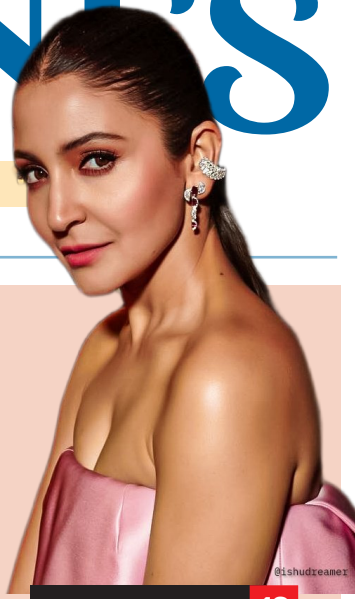


HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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Anushka Sharma Debut With Allu Arjun AA22

BOX -OFFICE 12



6 killed in Qatar military chopper crash

FOCUS POINT 10



Female tea garden workers on their way to the factory after finishing work at a tea estate in the Dooars region of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal on Sunday

... JALPAIGURI

SHORT TAKES



PM MODI REVIEWS WEST ASIA SITUATION

The meeting took stock of the current global situation in the wake of the West Asia conflict and the measures taken to protect consumer and industry interests, which is the key focus of the government, the sources said.

HOME LAND 07



INDIA'S OPTIONS BOOM, A 25-YEAR-OLD CAUTION

Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman raised the taxes on futures and options trading, and the markets responded with a 2% crash. She said that the move was intended to arrest excessive speculation in the market.

MONEY MATTERS 09



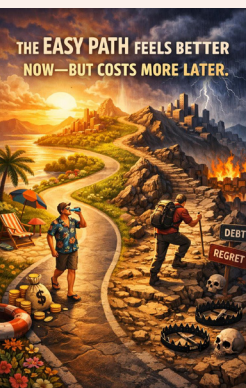
BHAGAT SINGH'S BOND WITH HINDI

When the name of Bhagat Singh is remembered, it evokes images of fearless revolution, sacrifice, and deep patriotism—but beyond his martyrdom, he was also a powerful writer who used language as a tool to awaken the masses.

OPINION 06

THE DAILY MANTRA

WAY TO GLORY



- The easy path feels good now but hides its true cost
- The hard path demands effort upfront but rewards you long-term
- Real growth comes from discomfort
- Respect is earned through discipline

Collected by

Venna Srinivasa Reddy

45-Day Plan to Release Rs.9K Cr Farm Support

- KCR regime spent only Rs 2533 crore for farmers welfare every month
- The People's Govt. was spending Rs 5500 crore
- CM Revanth cautioned the Fertilizer shortage in the wake of the Iran - America conflict.
- Convince PM Modi for more allotment of fertilizers to Telangana
- CM announces cabinet minister post to the leader who wins Siddipet Assembly Constituency in next election
- Appeals to Siddipet voters to support Congress and stop family run politics
- Appeals Agriculture minister to set up Palm Oil factory in Kodangal
- Ready for a debate on funds allocated to Kodangal during BRS rule.
- CM Revanth Reddy inaugurates Oil Palm factory at Narmetta in Siddipet Assembly Constituency today



Narmetta/ Siddipet , March 22: Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy has announced that Rs 9000 crores of Rythu Bharosa scheme benefit will be deposited in the farmers bank accounts in 3 installments in 45 days. The Chief Minister released the first installment of Rythu Bharosa benefit on the sidelines of inauguration of the Oil Palm factory at Narmetta in Siddipet Assembly Constituency today. Speaking at a public meeting organised on the occasion of "Farmers Fes-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CM unveils development works worth Rs. 775.72 crore in Siddipet dist

HYDERABAD, MARCH 22

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday officially launched a series of development projects and initiated new construction endeavours valued at Rs 775.72 crore, specifically benefiting the Siddipet and Gajwel Assembly constituencies in Siddipet district. Officials reported that the Chief Minister inaugurated an oil palm factory in Narmetta village, Nangunuru mandal, Siddipet district, with an investment of Rs 300 crore.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



8,931 Days

PM Modi Creates History in Public Office

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday achieved a historic milestone, becoming the longest-serving head of a government in India with 8,931 days in office. He surpassed the previous record of 8,930 days held by Pawan Kumar Chamling, who served

as the Chief Minister of Sikkim for over 24 years. Modi's political journey spans over two decades in executive leadership. He served as the Chief Minister of Gujarat from October 7, 2001, to May 21, 2014, becoming

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

I can not continue in Congress party Anymore : Jeevan Reddy

KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 22

Senior Congress leader and former minister Jeevan Reddy has made a significant announcement regarding his resignation from the ruling party. He made it clear that he can no longer continue his association with the Congress party. He announced that he would tender his resignation from both his Congress party membership and his AICC membership



on the 25th of this month. He stated that he would announce his future course of action on that very day. Jeevan Reddy appealed to

the party workers and supporters to attend the meeting scheduled to be held in Jagtial on the 25th of this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

NITISH KUMAR'S TRANSITION A MEASURED EXIT OR A POLITICAL TIGHTROPE?

The Six-Month Cushion That Raises Big Questions

BY CHATURVEDULA SUBRAHMANYAM

Nitish Kumar's potential six-month continuation as Bihar Chief Minister after entering the Rajya Sabha reflects a carefully calibrated political transition. While it ensures administrative continuity and coalition stability, it also raises questions about mandate, succession, and the optics of holding dual roles during a crucial leadership shift. There is something very deliberate, almost methodical, about Nitish Kumar's latest political move. After securing a seat in the Rajya Sabha, the Bihar Chief Minister is in no hurry to vacate his



chair in Patna. Instead, we are looking at a possible six-month overlap, a period that is as politically significant as it is strategically convenient.

Now, let's be clear. This is not about constitutional necessity. There is no rule that forces an immediate resignation. But politics is rarely about what is allowed. It is about what is seen

to be right. And that is where the debate begins.

CONTINUITY VERSUS OPTICS

Supporters of Nitish Kumar will argue that this is a sensible transition plan. Bihar is not a state that can afford administrative disruption. A staggered exit ensures governance continuity, avoids sudden instability, and gives the ruling alliance time to settle on a successor. But critics are asking a sharper question: if the mandate was for Nitish Kumar as Chief Minister, does this gradual shift dilute that mandate? It is a fair question.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Integrated schools are visionary temples: Bhatti

HYDERABAD, MARCH 22

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has reiterated the Congress administration's unwavering commitment to prioritising education. He characterised each financial allocation towards education as a strategic investment in the development of future generations. During his visit to the Madhira constituency on Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka inspected the progress of the integrated residential school construction works in Lakshimpuram village of Bonakal mandal. He toured the under-construction building complexes and reviewed the progress. Bhatti Vikramarka directed officials and contractors to speed up the construction works further.

The Deputy Chief Minister inspected the construction of junior hostel, junior and senior academic blocks, and administrative buildings. He also reviewed the construction of mechanical, science, mathematics, and computer lab buildings. Bhatti Vikramarka instructed that there should be no compromise on quality. He stated that these are not just buildings, but visionary temples that will shape the bright future of coming generations.



Bandi Sanjay Hits Out at Govt Over Hydra Actions

HYDERABAD, MARCH 22

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay on Sunday criticized the Congress government in Telangana for adopting a dual-pronged approach. He lashed out at the administration for demolishing the houses of the poor under the guise of the 'Hydra' operation while sparing encroachments made by leaders belonging to the AIMIM party over Salman lake.

Sharing a clip of a recent interview given by the Hydra Commissioner Ranganath to a news channel on his 'X' account, Bandi Sanjay leveled severe criticism against the remarks made by the Commissioner during the interview. He slammed the Congress party by stating that its conduct mirrors the slogan: "Garibon Ko Hatao, Owaisi Ko Bachao" (Remove the Poor, Save Owaisi). He expressed his outrage by pointing out that the state government

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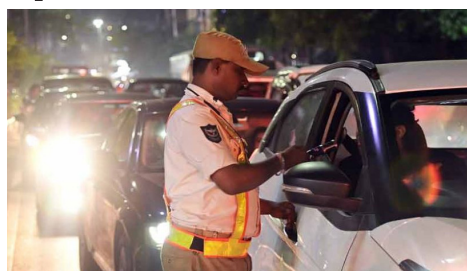
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Weekend-Special Drunk & Drive Checking's by Cyberabad Traffic Police



HYDERABAD : Cyberabad Traffic Police (CTP) has conducted a special drunk driving enforcement drive over the weekend, resulting in the apprehension of 173 offenders. The total cases booked 138 two wheelers, 10 three wheelers, 22 four wheelers and 3 heavy vehicles. Based on the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels, 145 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 36 mg/100 ml to 200 mg/100 ml. 15 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 201 mg/100 ml to 300 mg/100 ml. 13 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 301 mg/100 ml to 550 mg/100 ml. All the offenders will be produced before the Court. Cyberabad Police reiterate that driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence. If anyone is found to be driving in an inebriated condition and causes a fatal accident, such individuals will be booked under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Culpable Homicide Not Amounting to Murder). The maximum punishment under this section is 10 years of imprisonment along with a fine. In the last week (March 16 to 21), a total 358 drunk driving cases were disposed in the courts, 2 offenders receiving both fine and social service and 356 persons got fine only.

Congress party is synonymous with deceit : Former Minister V. Srinivas Goud

HYDERABAD

Former Minister V. Srinivas Goud today criticised the ruling Congress party by stating that the very name "Congress" was synonymous with deceit. He asserted that the party had done nothing other than utilizing Backward Classes (BC) communities as a mere vote bank.

Speaking to the media at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad, Srinivas Goud lashed out at the Congress party and accused it of acting with utter impunity within the state. He pointed out that the Congress party came to power solely on the strength of votes from the BCs, SCs, STs and minorities. However, he alleged that in the budget introduced by the state government, the administration had completely neglected communities dependent on traditional occupations. He reminded everyone that the majority of people within the BC category sustain their livelihoods through these traditional trades.

He noted that in a budget exceeding ₹3 lakh crores, there was mention of only a single specific initiative for the BC communities. He criticized the Congress party for making grandiose promises before the elections by claiming that it would allocate a budget of ₹20,000 crore annually for the BCs but spent only ₹5,000 crores to date. "You promised to include the Mudiraj community under the 'BC-A' category;



what happened to that promise," Srinivas Goud questioned. He recalled that former CM KCR had allocated land parcels worth ₹10,000 crore for the construction of "Self-Respect Buildings" (Atma Gourava Bhavanalu) for various BC communities.

However, he expressed outrage that the Congress government had made absolutely no mention of the BCs regarding the opportunities in education and employment sectors. He reminded the Congress party that during the elections, it had pledged to establish a separate ministry and allocate dedicated funds for Most Backward Classes (MBCs). He lamented that the ruling party

was not even granting nominated posts to the members of the BC communities. He demanded to know as what happened to its promised "Sub-Plan." He took a jibe at the ruling party by remarking sarcastically that the Congress party had emerged as a "role model" for the entire nation in the art of utterly betraying the public.

