

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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## US HITS IRAN MISSILES WITH BUNKER BUSTERS

In a major military action to secure the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. struck Iranian missile sites along the country's southern coast using multiple 5,000-pound deep-penetrator bombs, targeting hardened facilities that threatened regional shipping, the U.S. Central Command said.



### Bharat Taxi spends Rs 5 crore, generates Rs 35 crore income

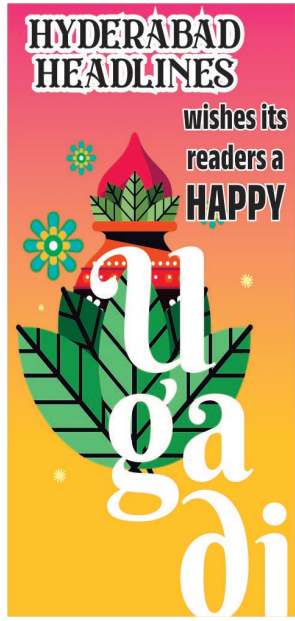
MONEY MATTERS 09

### Madhuri Dixit to Light Up Gaddar Film Awards 2025 in Hyderabad



BOX -OFFICE 12

BEYOND BORDERS 08



SHORT TAKES



### MP Vamsi Pushes for Singareni Pension Hike

Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna has urged the Coal Mines Provident Fund (CMPF) to enhance pensions for retired Singareni coal workers. Meeting CMPF Commissioner Sajeesh Kumar N, he highlighted the financial hardships faced by retirees. Officials assured the matter would be reviewed and addressed as per procedures.

NEW DELHI



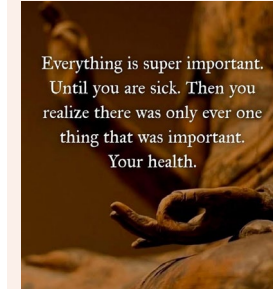
### The Hidden Crisis Behind Development Claims

Water is often called the essence of life—but what happens when that very essence turns toxic? Across India and the world, the crisis is no longer just about access to water, but about access to water that is safe to drink.

OPINION 06

THE DAILY MANTRA

HEALTH IS WEALTH



Everything is super important. Until you are sick. Then you realize there was only ever one thing that was important. Your health.

**'Health is wealth but wealth is always not health'. 'Health is true wealth—it sustains life and well-being**

- Wealth alone cannot guarantee good health
- Money can support care, but not replace a healthy body and mind
- Without health, the value of wealth diminishes

Collected by Venna Srinivasa Reddy

# CM Slams KCR's Absence, Pushes Vision 2047 Growth Plan

## CM unveils \$3 trillion vision, calls for accountability as KCR skips Assembly

HYDERABAD, MAR 18

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on Leader of Opposition K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) for his absence during the ongoing Budget Session of the State Assembly, questioning the practice of drawing salaries without attending legislative proceedings.

Participating in the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address, the Chief Minister expressed disappointment over KCR's absence, stating that the government had expected him to attend the session and offer constructive suggestions. He also noted that the opposition leader did not participate in key events, including the unveiling of the Telangana Thalli statue.

Reddy alleged that de-

❖ KCR drew ₹1.06 crore without attending Assembly, says CM

❖ A. Revanth Reddy seeks policy on pay for absent MLAs

❖ CM targets BRS for "arrogance" and past "dictatorial" rule

❖ Hits out at KTR over encroachment remarks

❖ Focus on lake restoration, pollution control, and city protection

❖ CM spoke during debate on Motion of Thanks to Governor's Address in Assembly

spite losing power in the 2023 Assembly elections, the leadership of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) had not shed what he described as its "arrogant and autocratic mindset." He remarked that such attitudes undermine democratic values, adding that in a democracy, elected representatives must remain accountable to the people. Highlighting fi-

ancial aspects, the Chief Minister said that since December 1, 2023, KCR had drawn ₹1.06 crore in salary and allowances as an MLA despite not attending Assembly proceedings. He called for a policy decision on whether legislators should be entitled to such benefits without fulfilling their responsibilities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



## CM Revanth on Drugs Case Bail: Government Acted Procedurally

New Delhi, March 18: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday broke his silence on the drugs case involving TDP MP Putta Mahesh Kumar and others, clarifying that the government's role in the matter was limited and procedural. Speaking to mediapersons in

Delhi, the Chief Minister said Putta Mahesh Kumar was granted station bail strictly in accordance with the law. He also confirmed that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted by the Telangana DGP to probe the case.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## Another Jewel in the State's Crown

### Narmetta Oil Palm Factory to be Inaugurated on 22nd The Narmetta factory area is being prepared for farmers' celebrations



Hyderabad, March 18: The Narmetta Oil Palm Factory, which will stand as another jewel in the state's crown, is set to be inaugurated grandly on the 22nd of this month. Invitations have already been sent to all public representatives, including the Assembly Speaker, Council Chairman, Ministers, MLAs, and MLCS.

On the occasion of the factory inauguration, the Narmetta industrial area is being readied for the farmers' festival organized by the government. On the auspicious day of Ugadi, at 4 PM, Agriculture Minister Tummala will inaugurate the exhibition halls and formally launch the celebrations.

Speaking at a press conference held at the State Secretariat on Wednesday along with Ministers Ponnamp Prabhakar, Vakiti Srihari, and Vivek Venkataswamy, Minister Tummala said that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## BRS Must Stop Mud-Slinging on Musi Project: Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, March 18: Alleviating a consistent pattern of baseless criticism, Minister for IT and Industries D. Sridhar Babu on Wednesday said the BRS appears to have adopted an

approach of "throwing mud and asking others to clean it," in its comments on the Musi River rejuvenation project.

Responding strongly to allegations made by K. T. Rama Rao during the Question Hour in the Telangana Legislative Assembly, the Minister clarified that the government has already stated that the estimated cost for the first phase of the Musi rejuvenation project stands between ₹6,500 crore and ₹7,000 crore. He criticised KTR for terming the project a "₹1.5 lakh crore scam," calling such claims completely baseless and misleading.

Sridhar Babu emphasised that the government is maintaining full transparency by placing all details of the project in the public domain, with no room for secrecy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## Smartphones, Data Tracking Drive Nutrition Gains Under Poshan 2.0

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

Poshan Tracker digital application was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) which collects near real time data of child nutrition indicators under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0). The Poshan tracker data has shown improvement in the child malnutrition indicators in the country over the years. The progress of these indicators among children is available on Poshan Tracker Dashboard at: <https://www.poshantracker.in/statistics>

Mission Poshan 2.0 empowers the frontline functionaries by providing them with smart-



phones. All Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) are provided with internet connectivity charges at the rate of ₹2000 per annum. Additionally, there is a provision of Growth Monitoring Devices (GMDs) at each Anganwadi Centre (AWC) for the regular growth monitoring of registered beneficiaries. Poshan Tracker facilitates monitoring and tracking of all AWCs, AWWs and beneficiaries on

defined indicators. Technology under Poshan Tracker is also leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting and under-weight prevalence among children. One of the major activities undertaken under Mission Poshan 2.0 is Community Mobilization and Awareness to educate people on nutritional aspects, as adoption of good nutrition habits requires sustained efforts for behavioural change. States and UTs conduct regular sensitisation activities under Jan Andolans during Poshan Pakhwada and Poshan Maah celebrated in the months of March-April and September, respectively.

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A Fish Derived Anti-hypertensive Peptide



Hyderabad : For the last two decades, heart disease has consistently been the leading cause of death worldwide. Hypertension is an important risk factor for cardiovascular disease and has become a major public health concern in most of the developed and developing countries. "Prof Sandeepa Burgula from Department of Microbiology at OU" has patented an anchovy fish derived peptide that has successfully reduced high blood pressure in an animal model. Her group consisting of her PhD scholar Usharani Keshapaga, Dr Gulam Hussain from National Research Institute of Unani Medicine for Skin Disorders and Dr Raghu Gogada from NIPER, Hyderabad, successfully showed lowered blood pressure in a hypertensive rat model. Due to several side effects of current anti-hypertensive drugs, it is important to pursue safer and natural alternatives. The peptide showed on par activity with a generic anti-hypertensive drug and has been granted an Indian Patent this month. Prof Burgula hopes to continue this work to preclinical stage soon.

IJU 11th Plenary to be held in Vijayawada

Hyderabad/Chandigarh: The 11th Plenary of the Indian Journalists Union (IJU) will be held on March 28-29 in Vijayawada (Amaravathi), the capital of Andhra Pradesh. In a statement issued on Wednesday, IJU President K. Sreenivas Reddy, Secretary General Balwinder Singh Jammu, and Secretary D. Somasundar announced that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will inaugurate the session as chief guest. Several Union ministers and Andhra Pradesh ministers will also attend as guests and deliver messages. The Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ) is hosting the IJU plenary after a 34-year gap—the second IJU plenary was held in Vijayawada in 1992. The elected delegates, presidents and general secretaries of affiliated unions from 25 states, will attend. The plenary will discuss the professional issues and current media situation in India, recent threats to media freedom, and organizational matters. The plenary will adopt about 10 resolutions and outline an action plan to advance working journalists demands including professional and welfare measures. A new National Executive Committee will be elected in the plenary for the next two years. The Reception Committee which was formed with Kesineni Shivanadh (Chinni), MP, as Chief Patron, Alapati Suresh Kumar.

Power network ready to efficiently handle 19,000 MW demand: Bhatti

HYDERABAD

With the Yasangi crop season and the impact of summer, electricity demand and consumption in the state are increasing significantly. In this context, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the power network is fully prepared to efficiently handle a demand of up to 19,000 MW.

He directed officials and staff of the power department to remain vigilant. A review meeting with senior officials of the power department was held at the Assembly premises on Wednesday in view of the summer season and the Yasangi cultivation period.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said the highest power demand recorded on March 20 last year was 17,162 MW. This year, the demand reached 17,606 MW on March 2, matching the previous record. Subsequently, with a steady rise in demand, it touched 18,228 MW on March 13, setting a new



record with power consumption of 341.08 million units, Bhatti Vikramarka said.

He stated that despite the sharp increase in demand, power utilities managed the situation efficiently without any interruptions in supply or issues of overloading. The Deputy Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of the electricity staff for this achievement. He

further informed that the government is taking measures such as setting up new substations, transmission lines, and transformers to ensure that even if the demand exceeds 19,000 MW, there will be no disruptions.

He instructed that officials and staff must remain alert until the end of the Yasangi season and the summer period, ensuring

uninterrupted power supply to farmers, consumers in Greater Hyderabad, and all sectors across the state.

The meeting was attended by Special Chief Secretary (Energy) Naveen Mittal, Telangana Transco CMD Krishna Bhaskar, DISCOM CMDs Musharrarf Faruqi, Jitesh V. Patil, Varun Reddy, and other officials.

Ugadi Grand Assembly Today

By Dr Suneelkumar Yandra

PITHAPURAM

Peruri Suribabu, Convener of the Peetham (spiritual seat), announced that the Sri Viswa Vignana Vidya Adhyathmika Peetham will host the Ugadi Grand Assembly—marking the Telugu New Year—on Thursday, March 19. The event will take place at the Peetham's new ashram premises in Pithapuram town, under the presidency of the Ninth Peethadhipathi (Spiritual Head), Dr. Umar Alisha Swamy. He stated that Peethadhipathi Dr. Umar Alisha Swamy will inaugurate the Ugadi assembly by lighting the ceremonial lamp, followed by a musical program (Sangeetha Vibhavar) featuring devotional hymns sung by the Peetham's resident musicians.

Children from the Tatvika Bala Vikas (Philosophical Child Development) program are scheduled to deliver spiritual discourses. It is estimated that approximately 5,000 members and devotees will attend this grand assembly, and Ugadi Pachadi (the traditional Ugadi delicacy) will be distributed to the thousands of attendees. The traditional Panchanga Sraavanam (reading of the almanac) will be conducted by the renowned Ashtavadani (literary improviser) Yarramsetti Uma Maheswara Rao. Arrangements for free meals have been made for the thousands of people attending the assembly. Furthermore, various service activities will be organized through the Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust. It was noted that Peethadhipathi Dr. Umar Alisha Swami will impart the Maha Mantram (Great Man-



tra) to those who aspire to receive it and wish to lead a life of happiness, peace, and contentment within society. The grand assembly will conclude with a divine Harathi (offering of sacred light).

Peetham Convener Peruri Suribabu appealed to everyone to participate in the grand Ugadi celebrations marking the Telugu New Year, and to attain spiritual fulfillment by receiving the Swami's divine blessings and the sacred Teertha Prasadam.

JNTUH Vice Chancellor Inaugurates BHASWARA-2026 AICTE IDEA Lab in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

BHASWARA-2026, the 19th National Level Technical Fest, along with the AICTE IDEA Lab, was inaugurated at Geethanjali College of Engineering and Technology, Cheerla, Hyderabad by the Honorable Vice Chancellor of JNTUH, Dr. T. Kishen Kumar Reddy. BHASWARA-2026 is being conducted over two days, from 17th to 18th March 2026, witnessing participation from a large number of students in events such as paper presentations, poster presentations, project expo, technical quiz, and several other competitions, where winners were awarded attractive cash prizes.

The program was attended by the Chairman Sri G. R. Ravinder Reddy, Vice Chairman Sri R. Harishchandra Reddy, Director Dr. S. Udaya Kumar, Principal Dr. K. Sagar, BHASWARA-2026 Convener Dr. D. Sujatha, Co-Convener Dr. E. Ravindra, IDEA Lab Coordinator Dr. G. Vallathan, and IDEA Lab Co-Coordinator Dr. K. Venkatesh. Deans, Heads of various Departments, faculty members, and students also participated in large numbers.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. T. Kishen Kumar Reddy stated that facilities like the AICTE IDEA Lab play an important role in nurturing creativity and promoting innovation among students. He also mentioned that national-level technical fests like BHASWARA-2026 provide an excellent platform for students to showcase their technical skills and talents.

Kavita Tapasvi Kovela Suprasannacharyulu at 90: A Colossus of Telugu Literature and Thought

HYDERABAD

The 90th birthday of eminent Telugu scholar, poet, and critic Kovela Suprasannacharyulu was celebrated in a grand manner in Hyderabad, with leading writers, scholars, and admirers performing functions and celebrations to honor one of the tallest literary personalities of Telugu-speaking states.

Born on March 17, 1936, in the historic and culturally vibrant town of Warangal, Suprasannacharyulu's journey reflects a rare blend of scholarship, creativity, and spiritual insight. He completed his M.A. in Telugu Literature from Osmania University in 1959 and earned his PhD in 1962 for his acclaimed research on Ramaraja Bhushana and His Works. His academic pursuits also took him into linguistics studies in Hyderabad and earned him the prestigious "Diplomo De Merito" from the University Delle Arti, Italy, in 1982.

Beginning his career as a lecturer in 1959, he went on to serve in distinguished academic roles at Kakatiya University, where he rose from lecturer to professor. He also served as Principal of the University Evening College (1987-1990), Head of the Department of Telugu (1990-1993), Dean of Faculty of Arts, and Chairman of the Board of Studies. His academic leadership extended to several universities, contributing significantly to curriculum development and research.

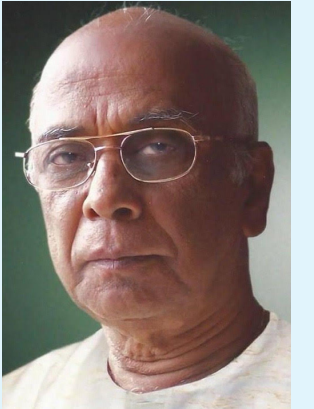
A prolific writer, Suprasannacharyulu has authored more than 60 books spanning poetry, criticism, and philosophical literature. His works are deeply rooted in Indian culture, spirituality, and human values, while also engaging with modern literary movements. Over 20 PhDs and 16 M.Phils were awarded under his guidance, reflecting his immense contribution to academic research.

Beyond academia, he played a pivotal role in literary and cultural organizations. He founded Sahiti Bandhu Brindam and was associated with bodies like Jatiya Sahitya Parishat and Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy. As secretary of Pothana Vijnana Peetham, he contributed to research on Bhagavata traditions and their influence on Indian culture, arts, and national integration.

Suprasannacharyulu's literary vision was shaped by diverse influences—from Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo to Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose. While briefly influenced by Marxist thought, his later writings embraced a broader, integral vision of life, blending nationalism, spirituality, and universal humanism.

His poetry, marked by a distinctive style and powerful idiom, explores life as an "eternal scripture," emphasizing the unity of humanity, nature, and the cosmos. Works like Sampaarayam reflect his deep philosophical engagement with existence, consciousness, and the future of humanity.

Recognized with numerous awards, including the Best Teacher Award by the Andhra Pradesh government and honors from literary academies, his legacy continues to inspire generations. As literary circles celebrated his milestone, Suprasannacharyulu stood not just as a poet, but as a guiding light—bridging tradition and modernity, and illuminating the path of Telugu literature with timeless wisdom.



Another Jewel in the State's Crown

FROM PAGE 1

a total of 150 stalls related to agriculture, animal husbandry, and allied sectors will be set up as part of this grand farmers' event.

Departments of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, and fisheries, along with universities, banks, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), startup companies, and private institutions will showcase their modern technologies, services, and opportunities to farmers. A special platform will also be arranged for farmers to directly interact face-to-face with experts, scientists, and representatives from banks, FPOs, startups, and private companies.

This farmers' festival will continue until the 22nd of this month. Every day, from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM, interactive sessions will be conducted with scientists from agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, and fisheries departments, along with officials, award-winning farmers, and progressive farmers.

On the 22nd at 4 PM, the Honorable Chief Minister will inaugurate the Narmetta Oil Palm Factory and dedicate it to the farmers. On the same day, the foundation stone will also be laid for a refinery unit to be constructed near the factory at a cost of ₹80 crores.

As part of the program, the Chief Minister will directly interact with farmers on key issues in the agriculture sector. From the same platform, the Chief Minister will also release Rythu Bharosa funds.

The Narmetta Oil Palm Factory is expected to become a milestone for farmers. It will help resolve the problems of oil palm farmers, significantly reduce transportation costs, and contribute to increasing farmers' income.

Responding to requests from farmers and public representatives, the Minister stated that despite no support from the central government, the state had procured maize during the previous Kharif season, and is prepared to continue procurement in the current Yasangi season as well.

Government Acted Procedurally

FROM PAGE 1

The case relates to a raid conducted on the night of March 14 at a farmhouse in Moinabad, Hyderabad, belonging to former BRS MLA Pilot Rohith Reddy by the Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE) in coordination with the police. Eleven people, including a woman, were arrested, and six tested positive for drugs. While Putta Mahesh Kumar and seven others were released on station bail, Rohith Reddy, his brother Ritesh Reddy, and Delhi-based businessman Namith Sharma were remanded to judicial custody.

In a separate remark, Revanth Reddy predicted that the next Telangana Assembly elections will be held in 2029, not 2028. He also expressed support for early implementation of women's reservations in Parliament and



the state legislature. Earlier, the Chief Minister, accompanied by Telangana Congress chief Mahesh Kumar Goud and party MPs, met Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in

Parliament. During the meetings, he introduced his close friend and newly elected Rajya Sabha member Vem Narender Reddy to the Congress leaders, and discussed ongoing political developments in Telangana.

'BRS Must Stop Mud-Slinging on Musi Project'

FROM PAGE 1

He underlined that pollution of the Musi river is a major issue affecting the twin cities, and accused the BRS of attempting to obstruct every effort aimed at addressing it through narrow political allegations. Minister questioned whether it was not a fact that the previous government had issued a Government Order in 2016 designating a 50-metre buffer zone on either side of the Musi river. He said raising concerns now about removal of encroachments is an attempt to derail a critical development ini-

tiative. He further alleged that the BRS is prioritising political attacks over public welfare and has made a habit of casting aspersions on every initiative undertaken by the government.

