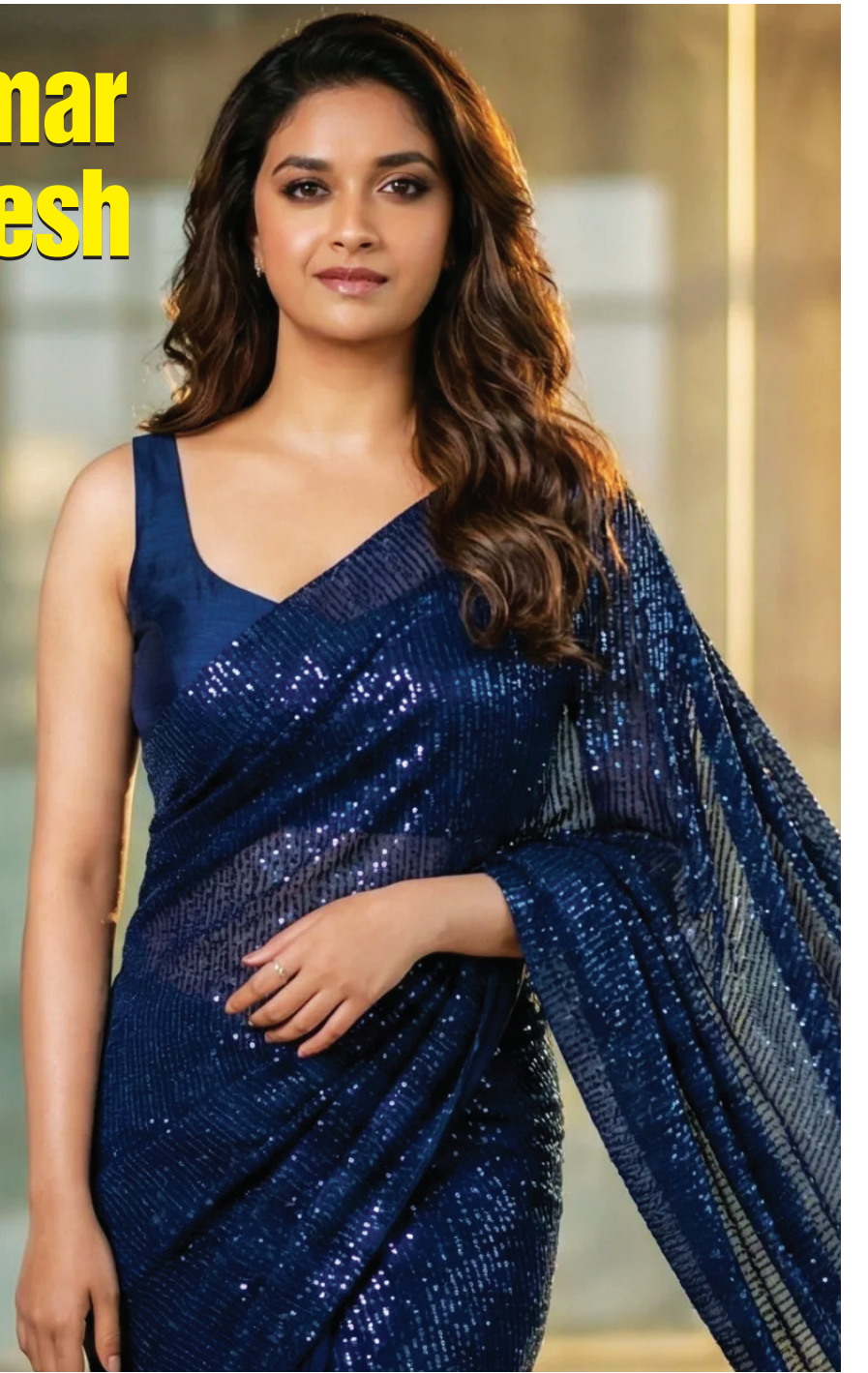
Rajkummar also shared the announcement on his Instagram Stories and expressed his excitement about the project. "Super excited to present @kampafilm's first theatrical Raftaar releasing on 24th July only in theatres (sic)."

The film is executive produced by Tarun Bali, with the story and screenplay written by Rohan Narula. Along with Rao and Suresh in the lead, the film features an ensemble cast including Anurag Thakur, Rohan Verma, Tanya Maniktala and Rajat Kapoor in key roles.

Raftaar is set in a high-stakes corporate environment centred around a fast-rising start-up and the intense relationship between an ambitious man and an equally driven woman. As their pursuit of success intensifies, money, power and greed begin to complicate their personal relationship, raising questions about whether they can recover from the consequences of their choices.

The film is presented by Amazon MGM Studios and will release in theatres on July 24, 2026.

Meanwhile, Rajkummar Rao also has several other projects lined up, including a biopic on former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly and another biographical film based on public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam. He will also be seen in Toaster alongside Sanya Malhotra.