He questioned as to who actually wanted the "Future City" and the Musi River cleanup projects? He asked whether the future of the Backward Classes (BCs) would truly change because of the Future City? He expressed outrage and asked as to how much longer the BC com-

munity would continue to be deceived. He questioned the fate of the "Kamareddy Declaration." He lashed out at the state government by accusing it of providing security to the homes of the state ministers while demolishing the homes of the poor under the pretext of "Hydra" operations. He asked as to whom the Congress party had allocated the Rajya Sabha seats representing the state of Telangana? He asserted that the BC community would not forgive the Congress party. He advised the BC leaders currently within the Congress party to reflect seriously on this matter. He demanded that more ministerial portfolios be allocated to the BC community.



RGUKT-Basar declares holidays amidst ongoing protests

HYDERABAD

In response to ongoing student demonstrations, the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) has announced a temporary closure for its Pre-University Course (PUC) first and second-year students, as well as engineering first and second-year students, effective March 23.

According to a statement released on Sunday, university officials indicated that this decision was made to safeguard the academic schedule from disruptions stemming from protests concerning alleged deficiencies in on-campus medical facilities, particularly in the wake of a student's passing.

The protests were incited by the demise of Mallipudi Tejashwini, a PUC second-year student hailing from Medak district. The university has stated

that the date for the resumption of classes will be communicated at a later time and encouraged students to make productive use of this period.

Students commenced their protests on March 17, citing inadequate medical provisions and demanding a compensation of Rs 50 lakh for Tejashwini's family. Demonstrations, including the chanting of slogans calling for justice, were held at the Vice-Chancellor's office.

Concurrently, Tejashwini's parents have formally requested the government to ensure justice and appropriate compensation for their daughter. They engaged in a sit-in protest at the RGUKT entrance on Friday. Tejashwini, aged 17 and a resident of Ramachandrapuram in Medak district, succumbed to leukemia on March 16 while receiving treatment at Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

45-Day Plan to Release Rs.9K Cr Farm Support



FROM PAGE 1

CM Revanth Reddy highlighted that the government was providing compensation to farmers who lost their crops and already spent over ₹1 lakh crore on farmers' welfare within just two years. In view of the Telangana emerged number one in Paddy production in the country, the Chief Minister stressed that the Agriculture sector needs to undergo a transformation and the farmers should adopt crop diversification for more profits. "We need to encourage farmers to cultivate not just paddy but a diverse range of crops", the CM said explaining the difficulties in the paddy procurement. We have procured 71 lakh metric tonnes of paddy. However, the Central Government is not procuring more than 50 lakh metric tonnes. In this backdrop,

We must formulate and implement necessary plans for crop diversification to ensure that the crops cultivated by our farmers become profitable ventures.

Stating that the Government is making efforts to facilitate the export of agricultural produce to international markets, the CM stressed

that every crop grown in Telangana should be profitable to achieve "Golden (Bangaru) Telangana." Following the recent Iran - America war and Middle East crisis, CM Revanth Reddy cautioned the farmers of fertilizer shortage in the coming days. The Chief Minister ordered the authorities to convince the union government for more fertilizers. We must meet with Prime Minister Modi and strive to secure the maximum possible allocation of urea for our state. "This is not the time for politics and moving forward with coordination and unity. We do politics only during the elections. Once the elections are over, the development of the state becomes the sole priority."

Explaining the importance of Oil Palm project which is meant to the benefit of farmers and not for local MLA, the CM announced that the leader who wins against BRS leader in Siddipet in next elections will be inducted in the state cabinet. I am entrusting our ministers G Vivek and Damodar Raja Narasimha with the responsibility of winning the Congress candidate in the assembly segment. The legislature representing the area hailed from the same single

family, CM Revanth Reddy said appealing to people to give an opportunity to others and bring a change.

The CM made it clear that the People's Government was not discriminating against anyone and it was not his nature to give priority over others. Further, the Chief Minister said that he is ready for a debate on funds allocations to Kodangal during BRS rule. CM Revanth Reddy reiterated that Congress will retain power by winning the majority of seats in 2029 assembly elections.

The Chief Minister outlined the government's plan to promote the oil palm industry. The government is ready to purchase the produce in 10 lakhs acres also and Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageshwar Rao was requested to establish an oil palm processing plant in the Kodangal constituency as well. Ankapur should serve as an inspiration for all 12,728 Gram Panchayats across the state in the field of agriculture. It is the responsibility of our government to transform every village into a model like Ankapur and to make agriculture a profitable business.

Listing the welfare and women empowerment schemes introduced

by the government, the CM said that a free travel facility was provided for women in RTC buses. Also, empowered women by making them the owners of the RTC bus fleet aiming to transform one crore woman into millionaires.

CM Revanth Reddy ordered the officials to increase the membership of women's self-help groups in urban areas as well. The government has already provided Rs 57,000 crores of loans to women groups through bank linkages. It is also a proud moment that women groups are competing with Adani and Ambani in the solar power generation. The nation's economy will truly flourish only when women attain equal economic partnership.

The Chief Minister also said that the government is launching Telangana Public Schools in the upcoming academic year aiming to compete with the government Educational institutions with private and corporate institutions. The proposal to overhaul all Government schools is under active consideration and also establishing Advanced Training Centers (ATCs) to provide skills training to the youth.

A measured exit or a political tightrope?

FROM PAGE 1

And it goes to the heart of how political accountability is interpreted in India.

THE NDA'S BALANCING ACT

For the BJP and its allies, this is a delicate balancing act. On one hand, Nitish Kumar remains a key ally, a seasoned administrator who brings credibility and experience. On the other, there is clearly a long-term calculation at play, the need to prepare Bihar for a new leadership structure that align more closely with the BJP's own political ambitions in the state. The six-month window, therefore, is not just about Nitish Kumar. It is about managing coalition dynamics without triggering friction.

FROM PATNA TO DELHI: A SHIFT IN ROLE

Nitish Kumar's move to the Rajya Sabha signals a transition from state-level governance to a more national political role. In Delhi, he will not be burdened with day-to-day administration. Instead, he could emerge as a

voice of experience within the NDA, possibly even playing a role in shaping broader political strategies. But this also raises a question: does this mark the beginning of a gradual withdrawal from active state politics?

THE SUCCESSION PUZZLE

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this entire development is the question of succession. Who takes over? When is the announcement made? And how smoothly can that transition be executed? Names may be circulating, but there is no official clarity yet. And that uncertainty is significant. Leadership transitions in coalition governments are rarely straightforward. They require negotiation, consensus, and sometimes, compromise.

KEY DATES TO WATCH

Mid March 2026: Nitish Kumar elected to Rajya Sabha
Early April 2026: New Rajya Sabha term begins
April to September 2026: Transition phase in Bihar
Around September or Octo-

ber: Likely leadership change

OPPOSITION'S ATTACK LINE

The Opposition, unsurprisingly, is not holding back. They are framing this as a betrayal of the people's mandate. Their argument is simple and politically potent: voters chose Nitish Kumar to lead Bihar, not to move to Parliament midway. Whether this argument gains traction will depend on how the transition is handled in the coming months.

THE ROAD AHEAD

For now, Bihar enters a phase of political transition that is carefully managed but closely watched. If handled well, this could be seen as a model of orderly succession. If mismanaged, it could open up fault lines within the ruling alliance and give the Opposition an opportunity to regroup. In Indian politics, timing is everything. Nitish Kumar has chosen his moment. The real test will be how this transition unfolds, not just in terms of power, but in terms of public perception.

CM unveils development works worth Rs. 775.72 crore in Siddipet dist

FROM PAGE 1

He also laid the foundation stone for water supply and underground drainage initiatives within the Siddipet municipality, totaling Rs 141.34 crore, and for a new district jail building in Ensanpally, costing Rs 78 crore. Further inaugurations by the Chief Minister included a 50-bed Integrated AYUSH hospital in Ensanpally (Rs 15

crore), a central medicine store in Ensanpally (Rs 3.60 crore), a Primary Health Centre (PHC) building in Gatlamalyala, Nangunur Mandal (Rs 1.43 crore), and a newly constructed Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) building in Ambedkar Nagar, Siddipet Municipality (Rs 1.43 crore).

In the Gajwel constituency, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for the 'Young

India Integrated Residential School Complex' in Kondapaka, a project estimated at Rs 200 crore. He also oversaw the inauguration of additional infrastructure facilities at Telangana Public School in Markook (Rs 16.62 crore), the Integrated Mandal Offices Complex (IOC) in Markook (Rs 8.65 crore), and the Integrated Mandal Offices Complex (IOC) in Jagadevpur (Rs 9.65 crore). (NSS)

I can not continue in Congress party Anymore : Jeevan Reddy

FROM PAGE 1

month and to offer their advice and suggestions.

"The decision regarding my political future will be taken on the 25th of this month. I request the party workers and close associates, who have stood by me

for four decades to offer their suggestions. A meeting with key leaders will be held on the 25th at Bandaru Gardens in Jagtial. I can no longer continue in this party. I cannot bear this anguish. I no longer command any respect within the party," he said.

Bandi Sanjay Hits Out at Govt Over Hydra Actions

FROM PAGE 1

creates "buffer zones" for the poor while establishing "comfort zones" for Owaisi and added that it enforces 'Full Tank Level' (FTL) regulations strictly against the poor, yet adopts a 'Full Thanks Level' (total leniency) approach toward Owaisi. He lambasted the Congress party's logic by noting the hypocrisy of the Hydra Commissioner wherein the students studying in an unauthorized college is viewed through a 'social angle,'

while the homes of the poor are demolished under the pretext that they constitute 'encroachments.'

Citing official statistics, he observed that while the Hydra bulldozers moved with lightning speed to demolish the homes of over 200 poor families, the administration was deliberately dragging its feet regarding the Owaisi College, which is situated within the Full Tank Level (FTL) area of Salkam Lake. He criticized the Congress government for contrasting its ac-

tions with those of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "While PM Modi is constructing dignified housing for the poor through the PM-AWAS scheme, the Congress government, conversely, is sending in bulldozers to demolish their homes," he alleged. He criticized the situation by stating that if the law bends for the heirs of the Razakars yet cracks down on the poor, it amounts to nothing more than a feeble justification that disregards the very ideals it is meant to uphold. (NSS)

8,931 Days

FROM PAGE 1

the state's longest-serving CM after winning four consecutive terms. He assumed office as Prime Minister in 2014 and has since secured re-election in 2019 and 2024, marking his third consecutive term.

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the Prime Minister, praising his "pure devotion to the nation and its people." He highlighted Modi's journey from state leadership to

national governance as a testament to his unwavering commitment to public service.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also lauded the achievement, describing it as a milestone rooted in "service, hard work, and unwavering commitment." He noted that Modi's tenure reflects a strong focus on nation-first governance, integrity, and tireless service to citizens.