Highlighting the credibility of the project, Sridhar Babu said the Detailed Project Report (DPR) was prepared by Singapore-based engineering firm Meinhardt, which has extensive experience in executing similar projects globally. He dismissed claims that the DPR was prepared in just two months, clarifying that it took nearly a year to complete. The Minister further

stated that the DPR has been submitted to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for financial assistance and is currently under evaluation.

He expressed confidence that the project will receive approval in the upcoming ADB Board meeting and termed as "false" the claims that ADB has rejected the proposal. Sridhar Babu asserted that even if ADB funding does not materialise, the government will explore alternative avenues, including other institutions and partnership models. "The Musi rejuvenation project will move forward under all circumstances," he affirmed.

BHAVYA: Rs 33,660 Cr Industrial Push

FROM PAGE 1

Social infrastructure: worker housing and support amenities Support for external connectivity will also be provided, covering up to 25% of project costs, ensuring seamless integration with existing networks. Projects will be selected through a challenge mode, promoting high-quality, reform-oriented, and investment-ready proposals.

Designed as future-ready and sustainable ecosystems, these parks will incorporate PM GatiShakti principles for multi-modal connectivity, green energy, and integrated underground utility corridors, enabling efficient operations and minimal maintenance. BHAVYA is expected to create lakhs of direct and indirect jobs, strengthen domestic supply chains, and catalyze regional industrialization.

Small Hydro Power Scheme: Clean Energy for Remote Areas

The Cabinet also approved the SHP Development Scheme, with an outlay of Rs. 2,584.60 crore, targeting installation of small hydro projects with an approximate capacity of 1,500 MW. The scheme prioritizes small hydro projects (1-25 MW), especially in hilly and North Eastern states, which have high potential for such installations.

Financial support will be provided as follows:

North Eastern and border districts: Rs. 3.6 crore per MW or 30% of project cost (up to Rs. 30 crore per project)

Other states: Rs. 2.4 crore per MW or 20% of project cost (up to Rs. 20 crore per project)

The scheme is expected to attract Rs. 15,000 crore in investment, generate 51 lakh person-days of employment during construction, and create long-term jobs in operation and maintenance. Small hydro projects are decentralized, requiring minimal transmission infrastructure, reducing losses and environmental impact. They also avoid large-scale land acquisition, deforestation, and displacement, while fostering socio-economic development in rural areas.

An amount of Rs. 30 crore has been allocated to support states and central agencies in preparing detailed project reports (DPRs) for around 200 future SHP projects, creating a robust pipeline for renewable energy development.

Driving Growth, Jobs, and Sustainability

Together, BHAVYA and the SHP Development Scheme underscore the government's dual focus on industrial modernization and clean energy transition. BHAVYA will provide world-class industrial infrastructure, enabling industries to move quickly from planning to production, reducing entry barriers and operational delays. The SHP initiative will tap renewable energy potential in remote and difficult-to-reach areas, creating sustainable employment and boosting local economies.

Allocate Rs.20,000 cr for BC welfare: Talasani demands

HYDERABAD

Former Minister and BRS deputy floor leader in Assembly Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Wednesday urged the state government to allocate Rs.20,000 crore for Backward Classes (BCs), citing their 50% population share. He flagged Rs.10,000 crore fee reimbursement arrears, saying delays are affecting students, and called for immediate fund release under the "Jyothirao Phule Overseas Scholarship Scheme" for BC students pursuing higher education abroad.

Participating in the debate on the Governor's address, the BRS leader while reminding that the Congress party had promised to implement a 42 percent reservations for the BCs, alleged that the government failed to acknowledge the fact that merely tabling a Bill in the Assembly does not grant it statutory validity; rather, such validity was attained only when the Central Government includes it in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution. Failure of the Congress party's top leaders like Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi to attend a protest (Dharna) organized by the Congress party in Delhi serves as a testament to their lack of sincerity regarding the welfare of BCs. Even the ministers and MLAs belonging to the BC communities within the Congress party were facing difficulties regarding BC-related issues, he remarked.

## Divine Call to Service: Hanuman Chalisa Mass Led by Radhika Reddy Tanguturu

HYDERABAD

In a melding of devotion, culture, and service, Radhika Reddy Tanguturu—founder of the Radhika Charitable Trust and managing director of the Tamara Group—led a grand, spiritually vibrant mass recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa in Moinabad. The event drew participants from across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, uniting people of all ages in prayer, rhythm, and shared purpose.

Tanguturu has long championed the preservation and propagation of Sanatana Dharma, and this initiative underscores her principal aim: to bring the timeless wisdom and values of dharma closer to today's youth. Attendees described the recitation as more than a devotional act; it was a bridge between tradition and modern life, infused with music, reflection, and communal harmony.

"Sanatana Dharma offers a compass for compassion, discipline, and service," Tanguturu remarked at the close of the gathering. "If we present these timeless ideals in a way that resonates with young people, we can nurture a generation that embodies both spirituality and social responsibility." The program featured rhythmic bhajans, mantra chanting, and interactive segments designed to engage youth while honoring the chant's sacred lineage.

Beyond the mass recitation, Tanguturu has been actively promoting Sanatana Dharma across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh through cultural outreach, educational collaborations, and community partnerships. Her work aligns with a broader regional movement to renew interest in spiritual heritage while making traditional practices accessible to contemporary audiences.

In tandem with her spiritual outreach, Tanguturu personally oversees a Goshala in Moinabad,



dedicated to the protection, care, and welfare of cows. The Goshala embodies her commitment to animal welfare and the compassionate ethos that many followers of Sanatana Dharma hold dear. Local priests, educators, youth leaders, and members of the diaspora attended the event, praising the initiative for its emphasis on youth engagement, service, and spiritual education. Organizers highlighted the importance of ongoing programs that blend reverence for tradition with practical avenues for young people to participate in charitable and community-building activities. As Telangana and Andhra Pradesh witness renewed interest in heritage and spiritual renewal, leaders like Radhika Reddy Tanguturu are shaping a compassionate path that integrates devotion, cultural stewardship, and social service.

Her leadership with the Radhika Charitable Trust, the Tamara Group, and the Moinabad Goshala showcases a holistic model of service—honoring ancient practices while addressing today's needs.



## National Pharmacy Education Day CELEBRATED AT GITAM

HYDERABAD

The School of Pharmacy at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, celebrated National Pharmacy Education Day on the 124th birth anniversary of Prof. M.L. Schroff, under the theme "Artificial Intelligence in Pharmacy: A Paradigm Shift in Pharmaceutical Education and Research."

Dr. Sistla Ramakrishna, Chief Scientist, IICT-Hyderabad, attended as the Chief Guest and urged budding pharmacists to uphold the dignity of their profession, think beyond conventional boundaries, and embrace interdisciplinary learning. He encouraged students and researchers to explore diverse domains within pharmacy and adopt an innovative, problem-solving mindset.

Dr. Vamshi Madugula, Head-DMPK at Sai Life Sciences, was the Guest of Honour and delivered a keynote address highlighting the transformative role of AI in pharmaceutical research. He emphasized the growing importance of Drug Metabolism and Pharmacokinetics (DMPK), the challenges in conventional drug development, and how AI-driven approaches can enhance efficiency, enable



early risk assessment, and shift the focus toward predictive and preventive strategies. The event also featured a panel discussion with industry experts, who shared insights on current trends and future prospects in pharmaceutical sciences.

Earlier, Prof. G. Shiva Kumar, Principal and Convener, welcomed the gathering and encouraged students to actively engage and leverage emerging opportunities in AI-driven pharmacy education. Students from B.Pharm, M.Pharm, and Ph.D.

programs actively participated, making the session interactive and enriching. The programme was coordinated by Assistant Professors Dr.Gatadi Srikanth and Dr. Priya Singh.

### Civil Defence Volunteer Training Concludes at GITAM

A week-long Civil Defence Volunteer Training programme concluded successfully on March 18, 2026, at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad. The programme was organised by the Telangana Fire, Disaster Response, Emergency and Civil Defence Department in association with various State and Central Government departments. The hands-on training

equipped participants with essential skills to respond effectively during emergencies such as air raids, chemical incidents, nuclear situations, and natural disasters. Volunteers received practical training in rescue operations, firefighting techniques, first aid, crowd management, and the distribution of relief materials.

Participants were also trained to coordinate with key emergency response agencies, including the Police Department, Fire Services, and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), ensuring a well-organised and timely response during crisis situations.

Officials noted that the initiative plays a crucial role in building a strong network of trained community volunteers capable of providing immediate assistance, thereby helping to save lives and minimise damage during emergencies. Upon successful completion of the training, participants were awarded identity cards and certificates of appreciation, recognised as valuable credentials both nationally and internationally.

Students of GITAM expressed their pride and satisfaction in being part of this unique and impactful initiative. The programme was formally inaugurated on March 12 by D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Resident Director, GITAM, Hyderabad, and B. Nag-eeswara Rao, District Fire Officer, Sangareddy, in the presence of K.V. Nagendra, Station Fire Officer, Patancheru, other officers, and staff.

## S. Kumar Named BJP SC Morcha Co-Incharge for TN Polls

HYDERABAD

The Bharatiya Janata Party has entrusted key responsibilities to Shri S. Kumar, who is currently serving as the National Secretary of the BJP SC Morcha. In view of the upcoming Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, BJP SC Morcha National President Shri Lal Singh Arya has issued orders appointing him as the Co-Incharge for the SC Morcha election activities in that state. Along with Tamil Nadu, in



states such as West Bengal, Assam, Puducherry, and Kerala, in-charges and co-in-charges have also been appointed on

behalf of the SC Morcha. As part of this, Shri Shambhunath Tundiya has been appointed as the In-charge for Tamil Nadu, while Shri S. Kumar and Shri S. Muniswamy (former MP) have been appointed as Co-Incharges.

S. Kumar has been actively contributing to strengthening the party as the National Secretary of the SC Morcha for some time. Recognizing his performance, the party leadership has entrusted him with this im-

portant responsibility to coordinate voters and strategize for the party's victory in the Tamil Nadu elections. On this occasion, S. Kumar expressed his gratitude to the national leadership for placing their trust in him.

Leaders of the BJP in Telangana and SC Morcha workers have expressed happiness over assigning such a significant electoral responsibility in Tamil Nadu to S. Kumar, who hails from Telangana.

## CM Revanth Reddy Extends Ugadi Greetings to Telangana People

HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy extended heartfelt greetings to Telangana people on the auspicious Ugadi festival. The Telugu new year 'Sri Parabhava Nama Samvatsaram' is set to commence on Friday.

The Chief Minister hoped that the new year would bring prosperity and good fortune to the people of the state. Further, the CM prayed for bountiful rains and the farmers' lives filled with joy with abundant agricultural yields and livestock.

Recalling the launch of the 'Fine Rice' distribution scheme free of cost for all ration card holders on Ugadi festival last year, CM Revanth Reddy affirmed that the youngest state of Telangana in the country will achieve significant growth in all sectors and stands as a role model for the country. The Chief Minister appealed to every Telangana citizen to celebrate Ugadi with pomp and gaiety, enriching our culture and traditions further.



## Hero in the Storm: A Lineman's Courage Lights Up KPHB Colony

Samudrala Kiran,  
Correspondent

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

March 18, 2026: In the early hours of a rain-soaked Hyderabad morning, when the city's lights should have offered safety, a frontline warrior from TGSPDCL rose to the challenge, risking his life to restore power and protect lives in KPHB Colony 7th Phase. A main distribution line burned and sparked under the brutal weather, but one lineman stood between danger and the community, climbing to assess and isolate the fault with rain-soaked gear and a heart full of duty.

Amid the crackle of live wires and the threat of fatal shocks, he chose to answer the call of service. His actions, taken in the face of thunder, wind, and darkness, helped prevent a wider outage, minimize damage to homes and businesses, and avert potential fire hazards that could have escalated into a catastrophe for a city already fighting the elements. The residents awoke to restored lights, not just as



a convenience, but as a lifeline—reliable power for lighting, heating, medical devices, and daily routines.

This lineman's courage transcends the moment of repair; it embodies the quiet heroism of the countless workers who safeguard the grid and the public with every assignment. His sacrifice is a stark reminder that the safety nets of our cities depend on individuals who put public need above personal risk, especially when the weather tests the line between resilience and peril. May his unwavering commitment be honored, and may the safety and well-being of all frontline workers be a priority for communities and authorities alike.

## Lotus Lap students attempt SSC Hindi paper in novel academic exercise

HYDERABAD

In an innovative academic initiative, Lotus Lap Public Schools, with branches in Dilsukhnagar and Boduppal, conducted a simulated SSC Hindi Public Examination for students of Classes IV to IX on Wednesday.

The exercise was aligned with the Telangana Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Hindi examination held on March 18, 2026, with students attempting the same question paper. The initiative aimed at providing early exposure to board-level assessments while fostering language proficiency and academic confidence among younger learners.

Despite their age, students participated with notable enthusiasm and seriousness, at-



tempting a Class X-level paper in a structured examination setting. The school premises maintained a disciplined and focused environment, mirroring that of a formal public examination.

In a distinctive feature of the programme, parents served as invigilators. Their involvement offered them

an opportunity to observe their children's approach to assessments firsthand. Several parents appreciated the effort, noting that such exposure could reduce examination anxiety and encourage self-confidence.

The initiative was conceptualised by Chairman Dr. Lion Vidyaratna Komatired-

dy Gopal Reddy and Director Komatireddy Abhishek Reddy, with an emphasis on self-directed learning and early academic preparedness.

The event was conducted under the supervision of Vice Principal Madhavi, with support from the teaching staff. Hindi teachers Rekha Agarwal and Vijaya Lakshmi played a key role in preparing and guiding the students.

According to the school management, the exercise contributed to enhancing students' interest in Hindi, while also developing discipline, time management, and the ability to handle higher-level academic challenges.

The initiative reflects a broader attempt to reimagine assessment practices and promote experiential learning within the school system.

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### CONSTRUCTION OF LIFT/ESCALATORS AT VARIOUS STATIONS UNDER LUMDING DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. SCL/Engg/12 of 2026; dtd. 09.03.2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN.1. Brief Description of Item:** Construction of Lift/Escalator and other ancillary works in connection with 12m wide FOB at Udaipur (UDPU), Dhamanager (DMR), Kumarghat (KUGT) & New Hafong (NHLG) stations under Amrit Bharat Scheme in Lumding Division. (Two packet system). **Tender Value:** ₹16,40,90,901.01. **Bid Security:** ₹9,70,500/- . E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 06-04-2026 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 07-04-2026. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 06-04-2026 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

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## SHORT TAKES

### IAF opens doors to industry at Hakimpet Air Base

**HYDERABAD:** Air Force Station Hakimpet hosted an Industry Outreach Programme (IOP), drawing 112 industry representatives along with delegates from Air Headquarters and Training Command and other bases. The initiative showcased the station's operations and the Indian Air Force's role in general and the Indian Air Force in particular, offering participants a first-hand look at key facilities. The programme aimed to foster innovation and strengthen collaboration with private industry, supporting the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission. The event enabled industry personnel to align their research and design approaches towards innovative solutions. The enthusiasm and response from industry representatives were noteworthy, showing keen interest in delivering practical and executable solutions.

### Governor extends Ugadi greetings to Telugu people



**HYDERABAD:** On the auspicious occasion of Parabhava Nama Ugadi, Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla has extended heartfelt best wishes to each and every Telugu speaking brothers and sisters across the world. In a statement here on Wednesday, the Governor wished that the Telugu new year usher in blessings and prosperity for the loved ones of people. "Ugadi is a festival of joy and hope and the new year shall bring with it new cheer and a bright future. Let us embrace spirit of Ugadi, symbolised by the diverse tastes of the traditional Ugadi Pachchadi, to face life's challenges with optimism," he said. The Governor said the 'Sri Parabhava Nama Samvatsaram' should usher in peace, prosperity, harmony, health and happiness for all people and sections of society.

### NCC chief calls for focus on cyber, drone training

**HYDERABAD:** Director General NCC Lt Gen Virendra Vats reviewed training activities during his visit to the NCC Directorate Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in Secunderabad. The visit was aimed at reviewing the ongoing training activities and initiatives being undertaken by the Directorate for the holistic development of NCC cadets. The NCC chief lauded the Directorate for its commitment towards nation-building and youth development through structured training and community engagement initiatives. While interacting with officers and staff, he emphasized the need to align NCC training with emerging technological advancements. He specifically advised the Directorate to focus on enhancing Cyber Training and Drone Training for cadets.

## BJP state chief warned police to act impartial

### HYDERABAD

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, BJP State President N Ramchander Rao today alleged that democracy was murdered under Congress' anarchic rule in Telangana.

He was speaking to media at Nalgonda after visiting government hospital where he met BJP workers who were injured in a brutal attack by alleged Congress goons.

Rao assured "BJP workers need not fear and the party stands firmly behind you. He warned that Congress leaders that if attacks continued, there will be a strong resistance. We will not rest until the culprits are punished and sent to jail."

Giving details of the attack the BJP state chief said six BJP workers sustained serious injuries when they were attacked by Congress leaders

# Uttam Names Nodal Agency, Promises Action on Godavari & Munneru



- Flood Plain Zoning ensures intelligent and sustainable development
- 2024 Khammam floods caused Rs 5,438 crore economic damage
- Musi project to adopt CWC Flood Plain Zoning guidelines

### HYDERABAD

The Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said today that a dedicated Nodal Agency will be constituted for 'Flood Plain Zoning' in Telangana and promised to identify the first river reaches for demarcation with mapping of vulnerable pockets before the upcoming monsoon.

Inaugurating a workshop on Flood Plain Zoning for Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, organised by the Krishna and Godavari Basin Organisation, Ministry of Jal Shakti at MCHRD, he presented a detailed roadmap to address the recurring floods and extensive ravage being caused by them in the state. He said it gives special focus to the recurring flood problems of the Godavari at Bhadrachalam and the Munneru in Khammam besides other river sub basins in the State.

Recalling the devastating September 2024 floods in Khammam as the Munneru River crested at a record 36 feet — the highest since 1984 — submerging several colonies to rooftop level, inundating over 110 villages and leaving people stranded on hillocks and rooftops, he said the floods affected 29 of Telangana's 33 districts, damaged 1,023 km of roads,

breached 257 streams and ponds, killed 26,592 cattle, destroyed more than 20 lakh acres of crops and caused an initial estimated loss of Rs 5,438 crore, with 29 lives lost.

He described the event as unprecedented in 30 years and said every statistic represented human suffering. Elaborating on the Godavari flood crises, he said at Bhadrachalam, the Godavari crosses the danger mark almost every severe monsoon, cutting off the vital Bhadrachalam-Nelipaka road and isolating communities.

In 2025, the Suddakal river crossed its historical High Flood Level of 425 metres. Along the Maner River, villages including Ankushapur, Garimillapally and Somanpally witnessed flood levels in 2023 that crossed all previous records, submerging thousands of acres.

In 2025, Saloora on the Majira river reached 344.5 metres (gauge 8.90 m). He stressed that every flood is different and proper planning is essential. He declared that floods are "not merely an act of nature — they are a mirror reflecting our own neglect" caused by decades of encroachment on floodplains, filling of wetlands, narrowing of channels and blocking of natural drainage.

He explained the CWC's three-zone framework — Protected Zone, Regulatory Zone and Warning Zone — and asserted that Flood Plain Zoning is not anti-development but a guarantee of intelligent and sustainable growth. "Telangana is blessed with two of India's mightiest river systems — the Krishna and the Godavari. These rivers are the arteries of our agriculture, the lifeline for our drinking water, and the very foundation of our state's economic development and progress."

With these blessings, however, comes a profound responsibility. Climate change is intensifying both droughts and floods, while rainfall patterns that once remained predictable over decades have become highly erratic even within a single monsoon season. Regions that had not witnessed flooding for 10 to 15 years are now suddenly inundated. The devastating September 2024 floods were, for many districts, unprecedented in living memory.