Inside Talk: First 2 Hours Of Dhurandhar 2 Is Rampage

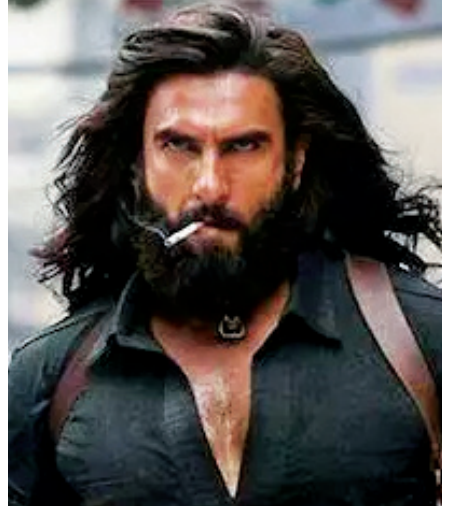
The buzz around Dhurandhar: The Revenge is growing stronger with each passing day as the sequel gears up for its grand release. After the tremendous response the first part received in theatres, trade circles are already predicting that the second installment could become an even bigger blockbuster. According to reports from Mumbai film circles, the film was recently screened for a few insiders, and the early reactions have been extremely positive. The first half of the movie is said to be packed with intense action sequences and surprising twists that keep the narrative gripping. A flashback episode featuring Ranveer Singh as Jaskirat Singh Rangi is reportedly one of the highlights and is expected to leave audiences stunned.

Industry trackers believe the sequel could

open to massive numbers at the box office. The first part had collected around ₹40 crore on its opening day, but trade experts predict that the sequel may open with nearly three times that when it hits theatres on March 19. Even before release, the film has reportedly generated close to \$15 million from the North American market through advance bookings and distribution deals. In India, the makers are targeting a ₹100-crore opening day from the Hindi belt alone. If the momentum continues across other languages, the total could climb significantly higher.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, the film is being compared to blockbuster sequels like KGF: Chapter 2, Baahubali 2: The Conclusion, and Kantara, all of which set new benchmarks at the box office.

Meanwhile, reports suggest that the makers also turned down a request from a newly opened theatre in Hyderabad that wanted to host the film's premiere. The team is said to be avoiding promotional events, maintaining a low-key strategy ahead of release.



RGV SAYS INDUSTRY IS WAITING FOR ADITYA DHAR, YAMI GAUTAM TO FUMBLE AND FALL

Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma has once again praised Aditya Dhar for his work on the spy thriller Dhurandhar, saying the director's success has unsettled many in the film industry. Varma claimed that Dhar's growing influence has made several people envious and added that the industry is waiting for him and his wife, actor Yami Gautam, to stumble.

In an interview with Rediff, Varma lauded Dhar's filmmaking skills and said his approach has reshaped storytelling in Indian cinema. According to the director, Dhar's work has pushed filmmakers across industries to rethink their style and scale.

"Aditya Dhar has changed the entire grammar of storytelling on screen. Our movies will never be the same again, and I am talking about all the languages, not only Hindi. In Telugu, many of the forthcoming big-budget action films are undergoing massive reshooting. Which means huge budgetary liabilities," he said.

Varma further added that such changes have not gone down well with everyone in the industry. "So, of course, they hate him. He has forced them to get out of their comfort zones, and that costs a lot of money," the filmmaker added.

The filmmaker also spoke about Dhar's wife, Yami Gautam, who recently received praise for her performance in the courtroom drama Haq.

Talking about the couple, Ram

Gopal Varma said that Aditya Dhar and Yami Gautam will have to move forward with extra caution, adding that the film industry is waiting for them to "fumble and fall".

ABOUT HAQ

Directed by Suparn Verma, Haq also stars Emraan Hashmi and Sheeba Chaddha in key roles. The film is inspired by the landmark Supreme Court case Mohd Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum, which dealt with matrimonial rights within Muslim households.

The story follows Bano, a woman who turns to the legal system after her husband marries his first love and refuses to provide financial support for their children, highlighting her fight for justice and dignity.

ABOUT DHURANDHAR 2

Meanwhile, Dhar's upcoming film Dhurandhar: The Revenge is among the most anticipated Hindi films in recent years. The sequel sees Ranveer Singh returning as Hamza, also known as Jaskirat, an Indian spy operating in Pakistan.

The film also features an ensemble cast including R. Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, Danish Pandor, Rakesh Bedi and Sara Arjun.

The first instalment was a massive success, reportedly earning Rs 1300 crore worldwide after its release in December last year. The film has been re-released in theatres ahead of Dhurandhar 2's release on March 19.

The film was initially expected to clash with Toxic starring Yash, but the clash was avoided after the film postponed its release from March 19 to June 4. However, Dhurandhar 2 will now face competition from Ustaad Bhagat Singh starring Pawan Kalyan.

Ustaad Bhagat Singh is a remake of Theri starring Vijay. Both films are currently scheduled to release on March 19, with paid previews planned for the evening of March 18.