The milestone comes alongside Modi's expanding global presence. He recently became the first world leader to cross 100 million followers on Instagram, further underscoring his widespread influence.

Telangana amends building rules to boost real estate in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has amended building rules, relaxing TDR norms for builders in Hyderabad up to Outer Ring Road limits.

The government has issued a Government Order (GO) to enhance flexibility in the rules related to the utilisation of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) for building constructions.

Amendments relating to utilisation of TDR, relaxation of building parameters and rationalisation of utilisation of TDR provisions are expected to boost real estate in the city up to Outer Ring Road (ORR)

The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department has issued G.O. Ms No. 95, introducing several amendments to the Telangana Building Rules, 2012.

The government said on Sunday that these orders were issued after examining representations received from various stakeholders, with the objective of rationalising the utilisation of TDR and increasing flexibility in building regulations. After careful consideration, the government has approved and notified the amendments to streamline TDR usage and



relax building parameters under the existing rules, it said. Under the new guidelines, buildings above 21 meters are classified as high-rise.

For the plots from 750 square meters and 2,000 square meters, buildings from 18 meters to 21 meters height will be permitted only through utilisation of TDR, subject to provi-

sions of required parking and compliance with other rules, says the G.O.

The new rules have allowed setback relaxation through the utilisation of TDR for non-high-rise buildings.

The high-rise constructions will get 10 per cent setback relaxations through TDR, subject to maintaining a minimum of seven meters all-round

setbacks. Plots above 2,000 square meters can now have additional floors through TDR. Extra floors will be allowed based on the width of the roads abutting the plots. Three additional floors will be allowed on a 40-foot-wide road, four floors if the road width is 60 feet and five floors in case of 80-foot roads.

Two electricians killed in balcony slab collapse in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

Two persons were killed and one injured when a portion of a slab caved in at an apartment in the Begumpet area here on Sunday, police said. The incident occurred at Methodist Colony in Kundan Bagh, under the limits of the Panjagutta Police Station.

Two persons working as electricians died in the mishap, while the house owner sustained critical injuries. The victims were identified as Devidas (56) and Vivek (32), both residents of Seetharambagh in Asifnagar.

According to the police, the owner of a flat, Diwakar Prasad, had hired the services of two electricians, Devidas and Vivek, for some work at his flat located on the third floor of an apartment building.

The electricians were working while Diwakar Prasad was standing in the balcony when, all of a sudden, the slab caved in. All three persons fell to the ground and suffered injuries.

Devidas and Vivek died on the spot due to their injuries, while Prasad was rushed to a hospital, where his condition is stated to be critical. The bodies of Devidas and Vivek were shifted to



the Gandhi Hospital mortuary for post-mortem examination. Police have registered a case and taken up further investigation.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident in Telangana's Khammam district, a 70-year-old man died by hanging. According to the police, the incident occurred in Yerrupalem on Sunday, with the hanging resulting in decapitation.

The deceased was identified as Venkatrami Reddy (70), a resident of Baniganlapadu village in Yerrupalem mandal.

He is survived by his wife and a daughter. Preliminary investigation by the police revealed that he took the extreme step due to financial problems.

In another incident, a couple and a child suffered serious burn injuries when a motorcycle caught fire while petrol was being filled into the vehicle at a shop in a village in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. The incident occurred at Gonabavi village in Gummagatta mandal on Sunday. The child's condition is stated to be critical.

'Middle East conflict may trigger fertiliser shortage'

HYDERABAD

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East may result in the shortage of fertilisers, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Sunday.

The Chief Minister asked the officials concerned to convince the Union government to allot more fertilisers to the state. He said the leaders of all parties should meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and strive to secure the maximum possible allocation of urea for our state.



"This is not the time for politics and moving forward with coordination and unity. We do politics only during the elections. Once the elections are over, the development of the state becomes the sole priority," he said while addressing a public meeting at Narmeta in Nangunur mandal of Siddipet district. The Chief Minister along with agriculture minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and other ministers inaugurated oil palm factory

The factory has come up on 32 acres at a cost of Rs 300 crore. He also laid foundation stone for a refinery in the factory premises. The refinery is being set up at a cost of Rs 80 crore.

The palm oil factory at Narmeta to be the first factory in the country completed in 16 months. It has crushing capacity ranging from 30 to 180 tonnes per hour.

The Chief Minister went around the stalls set up as part of 'Rythu Mahotsavam' to showcase agricultural mechanisation, oil palm cultivation practices and allied sectors such as horticulture, dairy and

fisheries. The Chief Minister noted that oil palm cultivation has increased to 3 lakh acres in the state. He made it clear that even if cultivation of oil palm reaches one million acres, the government is committed to purchasing the produce.

He requested Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao to establish an oil palm processing plant in the Kodangal constituency as well. The Chief Minister stated that this is a highly profitable form of agriculture.

Taking a dig at BRS leader and MLA T. Harish Rao, in whose constituency, the oil palm factory has been established, the Chief Minister remarked that the project is meant to benefit farmers and not for local MLA.

The Chief Minister announced that the leader who wins against BRS leader in Siddipet in next elections will be inducted in the state cabinet. He said the legislators representing the constituency for over 30 years hailed from the same single family and appealed to people to give an op-

portunity to others and bring a change.

The Chief Minister claimed that his government was not discriminating against anyone. Alleging that there was discrimination against his constituency Kodangal during BRS rule, he said was ready or a debate on this. CM Revanth Reddy reiterated that Congress will retain power by winning the majority of seats in 2029 assembly elections.

Listing the welfare and women empowerment schemes introduced by the government, the CM said that free travel facility was provided for women in RTC buses.

The government empowered women by making them the owners of the RTC bus fleet. It also aims to transform one crore woman into millionaires. CM Revanth Reddy ordered the officials to increase the membership of women's self-help groups in urban areas as well. The government has already provided Rs 57,000 crore of loans to women groups through bank linkages.

BRS questions CM's false claims on Rs 3.3 lakh crore debt repayments

HYDERABAD

Fresh figures in the State government's own Socio-Economic Outlook-2026 have cast serious doubt on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's claims in the Assembly that his government raised Rs 3.47 lakh crore in loans and repaid nearly Rs 3.3 lakh crore.

The BRS leaders stated that the Chief Minister gave false statement on debt servicing which was far lower than those mentioned in the House.

During the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address, the Chief Minister argued that heavy borrowing was unavoidable because of an Rs 8 lakh crore debt left by the previous BRS government.

He also claimed that the Congress government raised Rs 3.47 lakh crore loan and spent Rs 3.3 lakh crore towards repayments including interest on loans obtained by the previous BRS regime. However, the official debt-servicing data contradicted this narrative.

According to the Socio Economic Outlook 2026 tabled in the Assembly, the Congress government spent Rs 1.67 lakh crore towards repayment of principle and interest between December 2023 and December 2025. These repayments were pertaining to FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management) loans and government-guaranteed loans raised by SPVs but serviced by the government.

Telangana eases TDR rules up to Hyderabad ORR

HYDERABAD

Telangana government relaxed Transferable Development Rights (TDR) norms for builders in Hyderabad up to ORR limits. The revised TDR norms are aimed to boost real estate in the city,

boost the TDR market, provide compensation to landowners affected by public projects, and apply to new projects, plan revisions, and additional floor approvals.

The Telangana government's decision to relax TDR norms up to the Outer Ring



Road (ORR) limits marks a significant shift in Hyderabad's urban planning and real estate

strategy. By expanding the geographical scope, the state is effectively creating a more

fluid secondary market for development rights. Previously, TDR utilisation was more restricted in terms of zones.

Extending these norms to the ORR limits (covering a massive radius around the core city) allows builders in emerging hubs like Tellapur, Kokapet, and Adibatla to utilise TDR certificates.

This is particularly beneficial for high-rise residential complexes where the cost of land is high; TDR offers a cheaper alternative to paying high betterment or premium charges to the municipal body.

Andhra MLA loses Rs 12 lakh in online fraud

HYDERABAD

A member of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly has lost Rs 12 lakh in an online fraud, police said. Cybercriminals allegedly duped Chirri Balaraju, the MLA from Polavaram.

The legislator belonging to Jana Sea Party (JSP) received a WhatsApp message containing a link in the name of a Road Transport Authority (RTA) challan. The amount was reportedly withdrawn from his bank account after he clicked on the link. On realising that he had fallen victim to cyber fraud, the MLA lodged a complaint with the police.

A case has been registered at Jeelugumilli Police Station. Police said the investigation is underway to trace the accused and recover the amount.

This is not the first case of an MLA of Andhra Pradesh



falling victim to cybercrime.

In October last year, an MLA of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) had lost Rs 1.07 crore in an alleged digital arrest case. Cybercriminals impersonating Mumbai cybercrime officials conned Putta Sudhakar Yadav, the MLA from Mydukur inYSR Kadapa district. The legislator, resid-

ing in Hyderabad, had lodged a complaint with Hyderabad cybercrime police after realising that he had been duped. The fraudsters had threatened to arrest the MLA in a fabricated case of money laundering and human trafficking. They forced him to transfer the money under the pretext of securing a provisional

bail. The cybercriminals had informed the MLA that the Mumbai cybercrime police had registered an FIR against him for money laundering based on 17 complaints, alleging misuse of his Aadhaar and SIM card to open a bank account in his name.

According to the MLA, a fraudster posing as a cybercrime investigation officer had even joined a WhatsApp video call, displaying a forged arrest warrant and a CBI account freeze order.

After the MLA was threatened with arrest, he transferred Rs 1.07 crore through nine transactions in a week to secure a provisional bail. When the scammers demanded another Rs 60 lakh for a court clearance order, the MLA realised that he had been conned and approached the police.

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SHORT TAKES

HC stays Jubilee Hills land acquisition for road project



HYDERABAD: The Telangana High Court recently stayed the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's (GHMC) move to acquire 5,186.14 square yards of private land in Jubilee Hills' Road No. 45. The land was required for a 120-ft wide road connecting Road No 45 to Durgam Cheruvu. However, petitioners alleged that GHMC failed to declare any resettlement area for the affected families and did not properly consider the owners' objections. The court also noted that the requirement of publishing the acquisition notice in two daily newspapers, one in a regional language, was not followed, and the notice had been published on a non-official website, www.thefreedompress.in. Hearing the argument, Justice NV Shrivani Kumar directed GHMC to file a detailed counter and posted the matter to April 7 for further hearing.

343 arrested for drunk driving in Hyderabad, all males

HYDERABAD: As many as 343 people were held for drunk driving in Hyderabad during a special drive over the weekend on March 20 and 21. Among all those arrested, 287 were two-wheeler drivers, 32 were four-wheeler drivers, and 24 were three-wheeler drivers. Among all the offenders, 143 recorded a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 51-100, 77 recorded a BAC of 101-150, 71 recorded a BAC of 30-50, 30 had a BAC of 151-200, 14 recorded a BAC of 201-250, four recorded a BAC of 251-300 and four others had a BAC above 300. In a statement, the Hyderabad traffic police said, "There will be zero tolerance on Drunk & drive violations, and this special drive will continue. Commuters are requested to cooperate with the Hyderabad Traffic Police."