Yet the core problem is not merely the rainfall itself, he said. Over decades, we have quietly encroached upon what rightfully belongs to the rivers. We have built on floodplains, filled wetlands, narrowed river channels, and blocked natural drainage pathways. When the rivers reclaimed their space in September 2024, they were merely responding to the injustices we had inflicted upon them. "The floodplain of a river is essentially its domain. Any intrusion into it must recognise the river's right of way," he stressed.

### Musi River Rejuvenation Project

The minister called the Musi River Rejuvenation Project as one of the most ambitious urban river restoration projects in the country and stressed that replicable model would help address the problem even in dense urban areas. Just five days ago, on 13 March 2026, in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Detailed Project Plans for Phase 1 of the Musi Riverfront Development were unveiled.

The project fully incorporates CWC Flood Plain Zoning guidelines, demarcates Protected and Regulatory Zones along the Musi corridor. What makes the Musi project historic is not

just its scale — it is what it represents. For decades, the Musi has been a river abused. Encroachments crept in from both banks. Industrial effluents flowed unchecked. The floodplain that once gave the city of Hyderabad its natural resilience was buried under concrete and commerce, he said. "We are giving the river its space back. We are demarcating protected zones" he explained.

### Priority attention needed for desiltation of projects

Uttam Kumar Reddy stressed that the increasing siltation of irrigation projects has resulted in a significant loss of gross storage capacity in Indian irrigation reservoirs. He pointed out that the desiltation process has been consistently neglected, which has further added to flood devastation. He urged that desiltation of irrigation projects should receive priority attention from both the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

He concluded with a clear commitment to address the problem of flood ravage and outlined Telangana's preparedness to tackle the situation with special measures including table-top exercises, mock drills, GIS mapping and forecasting upgrades. He appealed to policymakers, academicians, startups, industry and communities to join hands in this endeavour.

Senior officials from the Central Water Commission, GRMB, KRMB, Irrigation Departments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and academicians from premier institutions and industry representatives were among those who took part.



## Dr. Peruka Raju Selected for Sahiti Kala Seva Award 2026

### HYDERABAD

Renowned national poet, writer, and multilingual scholar Dr. Peruka Raju has been selected for the prestigious "Sahiti Kala Seva Award – 2026" in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the field of literature. The award was conferred in appreciation of his exceptional literary service across various Indian languages, expressed through a powerful pen enriched with social consciousness along with his contributions to the Telugu language. The award was presented to Dr. Peruka Raju during a special ceremony held in Bhagyanagar (Hyderabad) as part of the Ugadi celebrations.

A proud son of Telangana who brings honor to Mother India, Dr. Peruka Raju is currently serving as a Junior Officer in the Indian Army under the Ministry of Defence. As a national poet, writer, and translator, he has earned remarkable recognition for harmonizing ideas, emotions, and cultures across multiple Indian languages.

His writings blend the sharpness of neem blossoms, the tanginess of raw mango, and the sweetness of sugarcane, creating a unique literary flavor that leaves readers deeply moved and enriched.

Alongside his literary pursuits, Dr. Raju is also actively engaged in social service. With the aim of uplifting the poor and marginalized sections of society, he founded

the voluntary organization "My Gift", through which he continues to serve the community. His guiding philosophy in life is: "Encouragement is the greatest gift."

Dr. Peruka Raju has received several honors including the Swarna Kankanam and Nandi Award. In addition, he has recently been honored with the Sankranti Visishta Kavi Ratna, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Vishva Sahiti Kala Vedika Award, International Mother Language Distinguished Literary Award, and the Nava Bharata Kala Kshetra Award. Through these recognitions, he has firmly established his position as a prominent literary voice at the national level.

On the occasion of his selection for this prestigious award, friends from his hometown, literary admirers, members of the "My Gift" organization, and his colleagues from the Army expressed their happiness and congratulations.

The event was attended by Saraswati devotee Sri Daivajna Sharma, former Chairman of the Telangana BC Commission Dr. Adinarayana, Adi Leela Founder President, Murthy ,C.A.P.O., Founder President Mrs. Swapna Kishore, Ravi, Jindam Ashok, Rajitha, and several other dignitaries, artists, students, and youth. Cultural performances including dances and songs by children and artists added charm to the event and delighted the audience.

## Digital Media Policy Coming Soon

### Minister Ponguleti in the Legislative Council

### HYDERABAD

State Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy announced that a Digital Media Policy will be introduced within the next two to three months.

On Tuesday, the minister responded in the Legislative Council to questions raised by several members regarding journalists' issues. He clarified that the government will not compromise in ensuring the safety of journalists. He noted that some people are creating unnecessary misconceptions regarding the issuance of accreditation cards. Accreditation cards will be issued to all eligible



journalists. Without any bias, the government initially released a Government Order (G.O.), and after seeking opinions and suggestions from all journalists' associations, it made necessary amendments to it.

He also stated that the government does not differentiate between desk jour-

nalists and other journalists.

Regarding house site allotments, he said that a positive decision will be taken. The Honorable Chief Minister has already provided clarity on this matter, and the government is preparing an action plan to allot house sites without any legal complications.

## Rotaract Club Inaugurated at Government Polytechnic Mahabubnagar

- Scholarships Worth 3.30 Lakhs Distributed to Students

### MAHABUBNAGAR

In a significant initiative aimed at promoting leadership, social responsibility, and student engagement in community service, the Rotaract Club was formally inaugurated on Monday at the Government Polytechnic College, Mahabubnagar. The program was organized with great enthusiasm and witnessed active participation from students, faculty, alumni, and distinguished guests.

The District Governor of Rotary Club, Dr. S. V. Ramprasad, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and officially inaugurated the Rotaract Club. In his address, he emphasized the importance of youth involvement in nation-building activities and highlighted the role of Rotaract in nurturing leadership qualities, ethical values, and a spirit of service among students.

Sri Hari Hara Prasad attended the program as the Guest of Honour and appreciated the initiative taken by the institution and alumni association in establishing the Rotaract Club. He encouraged students to utilize such platforms to develop their skills, expand their networks, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Dr. K. Venkata Murali, President of Rotary Club North Hyderabad, and Sri Suman Poshala, Secretary, participated as distinguished guests. They elaborated on the various service activities undertaken by Rotary and Rotaract Clubs, including community development, health awareness, education support, and environmental protection. They



motivated students to actively involve themselves in such initiatives and become responsible citizens. The dignitaries arrived at the college premises at 11:00 AM and were accorded a warm and cordial welcome by Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao, President of the Alumni Association; Sri Ramchander, General Secretary; Sri Muralidhar, Treasurer; senior member Sri J.R.S. Kumar; and the College Principal, Sri Mohan Babu. The reception reflected the institution's strong sense of respect and tradition.

As part of the inaugural ceremony, the guests paid floral tributes to the statue of Sir

alumni association in supporting student development initiatives and building strong industry-academia connections.

A major highlight of the event was the distribution of scholarships to deserving students. Under the EBC (Economically Backward Class) scholarship scheme, 31 students were awarded ₹10,000 each, amounting to a total of ₹3,10,000. Additionally, a special scholarship of ₹20,000 was presented to a differently-abled student to support their education and encourage inclusivity. Altogether, scholarships worth ₹3,30,000 were distributed, reflecting the institution's commitment to promoting equitable access to education.

The beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the Rotary Club, alumni association, and the institution for their generous support. The initiative was widely appreciated by students and faculty alike, as it not only provided financial assistance but also inspired students to strive for excellence. The program concluded on a patriotic note with the singing of the National Anthem, marking the successful completion of a meaningful and impactful event.

# Centre Pushes Nationwide STREE Drive for Women, Green Mobility

India's Largest Pilot Project.. A Grand Success in Bihar, AP, MP & Kerala.. Average Monthly Savings of RS.1,351 Achieved for 1,800 Women Beneficiaries through E-Bicycles

VIJAYAWADA, 18 MARCH 2026:

Buoyed by the remarkable success of its flagship pilot initiative STREE (Sustainable Transport for Rural Entrepreneurs through Electric Bicycles), the Government of India has urged all States to adopt and scale the programme as a nationwide mass movement for women empowerment, rural livelihoods, and energy-efficient mobility.

The pilot, implemented across Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala, has demonstrated transformative impact by enabling Self Help Group (SHG) women with electric cargo bicycles. Covering 1,800 beneficiaries, the initiative has resulted in

average monthly savings of ₹1,351 per woman, alongside enhanced income opportunities and mobility. Addressing a National Workshop in New Delhi, Union Minister of State for Rural Development, Kamlesh Paswan, called upon State Governments to partner with the Centre in scaling up STREE through coordinated efforts involving the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Power, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL), and leading institutions such as Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

He emphasized that the initiative aligns seamlessly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of women-led development, green mobility,



and a self-reliant rural economy. "STREE must evolve into a people's movement that empowers women while advancing India's energy efficiency goals," he said. Citing global studies, the Minister noted that electric micro mobility can increase women's incomes by 25-40 percent, while lack of safe transport significantly

limits workforce participation. The STREE model directly addresses these barriers by providing affordable, sustainable, and practical mobility solutions. The initiative is also environmentally significant, with electric bicycles having one of the lowest carbon footprints—approximately 15 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per

kilometer - making them an ideal solution for low-carbon rural transport. STREE has demonstrated that when mobility is combined with access to credit and digital connectivity, women gain not only income but also confidence and agency. Beneficiaries have reported improved participation in local governance,

better market access, and enhanced decision-making power within their communities.

**The programme is already yielding tangible results:**

- In Andhra Pradesh's Kuppam, 59% of beneficiaries reported income growth, with many seeing average monthly gains of ₹4,601.
- In Bihar, over 52% of women now use e-bicycles as their primary mode of transport, reducing dependence on costly shared mobility.
- Several beneficiaries have reported substantial monthly savings, with inspiring stories of financial independence emerging from the pilot regions. The Secretary Ministry of Rural Development Shailesh Ku-

mar Singh highlighted the potential of SHG networks to create a new ecosystem of rural entrepreneurs engaged in delivery of agricultural produce, medicines, educational materials, and digital services—strengthening last-mile connectivity across villages.

**The Union Minister also called for greater inter-ministerial convergence, urging:**

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to support innovation and "Make in India" manufacturing,
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to integrate SHG networks with solar and renewable initiatives, creating addi-

tional livelihood avenues through training in installation and maintenance. EESL/CESL CEO Akhilesh Kumar Dixit, reaffirmed that STREE represents a scalable, inclusive, and sustainable model for rural transformation.

**Congratulating all stakeholders, the Minister concluded with a strong appeal:**

"Let us take this success forward and work collectively to transform STREE into a nationwide movement—so that millions of women can ride towards mobility, dignity, and prosperity." Sr. Executives - Venkatesh Dwivedi, S Gopal, Rajneesh Rana and Ritu Singh participated and explained about the impact of the Program.

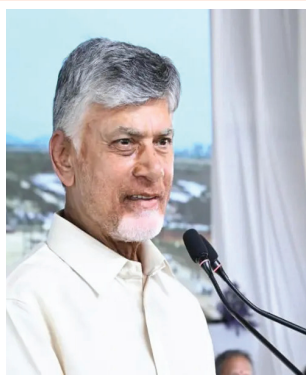
## Chandrababu Naidu hands over cheque of Rs 226 cr to Polavaram project displaced families

Polavaram diaphragm wall to be completed in a week: CM

AMARAVATI:

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu today handed over a cheque of Rs 226.61 crore as part of the third installment to Polavaram project displaced families on the occasion of Ugadi festival. When they met Chief Minister at camp office here today, he said the Polavaram Project is becoming a reality because of their sacrifices.

Describing the Polavaram Project as lifeline of the state, the Chief Minister said that once it is completed and river interlinking is achieved, it will benefit the entire state. He noted that due to the negligence of previous governments, the diaphragm wall was damaged. After consulting experts, the government has now undertaken reconstruction of a new diaphragm wall at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore. He said the diaphragm wall



will be completed within a week and that project works are progressing rapidly. He added that work has been accelerated over the past 21 months and expressed confidence that the project will be completed within two months after next year's Ugadi, fulfilling the long-cherished dream of the people.

The Chief Minister clarified that Rampachodavaram constituency was re-organized as Polavaram district keeping the project

and displaced people in mind. Though it is a central government project, he said the state government is completing it with strong commitment.

The Chief Minister stated that compensation payments to displaced families have accelerated only after the coalition government came to power. He said Rs 800 crore was released as the first installment during Sankranti in January 2025, and Rs 916 crore as the second installment during Diwali last year. Now, Rs 226.6 crore is being released as the third installment on the occasion of Ugadi. A total of Rs 1,943 crore has been paid to 26,149 displaced persons over the past 21 months. As part of the two-phase project construction, steps have been taken to relocate 38,068 displaced persons in the first phase. Out of 75 rehabilitation colonies,

26 have already been completed, while 49 are under construction.

He further stated that colonies are being constructed for 17,114 displaced persons identified in 2022, with a target to complete rehabilitation by April 2027. Around Rs 3,500 crore more is required for the project.

Each displaced family is being provided Rs 3.5 lakh for house construction, and the amount for house sites has been increased to Rs 2 lakh. He said the project was delayed by 6-7 years due to the negligence of previous governments.

Members of Polavaram Project displaced families shared their views with great emotion and happiness.

Minister for Water Resources Nimmala Rama Naidu, Chief Secretary G. Sai Prasad and Polavaram R&R officials were present.

## AP Govt's Ugadi Gift for Specially Aabled

CM launch Divyang Shakti-free travel facility for specially abled peoples

Coalition government t committed for welfare of Divyang individuals :CM



Amaravati: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched Divyang Shakti-free travel facility for specially abled people in APS RTC services today as Ugadi gift towards building an inclusive and equitable opportunities for specially abled people. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has successfully launched the "Divyang Shakti" initiative, reaffirming its commitment to empowering divyang people. As part of the launch of "Divyang Shakti" the bus journey started from Mangalagiri Bus Stand along the Old Mangalagiri route, drawing widespread public attention and participation. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Dy CM Pawan Kalyan and Minister Nara Lokesh took part in the programme, traveling along with divyang individuals in a Palle Velugu bus. Throughout the journey,

the leaders warmly greeted citizens gathered along both sides of the road and engaged directly with divyang individuals, listening to their concerns, understanding their challenges and gaining first hand insights into their daily experiences. Following the completion of the program, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for divyang individuals to celebrate the launch of the scheme. The "Divyang Shakti" scheme stands as a transformative welfare initiative, providing free bus travel for divyang individuals in services operated by Andhra Pradesh State Road

Transport Corporation, including City Ordinary, Metro Express, Palle Velugu, Ultra Palle Velugu,

and Express buses. The initiative is designed to remove mobility barriers, enhance accessibility and foster confidence and independence among beneficiaries. The scheme applies to individuals with more than 40 per cent disability across 21 categories and is expected to benefit approximately 12.76 lakh people including attendants. By improving access to transportation, the program significantly enhances opportunities for education, healthcare, employment and social inclusion. The Government committed for annual allotment of Rs 207 crore for the effective implementation of the scheme, underscoring its strong focus on social justice and inclusive growth. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister asserted that the launch of Divyang Shakti scheme today has given him great satisfaction and happiness. He said persons with disabilities are not disabled—they are differ-

ently-abled individuals with unique talents, who have the strength to overcome challenges and achieve success. Earlier, the government supported divyang people through Cheyutha program and provided tricycles and also two-wheelers to boost their confidence. He said the state government providing a Rs 6,000 pension to persons with disabilities and providing Rs 10,000 for those with severe health issues and Rs 15,000 for those who are bedridden. The government spending Rs 33,000 crore annually on pensions. With the free travel facility introduced today physically challenged people can travel free for their work spots and needs without any expense, saving up to Rs 2,000 per month.

The Chief Minister said through Divyang Shakti the government providing free bus travel to 12.75 lakh specially abled people. He said under the Stree Shakti scheme introduced for women so far, there have been 52 crore journeys recorded. Now, with Divyang Shakti, lakhs of people will benefit.

## Stalin Slams AIADMK, Says People Back Development

CHENNAI, MARCH 18

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Wednesday strongly criticised AIADMK leaders over alleged derogatory remarks against women, asserting that the people of the state are closely watching and will ultimately choose a path of development. Reacting to the controversy, Stalin accused the opposition of lowering the standards of political discourse. In a post on social media platform X, he said, "Which platform truly serves Tamil Nadu? On our platforms, we speak with data about achievements that are shaping the future of the state and benefiting its people." Taking a direct swipe at the AIADMK, he added, "On the other side are those who have no achievements to speak of and no policies to implement. They resort to vulgarity and slander." He further emphasised that voters are aware of these differences, stating, "The people of Tamil Nadu are observing everything. They will choose the dawn



that brings development." The Chief Minister's remarks came in response to controversial statements made by former AIADMK ministers C.V. Shanmugam and Dindigul Srinivasan during a protest organised by the party against the DMK government. While addressing a gathering in Villupuram, C.V. Shanmugam allegedly made inappropriate remarks about a woman actor, triggering widespread criticism. Amid the backlash, the AIADMK's IT wing later said that he had apologised for his comments.

The controversy deepened after former minister Dindigul Srinivasan was also accused of making derogatory remarks about women, drawing condemnation from multiple political parties.

## Haryana Congress Names 4 MLAs in RS Cross-Voting Row

CHANDIGARH: (MAR 18)

The Congress on Wednesday named four of its five MLAs in Haryana who allegedly cross-voted in Monday's Rajya Sabha polls.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Congress general secretary in-charge of Haryana B K Hariprasad disclosed the names of four MLAs who



cross-voted. "Bhupinder Singh Hooda and I were the authorised agents (of the party) and we saw every ballot of our MLAs," Hariprasad said.

## Bengal govt assigns new posts to 19 IPS officers removed by ECI

KOLKATA, MARCH 18

The West Bengal government on Wednesday assigned new responsibilities to 19 IPS officers who were removed from their posts by the Election Commission. They have now been appointed to new positions, a senior officer at the state secretariat, Nabanna, said. The state government issued a directive to this effect on Wednesday, keeping in mind the EC's condition that none of the officers could be reinstated to any post related to the Assembly elections.

Indira Mukherjee, who was removed as Deputy Commissioner (Central) of Kolkata Police, has been transferred to the post of Special Superintendent (SS) in the State Police's Criminal Investiga-



tion Department (CID).

Rajiv Mishra, who was removed from the post of Additional Director General (ADG) South Bengal, has been transferred to the post of ADG (Reform and Coordination).

Praveen Kumar Tripathi, formerly the Police Commissioner of Barrackpore, has been appointed Inspector General (IG) of the State Police's Special Task Force (STF).

Sunil Kumar Choudhary,

the removed Police Commissioner of Asansol-Durgapur, has been assigned the same responsibility again.

Sukesh Kumar Jain, removed as IG (North Bengal), has been appointed IG of the State Police's Intelligence Bureau (IB).

Akash Magharia, removed as Police Commissioner of Howrah, and Koteswara Rao, removed as Police Commissioner of Chandernagore, have both been appointed Deputy Inspector Generals (DIGs) in the IB.

Meanwhile, six removed officers have been appointed Special Superintendents in the IB. They include: Joby Thomas, removed SP of Islampur; Abhijit Banerjee, removed SP of Malda; Amandeep, removed SP of Birbhum; Kamnashis Sen, removed SP of Hoogh-

ly (Rural); Dhritiman Sarkar, removed SP of Murshidabad Police District; and Hossain Mehdi Rahman, removed SP of Jangipur Police District.

The removed Superintendents of Police, Parijat Biswas (East Midnapore), Bishop Sarkar (Diamond Harbour), Sandeep Karra (Cooch Behar), Arish Bilal (Barrackpore), and Palash Chandra Dhalli (West Midnapore), have been appointed as Superintendents of Police in the State Police STF. Additionally, Priyabrata Roy, the former SP of Barasat, has been appointed Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the Traffic Department of the Kolkata Police. Laxmi Narayan Meena, who continues as ADG (Prisons), has been given additional charge of ADG (Records Bureau).