Retired IAS Chiranjeevulu demands govt to allocate Rs.50,000 crores to BCs in annual budget

HYDERABAD

The Chairman of the Telangana Intellectual Forum and retired IAS officer T. Chiranjeevulu on Sunday demanded the Congress government to immediately issue a public apology for committing a grave injustice against Backward Classes (BCs) in the state its annual budget. He warned that, if the government failed to do so, they would mobilise the BCs across the state and teach the government a fitting lesson in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Speaking as the chief guest at a seminar held on Sunday at the Bashir Bagh Press Club in the city on the subject of "Severe Injustice to BCs in the Budget," he put forth these demands. He insisted on the



establishment of a "BC Sub-Plan" for the Backward Classes similar to the plans currently in place for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). He urged the state government to allocate at least ₹50,000 crores to the BCs in the current budget. He criticized the state government for giving the BCs the cold shoulder regarding development initiatives, despite the fact that they constitute more than half of the state's population and

definitely pay all forms of taxes. Speaking on the occasion, BC Political Front Chairman Balagani Balraj Goud, conveners Vijay Kumar and Venkanna Goud expressed their outrage by accusing the state government of treating the BC community with disdain. They lashed out at both the BRS and Congress governments by pointing out that since the formation of the Telangana state, both administrations had consistently allocated meager funds to the BCs in their budgets. They condemned the governments for committing a grave injustice by failing to fully utilize even the limited funds that were allocated. BC community leaders Narayana, Srikanth, Kailash Yadav and others participated in the seminar.

"Do Not Waste Water... Every Drop is as Precious as Life"

Institution of Engineers (India) President Manish Mahendra Kothari

HYDERABAD

The World Water Day celebrations were held grandly on Sunday, March 22, 2026, at the Engineering Staff College of India (ESCI). The meeting was attended by the President of the Institution of Engineers (India), Manish Mahendra Kothari, who came from Kolkata, along with senior engineers and past presidents of IEI including V.B. Singh, Devendra Gill, Santosh Kumar Surajmal, Raghupati Bhim Rao, Devendra Bhai Panchal, Dr. Ramana Nayak Banoth, Surya Prakash, Dr. Seeram Satyanarayana, and Brahma Reddy.

From Walk for Water Foundation, M. Karunakar Reddy participated along with water expert Dr. Donthi Madhava Reddy and Anita Sharma. Director of ESCI, Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao, along with several officials, staff members, candidates from the National Council for Vocational Educational Training, and members of various voluntary organizations also took part in the event.

Speaking on the occasion, IEI President Manish Mahendra Kothari emphasized that water is essential for all



living beings and without water, the world cannot exist. He stressed the need for widespread public awareness to conserve water. He also mentioned that candidates currently pursuing the Electrical Vehicle Battery Engineer course at ESCI have a promising future, and added that plans are underway to introduce GIS and GPS courses related to geospatial technologies.

IEI Past President V.B. Singh highlighted the importance of creating awareness among people to conserve water. Director of ESCI, Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao, stated that the institution prioritizes training programs aligned with major central and state government schemes. He mentioned that ESCI is providing training to candidates from various states on programs such as JalJeevan Mission, AMRUT, Power Finance Corporation, and Ministry of

Road Transport initiatives. He further added that with all countries striving to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6—ensuring safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2030—ESCI organizes World Water Day celebrations every year.

M. Karunakar Reddy from Walk for Water explained that 97% of the Earth's water is in oceans and is not suitable for drinking. Of the remaining 3%, over 2.5% is locked in glaciers in regions like Antarctica and Greenland. The remaining small fraction exists in lakes, canals, rivers, wells, and underground layers, serving as a lifeline for billions of people. He also noted that the United Nations has selected "Water and Gender" as the theme for 2026, emphasizing equal representation of women and men in water governance and decision-making. He cited examples from states like Rajasthan, Maharashtra,

and Gujarat, where communities successfully tackled water scarcity through collective efforts such as watershed management and construction of check dams. He also mentioned that under the leadership of Tarun Bharat Sangh, thousands of johads helped revive a dried river in Rajasthan.

Dr. Donthi Madhava Reddy stated that around 25% of the world's population faces severe water scarcity. With rising population and climate change, the drinking water crisis is worsening. He warned that failure to conserve water could lead to severe consequences in the future. He also pointed out that consumption of contaminated water is causing new diseases and stressed that rainwater harvesting is essential to ensure safe drinking water.

The meeting was also attended by College Chief Lakshminanth Rao, Dr. P. Rajarao, and heads of various departments including Dr. Chandrakala, Dr. U.S. Jyothi, E. Rama Kishore, P. Sai Kishore, Dr. K. Ashok, Dr. Bharat, Dr. Adi Naresh, Dr. Swati, and Anil Kumar. The program was coordinated by Environment Head Anita Agarwal.

On this occasion, several senior engineers from Kolkata and other places were felicitated by Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao on behalf of ESCI.

AP CM Chandrababu Must Exert Pressure on Modi to stop war : Dr. K. Narayana

VIJAYAWADA

CPI National Leader Dr. K. Narayana pm Sunday expressed deep concern that the war being waged against Iran by the US and Israel was subjecting humanity across the globe to severe hardships and noted that this conflict primarily serves to generate profits for corporate entities within the United States. He remarked that despite the horrific loss of life resulting from this war, the stance taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi—specifically his failure to exert pressure on the US to prevent the conflict—remains highly questionable.

Dr. K. Narayana held a press conference on Sunday at Dasari Bhavan in Vijayawada. Speaking on the occasion, he characterized the war as a calculated move by the US President Donald Trump, aimed primarily at establishing dominance over oil resources and generating profits for corporate organizations. He stated that this conflict was precipitating conditions of economic crisis across the entire world. He drew attention to the fact that the prices of petrol, diesel and gas had already surged within India while adding that the rising cost of the petrol is having a severe adverse impact on the country's transport sector. He noted that due to wartime conditions, gas shortages had arisen leading to the closure of hotels, restaurants, and hostels—a situation that is directly impacting the working class and laborers.

He criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi for maintaining a stoic silence regarding Donald Trump's stance amidst these circumstances and deemed such silence inappropriate. He asserted that Modi should, as a priority, exert pressure on Trump to bring an end to this war. He expressed the opinion that Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is the only leader capable of exerting pressure on Modi regarding this issue of war. He urged Chandrababu—who currently extends support to the Central Government—to press Modi to refrain from



backing Trump and to instead insist on halting the war.

He suggested that Chandrababu should step forward in his capacity as a leader, who has played a pivotal role in national politics. He announced that, in opposition to America's militaristic policies, a massive peace demonstration titled "No War" would be organized in Hyderabad on the 29th of this month by bringing together all political parties. He appealed to the public to actively participate in this event.

He recalled that Chief Minister Chandrababu had recently visited the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and opined that it was inappropriate to allow an individual facing allegations that tarnish the reputation of such a sacred shrine to continue holding the position of the TTD Chairman. He suggested that the individual currently occupying that office should engage in self-inspection. He stated that for a temple—which serves as the bedrock of devotees' faith—the Chairman should ideally be a devout devotee and added that it was improper to appoint businessmen or individuals facing allegations to such a post. He urged the state government to reconsider its stance to ensure that the prestige of Tirumala remains undiminished.

He welcomed the state government's decision to construct a statue of the martyr Potti Sreeramulu in the capital city of Amaravati. However, he stated that it would be inappropriate to entrust the construction of this statue to corporate entities or to man-

age it as a commercial venture. He demanded that this construction be carried out exclusively under state government supervision. He remarked that, despite the bifurcation of the state, the sacrifice of Potti Sreeramulu remains eternally etched in the hearts of the Telugu people. He suggested that all attempts to confine his legacy to a single caste identity should be abandoned.

Responding to comments made by public speaker Garikapati Narasimha Rao regarding the mid-day meal scheme in the government schools, he stated that—while he holds personal respect for Narasimha Rao—making such remarks was unfortunate. He suggested that Narasimha Rao should immediately retract his comments.

He observed that it was natural for members of the same family to belong to different political parties but noted with regret that public disputes over property assets were distressing.

Recalling that the former CM Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy was a personal friend, he expressed sorrow over the ongoing property disputes within the late leader's family. He made specific reference to the letter recently released by YSR's wife Y.S. Vijayalakshmi. He suggested that personal property disputes should be resolved either through legal channels or through mutual dialogue. He remarked that while it is natural to engage in discussions regarding political matters, airing family affairs in the public domain was an affront to the institution of the family.

AIMIM to contest Bengal elections with Humayun Kabir's party: Owaisi

HYDERABAD

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) President Asaduddin Owaisi, on Sunday, March 22, announced that the party will contest the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections in alliance with Humayun Kabir's Aam Janata Nunnayan Party (AJUP).

Owaisi said he would hold a joint press conference with Kabir in Kolkata on March 25



to announce further details of the alliance.

Earlier, AJUP founder and former Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Humayun Kabir said his party would contest

182 seats in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections. He added that AIMIM would be a partner in the alliance and is expected to contest around eight seats. Kabir also

announced three more candidates, taking the total number of nominees declared so far to 18.

The West Bengal Assembly elections will be held in two phases on April 23 and April 29, with the counting of votes scheduled for May 4. The state has a total of 294 Assembly constituencies, with the main contest expected between the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).



Garbage piled up in front of the Traffic Police Station at Charminar, highlighting poor sanitation and lack of regular waste clearance in one of the city's busiest heritage zones, raising concerns over public health, hygiene, and civic management.

Telangana BJP congratulated PM Modi for his long time public service

HYDERABAD

Telangana State BJP President N Ramchander Rao extended heartfelt congratulation on behalf of people of Telangana to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his long standing public service as Chief Minister and Prime Minister. He was speaking at a function organized by state party unit on Musi River Rejuvenation and Facts. Rao said "today is a proud day for all BJP workers that Narendra Modi has completed 8,931 days in public service as Chief Minister and Prime Minister combined, surpassing the record of former Sikkim CM Pawan Kumar Chamling." This was a unique milestone in India's political history. On behalf of the BJP and the people of Telangana, he extended heartfelt congratulations and wished him a long, healthy life.

CM Revanth Reddy misled public: MLC Dasoju Sravan

HYDERABAD

MLC Dasoju Sravan on Sunday lashed out at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy by accusing him of misleading the public. He criticized Revanth Reddy for conducting his politics on a foundation of lies and deceit. He alleged that Revanth Reddy was uttering blatant falsehoods on the very floor of the Legislative Assembly about various issues pertaining to the state.

Speaking to the media at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad, Dasoju Sravan criticized the Congress government by alleging that it had once again deceived the public regarding its "Six Guarantees."



He condemned the malicious propaganda spread by the government, which falsely claimed that former KCR had accumulated a debt of ₹8 lakh crore. He remarked that CM Revanth Reddy had exposed his true character by engaging in such malicious campaign-

ing even before assuming the office of Chief Minister. He pointed out that CM Revanth Reddy himself had stated that the actual debt incurred by the state was ₹3.47 lakh crores. He alleged that Revanth Reddy had lied by claiming that the state government had re-

paid ₹3.30 lakh crore in debt. Dasoju Sravan clarified that the actual debt repaid by the government amounted to only ₹1.67 lakh crores.

He criticized CM Revanth Reddy for using the Assembly as a platform to spread lies in an attempt to malign KCR. He noted that when he spoke in the Legislative Council and asserted that the Governor's address was untruthful, objections were raised against him. He argued that it was up to the people to decide what action should be taken when a Chief Minister speaks falsehoods within the Assembly? He questioned whether there exists any other Chief Minister, who would

attempt to deceive the public through the budget, anywhere? He announced that their party's working president KTR intends to introduce a Private Member's Bill regarding the "Six Guarantees" and urged all members to extend their support to this bill. Dasoju Sravan pointed out that the budgetary allocations for the Education Department had declined in the 2026-27 fiscal year and added that only 8 percent of the funds had been allocated. He urged the Chairman of the Education Commission Akunuri Murali and its members to respond to this matter. He lashed out by accusing the Chief Minister of ruining the Education Department.

To be or not to be: Jeevan Reddy to decide future after supporters' meet

HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader Jeevan Reddy has called upon his supporters to attend the March 25th meeting in Jagtial to discuss his future political course.

In a letter, Reddy said that the last 20 months have taken a toll on his mental well-being, making it difficult to continue with the Grand Old Party.

"Political colleagues, Congress leaders, party workers, friends, well-wishers, and supporters who have worked with me in public service for

the past four decades," the letter read. The meeting will take place at Bandari Garden, located on Gollapalli Road.

The previous day, IT Minister D Sridhar Babu, SC/ST and Minority Welfare Minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar and Choppadandi MLA Medipally Sathyam met Reddy at his residence in an attempt to dissuade him from resigning.

However, the meeting was in vain, and Reddy remained defiant. He made a veiled statement saying "Devudu Saasinchindu, Maanavudu Anusaristhadu (God Propos-

es, Man Disposes)." Political rumours are rife with Reddy joining the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) after he was seen offering Eid-ul-Fitr prayers alongside leaders in Jagtial on Saturday.

For the past few months rift has been brewing between him and Jagtial MLA M Sanjay Kumar. Jeevan Reddy has repeatedly said that the only way to resolve the issue between him and the Congress was to disassociate with all 10 BRS MLAs who shifted their loyalties to the Congress after winning the 2023 Assembly elections.

Punjab Oppn targets Aam Aadmi Party over PCS harassment row

CHANDIGARH: (MAR 22)

Shiromani Akali Dal and Congress on Sunday claimed that a PCS officer faced mental harassment at the hands of the Moga deputy commissioner to elect AAP candidates to positions of chairperson and vice chairperson of the Baghapurana Panchayat Samiti. Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders Sukhbir Singh Badal and Bikram Singh Majithia, and Congress leaders Partap Singh Bajwa and Pargat Singh shared a purported letter of the PCS officer and Baghapurana Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Babandeep Singh Walia complaining against Moga DC and IAS officer Sagar Setia. Setia, however, rejected the allegations against him and said that Walia was facing an inquiry over complaints received against him from panchayat samiti members.

We are building Amaravati to surpass Hyderabad: Chandrababu Naidu

HYDERABAD, MARCH 22

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday said that Amaravati would be developed to surpass Hyderabad.

He said the coalition government in Andhra Pradesh was rebuilding Amaravati after five years of neglect. "Amaravati is poised to emerge as a capital city that surpasses even Hyderabad," he said.

Naidu said by integrating technology, the government is undertaking the construction of a "Smart City" and a "Blue-Green" capital city. The Chief Minister was addressing the South Asian Learning Summit 2026-Transforming AI at the Indian School of Business (ISB) here.

Chandrababu Naidu recalled the initiatives he had taken as the Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh between 1995 and 2004 for the development of Hyderabad as the IT hub.

"I visualised what the fu-



ture is. I thought the knowledge economy was the future, and that was the decision in 1995. We had so many problems. I built brick by brick. I had several meetings, brainstorming sessions with industrialists and academicians," he said, recalling his meeting with Bill Gates, which helped attract Microsoft to Hyderabad. "We constructed the 'Cyber Towers' as a symbolic landmark for the IT revolution. This decision was driven solely by the objective of benefiting the public. Microsoft chose to establish its presence

in Hyderabad, bypassing cities like Bengaluru and Chennai. For three decades now, we have been witnessing the tangible results of those initiatives. As part of this broader vision, we also secured the establishment of the Indian School of Business (ISB)," he said. Naidu noted that ISB has earned a stellar reputation as an exceptional business school. The 'Genome Valley' project also came into existence through a similar process. "It is precisely because of the decisions taken back then that both Telugu states

currently hold the number one position in the pharmaceutical sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hyderabad's Genome Valley supplied vaccines to the entire world," he said. "The ecosystem of Hyderabad emerged as a result of the reforms introduced in the past across sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and infrastructure. Hyderabad evolved into one of the most livable cities in the world. This did not happen overnight; rather, a combination of factors—ranging from early-morning inspections to various policy decisions—paved the way for this transformation," he added. Naidu stated that although Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into two separate states due to political reasons, the decisions taken in the past have successfully boosted the per capita income of the Telugu people. "By the time we returned to power in Andhra Pradesh in 2024, the entire state had been left in ruins. The state's brand image was

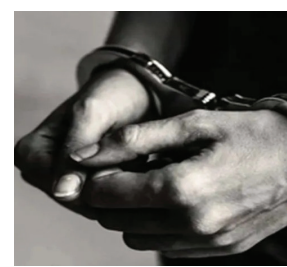
tarnished, and its institutional frameworks were completely dismantled," he said and claimed that the coalition government took several steps to put the state back on the path of progress. The Chief Minister claimed that Andhra Pradesh now stands at the forefront in attracting investments. Realising that future technologies will revolve around fields such as Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence, and Drones, the state government embarked on establishing dedicated hubs for Space, Electronics, and Drone technologies, he said. The government also started focusing on Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia, which are set to dominate the energy landscape. With sustainable power generation, there will be no need to increase electricity tariffs in the future, he said. He stated that Andhra Pradesh is poised to lead the entire South Indian region in the production of green energy.

Five arrested in two cases of minor girls' murder in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 22

Odisha Police on Sunday arrested five persons in two separate cases involving the rape and murder of a 17-year-old girl in Dhenkanal district and the killing of a 14-year-old girl in Mayurbhanj district. In the first case, Dhenkanal district police arrested four persons, including the prime accused Gangadhar Patra alias Jaga (38), a resident of Santarapur village under Kamakhyanagar police limits, in connection with the rape and murder of a minor college student. Police said the victim had left her home on March 18 at around 7:30 a.m. to attend an examination but did not return by the afternoon. Her family contacted the college authorities but could not trace her whereabouts. The family later began searching for the girl. On March 19, they were informed that her body had been found near the Saruali Gram Panchayat office.

During the investigation, police found that the accused, a bus driver, was known to the victim as she used to travel to college on the bus he drove. On March 18, he allegedly took her in a car after the examination, raped her and later killed her. He then, with the help of associates, disposed of



the body in a forested area near Saruali village.

Police said the accused persons were arrested on Saturday night while allegedly attempting to flee in a vehicle. In a separate case, Mayurbhanj Police arrested a tuition teacher, identified as Trilochan Mahakud (39), for the murder of a 14-year-old girl in the Karanjia area.

According to a police statement, the accused was allegedly infatuated with the victim, which was opposed by her family. Police said he bore a grudge over the opposition and allegedly planned the crime. On March 20, Mahakud allegedly called the victim to a secluded spot near her residence, where an argument ensued. He then allegedly strangled her using a belt and later concealed the body in a gunny bag before disposing of it in a nearby forest area. Based on the family's complaint, police detained the accused, who later confessed during interrogation, officials said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Odisha Health Minister orders regular fire safety audits in govt hospitals

BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 22

Odisha Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling on Sunday emphasised strict compliance with fire safety measures in hospitals across the state, directing health department officials to carry out periodic monitoring. During a high-level review meeting of the state health department held at Lok Seva Bhawan here, Mahaling stressed strict enforcement of fire safety norms in government hospitals and ordered regular inspections.

The meeting reviewed fire safety arrangements in various medical colleges, district headquarters hospitals, and other healthcare centres across Odisha.

The Odisha Health minister also advised officials to pay special attention to periodic monitoring and ensure proper compliance with fire safety standards.

According to an official statement, the Odisha Health Minister emphasised the need for a prompt response during emergencies and prioritising patient safety. Mukesh Mahaling directed that fire-fighting equipment in all hospitals must remain fully functional and that regular inspections and mock drills should be conducted.

The Minister also in-



structed officials to take necessary steps in coordination with the Works Department and the Fire Services Department. Several other important issues related to the state health sector were also discussed during the meeting.

"The safety of patients and the general public is the top priority for the state government, and any negligence in this regard will not be tolerated," Mukesh Mahaling said. The health minister asked health department officials to remain alert to prevent such hazards in hospitals across the state. It is worth noting that following the recent fire mishap at the government-run SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, which officially claimed 12 lives, the Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Congress have been demanding the resignation of Health Minister Mahaling on moral grounds.

The Opposition parties have also alleged that the incident exposed shortcomings in the functioning of the state health department.

Andhra Pradesh CM congratulates PM Modi for 'extraordinary achievement'

AMARAVATI, MARCH 22

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on becoming the longest-serving head of the government. The national president of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) took to X to congratulate the Prime Minister and expressed his best wishes.

"Heartiest congratulations to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji on achieving the historic milestone of becoming the longest-serving head of government in India's history, completing 8,931 days in service to the nation. This extraordinary achievement reflects his dedication, visionary leadership, and tireless commitment to the progress and prosperity of our country," said Chandrababu Naidu, whose party is a key partner



in the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

"His vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047 continues to inspire us all and guide India toward a brighter future. Wishing him continued strength, good health, and success as he leads the nation to even greater heights," the Chief Minister added.

Nara Lokesh, Andhra Pradesh minister for human resources development and information technology, also

congratulated Prime Minister Modi on completing 8,931 days in office to become the longest-serving head of the government in India's history.

"Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has become the longest-serving head of government in India's history, completing 8,931 days in office and setting a new national record. This remarkable milestone reflects decades of unwavering commitment to public service and

nation-building. His tireless leadership, clarity of vision, and focus on India's growth continue to inspire millions across the country. Sir, heartfelt congratulations on this historic achievement," posted Lokesh, who is the son of Chandrababu Naidu.

Union minister for coal and mines G. Kishan Reddy congratulated PM Modi on "completing 8,931 days of unwavering service to the nation as the head of government."