## A tale of two meetings: Karnataka Congress MLAs seek plum posts amid power tussle

Following their dinner meeting, the MLAs decided to meet the Congress high command on March 26 in New Delhi.



The power tussle within the Karnataka unit of the Congress party seems to be intensifying. At least 45 MLAs of the ruling party met at Bengaluru's Shangri-la Hotel on Tuesday to discuss their prospects of joining the Siddaramaiah Cabinet. Following their dinner meeting, the MLAs decided to meet the Congress high command on March 26 in New Delhi.

"We are either first-time or second-time MLAs. We will submit a representation to the Chief Minister and the AICC, seeking cabinet berths for a few of us. Ahead of the 2028

elections, we also need clarity on the political rift within the government," said one of the MLAs who attended the meeting. In a parallel meeting, Bengaluru Development Authority Chairperson and four-term MLA NA Haris along with several senior Congress MLAs met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and demanded

their inclusion in the government. The political developments on Tuesday came days after over 25 Congress legislators had gathered for a dinner meeting at a private hotel, triggering speculation about a possible change in Karnataka's CM.

According to sources, the legislators spoke at length about the party's deteriorating image in the March 12 meeting. They also warned that internal issues could affect the government's prospects in the 2028 Karnataka Assembly elections. Interestingly, the meeting took place even as the Chief Minister was chairing a Cabinet meeting at Vidhana Soudha.

On March 4, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is reportedly locked in a power tussle with the Chief Minister, said that he was exercising patience and had no intention of triggering any "revolution" over the Chief Minister's post. According to political observers, recent meetings and public statements by senior leaders have added to the buzz around the party's future leadership in the state.

## Row Over Rajya Sabha Polls: CM Accuses Congress of Subverting Democracy

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 18

Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday mounted a sharp attack on the Congress over the Rajya Sabha elections, alleging that the party itself is guilty of undermining democratic principles. Terming Congress's claim of "murder of democracy" as politically motivated, he said such assertions betray the party's frustration and that its own statements have, in fact, weakened democratic discourse.

Speaking during the ongoing Budget Session of the State Vidhan Sabha on Wednesday, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said the issue did not formally arise for discussion in the House. However, he noted that senior member Dr. Raghunath Singh Kadian, a former Speaker, had questioned the necessity of fielding a third candidate. He also referred to remarks made to the media by MLA Geeta Bhukkal, who alleged that government ministers



had sought to poach Congress MLAs. The Chief Minister clarified that the third candidate was not backed by them, but was an independent candidate fielded by independent members. He emphasized that in a democracy, every individual has the right to contest elections. The independent candidate had approached them for support and had also sought votes from the Congress. Ultimately, those who chose to back him did so in accordance with their conscience. There should be no objection to that. The attempts to cast aspersions on the process were unwarranted, said Sh. Nayab Singh Saini.

## BJP's poll panel discusses candidates for upcoming Assembly polls

NEW DELHI: (MAR 18)

The BJP's Central Election Committee held a meeting here on Wednesday to discuss and finalise the names of the party candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls in Assam and Puducherry. The meeting, presided over by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Nitin Nabin, was attended

by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and party national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh, among others.

According to sources, the meeting is learnt to have extensively deliberated on the panel of names recommended by the respective state units.

EDITORIAL

REWIND

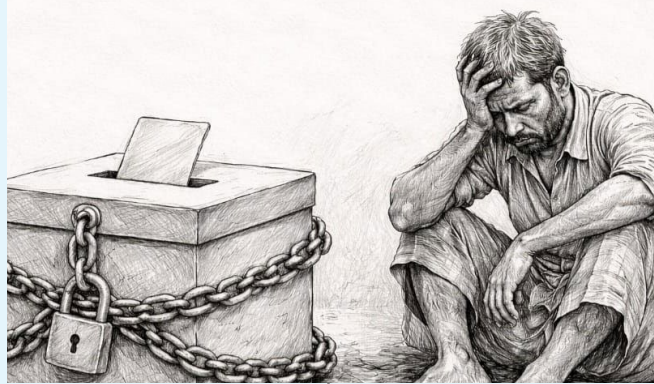
THE INVISIBLE EMERGENCY:  
INDIA'S PRISON HEALTH CRISIS

The public health crisis in India's prisons is distinguished by its poorer infrastructure and a general disregard for treating ailments until they become inconvenient. A prisoner does not lose the right to health, a point courts have repeatedly stressed; yet, between August 20, 2025, and March 9, 2026, around 92 inmates at the Jalpaiguri Central Correctional Home were infected with herpes simplex virus (HSV) and seven of them died. HSV is common in the general population but experts have said that in immunocompromised or overcrowded populations with poor care, it can lead to encephalitis, which is often fatal. The Home's 171% occupancy rate rendered good hygiene and isolation a luxury. According to the 2023 Prison Statistics of India, district prisons in West Bengal have reported occupancy rates exceeding 160% and certain facilities, such as the Kandi Sub-Jail, have historically reached staggering levels of over 400%. While the State has many foreign national inmates, overcrowding is a persistent fact of India's correctional facilities. In 2023, 30% of inmates in 10 prisons in Kerala were found to have skin diseases caused by humidity and a lack of personal space. A 2023 study in The Lancet Public Health found prisoners in India five times more likely to develop tuberculosis (TB) than the general population. In 2025, the Home Ministry ordered prison screening camps as unventilated environments allow TB to spread rapidly. The Nagpur and Indore central jails had major COVID-19 outbreaks.

According to the India Justice Report 2025, HIV prevalence among inmates is also significantly higher than the national average due to shared equipment and inadequate screening at entry. Mandatory, comprehensive medical screening could catch many of these infections before they become injurious, which also requires facilities to have the requisite personnel. But the report also flagged a 43% vacancy rate for medical officers, resulting in the number of inmates per doctor being 2.6 times higher than recommended by the Model Prison Manual. There are also only 25 psychologists for India's 5.7 lakh inmates. Filling this gap requires integrating prisons into the National Health Mission, ensuring a sufficient number of health workers trained to manage outbreaks, and enforcing the Manual's standards uniformly across States. As West Bengal's actions in 2020 illustrate — temporarily releasing thousands of undertrials to relieve overcrowding in the South 24 Parganas District Correctional Home and the Baruipur Central Jail — the solutions are not confined to health. The judiciary must fast-track cases involving undertrials, who constitute the majority of inmates, expand the use of bail and non-custodial alternatives for minor offences and expedite the repatriation of foreign nationals.



POSSIBLE



All things that breathe shall one day fade, Even gold will dull and jade. Time bows the proud, dethrones the wise, It rusts the steel, it dims the skies.

But one bright flame shall never die The flame of learning, reaching high. No storm can drown its sacred gleam, It flows unbroken truth's own stream.

They laughed: "You're poor, you're meant to fall, No polished shoes, no dreams at all. In crumbling hostels, dark and bare, You chase a hope that isn't there."

"No coin for sweets, no room to dream, Your mother's tears, your father's scream. No books at home, no guiding hand, Just toil and dust, just earth and sand."

"You shine in class, but what's the gain? Your path is paved in loss and pain. You run, you strive, you try in vain; The poor don't win in rich men's game."

Such words, like blades, cut through his soul, Yet sparked a fire beyond control. "The world says no but still I'll try. Impossible is but a lie."

He drank from fate in broken mugs, He lived on scraps and silent shrugs.

He bore each stone, each scar, each dream of breaking every bar.

He sold torn shirts on dusty roads, He bore the sun, the harshest loads. His palms were cracked, his skin was gray Yet still he read at end of day.

No mentor came, no open gate, Just burning will to challenge fate. He rose from mud with soul aflame His merit carved a mighty name.

And when he climbed that final height, With hands worn raw from lifelong fight, He watched the world bow down to gold Not to the truth his story told.

Money may buy the softest bed But not the peace to rest your head. It buys a feast, but not the taste, It buys a name but leaves it waste.

It buys a house, but not a home, It buys the world but not your own. It buys the mask not what's beneath, It buys applause not soul or wreath.

So teach your child to seek the stars, To mend their wounds, to wear their scars. For wealth may fade, and kingdoms fall But wisdom stands beyond them all.

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

Contaminated Water The Hidden Crisis Behind Development Claims

WATER IS OFTEN CALLED THE ESSENCE OF LIFE—BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THAT VERY ESSENCE TURNS TOXIC? ACROSS INDIA AND THE WORLD, THE CRISIS IS NO LONGER JUST ABOUT ACCESS TO WATER, BUT ABOUT ACCESS TO WATER THAT IS SAFE TO DRINK. EVEN AS AMBITIOUS GOVERNMENT SCHEMES EXPAND PIPELINES AND PROMISE TAP CONNECTIONS TO MILLIONS, A TROUBLING REALITY PERSISTS: THE WATER FLOWING INTO MANY HOMES REMAINS CONTAMINATED. THIS SILENT THREAT IS NOT ONLY UNDERMINING PUBLIC HEALTH BUT ALSO EXPOSING DEEP GAPS IN GOVERNANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY—RAISING A CRITICAL QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER DEVELOPMENT CAN TRULY BE CALLED PROGRESS IF IT FAILS TO SECURE SOMETHING AS FUNDAMENTAL AS CLEAN DRINKING WATER.



In many places, drinking water pipelines run dangerously close to sewage lines. Over time, as pipelines deteriorate, sewage water seeps into drinking water supplies, leading to severe health hazards. In recent years, several cities have reported outbreaks of illness—and even deaths—due to contaminated water. Incidents in cities like Indore highlight the gravity of the situation. It is deeply ironic that a city repeatedly ranked among the cleanest in India faces such deadly consequences due to polluted water.

Health experts have long warned that most diseases originate from the digestive system, with contaminated water being a primary cause. Waterborne diseases such as diarrhea, vomiting, typhoid, cholera, and jaundice continue to affect millions. Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable due to weaker immunity. In rural areas, where healthcare facilities are limited, the impact becomes even more severe. Thus, contaminated water is not just an environmental issue—it is a

major public health crisis. Several factors contribute to water pollution. One of the most significant is the discharge of untreated industrial waste into rivers and water bodies. Additionally, untreated sewage from cities further pollutes water sources. Reports from pollution control authorities indicate that many river stretches across the country fail to meet water quality standards. This suggests that our water bodies are increasingly trapped in a web of pollution. At the same time, excessive groundwater extraction is compounding the crisis. India is among the largest users of groundwater globally, and over-extraction has led not only to declining water tables but also to increased concentrations of harmful substances like fluoride and arsenic in many regions.

Unplanned and unchecked development has further aggravated the situation. Expanding cities, growing industries, and rising population exert immense pressure on water resources. However, water man-

agement systems have not kept pace with this growth. In many cities, sewage treatment plants are either inadequate or inefficient, resulting in large volumes of untreated wastewater flowing directly into rivers and lakes. When these polluted sources are used for drinking water supply, contamination becomes inevitable. The impact of polluted water extends beyond human health—it affects entire ecosystems. Rising pollution levels in rivers and lakes threaten aquatic life, pushing many species toward extinction. Furthermore, when contaminated water is used for irrigation, it degrades soil quality and eventually enters the food chain, posing long-term risks to human health. Thus, water pollution is a complex and multidimensional problem.

Addressing this crisis requires more than policy announcements—it demands effective implementation. First and foremost, regular and transparent monitoring of water quality must be ensured. Testing water samples is meaningful only if prompt corrective action

follows contamination detection. Additionally, maintaining a safe distance between water supply and sewage systems should be made mandatory. In cities and towns with outdated pipeline infrastructure, urgent and phased replacement is essential. Strict control over industrial pollution is equally critical. Industries must ensure that no untreated waste is discharged into water bodies. This requires not only stringent regulations but also robust monitoring mechanisms. Equally important is fixing accountability at the level of local authorities, who are often responsible for both water supply and quality monitoring. Lack of transparency at this level often exacerbates the problem.

It is essential to recognize that access to clean water is not a luxury—it is a fundamental right of every citizen. Just as food, education, and healthcare are considered basic necessities, safe drinking water must be accorded the same priority. If the nation truly aspires to be healthy and prosperous, ensuring water quality must become a top priority. Initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission can be deemed fully successful only when the water delivered to every household is genuinely safe. Going forward, water management must not remain confined to government programs alone; it must evolve into a mass movement driven by public participation. Community-based water testing, rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, and awareness campaigns can play a transformative role. Without collective efforts from society, administration, and government, the crisis of contaminated water cannot be fully resolved. Protecting clean water is, in essence, protecting life itself—and this responsibility belongs to all of us.



LALIT GARGG  
Writer, Journalist, Columnist

Navratri: A Festival of Inner Energy & Spiritual Elevation

Navratri holds immense significance in Indian society as a sacred festival dedicated to the worship of Adi Shakti, Goddess Durga. The nine days of Navratri are devoted to the worship of the nine divine forms of the Goddess, and hence it is also known as the festival of nine powers. Navratri begins on the Pratipada of the Shukla Paksha of the Chaitra month, and this year it will commence on March 19 and conclude on March 27. Each of these nine days represents a distinct form of divine energy, each with its own significance.

The first form worshipped is Shailputri, the daughter of the Himalayas, who rides a bull named Nandi and holds a trident in her right hand and a lotus in her left. She is considered the protector of all living beings, and temples dedicated to her are often established in remote regions to ensure safety and protection.

The second form is Brahmacharini, regarded as the embodiment of knowledge and penance. Her worship enhances virtues such as discipline, sacrifice, detachment, and moral conduct. Clad in white, she carries a rosary and a water pot. It is believed that in her previous birth as Parvati, she performed



intense penance for thousands of years to attain Lord Shiva.

The third form is Chandraghanta, adorned with a crescent moon shaped like a bell on her forehead. She symbolizes courage and grace, riding a tiger and radiating golden brilliance.

With ten arms holding various weapons, she is always ready to destroy evil and bless devotees with health, prosperity, and longevity.

The fourth form is Kushmanda, believed to have created the universe with her gentle smile.

She resides in the core of the Sun and possesses immense energy. She blesses her devotees with strength, wisdom, and vitality while removing sorrow and suffering.

The fifth form is Skandamata, the mother of Lord Skanda (Kartikeya). Seated on a lotus and riding a lion, she represents nurturing power and grants prosperity and salvation. She carries her child in her lap, symbolizing maternal protection.

The sixth form is Katyayani, born in the ashram of Sage Katyayan to destroy demons and restore righteousness. She rides a lion and holds a sword and lotus, symbolizing strength and justice.

The seventh form is Kalaratri, fierce in appearance yet auspicious in nature. Known as "Shubhankari," she destroys negativity and evil forces. With her dark form and fiery eyes, she represents the ultimate power that protects righteousness.

The eighth form is Mahagauri, symbolizing purity and serenity. After intense penance, she attained a radiant fair complexion. Worshipped on Ashtami, she is associated with prosperity, peace, and fulfillment. She is also linked with the tradition of Kanya Pujan.

The ninth and final form is

Siddhidatri, the granter of all spiritual powers. Seated on a lotus, she blesses devotees with wisdom and fulfillment of desires. She is also considered a form of Goddess Saraswati.

Navratri is not merely a religious observance but a celebration of inner awakening. It teaches us discipline, courage, and righteousness. The nine forms of Goddess Durga illuminate nine dimensions of life, guiding us from ignorance to knowledge, from fear to fearlessness, and from weakness to strength. This sacred festival inspires every seeker to recognize their inner power and move forward in life with positivity and purpose.



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

## From Parliament to Constituencies, MPs Join Forces to End Child Marriage by 2030

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18:

In a rare and powerful collective push, over 20 Members of Parliament from different political parties came together in the national capital under the banner of 'MPs for Children' to chart a roadmap for making India free from child marriage by 2030. Highlighting child marriage and the risks emerging from social media as two major threats to children, the MPs emphasised the need to utilise Zero Hour, introduce Private Members' Bills, and leverage their constituencies to bring these issues to the forefront.

'MPs for Children Forum', supported by Just Rights for Children, came into being on 17 November 2024, when as many as 38 MPs extended their support, raising concerns over child marriage and child sexual abuse. Just Rights for Children is the country's largest network of NGOs, with over 250 partners working across more than 450 districts. Speaking at the 'Dialogue with Parliamentarians

on Achieving Child Full Potential', Telugu Desam Party leader and convener of MPs for Children, Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, said, "Child marriage is not about any one party or religion. There is broad consensus across political lines that it must end. India has shown that when we act with collective resolve, we can achieve results, we eradicated polio and ensured children are in school. With the same commitment, there is no reason why we cannot eliminate child marriage by 2030."

Devarayalu, who is the Parliamentary Party Leader of the Telugu Desam Party, also called for age-specific restrictions on children's use of social media. Notably, he recently introduced a Private Member's Bill in the Lok Sabha to strengthen the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006. The Bill proposes strict penalties, exclusive Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CPMOs), special courts, and a digital reporting portal to accelerate the goal of a child marriage-free India.

• Over 20 MPs from different parties came together under 'MPs for Children' banner for child marriage free India by 2030.  
• MPs for Children is an initiative supported by Just Rights for Children, India's largest network of over 250 NGOs.  
• Telugu Desam Party leader Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, along with other MPs also called for progressive, age-appropriate restrictions on social media to protect children.



Thanking all the Parliamentarians for their support, Bhuwan Ribhu, Founder of Just Rights for Children, said, "We thank the MPs for Children Forum for their leadership and for underscoring the urgent need to take up critical child protection issues within Parliament and with relevant government agencies. Child protection is not only a social

responsibility, but a national priority. Ensuring that children are protected from harm, both online and offline, is fundamental to building the nation." He further added, "We are grateful to the MPs for agreeing that the Government of India should designate a 'National Day for Child Marriage Free India'. Instituting a National Day would not only

recognise the urgency of ending this crime but also reinforce a whole-of-government and whole-of-society accountability approach to ensure that no child is pushed into marriage. Bhuwan Ribhu has also recently called on the United Nations to declare a dedicated 'World Day for the Elimination of Child Marriage'. Recognising the growing influence of digital spaces in shaping childhood, the group also called for progressive, age-appropriate restrictions on social media to protect children from the emerging threats of technology-enabled child sexual abuse and exploitation. Other Members of Parliament who were present during the MPs for Children dialogue included Bhim Singh, BJP; Dr. Dhar-amvira Gandhi, INC; Raja Ram Singh Kushwaha, CPI ML; Lumba Ram Choudhary, BJP; Pushpendra Saroj, SP; Jothimani, INC; Daggamalla Prasada Rao, TDP; Gajendra Patel, BJP; John Brittas, CPM; Thiru Arun Nehru, DMK; Chhotelal Kharwar, SP; Igra Choudhary, SP; Jugal Kishore

### CENTRE TO ADDRESS MEDIA AFTER CABINET MEETING

KEY DECISIONS WORTH ₹54,926 CRORE CLEARED

- ₹33,660 crore approved for plug-and-play industrial estates under Industrial Development Plan
- ₹11,712 crore reimbursement cleared for farmers during 2023-24 cotton season
- ₹6,969 crore approved for Barabanki-Bahraich four-lane access-controlled highway project
- ₹2,585 crore sanctioned for small hydropower 'run-of-the-river' scheme

Total decisions worth ₹54,926 crore approved



## Cabinet Clears Key Projects Worth ₹54,926 Crore; Centre to Brief Media

DELHI, MARCH 18:

The Central Government will address the media following the Cabinet meeting, outlining major decisions approved across sectors. Addressing a Cabinet briefing, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that several key initiatives were cleared to strengthen the 'Make in India' push. A major scheme under the Industrial Development Plan, worth ₹33,660 crore, was approved to develop plug-and-play industrial

estates. The Cabinet also cleared reimbursement of about ₹11,712 crore to support farmers for the 2023-24 cotton season. In addition, the Barabanki-Bahraich access-controlled four-lane highway project, with an investment of ₹6,969 crore, received approval. A small hydropower 'run-of-the-river' development scheme worth ₹2,585 crore was also sanctioned. In total, decisions amounting to ₹54,926 crore were approved by the Cabinet.