"This milestone reflects your tireless commitment towards Jan Seva, visionary leadership, and dedication to India's progress and unity. Under your guidance, India has witnessed transformative growth and strengthened its position on the global stage. Wishing you continued strength and success in your service to the nation," Kishan Reddy posted on X.

Yogi Adityanath reviews Noida Airport preparations

NOIDA: MAR 22, 2026

Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath conducted an on-site review of preparations at Noida International Airport ahead of its March 28 inauguration by PM Narendra Modi, directing officials to ensure seamless arrangements, robust security and world-class execution. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday inspected the Noida International Air-



port to review preparations for its inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 28. He assessed the proposed route of the prime minister's visit and inspected

key locations, including the passenger and cargo terminals, helipad, parking zones, access roads and the rally venue, issuing on-the-spot directions to officials. The prime minister will inaugurate the airport and its cargo terminal, and lay the foundation stone for a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility, marking a significant step in developing the Jewar aviation hub. Following the inspection, Yogi Adityanath chaired a re-

view meeting at the airport auditorium with senior officials and public representatives. Discussions focused on event execution, operational preparedness, security arrangements and coordination among departments. He stressed that all works must be completed within stipulated timelines and to prescribed standards, given the expected crowd of dignitaries, elected representatives, media and large public participation.

Navratri: 30,000+ pilgrims head to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine

JAMMU, MARCH 22

A huge rush of pilgrims reached the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine base camp, Katra, in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Sunday, and they are now proceeding towards the shrine as the Navratri festival picks up momentum. Office of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) said on Sunday that a massive rush of devotees is being witnessed at Katra, the base camp of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, as over 30,000 pilgrims have departed for their onward journey to the holy cave. The surge in footfall comes in the wake of the ongoing Chaitra Navratri festival, hence drawing thousands of devotees from across the country to seek the blessings of Mata Vaishno Devi.

Despite the heavy inflow, the yatra is progressing in an orderly manner. The authorities are maintaining strict control over the crowd and



are ensuring that all essential facilities are available for the pilgrims. Devotees are praising the overall arrangements of the area, noting that the signboards and informative displays across the area have relatively improved. Earlier, registration for the yatra resumed at 4 a.m. on Sunday following a temporary suspension on Saturday evening. The registration process was halted nearly four hours ahead of its scheduled 10 p.m. closure due to the overwhelming influx of devotees at Katra. Despite this brief suspension, the pilgrimage itself continued smoothly throughout the night. Officials reported

that nearly 1 lakh devotees have paid obeisance at the sacred cave shrine since the commencement of Navratri, reflecting a period of intense spiritual fervour. To manage the high volume, authorities have implemented robust crowd control measures and necessary arrangements to ensure a safe and orderly experience for all pilgrims.

The shrine situated at the top of the Trikuta Hills witnesses over 1 crore pilgrims each year, and the SMVDSB has been efficiently managing the affairs of the shrine under the supervision and guidance of Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha, who heads the shrine board.

BJP set to sweep Barak Valley in Assembly polls: Assam CM

GUWAHATI, MARCH 22

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday exuded confidence over the BJP's prospects in the Barak Valley, asserting that the party is poised for a decisive victory in the region in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Addressing reporters here, CM Sarma said the BJP is certain to win at least 10 Assembly constituencies in the Barak Valley, adding that the tally could even rise to 11. "We are confident of securing victory in 10 seats in Barak Valley. With the kind of response we are receiving, the number may go up to 11," he said. The Barak Valley, comprising Cachar, Sribhumi and Hailakandi districts, holds significant electoral importance with 13 Assembly seats. The BJP and its allies had performed strongly in the region in the previous elections, and the party is now aiming to consolidate



its position further.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister also held a crucial meeting with three sitting MLAs who were denied party tickets in the upcoming polls. Dipayan Chakraborty, Niharranjan Das and Mihir Kanti Das met Sarma, who sought to pacify them and ensure unity within the party ranks ahead of the elections. Sources indicated that the meeting focused on addressing grievances and persuading the leaders to work for the party's success despite not being fielded this time. Sarma is learnt to have assured them

of appropriate responsibilities in the future, while emphasising the importance of collective effort to secure victory.

In the run-up to the elections, the BJP has denied tickets to several sitting MLAs as part of its strategy to counter anti-incumbency and bring in fresh faces. At least 18 legislators have been dropped from the candidate list this time, signalling a significant reshuffle aimed at strengthening the party's electoral prospects.

The move, however, has triggered some discontent within sections of the party, prompting the leadership to engage in damage control through direct outreach and dialogue.

The BJP is set to intensify its campaign across Assam after the nomination process is completed in the next few days, banking on governance, welfare schemes, and organisational strength to retain power in the state.

1 dead, 17 hurt in Chhattisgarh ropeway collapse during Navratri

RAIPUR: MAR 22, 2026

A tragic accident at the Akhallari Mata Temple in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district left one woman dead and 17 people injured after a ropeway cable snapped during the Navratri rush on Sunday. The incident caused panic at the popular hill shrine, located about 3,000 feet above ground, as devotees had been arriving in large numbers since early morning for festival prayers.

According to initial reports, the ropeway – used by pilgrims to access the temple atop the hill – collapsed midway, causing

cabins to fall and leaving passengers injured. Eyewitnesses described scenes of panic as people scrambled for safety after the sudden failure. The temple is a well-known tourist and religious site, drawing heavy footfall especially during Navratri, when daily pilgrim numbers surge significantly.

CASUALTIES AND MEDICAL RESPONSE

Officials confirmed that 17 people were injured in the accident. One woman died due to her injuries, while five of the injured were referred to hospitals in Raipur for advanced treatment. At least one of them is reported to be in critical condition.

EDITORIAL

BEYOND BIOLOGY:
THE SUPREME COURT'S NEW
PARADIGM FOR PARENTHOOD

Courts with a tinge of judicial activism have expansively interpreted the Constitution to secure fresh rights for citizens, over the years. In the latest instance, a view that encompasses evolving social systems, and a keen feminist perspective, taken by the highest court in the land, has recognised maternity leave for working women as a basic human right. The Court ruled that adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, regardless of the child's age at the time of adoption, thus striking down a previous restriction allowing maternity leave only for women who had applied for adopting children less than three months of age. The judgment, delivered by Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, came in response to petitioner Hamsaanandini Nanduri challenging this provision in the Maternity Benefit Act, recently replaced by the Code on Social Security. She also pointed out that the legal process of adoption itself took over three months to be completed. The judges observed that an adoptive mother had the same rights and obligations towards the child as a biological mother. Reading adoption as an 'expression of reproductive autonomy', the Court said that the emotional bond with the child has to be consciously nurtured through time, presence and sustained caregiving. "Adoption is an equally valid pathway for the creation of a family. It is not biology that constitutes a family of a mother, father, and children, rather, it is the shared meaning, responsibility, and emotional bonds that sustain such a relationship," it explained. Maternity benefit is extended to working women during the early phase of motherhood to support them financially and provide economic security without them having to depend on family members. This equally applies to biological and adoptive mothers. Further, the judges urged the government to legally recognise paternity leave as a social security benefit, noting that parenthood is not a solitary function performed by one parent alone.

The judges have, with one judgment, conferred equal rights to adoptive parents, and restored child rearing to a gender-neutral parenting paradigm. The patriarchal enabling system has feminised raising children, leading to it being undervalued or inadequately compensated, if it ever is. Nobel winner Claudia Goldin's work has identified that the gender pay gap often emerges with the birth of a first child. The top court has given India an opportunity to set right the inadequate laws governing maternity leave in adoption, and to a large extent, the gender imbalance in society. It is the duty now of the state to make sure that this progressive judgment finds effective implementation in every corner of the country.

THE TITLE



Not a note but a noble, numinous name on the summit's stone not a sound but a sovereign sign where silent strengths are sown. A breath that begets brilliance, a blaze that blesses birth; a syllabic shrine where shining thoughts take sacred shape on earth. It rises a citadel of consonants, crowned in cadence clear; a haven where high ideas hover, then humbly reappear. A title the tender, trembling thread through thought's vast, vibrant veil the fragrant force that forms vast forests from phrases faint and frail. It sings a secret symphony, subtle yet supremely strong a rhythm wrapped in stillness, a silence shaping song. If it is true it thrums, it throws a thousand thunders into flame if it is thin it fades, it fails, forfeiting form and frame. It is the path and the pulse, the marrow of mystic music, the meaning masked in sound. A halo in the hymn of art, a crest in creation's cry a gleam that grants the grounded word the grace to touch the sky. It echoes in hidden halls of heartbeats, hushed and deep

like light that leaks through liquid loss, where lonely longings weep. A title not a trinket for a transient dream to wear but a command, a covenant that calls the soul to dare. Within it waits—a will, a wisdom woven wide and wise a seed of certain sunrise in failure's fading skies. O Reader! Roam not rash beyond its radiant, ringing door for in its whisper waits a way you've never walked before. O Writer! Breathe it well with wakeful wit, not hurried, hollow art it is the lion's luminous gate to your kingdom's beating heart. When the title towers in truth the tale transcends all time and test when the title trembles with trust the work walks on, forever blessed. It is the call, the core, the cause creation's kindled key the lamp that lifts the latent line to living legacy. So carve it with chisel calm and conscious care through ages yet to be; and crown your craft with crafted clarity that claims eternity. Let your poem pour like a phoenix, pure, from ash that cannot bind let your title tower like a timeless torch no world can leave behind.

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

From Punjabi Roots to Hindi Writings

Bhagat Singh's Bond with Hindi

WHEN THE NAME OF BHAGAT SINGH IS REMEMBERED, IT EVOKES IMAGES OF FEARLESS REVOLUTION, SACRIFICE, AND DEEP PATRIOTISM—BUT BEYOND HIS MARTYRDOM, HE WAS ALSO A POWERFUL WRITER WHO USED LANGUAGE AS A TOOL TO AWAKEN THE MASSES. CHOOSING HINDI AS HIS MEDIUM DESPITE HIS MULTILINGUAL PROFICIENCY, HE SHAPED PUBLIC THOUGHT AND STRENGTHENED THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT THROUGH HIS BOLD, CLEAR, AND REVOLUTIONARY WRITINGS. FROM A YOUNG AGE, HE DISPLAYED REMARKABLE INTELLECTUAL DEPTH, USING ESSAYS, ARTICLES, AND PAMPHLETS TO ADDRESS SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND LINGUISTIC ISSUES OF HIS TIME. HIS WRITINGS NOT ONLY INSPIRED YOUTH TO JOIN THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE BUT ALSO EMPHASIZED UNITY, EQUALITY, AND THE IDEA OF A NATION BEYOND RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC DIVIDES.

W

hen we hear the name of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, images of

revolution, sacrifice, and strong love for the country come to mind. He was a great revolutionary, a skilled writer, and a deep thinker. Through his writing, he awakened the minds of common people.