## BLW Hosts 3-Day Stress Management Workshop

VARANASI, MARCH 18:

With the objective of promoting the mental and physical well-being of its officers and employees, a three-day meditation program was launched at the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), running from March 18, 2026, to March 20, 2026 (from 15:00 to 16:30). The theme of the program is "Learn to Meditate - Sahaj Marg: A Natural Path." To foster mental health, stress management, and the holistic development of BLW's officers and employees, a "Heartfulness Meditation Program"—a three-day initiative comprising one-hour sessions daily—was organized today, March 18, 2026 (the first day of the program), at the Technical Training Centre. This program represents a significant initiative aimed at ensuring the overall welfare of employees, cultivating a healthy work environment, and promoting a stress-free lifestyle. The program has been organized in collaboration with the Heartfulness



Institute, Varanasi. Notably, this organization operates in 160 countries worldwide, where it provides free meditation and yoga instruction. During the meditation program, the keynote speakers—Mr. R.P. Mishra (a retired officer of the Indian Economic Service and trainer at the Heartfulness Institute) and Mrs. Shobhita Srivastava (a former professor at Sunbeam Varuna, Varanasi, and a trainer)—discussed stress management. They explained the pivotal role that meditation plays in gaining control over negative emotions such as anger and stress, and in restoring peace and happiness to one's daily life through

the application of Heartfulness tools. A relaxation session was conducted by Mrs. Shobhita Srivastava during the program. During the session, it was explained that Heartfulness is a meditation methodology based on traditional Raja Yoga, which has been adapted to suit the modern lifestyle. Its key stages are Relaxation, Meditation, Purification, and Prayer. Regular practice of meditation leads to a reduction in mental stress, enhanced concentration, emotional balance, and an overall improvement in health. During this session, employees were guided through practical meditation exercises

and were informed about effective strategies for stress relief. Experts explained that chronic stress has an adverse impact on human health, whereas regular meditation practice fosters mental peace, aids in regulating blood pressure, improves sleep quality, and enhances work efficiency. Following the practical session, employees shared their experiences, noting that the meditation practice provided them with an immediate sense of mental calm, a feeling of lightness, and a surge of positive energy. The event witnessed significant participation from a large number of BLW employees—including a notable presence of female employees - alongside key figures such as Chief Mechanical Engineer (Production & Marketing) Mr. Sunil Kumar, Assistant Finance Advisor Mr. Ramshankar Jaiswal, and Trainer Mr. Santosh Pathak. The proceedings were anchored by Chief Vigilance Inspector and Trainer Mr. Sudhir Kumar Jain.

## Haryana Speaker Bats for Natural Farming

Chandigarh, March 18 — Haryana Vidhan Sabha Speaker Sh. Harvinder Kalyan said that it is a special occasion for the Assembly to have a distinguished personality like Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat present in the House to share his views on an important subject like natural farming. He stated that Acharya Devvrat is not only deeply connected with natural farming but has also made remarkable contributions in this field. For years, he has been making continuous efforts to turn natural farming into a mass movement across the country and inspiring farmers to adopt farming practices in harmony with nature. Harvinder Kalyan said that Haryana is an agriculture-dominated state, and therefore the importance of natural farming becomes even greater. In many regions of the state, the groundwater level is declining rapidly, and paddy-wheat-based farming is putting excessive pressure on water resources. He emphasized that the need of the hour is to develop a balanced agricultural system through natural farming that protects soil, water, environ-

## 3,100 Telegram channels, 800 websites blocked for hosting pirated contents

Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan said the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023, has strengthened the legal framework to deter film piracy.

Audiences can look forward to a jam-packed release calendar across Netflix, Prime Video, SonyLIV, JioHotstar, ZEE5, and Amazon MX Player, making the start of 2026 truly binge-worthy. The government said that laws which prohibit unauthorised recording and transmission of films were enacted to take the action against piracy. (Image for representation) More than 3,100 Telegram channels and about 800 websites hosting pirated content have been disabled at the government's order, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday. Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan said the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023, has strengthened

the legal framework to deter film piracy with sections 6AA and 6AB, which prohibit unauthorised recording and transmission of films. He said Section 7(1A) provides that if any person contravenes the two provisions, they shall be punishable with a minimum of three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 3 lakh, which can be extended up to three years imprisonment and a fine of up to 5 per cent of the audited gross production cost. In accordance with the provisions of law, the Telegram App was notified under Section 79(3)(b) of IT Act, 2000, on March 11, 2026 to remove and disable access to the 3,142 channels publishing content owned by or licensed to certain content owners, OTT platforms and producers without authorization in violation of the Copyright Act, 1957. Murugan said in reply to a written question. The minister said access to approximately 800 websites hosting pirated content was disabled through Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

## Vamsi Krishna Pushes Singareni Pension Hike

New Delhi: Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna met the Coal Mines Provident Fund (CMPF) Commissioner and Coal Controller Sajeesh Kumar N. at his office in New Delhi on Wednesday and strongly advocated for an immediate enhancement of pensions for retired Singareni coal workers under the CMPF Scheme, 1998. The MP explained that retired workers from Singareni were currently facing financial hardships due to the meager pension amounts they received. He appealed for an immediate increase in their pensions to ensure that these



workers could lead a dignified life. The officials assured him that they would examine this matter favorably and take appropriate measures in accordance with established procedures. The meeting concluded in a positive atmosphere, thereby paving the way for the resolution of the issues faced by the workers.

## Railways' Super-Fast Growth with Record Budget

MALIGAON, MARCH 18, 2026

Indian Railways is undergoing a major phase of expansion and modernization, backed by a record allocation of ₹2.78 lakh crore in the Union Budget 2026-27. Addressing Parliament, the Railway Minister said the merger of the Railway Budget with the General Budget has enabled faster decision-making, higher funding, and improved transparency with institutional monitoring by the Finance Ministry and NITI Aayog. The Minister noted that despite heavy spending on salaries, pensions, energy, and finance, the Railways continues to maintain a



modest surplus. Electrification has been a key driver of efficiency, saving nearly ₹6,000 crore annually and reducing diesel dependence. Freight loading has reached around 1,650 million tonnes, making it the world's second-largest freight carrier, while nearly 99% of the network is now electrified. Safety remains a top priority, with accidents reduced by nearly 90%

due to sustained investments and reforms. The deployment of the indigenous Kavach automatic train protection system is expanding rapidly, alongside increased construction of Road Over Bridges, Under Bridges, and automatic signalling systems. The Minister highlighted several strategic connectivity projects, including a proposed underground corridor in the Siliguri region and capacity upgrades along the India-Nepal border. In the Northeast, new rail lines and surveys are underway to improve regional connectivity, while international links with neighbouring countries are also being explored.

On infrastructure and services, production of modern coaches, locomotives, and wagons has reached record levels. Over 160 Vande Bharat Express and 60 Amrit Bharat Express trains are currently operational, while Dedicated Freight Corridors are enhancing logistics efficiency. Looking ahead, Indian Railways is leveraging AI and digital platforms like the RailOne App, alongside initiatives such as station redevelopment and high-speed projects including the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train. The Minister credited the efforts of 12.5 lakh employees in driving this transformation toward a modern, safe, and globally competitive railway system.



## Uday Borwankar honoured 3 Employees

GORAKHPUR, MARCH 18, 2026:

The General Manager of North Eastern Railway, Uday Borwankar, honored three employees for their outstanding work in the field of safety by declaring them "Safety Star of the Month." The awards, along with cash prizes and certificates of appreciation, were presented on March 18, 2026, at the General Manager's conference hall in Gorakhpur. Among the awardees: Nagendra Kumar, posted as Station Master at Chauri Chaura station in the Varanasi division, noticed on January 23, 2026, while giving the "all right" signal to a goods train, that sparks were coming from the 21st wagon and a wheel had turned red. He immediately informed the loco pilot and train manager via VHF. Upon inspection, brake binding was detected and released, allowing the train to pro-

ceed safely. His alertness and prompt action helped avert a major incident. Santosh Chaudhary, working as a track maintainer in the Engineering Department of the Lucknow division, spotted a broken rail during patrolling on December 9, 2026, between Campjerganj and Anandnagar at km 36/7-8. He ensured safety and promptly informed the concerned mate and track supervisor. His presence of mind and quick action prevented a potential accident. Rajkumar Baghel, a track maintainer under the Senior Section Engineer (Kasganj) in the Izzatnagar division, observed a rail fracture at km 250/2-3 during winter patrolling on January 3, 2026, between Kasganj and Marhara. He stopped an approaching train from Kasganj before it reached the fractured location and immediately informed area control and the track supervisor. His vigilance and alertness prevented a possible mishap.

## Safe Workplace is the Real Foundation of Sustainable Development: Ajay Sinha

BY SANJAY DWIVEDI

**Renukoot:** In today's rapidly advancing industrial environment, discussions often revolve around production, quality, and competitiveness. However, the most essential element supporting all these aspects is workplace safety. A strong safety culture ensures stable production, boosts employee confidence, and enhances an organization's credibility. Recognizing this, leading industries are now treating safety not just as a rule, but as a core value. This perspective was shared by Ajay Sinha, Head HR & VP

at Hindalco Renukoot, during interactions with employees, contract workers, and officers as part of National Safety Week celebrations. The initiative aimed to raise awareness and reinforce the importance of safety across all levels. Modern industrial experience shows that organizations prioritizing safety see fewer accidents and improved productivity. Studies indicate that effective safety management systems can reduce workplace incidents by 20 to 40 percent. As a result, safety is no longer just about compliance—it is now a key driver of sustainable operations.



Companies like Hindalco have adopted a holistic approach, making safety a shared responsibility rather than limiting it to a single department. Efforts include the use of advanced technologies, digital monitoring, regular training, and behavior-based

safety programs to create a secure working environment. Workplace safety in industrial units is built on three main pillars: systems, awareness, and leadership. Systems involve standard operating procedures, risk assessments, permit-to-work protocols, and emergency response plans. Awareness is developed through training sessions, toolbox talks, safety drills, and continuous communication. Leadership plays the most critical role, as visible commitment from management sets the tone for the entire organization. In large setups like Hindal-

co Renukoot, where thousands of workers are engaged in complex operations, safety becomes even more crucial. Practices such as near-miss reporting, safety observations, regular audits, and skill development programs help identify risks early and prevent accidents. A fundamental principle of safety is that every accident can be prevented with timely and correct decisions. This requires every individual to take responsibility and actively report unsafe conditions. Adopting the mindset that "safety is everyone's responsibility" is key to build-

ing a truly safe workplace. As industries continue to grow, maintaining a balance between development and safety is essential. Leveraging technology, data-driven insights, continuous training, and strong leadership can significantly strengthen safety practices. Ultimately, safety is not a one-time goal but an ongoing journey. Its success depends on the collective commitment of management, employees, and partners. A safe workplace not only protects lives but also ensures long-term stability, trust, and growth for the organization.

## Pak Deputy PM to Join Saudi Regional Meet

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD: (Mar 18) Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar is visiting Saudi Arabia to attend a meeting of the foreign ministers of regional countries, where he will push for a "swift end" to the West Asia conflict, the Foreign Office said on Wednesday. During his visit to Riyadh from March 18 to 19, Dar will "express complete support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of all brotherly countries in the region, and call for an end to all attacks on their territory," it said. He will reiterate Pakistan's call for a swift end to the ongoing conflict and urge the need for a return to dialogue and diplomacy.

## This is America's war: Iran Minister vows to keep fighting after Larijani killing

To support his argument, he also referred to the death of the former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a US-Israeli strike on February 28. "Even the (Supreme) Leader was martyred, yet the system continued its work," he said.

Iran will continue to fight despite the loss of its senior-most security official, Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araghchi said on Wednesday. "The presence or absence of a single individual does not affect Iran's political and economic structure," Araghchi said while speaking to the Qatari news channel Al Jazeera. Araghchi's comments followed the death of Ali Larijani, chief of Iran's national

security council, in a US-Israeli airstrike as the war in the Gulf nears the three-week mark. Larijani, who is credited to have been the architect of Iran's defence strategy that's been in display in the days since the start of the war, was killed in an air strike at his daughter's home near Tehran along with his son, deputy and bodyguards. Drawing a parallel with the death of the former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on the opening day of the US-Israeli-launched military offensive on February 28, Araghchi said, "Even the (Supreme) Leader was martyred, yet the system continued its work," he said. Speaking to the Doha-based news channel, Araghchi held the US responsible for the conflict in



the Middle East, adding that Washington must be held accountable for the human and economic losses.

### IRAN'S STANCE ON UNCLEAR BOMBS

The Iranian foreign minister added that Iran's stance against the development of nuclear weapons will not

significantly change. But he cautioned that Iran's new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, has not yet expressed his view on the matter. Former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei had opposed the development of weapons of mass destruction in a fatwa, or religious edict, issued in the early 2000s.

Western countries, including the U.S. and Israel, have for years accused Tehran of seeking nuclear weapons, while Iranian authorities have said their nuclear programme is solely for civilian purposes.

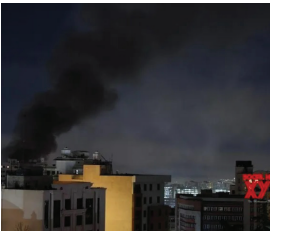
### IRAN ON BLOCKADE OF STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Araghchi urged Middle Eastern countries to draft a new protocol for the Strait of Hormuz after the war ends. He said that such a protocol could

ensure safe passage through the narrow waterway without harming Iranian and regional interests. Iran shut the vital energy gateway, through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied gas passes, saying it "won't even allow a litre of oil" to reach the U.S., Israel and their partners. On Tuesday, Iran's parliament speaker tweeted that the Strait of Hormuz' situation won't return to its pre-war conditions. The US has sought to build a naval coalition to escort vessels navigating the strait, with most NATO allies saying they don't want to get involved in military operations against Iran. The top Iranian diplomat also said that the war could come to an end only if Iran received compensation for damages incurred since February 28.

## Australian PM says Iranian projectile strikes near UAE air base

CANBERRA, MARCH 18



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Wednesday confirmed that an Iranian projectile struck near an air base in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where Australian soldiers are stationed, but that no personnel were injured. Albanese told reporters on Wednesday that the projectile hit a road leading to the Al Minhad Air Base south of Dubai around 9:15 a.m. local time, Australian Eastern Daylight Time on Wednesday (22:15 GMT on Tuesday). "I can confirm that no Australian personnel were injured, and everyone is absolutely safe at this point in time," he said. "There was minor damage to an accommodation block and a medical facility due to a small fire that was created as a result of that projectile hitting

a road leading up to that base." The Australian Defence Force has used the Al Minhad Air Base as an operational headquarters since 2003, but it has hosted a smaller Australian force since the 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan. Albanese said on Wednesday that the Iranian regime is engaging in "random attacks" across the Gulf region, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier on March 5, Anthony Albanese had confirmed that Australia had deployed military assets to the Middle East to aid with the repatriation of citizens.

## US drops 2,200-kg bunker buster bombs on Iran missile sites near Strait of Hormuz

The US military claimed that the strikes targeted 'Iranian anti-ship cruise missiles' that posed a direct risk to vessels moving through the Strait of Hormuz. The Central Command announced the bombings hours after Trump said most US allies had rejected his appeal for naval ships to escort merchant vessels through the strait.



Strait of Hormuz," the military command said in a tweet early Wednesday (IST). The military claimed that the strikes targeted Iranian anti-ship cruise missiles, which it claimed "posed a risk to international shipping in the strait." The Central Command announced the bombings hours after US President Donald Trump said most North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) allies had expressed that they did not want to get involved with the American military's campaign in Iran. While he did describe the move as a "very foolish mis-

take," the leader gave no indication that he plans to punish the alliance's fellow members for their stances. Trump said Nato countries were supportive of the joint US-Israeli war, which has now entered its third week, even as they did not want to get involved. "Everyone agrees with us, but they don't want to help. And we, you know, we as the United States have to remember that because we think it's pretty shocking," he told reporters. The remarks came just days after Trump publicly called on nations to send warships to enable container ves-

sels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz unharmed.

Several countries, however, including some very close allies of the US, appeared evasive regarding the appeal.

Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl, on the other hand, told local media: "Will we soon be an active part of this conflict? No." The remarks signalled a high level of reluctance by Berlin to partake in the proposed mission.

Other countries indicated they had no immediate plans to send ships to help unblock the strait. French President Emmanuel Macron said his country would "never" do so until the situation was calmer, according to news agency AFP. The Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed since the first week of March in the wake of the ongoing war between Iran and the joint front of Israel and the US, is a vital choke point through which about 20 per cent of the world's oil passes.

## Trump postpones trip to Beijing as Iran war delays China reset

President Donald Trump on Tuesday said he was postponing a highly anticipated trip to Beijing to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping as the war with Iran upends US foreign policy and delays an effort to ease tensions between the world's two biggest economies.



"We are resetting the meeting," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. "We're working with China. They were fine with it." Trump had been set to travel to Beijing from March 31 to April 2 for the first trip there of his 14-month-old second term. The trip will now take place in "about five or six weeks," Trump said. The White House did not specify a date. "China and the US remain in communication on President Trump's visit to China, including the dates," said a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Wash-

ington. "I have nothing to add at the moment." The postponed visit heightens uncertainty for markets and diplomacy alike, as the war with Iran has driven oil prices higher, threatened shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and sharpened investor focus on energy security. The delay will also sideline talks to ease frictions between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan, tariffs, computer chips, illegal drugs, rare earths and agriculture. Trump's campaign in Iran has unleashed a wave of military and economic consequences and commanded

attention from across his administration.

### LAVISH STATE VISIT AT ODDS WITH US ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

The image of Trump on a lavish state visit was increasingly seen at odds with a struggling US economy and the return of American service members killed in the Middle East, said a person briefed on planning for the Beijing meetings. Iran has responded to joint US-Israeli attacks by threatening to fire on vessels moving through the Strait of Hormuz. Trump's request for assistance from oth-

er countries so far has largely been rebuffed. China, which imported around 12 million barrels of oil daily in the first two months of 2026, the most in the world, has not directly responded to his request. Lin Jian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said earlier on Tuesday that it would be "misguided" to describe the trip as being delayed due to a dispute over the strait. Beijing never officially announced dates for Trump's visit and normally does not detail Xi's schedule more than a few days in advance. Trump last met Xi in October in South Korea. He last traveled to China in 2017. Preparations for the upcoming meeting included talks this week in Paris between US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng. Those talks focused on potential additional purchases of US agricultural goods including poultry, beef and non-soybean row crops.

## Kabul Urges World to Condemn "Brutal" Pakistan Attack

KABUL, MARCH 18

Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Wednesday held a virtual meeting with diplomats of Afghan embassies and consulates abroad, giving them necessary instructions and guidance regarding Kabul's clear position, policy and future actions following Pakistan's deadly bombing of a drug treatment hospital in which hundreds of people have lost their lives. South Cinema news Acco rding to the Afghan Foreign Mini stry, in this meeting, the minister shared information about the aggression against the national sovereignty of Afghanistan by the Pakistani military regime and recent events. "He strongly condemned the brutal attack and called it a clear violation of humanitarian principles. Muttaqi encouraged

the officials of all delegations to convey the position of the Islamic Emirate regarding the latest situation in the country to the international community," read a statement issued by Kabul. Movies "The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the country gave necessary instructions and guidance to his delegation regarding the clear position, policy and future actions of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The meeting ended with prayers for the souls of the martyrs who died due to the bombing by the Pakistani regime," it added. On Tuesday, Muttaqi termed the Pakistani airstrike on Kabul a serious violation of humanitarian and Islamic principles. He said that more than 408 people were killed and over 260 others were injured in Pakistani strike, majority of them patients at a drug rehabilitation centre.

## Iran regime not cracking, protesters will be slaughtered, Israel tells US: Report

A stark warning from Israel's top officials has exposed a grim paradox at the heart of the ongoing conflict with Iran. Even as it urges Iranians to rise up, it believes those who do may be "slaughtered". In a confidential assessment shared with the United States, Israeli officials have said Iran's regime is "not cracking" and remains prepared to "fight to the end", despite sustained military pressure, the Washington Post reported.



sage was blunt - if Iranians take to the streets in large numbers, "the people will get slaughtered". The cable, circulated by the US Embassy in Jerusalem, relayed that Israel sees little immediate sign of internal collapse within Iran's leadership.

### IRGC HAS THE UPPER HAND

At the centre of this assessment is the strength of Iran's internal security machinery. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Co

### DESPITE FEARS, ISRAEL BACKS UPRISING

Despite this grim outlook, Israel has continued to publicly call on Iranians to rise up. In a televised address at the start of the offensive, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would "strike hard at the terror regime" and create conditions for "the brave Iranian people" to free themselves. Similar appeals have followed in recent days. Privately, Israeli officials have gone further, urging the US to be ready to support protesters if an uprising begins, even as they acknowledge the likely human cost. The dual messaging - urging rebellion while predicting bloodshed - reflects the strategic complexity of the conflict, as Israel seeks to weaken Tehran's leadership from within while continuing military operations.



## Tajikistan sends 3,610 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Iran

DUSHANBE, MARCH 18

Tajikistan on Wednesday dispatched 3,610 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Iran in a 110-truck convoy. Social media management "Tajikistan's humanitarian aid comprises 3,610 tonnes of cargo, including 45 tonnes of medicines, a large volume of sanitary and hygiene products, children's clothing, various food products, household items, bedding, tents, building materials, and other necessary supplies," the country's Foreign Ministry stated.

Last week, citing preliminary assessments, UN Refugee Agency UNHCR had highlighted that between 600,000 and one million Iranian households - representing up to 3.2 million people - are now temporarily displaced inside Iran as a result of the ongoing conflict. Movies "Most of them are reportedly fleeing from Tehran and other major urban areas towards the north of the country and rural areas to seek safety. This figure is likely to continue rising as hostilities persist, marking a worrying escalation in humanitarian needs. Also affected

are refugee families hosted in the country, mostly Afghans, who are particularly vulnerable, given their already precarious situation and limited support networks. Families are leaving affected areas amid rising insecurity and limited access to essential services," stated UNHCR Director of Emergency and Programme Support and Cross-Regional Refugee Response Coordinator for the Middle East Emergency. It had mentioned that in Iran - a long-term host to 1.65 million people forced to flee, mostly from Afghanistan - around 100,000 people left Tehran in the first two days following the US-Israeli attacks.

Earlier, Iran's UN ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani had claimed that at least 1,332 Iranian civilians, including women and children, have been killed in US-Israeli airstrikes and thousands more injured. Over 180 children across the country have been killed and more than 20 schools have been damaged, Iravani told reporters at the UN headquarters in New York, earlier this month.

## Pak President Mourns Larijani, Urges End to Hostilities

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD: (Mar 18) Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday expressed grief over the killing of Iran's top security official Ali Larijani by Israel and called for immediate restraint and cessation of hostilities. Larijani, the Secretary of Iran's INSC, had effectively evolved as the in-charge of the country's war management following the assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei by Israel on February 28. President Zardari expressed "profound grief over the assassination of senior Iranian leader Dr Ali Ardesheer Larjani amid ongoing Israeli attacks on Iran and extended his earnest condolences to the Government and people of Iran," according to a statement issued by his office.

## Strike reported near Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant; no radiation leak

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said it had been informed by Iran about the purported strike. The agency called for "maximum restraint during the conflict to prevent risk of a nuclear accident."



An alleged strike at the location hosting one of Iran's most sensitive nuclear sites has raised fresh concerns - even as officials insist everything remains under control. A projectile hit an area in the vicinity of the Bushehr nuclear power plant on Iran's southern coast, according to Russian

and Iranian officials, though no radiation leak or damage was reported, the Associated Press reported. Russia's state-run Tass news agency quoted Rosatom CEO Alexey Likhachev as saying the impact occurred near a key facility within the plant complex.

"A strike hit the area adjacent to the metrology service building located at the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant site, in close proximity to the operating power unit," Likhachev said. Despite the proximity to the operational reactor, he stressed there

had been no immediate harm. "There were no casualties among Rosatom State Corporation personnel," he said.

Iran's Atomic Energy Organization echoed that assessment, saying "no financial, technical, or human damage occurred and no part of the plant was harmed."

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said it had been informed by Iran about the purported strike. The agency called for "maximum restraint during the conflict to prevent risk of a nuclear accident." The reported incident came amid heightened fears that ongoing military strikes in Iran could trigger a radio-

logical emergency if nuclear facilities are hit. Bushehr, located about 750 kilometres south of Tehran along the Persian Gulf, is Iran's only operational nuclear power plant and is run with the assistance of Russian technicians.

The facility has long been considered a potential flashpoint. Gulf states have repeatedly voiced concerns over the risk of radioactive material release - whether from conflict or natural disasters such as earthquakes. Originally started under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in the 1970s, construction of the plant was disrupted after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and later resumed with Russian support.

## Govt Eases Export Rules to Address Cargo Disruptions from Iran Conflict

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

The government has introduced a set of customs and logistics measures to assist exporters managing cargo stranded or returned due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing Middle East conflict. Under the new guidelines, exporters can bring back cargo into the domestic system with reduced storage and handling costs, while shipping lines adjust to suspended bookings and port restrictions. The measures aim to prevent procedural delays as shipments are rerouted or returned.

A recent circular by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) allows shipping lines to file fresh arrival manifests at the port of landing. Containers with tampered seals will undergo mandatory 100% examination. Vessels returning to Indian ports without visiting a foreign destination can now use a dummy port code for customs documentation. The circular also permits "Back to Town" clearance, enabling returned cargo to re-enter the domestic supply chain, while ensuring recovery of any export incentives previously disbursed. Exporters may now cancel shipping bills even after filing export general manifests, with details shared via ICE-GATE with the RBI and DGFT.

## Bharat Taxi spends Rs 5 crore, generates Rs 35 crore income for drivers: Govt

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

The government on Wednesday said that the Bharat Taxi platform has generated over Rs 35 crore in income for drivers with a modest investment of around Rs 5 crore so far, while creating employment opportunities for nearly 20,000 drivers and 200 support staff.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that Bharat Taxi, India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, is emerging as a major step towards empowering drivers and promoting inclusive growth in the mobility sector.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, the minister



said the initiative is designed to put drivers, referred to as 'Sarathis', at the centre of ownership and decision-making.

"Unlike traditional app-based cab services, Bharat Taxi operates on a cooperative model where drivers are members and stakeholders, allowing them to retain full

earnings from rides," HM Shah stated.

The platform does not charge any commission from drivers. Instead, it follows a subscription-based model, ensuring that drivers get fair and transparent income.

Passengers, on the other hand, are charged only the trip fare based on distance

and time, without additional convenience fees or surge pricing.

Bharat Taxi was established on June 6, 2025, under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002, and was officially launched on February 5, 2026.

It has been set up by eight national-level cooperative institutions as part of the government's broader push to strengthen the cooperative sector under the vision of 'Sahkar se Samridhhi'.

Currently, the service is operational in Delhi-NCR, including Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Faridabad, and Ghaziabad, as well as in cities like Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Somnath, and Dwarka in Gujarat.

The government said expansion to other states and Union Territories will be done in phases, depending on approvals and operational readiness.

To become a member, drivers must own a vehicle and hold a valid driving licence. They are required to buy at least one share in the cooperative, which has an authorised share capital of Rs 300 crore.

The structure ensures democratic participation, where members are involved in key decisions related to operations and management. The government said the project has not only boosted driver incomes but also created a sustainable and dignified alternative to aggregator-based models.

## Samsung Electronics Launches Galaxy M17e 5G at Rs. 13,999 for Young Indians



GURUGRAM, MARCH 18

Samsung Electronics on Wednesday announced the launch of its latest budget 5G smartphone, the Samsung Galaxy M17e 5G, aimed at India's young, on-the-go users. The device will be available from March 20 via Samsung's official website, Amazon, and select retail outlets.

Priced starting at ₹13,999 for the 4GB+128GB variant, the smartphone also comes in a 6GB+128GB option priced at ₹15,499.

The new addition to Samsung's popular Galaxy M series focuses on delivering reliable day-to-day performance, featuring a high-refresh-rate display, long battery life, efficient processing, and AI-powered software enhancements tailored for Gen Z users.

According to Akshay S Rao, Director, MX Business at Samsung India, the device is designed to meet the expectations of value-conscious young consumers seeking smooth performance, high-quality photography, and intelligent productivity tools.

The Galaxy M17e 5G features a 6.7-inch display with a 120Hz refresh rate, offer-

ing smooth scrolling and enhanced viewing for streaming and social media. It is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6300 5G processor, paired with an ARM Mali-G57 GPU for seamless multitasking and gaming.

The smartphone houses a 6000mAh battery, aimed at supporting extended usage, including gaming, video streaming, and calls throughout the day. On the camera front, it includes a 50MP primary sensor along with a depth camera for portrait shots, while an 8MP front camera caters to selfies and video calls.

Running on One UI 8.0 based on Android 16, the device integrates AI-driven features such as Google Gemini and Circle to Search to enhance user experience. Samsung has also emphasized security, equipping the phone with Knox Vault and Auto Blocker features. The company has committed to providing six generations of OS upgrades and six years of security updates, along with access to its extensive service network across India. The Galaxy M17e 5G will be available in Vibe Violet and Blitz Blue colour options.

## AU Small Finance Bank Launches Gold Loan Branches in Telangana

HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB), India's largest Small Finance Bank and the first in over a decade to receive in-principle approval to become a Universal Bank, has launched exclusive Gold Loan branches in Telangana, marking a major expansion in the bank's secured lending network in Southern India. The new branches have opened in Huzurabad, Khammam, and Vemulawada, with a fourth branch in Parkal scheduled to open later this month. This follows the bank's recent rollout of dedicated Gold Loan branches in Jamnagar and Junagadh in Gujarat. Telangana has been identified as a priority market due to high gold ownership, strong local economies, and growing demand for fast, formal gold-backed credit. According to a January 2026 industry report, India's total gold loan portfolio stands at ₹15.6 lakh crore, with the top ten states—including Telangana—accounting



for more than 90% of the national portfolio.

The new branches are strategically located to cater to diverse borrowers. Huzurabad, a semi-urban trading and agrarian hub, sees steady demand for gold-backed working capital. Vemulawada, a major temple town, has high year-round inflows of pilgrims and cultural gold use in offerings, weddings, and festivals. Khammam, a district center, features strong agriculture, MSMEs, and trading activity, representing a high-potential market for

gold-backed loans. Parkal, in a rural-semi urban belt, has low organized credit penetration, with gold loans commonly used for emergency household funding. AU SFB's Gold Loan branches focus exclusively on loans against gold ornaments and offer dedicated infrastructure, specialized staff, simplified processes, secure handling of pledged gold, and strong compliance frameworks. The branches serve rural households, small traders, farmers, MSMEs, and seasonal or pilgrim-linked borrowers with competitive interest rates, high loan-to-value ratios as per RBI norms, and fast valuation processes.

"Gold-backed credit continues to play a vital role in regional economies," said Uttam Tibrewal, ED & Deputy CEO of AU SFB. "Our exclusive branches provide banking-grade security, faster processing, and transparent valuations, enabling farmers, traders, small businesses to access liquidity with confidence."

## Andhra LIFE for Nature Summit Concludes in Vijayawada; Green Ambassadors

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 18

The two-day Andhra LIFE for Nature Summit concluded today in Vijayawada, emphasizing a vision for regenerative growth and climate-resilient development in Andhra Pradesh. The summit, themed "Sahaja - Jeevan - Vidhanam: Mainstreaming LIFE for a Regenerative Future in Andhra Pradesh," convened policymakers, conservationists, media leaders, and community stakeholders to promote nature-aligned development across the state.

Organised by CMS VATAVARAN in collaboration with The Habitats Trust and supported by MoEFCC, IUCN #NatureForAll, UNEP India, and the World Food Programme India, the summit also received backing from several Andhra Pradesh government departments and local institutions, including APCOST, the State Biodiversity Board, WWF India Hyderabad Office, and Grama Deep Trust.



The second day featured a high-level Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on "Enabling LIFE through Partnerships: Communities, Institutions, Media and Collective Action in Andhra Pradesh." Andhra Green Ambassador Awards were presented to:

**Mr. Komera Anka Rao, for his advisory role in forest and environmental protection.**

**Dr. Soundarya Manohari Velamati, for her leadership in**

**community-driven ecological restoration through Grama Deep Trust.**

Dr. Vasanti Rao, Director General of CMS VATAVARAN, stressed the need to move from dialogue to collaborative action, while Mr. Santhosh SL of The Habitats Trust highlighted the importance of connecting technology with grassroots conservation. Former PCCF Dr. Nalini Mohan Denduluri underscored that economic growth and ecology must advance together. Mr. Alapati Suresh Kumar, Chairman of

C. Raghavachari Media Academy, emphasized the media's role in fostering public awareness.

The summit concluded with a clear agenda: integrate ecological intelligence into planning, strengthen multi-sector partnerships, empower communities as drivers of change, and ensure that development aligns with long-term environmental resilience. Andhra Pradesh reaffirmed its commitment to building a future where economic progress and ecological security go hand in hand.

## Sensex, Nifty Post Third Day of Gains

NEW DELHI, MAR 18

Indian stock markets extended their rally for a third consecutive session on Wednesday, with the Nifty crossing the 23,850 mark, supported by broad-based buying across most sectors.

At close, the Sensex was up 633.29 points, or 0.83 percent, at 76,704.13, while the Nifty rose 196.65 points, or 0.83 percent, to 23,777.80.

Broader markets also outperformed, with the Nifty Midcap 100 gaining 2 percent and the Nifty Smallcap 100 rising 1.6 percent. The total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies increased to over Rs 443 lakh crore from Rs 438 lakh crore earlier.

Among sectors, all indices ended higher except FMCG

and metal.

Key sectors, including realty, IT, auto, media, capital goods, consumer durables, telecom, and infrastructure, rose in the range of 1 to 3 percent.

On the Nifty, key gainers included Jio Financial, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Eternal, and M&M, while losers were Coal India, NTPC, HUL, Cipla, and Sun Pharma.

More than 200 stocks touched their 52-week lows on the BSE. These included Gujarat State Petro, Cipla, Tata Chemicals, Gujarat Gas, Honeywell Automation, and Procter and Gamble Hygiene and Health Care, among others.

The Indian rupee also registered a sharp fall against the US dollar, breaching the 92.50 mark for the first time

and settling at a record closing low of 92.63.

IT stocks witnessed a sharp rebound during the session, with key players such as Infosys and HCL Technologies rising over 4 percent, while Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro gained 3.6 percent and 3.17 percent, respectively.

Among pharma stocks, Mankind Pharma rose 1.7 percent after acquiring the Rivotril brand for India, while Strides Pharma Science gained 3 percent after entering into agreements with Sandoz AG, Switzerland.

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 surged 2.9 percent to 55,239.40 following stronger-than-expected export data for February, while South Korea's Kospi jumped

## Timely Care at Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital

### Saves 10-Year-Old Boy's Limb

HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

In a remarkable display of medical expertise and teamwork, doctors at Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital (MRNH) successfully saved the limb of a 10-year-old boy who suffered a rare and life-threatening pediatric vascular injury following a severe accident.

The child was rushed to the hospital's Emergency Department with multiple traumatic injuries. Doctors diagnosed polytrauma, including fractures of the right distal femur, right humerus, and left forearm bones, along with severe degloving injuries to both upper limbs. Most critically, the child had sustained an injury to the distal Superficial Femoral Artery (SFA) in the right leg, which resulted in a complete loss of blood flow to the limb — placing it at imminent risk of amputation.

At the time of admission, the child's right leg was cold with no detectable pulses, absent movements

and sensations, and zero toe oxygen saturation — all strong indicators of severe vascular compromise. A CT Angiography further confirmed the gravity of the situation, revealing the absence of distal vessel reformation, making the case extremely challenging.

Acting swiftly, the hospital's vascular surgery team, led by Dr. K. Athirath Reddy, along with Dr. D. Sudheer Kumar Reddy and Dr. Mahesh, performed a complex right mid-femoral artery to distal popliteal artery bypass along with tibial vessel thrombectomy to restore blood circulation to the affected limb.

Pediatric vascular injuries are exceptionally rare, accounting for only about 0.6% of all vascular injuries. The surgery was further complicated by the small caliber of pediatric blood vessels, a significant thrombus burden, and distorted vascular anatomy caused by the trauma.

Despite these challenges, the procedure was successful. By the time of discharge, the young patient showed a palpable dorsalis pedis artery pulse and 100% toe oxygen saturation, clear signs that blood flow had been

successfully restored and the limb had been saved.

Speaking about the case, Dr. K. Athirath Reddy, Consultant Vascular & Endovascular Surgeon, said, "Pediatric vascular injuries are extremely uncommon and technically demanding due to the small size of vessels and associated trauma. In this case, the absence of distal vessel reformation on CT angiography and the extensive injuries made the surgery highly challenging. With timely intervention and coordinated teamwork, we were able to restore circulation and successfully save the child's limb."

The successful outcome was the result of a multidisciplinary effort. The Orthopaedics team, led by Dr. Venu Madhav, treated the multiple fractures, while the Plastic Surgery team, led by Dr. Raghuram, managed the complex degloving injuries. The Department of Anaesthesia played a crucial role in supporting the lengthy and intricate surgical procedure.

Dr. Rakesh Prabhu, CEO of Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital, appreciated the team and said, "This case highlights the

advanced surgical expertise and multidisciplinary care available at Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital. Successfully managing such a rare and complex pediatric vascular injury and saving a young patient's limb reflects the dedication and clinical excellence of our doctors. We remain committed to providing advanced, timely, and life-saving care to patients."

Dr. Ch. Bhadra Reddy, Chairman — Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital, added, "Saving the limb of a young child in such a rare and critical vascular injury reflects the exceptional expertise and dedication of our medical team. At Malla Reddy Narayana Hospital, we continuously strive to provide advanced medical care and timely intervention to save lives and improve patient outcomes."

Dr. Preeti Reddy, Vice Chairman — Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital, said, "This successful limb salvage case highlights the strength of our multidisciplinary approach and the advanced surgical capabilities available at our hospital. We are proud of our doctors

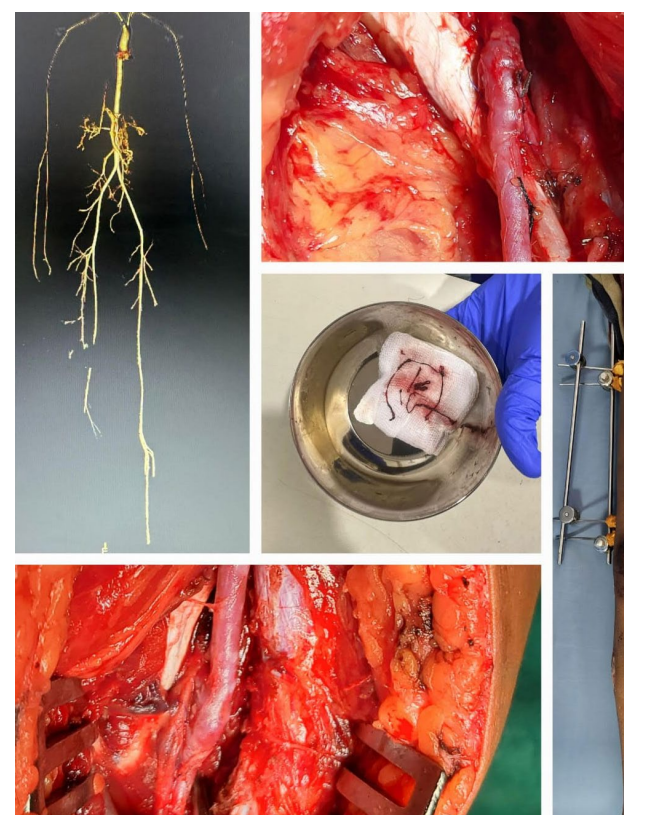
and their commitment to delivering compassionate, high-quality care for every patient."