He wrote in different languages, but he gave special importance to Hindi. Bhagat Singh's mother tongue was Punjabi. He was very good at Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, English, and Sanskrit—he could read and write all of them correctly. Still, he chose Hindi to spread his ideas across the whole country.

His first important Hindi essay was probably 'The Problem of Language and Script in Punjab.' He wrote it in 1924 at the age of just 17. This essay was for a competition by the Punjab Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, and he won the first prize of 50 rupees. It was later published in 'Hindi Sandesh' on February 28, 1933.

In this essay, Bhagat Singh deeply analyzed the language issues in Punjab. He felt sad that language was being given a religious color. He asked: "...It has been the misfortune of our province that language has been given a religious color here." Bhagat Singh was born in 1907 in Punjab, where Punjabi and Urdu were dominant, but Hindi was also common in print media and Hindu families. At that time, Arya Samaj and supporters of Sanatan Dharma were promoting Hindi. Bhagat Singh's family was connected to Arya Samaj—his grandfather, Sardar Arjun Singh, was close to Dayanand Saraswati. Many Sikhs were



also linked to Arya Samaj. So, learning Hindi at home, school, and college was natural.

Dr. Chandrapal Singh, a history professor at PGDAV College, Delhi University, and author of the book 'Bhagat Singh - Revisited,' says that the tradition of Hindi was already strong in the family. As Bhagat Singh became active in revolutionary work, he realized that writing in Hindi would help him reach ordinary people across India easily. After joining the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), he met revolutionaries from different parts of India, most of whom spoke Hindi. He had great respect for Chandrashekhar Azad and was very close to him.

Bhagat Singh mostly wrote about political, social, and revolutionary issues. At first, he wrote in Urdu and English, but later he turned to Hindi. He contributed to many Hindi newspapers and magazines like 'Pratap',

'Chand' 'Kirti,' and others.

To avoid arrest, he used fake names like 'Balwant Singh,' 'Ranjitand', 'Vidrohi.' Because of this, his writings could not be collected properly, which was a big loss. In 1925, Bhagat Singh went to Kanpur and worked at Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's newspaper

'Pratap.' He lived near the press in Pilkhana and improved his Hindi writing there. Kanpur was a major center for Hindi, so staying there made his Hindi even stronger.

His early writings were mostly about other freedom fighters and their struggles. The magazine 'Chand' brought out a special issue on martyrs, and Bhagat Singh contributed to it. He stressed values like freedom, equality, justice, and communal harmony.

Bhagat Singh's writings had a deep impact on India's freedom movement, especially on the youth. His passionate, clear, and logical articles inspired thousands to join the revolution. His simple but powerful style in Hindi increased the number of readers. While at 'Pratap,' he also did reporting—for example, in 1926, he came to

Delhi to cover the riots in Daryaganj. Most of his articles appeared in 'Kirti,' 'Pratap,' and 'Chand,' where he wrote openly about revolutionary ideas, political philosophy, and social issues. In his early days, Bhagat Singh was deeply influenced by the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the whole world is one family). He dreamed of the world becoming one family with love and mutual respect. His article 'Vishwa

Prem' (Universal Love) was published in 'Saptahik Matwala.' In it, he explained the Sanskrit phrase meaning 'The whole world is one family.' This was a core idea of Sanatan Dharma, which he accepted as universal love.

Through self-study, working with Hindi-speaking revolutionaries, and journalists, Bhagat Singh became a strong Hindi writer. He was not a traditional journalist, but his contribution to Hindi journalism was priceless. It gave a new direction to the freedom movement. It is surprising that at such a young age—and while doing revolutionary and organizational work—he wrote so much. This was possible because of his hard work, strong commitment, and smart use of opportunities. One important thing is that Bhagat Singh used Hindi for pamphlets and announcements to spread ideas. These were distributed in public places to encourage people to join the fight for freedom. Even in court, he used Hindi because he believed Hindi was the language of the common people, and it helped him reach more people with his message.

Bhagat Singh's pen still inspires us today. It shows that language is not just for talking—it can also be a weapon for revolution.



VIVEK SHUKLA

Israel-Iran War

Rethinking India's Energy Security

Energy security has always been deeply intertwined with geopolitics. The oil shocks of the 1970s reshaped the global energy system. The 1973 oil embargo, imposed by the Arab members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), triggered the 1973 Oil Crises, quadrupling energy prices and wreaking havoc in the global economy. In response, major oil consuming countries established the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 1974, encouraging the establishment of strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs) and coordinated emergency responses to manage supply disruptions.

The current United States-Israel-Iran conflict around the Strait of Hormuz represents another significant inflexion point for the global energy system. Both transportation channels and energy infrastructure are increasingly attacked and weaponised. Since mid-December 2025, Brent crude prices have surged more than 100% reaching its peak last week at USD 119 per barrel. The disruption of the strategic passage - through which roughly one-fifth of global energy supplies transit - have sent ripple effects across food prices, commodity markets and stock exchanges.

The IEA and G7 declaration to release 400 million barrels of oil has done little to stabilise markets or assuage investors. The oil prices continues to sit firmly in triple digits. The ongoing crisis underscores a crucial reality - that energy security cannot be viewed with the myopic lens of supply availability and price stability alone. It is shaped by not only demand supply dynamics but also geopolitical signals, logistical chokepoints, financial exposure and technological vulnerabilities.

Much like the recalibration that followed the oil shocks of the 1970s, this conflict is likely to compel governments and institutions alike to rethink how energy security is defined and managed in the twenty-first century. Future strategies will need to increasingly adopt a broader

risk-management paradigm spanning across financial systems, supply chains, infrastructure protection, and geopolitical uncertainty.

India: A Case in Point

These dynamics are particularly relevant in the case of India. Given the geographical proximity and historically reliable supply, the Middle East has long been a steadfast partner for India's growing energy needs. Today, India imports 40% of its crude oil and 60% of its natural gas from the region. However, the ongoing crises around the Strait of Hormuz highlights the depth of this dependence and vulnerabilities inherent in such concentrated exposure.

India has made significant progress in diversifying its crude oil sourcing - from nearly 40 countries - and maintains modest reserves of around 50 days of crude oil and refined products in pipelines, offshore vessels, above ground tanks within its distribution network. However, the situation is far more constrained in the gas markets. In addition to significant natural gas imports, nearly 90% Liquefied Petroleum Gas and Natural Gas Liquids imports originate from the Middle East.

Supply shortages inevitably translate to higher energy prices - and here lies the double whammy. Elevated energy prices depreciate the currency, coupled with widening current account deficit and weak capital inflows, increase the risk of stagflation. Estimates suggest that if oil prices continue to rise towards USD 100 per barrel, India's current account deficit could likely move towards 3% of GDP as opposed to baseline forecasts of 1.5% of GDP. Energy security, therefore, is not merely a question of supply but a matter of national and economic security.

The Trifecta

The lessons learnt from the emerging crises point to the need for a more comprehensive framework for energy security - one that balances securitisation, resilience, and the transition: what might be called the trifecta of energy security.

At the core of this framework is securi-

tisation and risk management, which will become central to protecting energy systems from future geopolitical and supply chain shocks. Much like a carbon price, energy markets may soon incorporate a permanent security premium, reflecting exposure to geopolitical realities and infrastructure risks.

The first dimension is physical. Countries will need to strengthen their oil and gas stockpiles to prepare for contingencies in an increasingly volatile world. Global oil demand continues to exceed 105 million barrels per day sustained by sectors including transport, aviation, petrochemicals and hard to abate industries. Besides reserves, energy infrastructure of national strategic importance - such as powerplants, refineries, LNG terminals, electricity transmission networks, pipelines - should be treated as critical national security assets with protections comparable to military installations.

The second dimension is digital. In an increasingly techno-digital era, warfare is not confined to the physical battlefield anymore, but also extends to the cyberspace. Therefore, strengthening cybersecurity defences across energy systems is essential, as demonstrated by the Russian cyberattacks of three power distribution companies in Ukraine in 2015 and 2016, which caused localised electricity blackouts.

Ukraine wartime experiences offer several valuable lessons in this regard: diversification and decentralisation of energy infrastructure; maintaining strategic stockpiles of fuel and critical components; protecting energy infrastructure through physical and military defences; and strengthening digital and cybersecurity components.

Resilience

Beyond securitisation and protection, building resilience through decentralisation and diversification of energy sources, trade routes and partnerships will become key to ringfencing the energy systems from volatile pricing and sudden supply chain disruptions.

Alternative pathways and corridors, such as the India Middle East Europe Corridor proposed during India's G20 Presidency, the emerging Eastern Mediterranean gas networks, the Euro Asia interconnectors, the Lobito Corridor in Africa, Arctic energy and shipping corridors are all examples of efforts already underway.

The Russia Ukraine war was an eye-opening moment for Europe, exposing the risk of dependence on a single supplier - Russia - for its gas imports. The crises in Hormuz could serve as the impetus to accelerate diversification efforts to build a robust and resilient web of networks and channels for energy cooperation. Diplomatic cooperation and strategic partnerships will be key to achieving these goals.

Decentralisation or distributed generation - rooftop solar, microgrids and localised storage - will reduce reliance on single points of failure such as one long transmission network or large centralised power plants. This will make the energy system more flexible and resilient to conflict, cyberattacks or supply shocks.

At the same time, resilience will depend on systems capability. This included strengthening capabilities in maritime monitoring, satellite surveillance, market data analytics, commercial licensing, contractual compliance, port security, payment systems, risk shipping insurance, reinsurance mechanisms, contract enforcement and real-time supply chain intelligence.

Transition

Finally, the energy transition agenda - closely tied to energy sovereignty - must be viewed as a pillar of long-term energy security. Investments in renewables plus storage, nuclear energy, and grid optimisation are likely to gain momentum.

Following the energy crises triggered by Russian invasion of Ukraine, investments in clean energy and technologies increased in Europe, reflecting an effort to secure control over domestic energy infrastructure. Similar trends are likely to unfold again.

Nandita Garlosa joins Congress, to contest from Haflong

GUWAHATI: (MAR 22)

Assam minister Nandita Garlosa joined the Congress on Sunday after being denied a BJP ticket, and she will contest the upcoming assembly polls from Haflong constituency in Dima Hasao district, a party statement said. The Congress had earlier fielded its state unit general secretary Nirmal Langthasa from the seat, but he has agreed to give the party ticket to Garlosa in "greater public interest", it said. "We are happy to announce that Nandita Garlosa has joined the Congress."

West Asia conflict: PM Modi reviews West Asia situation, underlines diversification imperatives

The meeting took stock of the current global situation in the wake of the West Asia conflict and the measures taken to protect consumer and industry interests, which is the key focus of the government, the sources said.