This rare limb salvage case once again demonstrates the hospital's capability to manage complex trauma and advanced vascular surgical procedures, ensuring the best possible outcomes even in the most challenging medical situations.

About Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital

Malla Reddy Narayana Multispeciality Hospital is a premier 750-bed, NABH & NABL accredited tertiary care facility in Hyderabad. As a flagship of Malla Reddy Health City, it is dedicated to providing world-class healthcare at affordable costs.

The hospital recently achieved a major milestone by launching SSI Mantra 3.0, Telangana's first indigenous surgical robotic system, revolutionizing precision in minimally invasive procedures. With 21+ specialties, 200 critical care beds, and advanced AI-powered "E-Wards," the institution combines cutting-edge technology with compassionate care, reinforcing its position as a leader in medical innovation.



# Magnetars drag spacetime to power superluminous supernovae

Some of the most extreme explosions in the universe are Type I superluminous supernovae. "They are one of the brightest explosions in the Universe," says Joseph Farah, an astrophysicist at the University of California, Santa Barbara. For years, astrophysicists tried to understand what exactly makes superluminous supernovae so absurdly powerful. Now it seems like we may finally have some answers. Farah and his colleagues have found that these events are most likely powered by magnetars, rapidly spinning neutron stars that warp the very space and time around them.



## THE POWER WITHIN

Magnetars have been a leading candidate for the engine behind superluminous supernovae. The theory says these insanely magnetized stars are born from the collapsing core of the original progenitor star and emit energy via magnetic dipole radiation. "This core is roughly a one solar mass object that gets crushed down to the size of a city," Farah explains. As its spin slows down, a magnetar bleeds its rotational energy into the expanding material of the dead star, lighting it up. The problem was that this theory did not quite explain observations. In a standard magnetar model, the light curve of the supernova should rise rapidly and then fade away evenly as the neutron star loses its rotational energy. "This way the light curve, in the prediction of this model, just goes up and then down quite smoothly," Farah says. But when astronomers observe superluminous supernovae, they almost never see this smooth fade. Instead, they see bumps, wiggles, and strange modulations. The light curve flickers over months.

For a while, scientists tried to patch the magnetar engine theory to fit observations. Maybe the expanding debris was slamming into irregular shells of material shed by the star before it died. Or perhaps the magnetar engine was spitting out random, violent flares. But these explanations required highly specific, fine-tuned parameters to match what we were seeing through our telescopes. The solution to the strange flickering problem came when the Liverpool Gravitational Wave Optical Transient Observer collaboration detected an object designated SN 2024afav on December 12, 2024. Initially, the object looked like a standard superluminous supernova. "It was as bright and it had bumps in the light curve like many other objects of this kind," Farah says. But as the telescopes kept watching, it started doing something unprecedented: It started to chirp.

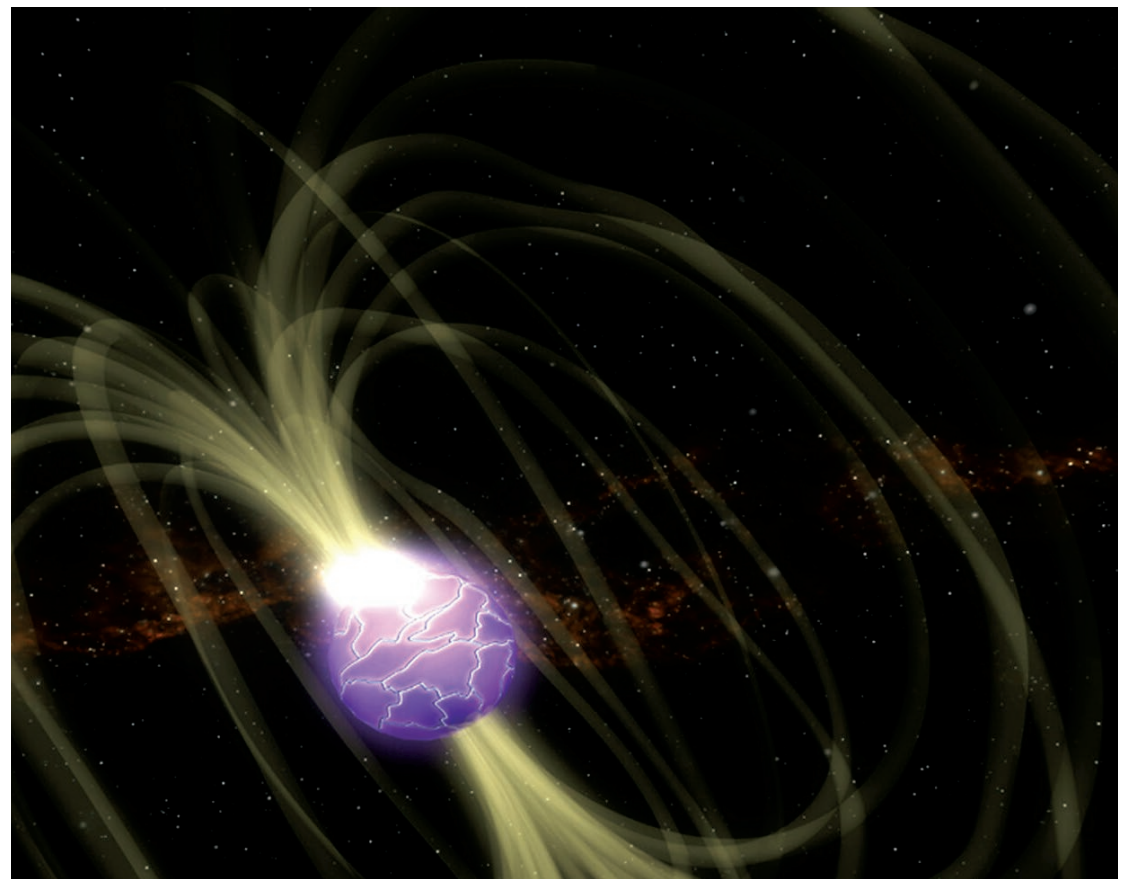
## THE CHIRPING STAR

In physics, a chirp refers to a signal with a frequency that steadily increases over time. In the case of SN 2024afav, its emissions were bumping up and down, but the gap between these bumps was shrinking. After a second and third bump both appeared with the gaps between them reduced by roughly 35 percent, Farah and his team realized they could calculate how much the gap between the bumps would decrease next.

The team adjusted their observation schedule, pointed their instruments at SN 2024afav, and discovered the fourth bump appeared exactly when they expected it would. The fifth bump enabled the scientists to narrow down the period reduction to about 29 percent. The fact that Farah and his colleagues could accurately predict the bumps delivered a massive blow to our existing magnetar models. While a few irregular bumps could be explained away by the supernova ejecta crashing into clouds of gas, it doesn't explain perfectly timed, cleanly sinusoidal modulations with a steadily decaying period. Random space rubble just doesn't work that way. "So, we came up with the new model to describe this behavior," Farah explains. They proposed a new physical mechanism that relied on the Lense-Thirring effect, otherwise known as frame-dragging. Frame-dragging is a prediction of General Relativity, where a massive spinning object slightly drags the spacetime around with it as it rotates. "We didn't try this mechanism before because it had never been seen around a magnetar before," Farah says. But when his team did try it, it turned out to perfectly match what was going on. The flickering in the superluminous supernovae, Farah hypothesized, was caused by the extreme gravity of a newborn magnetar dragging the very spacetime around it along as it was spinning.

## TWISTED SPACE

To understand Farah's Lense-Thirring solution, imagine a bowling ball spinning in a vat of molasses. As the ball rotates, friction drags the sticky fluid along, creating a swirling vortex. According to Einstein's General Relativity, mass and energy can warp the fabric of spacetime, so if a sufficiently large mass is spinning rapidly, it drags



the space-time along in a manner similar to the molasses. Around Earth, this effect is minuscule. But around a newborn magnetar, which is far more massive and spinning hundreds of times a second, spacetime is whipped into a violent, twisting frenzy.

When the progenitor star exploded to create SN 2024afav, it didn't eject all of its material perfectly. Some of the stellar guts failed to escape and fell back toward the newborn magnetar, forming a small accretion disk around it. Crucially, this disk was misaligned, tilted relative to the rotational axis of the magnetar. Because the disk was tilted in this aggressively twisted spacetime, the Lense-Thirring effect forced the entire disk to wobble, or precess, around the magnetar's spin axis like a top that was spinning ever more slowly. As this misaligned disk wobbled, it acted like a giant cosmic lampshade: it periodically blocked, reflected, or redirected the intense radiation and jets spewing from the central magnetar. The high-energy photons emitted by the magnetar had to fight their way through the expanding supernova ejecta, getting reprocessed into optical light and diffusing outward over a span of about 15 days. Observed through our telescopes on Earth, this wobbling disk created a rhythmic fluctuation in the superluminous supernova's brightness. After Farah and his colleagues explained the bumps in the signal with the wobbling disk around the magnetar, they moved to explaining why the signal chirped.

## THE SHRINKING DISK

The answer the team proposes lies in the environment of the disk itself. The size of this accretion disk isn't static. It's determined by an inward ram pressure from the infalling matter and the outward radiation pressure coming from the magnetar. Over time, as the exploding star runs out of fallback material, the accretion rate of the disk drops. With less matter pushing in, the disk loses equilibrium and begins to shrink, falling inward toward the magnetar. And the closer it gets to the spinning magnetar, the stronger the Lense-Thirring effect becomes. As the accretion disk shrinks and falls deeper into the gravity well, the twisted spacetime whips it around faster and faster. "Imagine a pirouetting figure skater pulling her arms in to accelerate the spinning movement," Farah suggests. In consequence,

the precession speeds up, the wobbles get tighter, and the light curve chirps. Finally, by measuring the chirps, Farah and his colleagues were able to work backward to measure the properties of the magnetar powering the SN 2024afav. They constrained its spin period to 4.2 milliseconds and precisely calculated its staggeringly powerful magnetic field. The team found that the magnetar's properties that derived solely from the chirping matched the properties required to power the overall baseline brightness of the superluminous supernova. The engine that powered the main explosion was exactly the right size and speed to cause the wobbling we observed. But the work on the revised "magnetar+LT" model is just beginning. "This object is so rare and so new," Farah admits. "We were scraping the bottom of the barrel for references that were even remotely related to the idea we were pitching here."

## SUPERLUMINOUS SIBLINGS

Farah's team went back and looked at archival data from other bumpy superluminous supernovae such as SN 2018kyt, SN 2019umb, and SN 2021mkr. They found that their "magnetar+LT" model explains the modulations in those events as well. A whole class of exploding stars that previously required multiple mutually exclusive physical explanations could be unified by a single, elegant model. This model, though, still has many unanswered questions. "How the accretion disk forms, how it blocks or modulates the light from the magnetar, how that light then gets to the ejecta, and finally how it gets to the observer," Farah listed. "Basically every step along the way we made the best assumptions we could." For each of these steps, he admits, there were at least five different ways it could happen, and the team just went with their best guess of what was going on. To really figure it all out, Farah says, we need to wait till more objects like SN 2024afav are discovered. And this, he hopes, should become possible with new observatories like the Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile coming online. "The Rubin Observatory is expected to discover dozens of these chirped supernovae," Farah says. "We will be able to test our models against many different objects. There's definitely room for development and growth. This is just the very beginning."

# BUTTERFLIES CROSSING OCEANS, MOTHS NAVIGATING BY THE STARS: UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERIES OF INSECT MIGRATIONS

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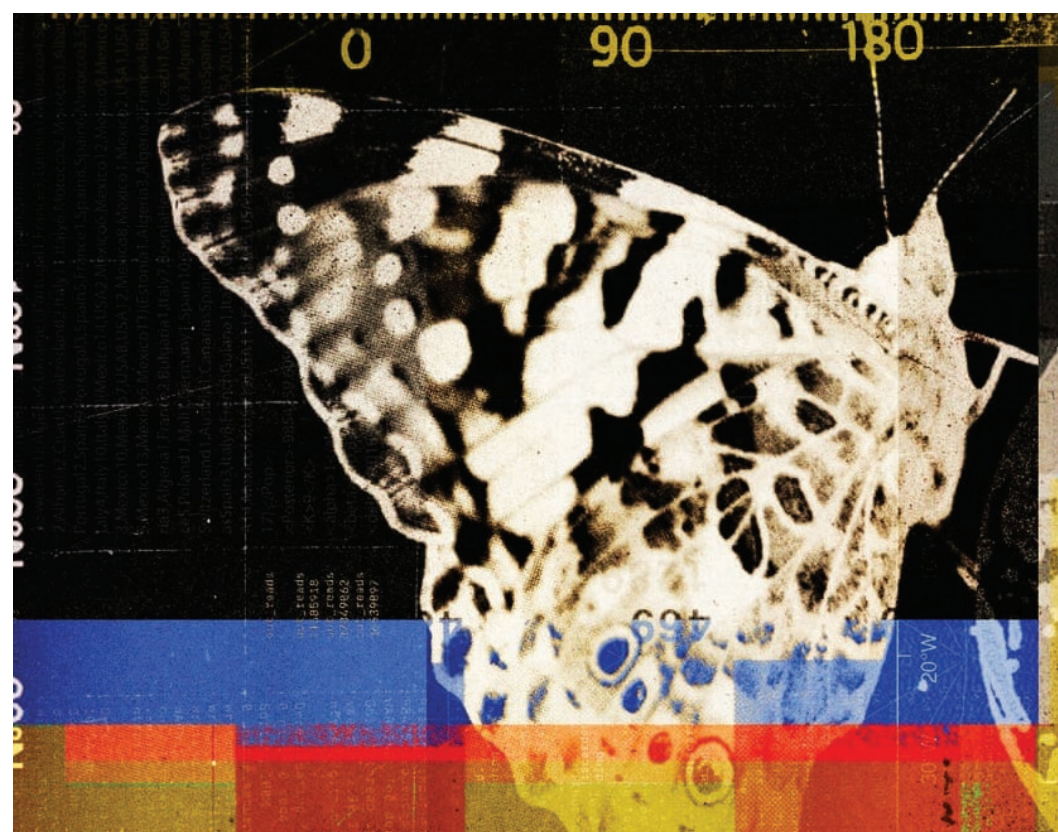
trillions of insects embark, largely unnoticed, on epic journeys every year across mountain ranges, deserts and seas, and it is only now, as their numbers suffer huge declines, that scientists are tracking their movements. On a cloudless sunny day in October 1950, ornithologists Elizabeth and David Lack stood on a mountain pass in the Pyrenees and observed a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle – clouds of migrating insects.

Up to 500 butterflies were fluttering past them every hour through the 2,200m-high Puerto de Bujaruelo mountain pass on the French-Spanish border. By mid-afternoon dragonflies were skimming through, outnumbering the butterflies by 10 to one. The spaces between were filled with thousands of tiny flies. That day became the first record of fly migration in Europe – the skies were packed with tiny travellers on remarkable long-distance journeys unknown to science. It would be decades before the concept of insect migrations was widely followed up.

Today, we know that insects – many of which have wings smaller than a human fingernail – are among the planet's most prolific migrants, with trillions travelling large distances every year, including over deserts, mountain ranges and even crossing oceans.

## CAN BUTTERFLIES CROSS THE ATLANTIC?

In 2013, Spanish entomologist Gerard Talavera was on a beach in French Guiana looking for butterflies. On the last day of his search, he spotted something remarkable. That single observation – of tired looking painted lady butterflies not thought to live in South America – launched a decade-long investigation to answer the question: can butterflies really cross the Atlantic Ocean? It was something that had never been proved and defied existing understandings about insects' capabilities. Talavera assembled a team of biologists, geneticists and atmospheric scientists to reconstruct this seemingly impossible journey.



## DISCOVER THE JOURNEY OF THE PAINTED LADY

Gerard Talavera spotted some tired and tattered painted lady butterflies in French Guiana. It puzzled him as they are not known to live in South America. Talavera wondered if these butterflies were part of the North American population. His team ran genome sampling which showed they were genetically identical to the

European-African population. The closer together the points, the more genetically similar they are.

## A 2,800KM (1,740-MILE) JOURNEY

Scientists had already proved that butterflies can fly across the Sahara desert but could they fly across the ocean? The team reconstructed wind data for October

2013 and found favourable high-speed winds at all altitudes (500m, 1,000m and 2,000m) could carry the butterflies over in about five to eight days. Without these winds a butterfly might only fly up to 780km before falling exhausted into the ocean. They needed to actively fly for only 15% of the journey.

## POLLEN POINTS TO WEST AFRICA

In 2018, Talavera found a way to analyse pollen DNA. Tiny bits of pollen stuck to the butterflies' bodies showed they fed on two shrubs found only in the Sahel – probably the last meal before crossing.

## DISCOVERING WHERE THEY WERE BORN

Isotope fingerprinting found hydrogen and strontium in their wings. Analysis of isotopes showed where the insects had grown up. Analysis pinpointed France, Ireland, the UK, or Portugal as their place of birth. Their 4,200km journey was therefore probably at least 7,000km.

The findings, published in Nature Communications in 2024, represent the first direct proof that any insect had crossed the Atlantic. Although the discovery was exceptional, "it's likely it happens quite often", says Talavera. Meanwhile, 10 years ago researchers first proved the painted lady was crossing the Sahara as part of its annual migration. The painted lady cannot overwinter in cooler climates so it has to move as the seasons change. The decision to migrate is due to environmental cues, such as day length, temperature and how much plant food is available for them. They strategically use winds to get to their destination.

Once they arrive at their breeding grounds, fresh vegetation allows the females to reproduce extensively, with a single female capable of laying more than 1,000 eggs. When the seasons change again, subsequent generations may make the same decision to migrate to pastures green.



# Rain Delays Miami Open Amid Alcaraz-Sinner No.1 Battle

**PGTI NexGen 2026**  
**Siddharth Semwal moves into two-shot lead on Day Two**  
**GURUGRAM:** Siddharth Semwal fired a second-round score of four-under 68 to take a two-shot lead at a total of five-under 139 at the DP World PGTI NexGen 2026 being played at the Golden Greens Golf & Country Club in Gurugram. Delhi-based Semwal (71-68), who was overnight tied 10th and three shots off the lead, produced six birdies and two bogeys in round two to emerge as the sole leader at the INR 25 lakh event. Arjunveer Shishir (70) and Vishav Pratap Singh Gill (68) were tied second at three-under 141.

**Snooker**  
**O'Sullivan, Trump advance to last 16 at 2026 World Snooker Open**  
**NANCHANG (CHINA):** Ronnie O'Sullivan, Judd Trump, and Zhao Xintong all advanced to the last 16 of the World Snooker Open in Yushan, south China's Jiangxi Province, on Wednesday with comfortable victories. Seven-time world champion O'Sullivan won five straight frames to beat fellow Englishman Matthew Selt 5-0. In the second frame, he compiled a superb 138 break in just nine minutes to take the frame. "I'm going to win the whole match," O'Sullivan said in his post-match interview. "I've felt in good form over the first two matches, and I'll keep this form going and try to keep winning."

**MIAMI**  
The Miami Open got off to a damp start with the match start times for Wednesday's first-round action being pushed back due to rain. Grigor Dimitrov, the former No. 3 player in the ATP Rankings, is among those set to compete at the ATP Masters 1000 event on Wednesday, when he faces Raphael Collignon. Their match is scheduled for the second on the Grandstand. Start times for matches on Grandstand, Buch Buchholz, and Court 1 have all been pushed back to not before 1 p.m. EDT. The prestigious event is quite important as both World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz of Spain and second seed Jannik Sinner of Italy are in the fray, as both of them continue their battle for the top spot. It may turn out to be a crucial stop in their battle for the top ranking as both players can gain a lot of points in this event.



Alcaraz currently leads Sinner by around 2000 points in the ATP Rankings, but the Italian has closed the gap by winning the title at the BNP Paribas Open. By lifting his sixth ATP Masters 1000 trophy, Sinner earned 1,000 points and reduced Alcaraz's advantage pre-Indian Wells lead from 2,800 to 2,150 points. The focus now turns to the Miami Open, where Sinner has an opportunity to build further momentum. The Italian did not compete in Florida in 2025, meaning he has no points to defend this fortnight, and every match that he wins in Miami will therefore add directly to his ranking total. Alcaraz, too, has minimal points at stake after a shock opening-round defeat to David Goffin last year left him with just 10 points to defend this fortnight. The World No. 1 will be motivated to respond after Daniil Medvedev ended his perfect 16-0 start to the 2026 season in the Indian Wells semi-finals. Miami also holds added significance for Alcaraz, who became the youngest champion in tournament history at the event in 2022, aged 18. It represents Alcaraz's best chance to extend his lead before the Tour shifts to clay, where the 22-year-old faces a heavy defensive stretch. Top seed Alcaraz leads the field in the top half of the draw and is set to begin his event on Friday evening against Joao Fonseca or Fabian Marozsan, who are scheduled to play on Thursday. Alcaraz has never faced 19-year-old Brazilian Fonseca, who lost to Jannik Sinner in the fourth round in Indian Wells. Second seed Sinner will start his event on Saturday against Damir Dzumhur or qualifier Ignacio Buse. The 24-year-old owns a 19-3 record in Miami, according to the Infosys ATP Win/Loss Index, and has reached the final in three of his four appearances, lifting the trophy in 2024, said a

report on the ATP Tour website. Sinner made history last week in Indian Wells, where he became just the third — and youngest — man to complete the set of winning all six ATP Masters 1000 hard-court events, joining Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer. Miami is a key stop for them as Alcaraz has 4,300 points to defend across the clay swing, including titles in Monte-Carlo, Rome, and Roland Garros, as well as a runner-up finish in Barcelona. Sinner, by contrast, has no points to defend until Rome, and then 1,850 points across the Italian Masters 1000 event and Roland Garros, giving him a window to chip away at the top spot in the coming weeks. Even so, the Italian will aim to apply immediate pressure in Miami, where he has reached the final in three of his four appearances and lifted the trophy in 2024.

Alcaraz and Sinner are seeded first and second, respectively, in Miami and can only meet in the final. If that matchup materialises, it would mark the 17th chapter of their rivalry on the ATP tour. If Alcaraz maintains or even extends his advantage during Miami, he would give himself valuable breathing room before entering the most defence-heavy portion of his calendar. Such a scenario would further strengthen his grip on the top spot while allowing him to begin building a lead in total weeks at No. 1. The Spaniard is set to match Sinner's 66-week milestone in early April, regardless of what happens in Florida. Sinner, on the other hand, will be hoping to do his best to continue to chip away at Alcaraz's lead so that he can make a further dent in that at Wimbledon and the hard-court season post the grass-court major.



## We have to win and get that fourth star, says KKR head coach Nayar

**KOLKATA**  
Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) head coach Abhishek Nayar delivered a clear and unambiguous message to his squad ahead of day one of the side's practice session at the Eden Gardens - the skill is there, the talent is assembled, and now it is time to win their fourth title. Three-time IPL winners KKR will open their 2026 season against five-time champions Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on March 29. "I'm just going to leave you all with one message before the whole group arrives. We have prepared a lot, we have worked on our skills in the past couple of months. We have had a lot of discussions; we have spoken a lot. "For me, what happens year on is how we tune what's between our ears. The skill is there, that's not going to change in the next 10 days. But what changes is our mentality. So every moment that we spend on this ground, every moment we spend with each other, with the coaches, amongst ourselves, there's one goal. "We have to do one thing, we have to win, we have to get that fourth star and we do everything to prepare our minds before our body actually arrives at the first game on the 29th. We prepare here, we use this time to talk to

each other, communicate, get stronger as a group. So we're ready for everything. Have a lot of fun," said Nayar in a video posted by KKR Knight Club. Nayar also used the occasion to welcome a clutch of new faces into the KKR fold, starting from assistant coach Shane Watson and fielding coach Dishant Yagnik. "Guys, just a very formal welcome from me. A few new entrants, so I think I should start with introducing them. Everyone knows Shane Watson as a player, but I've known him as someone who's played under him as a player. "I'm really, really happy, Watto, to have you with us. I think you've been a terrific addition, even in this small period that I've interacted with you. Tap into his experience, you will learn a lot. We've had a lot of good coaches, but I'm pretty sure that Shane Watson is going to add a lot of value to us. So, Watto, welcome to the KKR family. "I tend to miss a lot of names, but I think the second addition to our family is Mr. Dishant Yagnik, a ball of energy. A lot of you all know him domestically, but I'm sure his energy and his love and passion is something that will come across for us. So, welcome, Yagi. We've got (Manvirinder) Bisla and Biju (George) here who are our head of scouting and our scouting team.

## Sports Promote Physical and Mental Development – Dr. G. Rameshwar rao

**HYDERABAD**  
Sports play a vital role in promoting not only physical fitness but also mental well-being, said Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao, Director of the Engineering Staff College of India (ESCI). He emphasized that cultivating an interest in sports during the student stage can help individuals grow into accomplished sportspersons and earn recognition in the future. Under the aegis of ESCI, the School of Post Graduate Studies (SPGS) successfully organized a two-day "Sports Skills" event on Tuesday and Wednesday for students of the Post Graduate Diploma in General Management. Around fifty students enthusiastically participated in various sports events including cricket, volleyball, badminton, chess, and carrom. The competitions, held between first and second-year SPGS students, were conducted in a spirited and inspiring manner. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rameshwar Rao highlighted that sports are not limited to cricket alone, but include a wide range of disciplines such as football, basketball, kho-kho, kabaddi, hockey,



participate with great enthusiasm. He further stated that accepting both victory and defeat with equal spirit and using them as motivation helps in building strong character and personality development. Dr. K. Ashok, Principal of SPGS, remarked that sports help students relieve mental stress and encouraged them to also develop interests in music, literature, and writing, enabling them to excel in multiple domains. **Winners and Runners:** • Volleyball Winners: Rakesh, Ajay, Deepak, Abhishek, Surya, Sainath Runners: Nagarjuna, Tejas, Sai Kiran, Chandu, Shubhankar, Krishna • Cricket Winners: S. Deepak, J. Deepak, Ajay, Abhishek, Sai Kiran, Tejas Runners: Rakesh, Surya, Nagarjuna, Akhilesh, Chandu, Krishna, Julfaid • Carrom Winners: Deepak, Pavanii; Runners: Ajay, Julfaid • Chess Winner: Tejas; Runner: Krishna The event not only fostered sportsmanship among students but also contributed significantly to developing teamwork, leadership qualities, and time management skills. College Chief Lakshmi Kanta Rao, Dr. P. Rajarao, and staff members Dr. Sindhu Menda, Alig Raju, Ramavath Kishan, Dasari Murali, Raghuveera Reddy, and Chaya Padma Kumari congratulated all the participants.

## Ishan Kishan to captain Sunrisers Hyderabad

**HYDERABAD**  
Wicketkeeper batter Ishan Kishan will lead Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) for the first few matches of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, standing in for Australian legend Pat Cummins, who is yet to recover from a back injury, the franchise announced on Wednesday. SRH have also stated that No.1 T20I batter Abhishek Sharma will be Kishan's deputy during this period. "Pat Cummins will miss a few games while recovering from injury. Until he recovers, Ishan Kishan will be the



Captain and Abhishek Sharma will be the Vice-Captain," SRH wrote in a post on X. Cummins has not played competitive cricket since the third Ashes Test in Adelaide in December 2025, after being out of action post the tour of West Indies due to a lumbar bone stress injury in his lower back.

He was subsequently ruled out of the remaining Ashes matches and the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup due to the same issue. The all-rounder is expected to join the team in the later stages of IPL 2026. Kishan, who has been in the SRH camp since the 2025 IPL, captained Jharkhand to winning the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title in the recent domestic season and has strong credentials to lead the side in Cummins' absence. He has never captained any team in the IPL, and it will be his first stint as a leader in the world's biggest cricket league.

## Hockey World Cup: India to meet Pakistan on Aug 19; women's team to start against China on Aug 16

**AMSTERDAM**  
World No 8 India will meet archrivals Pakistan in a Pool D match at 6:30 pm IST on August 19 in the Men's FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 at the Wagener Hockey Stadium, Amstelveen. India are clubbed together with neighbours and four-time World Cup winner Pakistan in Pool D, along with Wales and England in the four-team Pool from which the top-placed team will qualify for the quarterfinals, while



the next two placed teams will figure in Cross-Over matches. After a thrilling draw ceremony held at the Wagener Stadium in Amsterdam on Tuesday, where participating teams and athletes discovered their opponents for the group stage, the

International Hockey Federation (FIH) has now confirmed the match schedule for the World Cup. The 1975 World Cup winner India will start their campaign in the 16-team men's competition against Wales on August 15, the opening day of the FIH Hockey World Cup, at 4:30 pm IST, and will run into fourth-ranked England on August 17 at the Wagener Hockey Stadium, Amstelveen. England will play Pakistan in another key match of Pool D on August 15.

## Borussia Dortmund show interest in re-signing Jadon Sancho from Man United

**LONDON**  
Eight-time German league winners Borussia Dortmund have shown interest in re-signing England-born Jadon Sancho on a free transfer from Manchester United, who bought him to his home country in 2021 and sent him on loan deals to Chelsea and Aston Villa in recent seasons. The 25-year-old Sancho, who was born in Camberwell, Greater London, and made his name at former Bundesliga winners Dortmund, is out of contract at United this summer, and he's unlikely to be offered a new deal, according to media reports in England. Dortmund thus want to take back Sancho to Germany, where he made his name as a teenager. Jadon Sancho, the 23-time England international, is currently on loan at Aston Villa, his third spell away from Old Trafford since joining the Red Devils for £73million in 2021. Sancho's switch to Villa was a dry loan, with no option to buy included, www.mirror.com.uk reported on Wednesday. Although Villa boss Unai Emery recently hinted at keeping the forward, Dortmund are keen on bringing back the player who made his debut for them in 2017.

## Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag unveils new jersey

**JAIPUR**  
Inaugural IPL champions Rajasthan Royals unveiled their new jersey for the upcoming 2026 season on Wednesday, with newly-appointed captain Riyan Parag, teenaged batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi among those present to showcase it. The 2008 IPL winners announced the reveal of their jersey in their usual blue and pink colours on Instagram with the caption: "New look, same Hal-la Bol. Jersey: RRevealed." RR will begin their IPL 2026 season against five-time winners Chennai Super Kings at the ACA Stadium in Guwahati on March 30. The franchise will play their first three home matches in Guwahati - their alternate home ground and Parag's hometown - with fixtures at their primary home venue, the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur, to be confirmed whenever the BCCI announces the remainder of the tournament's schedule. The opening fixture against Chennai Super Kings will carry an added edge, with Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran, now RR players, set to face their former side. RR will then travel to Ahmedabad for their first away game of the season, where they take on 2022 winners Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium on April 4.

## Second U19 Women's T20 WC Title Felt Special: Niki Prasad

**NEW DELHI**  
Niki Prasad says lifting the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup trophy for the second time - as the side's captain - was an experience like no other and that has only sharpened her hunger to keep winning more titles for India in future. The 2025 U19 Women's T20 World Cup winning team was among the five champion sides felicitated by the BCCI at the recent annual awards in New Delhi on Sunday. All members and coaches received special medals from former players Sudha Shah and Shubhangi Kulkarni. "I think that day was pretty special for all of us. Every kid dreams to play for India and for me it was playing for India U19 and also leading. So I think

lifting the trophy for the second time felt quite special. "Now as I look back at it, of course it's a really memorable day. Even coming over here, I was really excited to be around all the legends. So it was a pretty exciting day," said Niki in a video posted by the BCCI on their 'X' account on Wednesday. With India winning the Women's ODI World Cup, Men's Champions Trophy, Men's U19 World Cup and Men's T20 World Cup, Niki said seeing the trophies won by India filled her with immense pride. "Firstly

I think I take pride in being Indian and I'm really proud to be Indian. "Also I think it's really a very memorable and happy moment to be, not just sharing the U19 World Cup trophy with my own teammates, but also being part of the same calendar year, being part of seeing the women's team lifting the World Cup and then the men's one. So I think as an Indian and as a cricketer, I think it's a really proud moment for me, especially in this calendar year." Niki was keen to acknowledge that the BCCI's sustained investment in youth cricket is a key driver of that success. "I

think the BCCI plays a major role in the growth of the Indian team and also the future. They've put a lot of vision and a lot of investment in the youth. "So I think that is obviously going to pay off and we've already done that in both men's and women's. It's really important to have that kind of support from the BCCI. I think we're just going to keep growing from here on. With Niki playing her trade for Delhi Capitals in WPL and Karnataka in domestic cricket, she said her aim is to get more trophies when she enters the senior team. "For me, it's not just about playing for India, but it's about lifting the trophy again and again for India. So that's my ultimate goal for India. I think my first thought is going to be that we have one common thing - that all of us have one ICC trophy."





## Jr NTR's Dragon Gets Bigger, Bollywood Actor Joins The Film

The upcoming action film Dragon is creating huge excitement among fans. The movie stars Jr NTR and is directed by Prashanth Neel, who is known for making powerful action films. Now, the project is getting even bigger with new updates.

According to reports, veteran actor Anil Kapoor is likely to join the film as the main villain. This news has increased curiosity among fans, as Anil Kapoor is known for his strong screen presence. If confirmed, his role is expected to be very intense and important to the story. Initially, the film was planned for a June release. However, sources say that the release might now be pushed to late 2026. The reason behind this delay is the grand scale of the film. The makers want to ensure high-quality action sequences, visual effects, and overall production. They are aiming to deliver a big cinematic experience for the audience.

Recently, Jr NTR and Prashanth Neel were spotted together in Mumbai. Reports suggest that they met for discussions and planning related to the film. This meeting has further increased excitement, as fans are eagerly waiting for updates about the project. Another interesting update is about the female lead. Actress Rukmini Vasanth, who gained attention with her work in Kantara: Chapter 2, has been selected as the heroine of the film. Her pairing with Jr NTR is something new, and fans are curious to see their on-screen chemistry.

Director Prashanth Neel's last film was Salaar starring Prabhas. The film was a big action entertainer and received strong response from fans. Its sequel, Salaar: Part 2 - Shouryanga Parvam, is also in the pipeline. However, reports say that work on the sequel will begin only after the completion of Dragon.

## Teyana Taylor Calls Out Oscars Shove, Says "I Don't Tolerate Disrespect"



Teyana Taylor experienced an incident on the night of the Academy Awards that no one saw coming. The Best Supporting Actress nominee got into a confrontation with an apparent security guard, whom she says "shoved" her. In a viral video, Taylor is seen in a tightly packed crowd at the Dolby Theatre, calling the unidentified man "very rude" and adding, "You're a man putting your hands on a female." She also claims, "He literally shoved me."

"Do not touch me, do not shove me," she was seen saying in the clip. The incident has sparked criticism of the security guard's conduct, with many netizens calling it unnecessary and overly rough. The One Battle After Another star later addressed the incident, assuring that everything is now "all good." In an interview with TMZ, she explained the reason behind the confrontation, saying, "Everybody was having a good time, security was just doing a lot. There's always that one, but I'm perfectly fine. I'm happy."

She added that people were quick to make assumptions, but emphasized, "At the end of the day, I just don't tolerate disrespect, especially when it's unwarranted and unprovoked." On Monday, the Academy issued a statement addressing the incident, and noted, "We were extremely upset to learn about the experience endured by Teyana Taylor at the end of the Oscars ceremony last night. We have worked with Teyana over the last several months during awards season, and she has been nothing short of remarkable, supportive, kind, and all about community."

The statement continued, "Though the incident was with our outside security firm, SIS, the experience of every single guest is our responsibility. We have made it clear to them that this behavior is not acceptable. We want to thank Teyana for showing remarkable grace, and we are taking the appropriate measures to ensure this does not happen again." This incident has sparked an online debate regarding the condition of security and treatment of women at the Academy Awards.

Despite this incident, Teyana Taylor was later seen to be giving a standing ovation after Amy Madigan won the award for best supporting actress. Taylor seemed enthusiastic and excited despite losing the award.



## TAMIL NADU POLITICIANS DRAG IN RAJINIKANTH, NAYAN, AND TRISHA, RECEIVE FLAK

In what many are calling a deeply unfortunate trend, political discourse in Tamil Nadu has increasingly veered into controversial comments targeting film personalities, including top actresses and veteran star Rajinikanth. The latest controversy involves AIADMK MP Shanmugam, who made an objectionable remark about actress Nayanthara. Reacting to Chief Minister M. K. Stalin's public outreach initiative seeking people's aspirations, Shanmugam reportedly said, "I want Nayanthara, will you fulfil my dream?" The comment has triggered widespread backlash, with many condemning it as inappropriate and disrespectful, especially coming from an elected representative. The National Commission for Women has reportedly taken serious note of the issue. This is not an isolated incident. Recently, Tamil Nadu BJP president Nainar Nagendran drew criticism for his remarks involving actress Trisha Krishnan while referring to actor-turned-politician Vijay. He had controversially suggested that Vijay should "step out of Trisha's house" to understand ground realities in the state, a statement widely condemned as inappropriate.

Meanwhile, comments made by TVK leader Adhav Arjuna about Rajinikanth have further intensified tensions. Arjuna alleged that the superstar stayed away from politics due to pressure from the DMK's first family, a claim that sparked strong reactions across political and fan circles. Responding to the controversy, Rajinikanth dismissed the remarks as "untrue" and thanked leaders across party lines for their support. In a brief statement, he said, "Time does not speak, but waits and answers."

The remarks have ignited heated debates, with fans of the superstar taking to social media to express their anger, while political leaders across parties have weighed in on the issue. Overall, the incidents have raised concerns about the tone of political discourse in Tamil Nadu, particularly the repeated targeting of women and film personalities in public statements.



## No One Can Beat Rana In This Matter?

Rana Daggubati stands out as one of the most outspoken and extroverted stars in Telugu cinema, but his real strength lies beyond acting. More than just a hero in Tollywood, he has evolved into a global brand with a powerful network that even top producers admire. Unlike typical actors who focus on films and promotions, Rana operates with a strong corporate mindset. He has built extensive connections across industries and plays a key role in striking deals with platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. His marketing sense and clarity in project execution make him a valuable force behind the scenes. Rana's influence extends across Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Bollywood industries. He has supported content-driven films like C/o Kancharapalem and contributed to expanding markets, including helping connect Karan Johar with S. S. Rajamouli for Baahubali. Despite rumors, he isn't quitting acting and currently has multiple projects lined up. Beyond being the son of D. Suresh Babu, Rana has carved his own identity as a visionary actor-producer, shaping the future of Indian cinema.



## Madhuri to Light Up Gaddar Film Awards 2025 in Hyd

Bollywood star Madhuri Dixit Nene is set to grace the prestigious Telangana Gaddar Film Awards 2025, scheduled to be held on March 19, 2026, in Hyderabad. In a statement, Madhuri expressed her excitement, saying it is truly an honour to be part of the awards. She praised Telugu cinema for its rich legacy of storytelling, music, and extraordinary talent that continues to inspire audiences globally. She highlighted that such initiatives are vital as they celebrate grassroots artists and technicians—the true backbone of the industry. She added that she is looking forward to celebrating the vibrant legacy of the Telugu film fraternity in Hyderabad. Joining her will be Bollywood actress Esha Gupta, who also expressed her happiness about attending the event. She stated that it is an absolute honour to support an initiative that highlights technicians and regional artists. Esha further noted that honoring Gaddar's legacy while celebrating the industry's modern achievements is truly inspiring. She added that Telangana has a vibrant artistic spirit, and she is excited to be part of a night that recognizes excellence across all creative fields.