As tensions continue to escalate in West Asia, threatening energy and commodity supply routes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review the situation and suggest mitigating measures. A government



statement said the meeting assessed the ongoing conflict's short, long and medium-term impact. Furthermore, the committee also discussed potential measures, both immediate and long-term, to manage the crisis. "The ongoing conflict in West Asia will have

significant short, medium and long-term impact on the global economy. Its effect on India was assessed, and counter-measures, both immediate and long-term, were discussed," the statement said. Mr. Modi directed that a Group of Ministers (GoM)

and a group of secretaries be formed to work exclusively on a "whole-of-government approach" to the crisis. He urged sectoral groups to work in consultation with all stakeholders.

Ensuring alternate sources of import

The CCS discussed diversifying sources of major imports, including fertilisers, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and petrochemicals.

Fertilisers assume significance ahead of the upcoming Kharif season, and in view of the disruptions to natural gas imports after Tehran's missile attacks devastated energy infrastructure in Qatar, which is

among the biggest importers of LNG globally.

"The measures taken in the last few years to maintain adequate stocks of fertilisers will ensure timely availability and food security. Alternate sources of fertilisers were also discussed to ensure continued availability in the future," the statement read.

The cabinet committee also called for ensuring an "adequate" supply of coal stocks at all power plants. The carbon commodity becomes essential with power demand expected to peak in summers and the potential constraints of natural gas supplies due to the ongoing conflict.



Char Dham Yatra Preparations Intensify, Chief Engineer Inspects Yamunotri Highway

BARKOT, UTTARAKASHI:

Preparations for the upcoming Char Dham Yatra have intensified as authorities step up efforts to ensure a smooth and safe pilgrimage. On the directions of Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways Ajay Tamta, Chief Engineer of National Highways Uttarakhand, Mukesh Parmar, conducted an on-ground inspection of the Yamunotri National Highway. During the inspection, he reviewed the condition of the road, progress of ongoing construction works, and identified sensitive stretches. He issued strict instructions to the executing agencies and officials to complete all pending works before the commencement of the yatra and ensure that the route is fully safe and operational. Chief Engineer

Mukesh Parmar stated that a large number of devotees from across the country and abroad visit the Char Dham every year, making their safety and convenience the top priority. He particularly emphasized the urgent repair of landslide-prone areas, damaged road sections, and narrow stretches. Meanwhile, officials assured that all necessary works would be completed within the stipulated timeframe to ensure that pilgrims do not face any inconvenience. Assistant Engineer Ankit Nautiyal, along with Ashok Chauhan, Sunil Rawat, Brijmohan Nautiyal, Rajendra Kumar, Santosh Goswami, and project managers from All Grape, Shivalik, Paratech, S&P, and PGR, as well as staff from concerned departments, were present during the inspection.

Woman arrested for killing two daughters in Delhi's Malviya Nagar

NEW DELHI: (MAR 22)

Delhi Police have arrested a 54-year-old woman for allegedly killing her two daughters at their residence in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar earlier this month, an incident in which she had also allegedly attempted suicide, an official said on Sunday.

The case pertains to March 6, when the bodies of the two sisters, aged 34 and 28, were found in

separate rooms of their ground-floor house, while their mother was discovered unconscious at the scene.

According to police, a PCR call was received around 6 pm from the woman's husband, who reported that his wife and daughters were not opening the door. A police team reached the spot and found the house locked from the inside. They broke open a window above the main door to gain entry.



A former village pradhan who had been missing since March 18 was found dead in a sack near a canal in Pratapgarh. Police have arrested his lover, claiming she carried out the murder with accomplices. A gruesome murder in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh has triggered panic after the body of a former village Pradhan, who had 18 children, was recov-

UP man, father of 18, murdered by girlfriend; body found in sack

ered from a canal, stuffed inside a sack. The deceased, identified as Mustaq Gulshan alias Munna, had been missing since March 18. Police said the killing was allegedly carried out by the victim's lover, Suman, along with her associates. According to investigators, Gulshan was attacked on the head with a rod, leading to his death. The accused then allegedly packed the body in a sack and dumped it in the canal in an attempt to conceal the crime. Acting on information, police recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem examination.

Suman has since been arrested, and further investigation is underway to identify and apprehend other accused involved in the crime.

MISSING CASE TURNED MURDER PROBE

Officials said a missing person complaint had already been registered at Mandhata police station after Gulshan went missing on March 18. The recovery of the body has now turned the case into a murder investigation.

Additional Superintendent of Police Shailendra Lal said police teams are probing the sequence of events and the

motive behind the killing.

HAD 2 WIVES, 18 CHILDREN; FAMILY IN SHOCK

The murder left the victim's family devastated. Gulshan, a former pradhan of Mishrapur Mustaq village, is survived by two wives and 18 children. Police said he had married twice - his first wife, Kismatul Nisha, has nine children, while his second wife, Ambiya Bano, also has nine children. Both families lived together. Scenes of grief were visible as family members gathered at the site, while police continued their investigation into the murder.

Government committed to eliminating terrorism and Naxalism from the roots: Chief Minister

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 22:

Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that over the past 11 years, under the leadership of Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi, the government has been continuously moving forward in the direction of eliminating terrorism and Naxalism from the roots. Incidents like Dantewada serve as a reminder that the fight is still ongoing, but our brave soldiers remain ever ready to face every challenge. Haryana is a land of bravehearts, and its youth are deeply committed to serving the nation.

The Chief Minister was addressing a Shaheedi Diwas programme organised in Gurugram by the Home Developers Association in honour of CRPF personnel martyred in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh. On this occasion, the Chief Minister announced that a statue of Shaheed Bhagat Singh will be installed at Leisure Valley

Park. He also paid floral tribute to Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev.

On this occasion, Haryana Minister for Sainik and Ardh Sainik Welfare, Industries, Forest and Environment Rao Narbir Singh, MLA, Sh. Mukesh Sharma, Sh. Tejpal Tanwar and Mayor Rajrani Malhotra were also present.

The Chief Minister presented a cheque of Rs. 38.25 lakh to DIG, CRPF, Sh. Param Shivam for the welfare of CRPF personnel. This amount, collected by the Gurugram Home Developers, will be used for the welfare of the families of martyred soldiers. The Chief Minister was welcomed by the Association President, Sh. Narendra Yadav on his arrival at the programme.

Paying tribute to the soldiers martyred in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that a true patriot sacrifices everything for the nation. He assured that the state govern-



ment stands firmly with the families of martyrs.

Call to youth to draw inspiration from martyrs

The Chief Minister said that the mantra of "Nation First" is guiding the country today. Under the leadership of Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi, India has strengthened not only its border security but also its internal security over the past 11 years. Several schemes are being run by the Central and State Govern-

ment stands firmly with the families of martyrs. He said that this programme is dedicated to those 'Veeranganay' who have lost the biggest support of their lives but are still moving forward with courage. The sacrifice of martyrs teaches us that the highest purpose of life is service to the nation. The Chief Minister emphasised that national security is not the sole responsibility of the armed forces but a collective duty of 140 crore

Indians. He urged everyone to work with honesty and dedication in their respective fields and to place national interest above all, calling it the true tribute to the martyrs.

Describing Haryana as the land of bravehearts, he said that every household in the state reflects a spirit of patriotism, and every tenth soldier in the country's armed forces belongs to Haryana.

State government committed to the welfare of martyrs' families

Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that the government has formed the Sainik and Ardh Sainik Welfare Department in the state for the welfare of ex-servicemen and personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces.

He said that over the past 11 years, the present government has provided government jobs on compassionate grounds to the dependents of martyrs, with 418 such appointments made so far. The

ex-gratia amount for soldiers of the armed forces and Central Armed Police Forces martyred in war, and IED blasts has been increased from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore. Financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 per month is being provided to World War II veterans and their widows.

For Military personnel and Central Armed Police Forces soldiers injured during war, terrorism or other incidents, grants based on disability have been fixed at Rs. 35 lakh, Rs. 25 lakh and Rs. 15 lakh respectively. At the end of the programme, Gurugram MLA, Sh. Mukesh Sharma expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister and other guests.

Former ADGP, Sh. Anil Rao, BJP District President, Sarvepriya Tyagi, Deputy Commissioner, Sh. Ajay Kumar, Commissioner of Police, Sh. Vikas Arora, Municipal Commissioner, Sh. Pradeep Dahiya and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

New ROB at Gauripur Will Ease Traffic Congestion

MALIGAON, 22 MARCH, 2026:

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has successfully completed the construction of a Road Over Bridge (ROB) at Gauripur under Alipurduar Division in lieu of Level Crossing Gate No. CA-26, marking a significant milestone in enhancing railroad infrastructure in the region. Executed by NFR Construction, the project has been completed within the planned timeframe.

The ROB has been constructed between Gauripur and Alamanj stations at km 162/5-6. The structure spans a total length of 940 metres and has been designed with a maximum gradient of 1 in 40. Built to National Highway standards, the bridge features a 10.50 metre wide carriage-way accommodating three lanes, ensuring smooth and efficient vehicular movement. A key highlight of the structure is its 62-metre bow string girder main span, reflecting

To Improve Safety and Mobility



robust engineering and modern construction practices.

This ROB replaces the busy Level Crossing Gate No. CA-26, which had a high Train Vehicle Unit (TVU) of 69,840, indicating heavy usage by both rail and road traffic. The location is strategically important as it lies on a state highway connecting the major towns of Gauripur and Dhuri, making it a vital link for regional connectivity.

With the completion of this ROB, delays caused by frequent gate closures have been completely eliminated, ensur-

ing uninterrupted and safer movement of vehicles and pedestrians. The bridge significantly reduces the risk of accidents, saves travel time and minimizes fuel consumption. Additionally, it is expected to give a strong impetus to local trade, improve accessibility and contribute to the overall economic development of the region.

Northeast Frontier Railway remains always committed to modernizing infrastructure and enhancing safety and convenience for passengers and road users alike.

RPF Steps Up Vigilance and Passenger Assistance Across NFR

MALIGAON, 22 MARCH, 2026:

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway has been consistently maintaining strict vigilance against crime and ensuring the safety and security of passengers across its jurisdiction. In a series of successful operations, RPF teams apprehended multiple individuals involved in theft of passenger belongings at key stations. On 7th March, 2026 at Guwahati railway station, two persons were apprehended with one stolen mobile phone worth approximately Rs10,000, and were handed over to GRP/Guwahati for legal action. Subsequently, on 13th and 15th March, 2026 at Lumding railway station, two separate offenders were apprehended with stolen mobile phones worth approximately Rs 5,000 and Rs 6,000 respectively, and were handed over to GRP/Lumding. Further, on 14th March, 2026 at Guwahati railway station, one



person was apprehended with a stolen mobile phone worth approximately Rs 15,000 and handed over to GRP/Guwahati, where cases were registered in all instances under relevant sections of law. Apart from crime prevention, RPF personnel also extended prompt medical assistance to passengers in distress. On 9th March, 2026 at New Jalpaiguri railway station, a passenger namely was found sick and unable to walk and was immediately shifted to Sadar Hospital, Siliguri for treatment. On 14th March, 2026 an unidentified male person found in a sick/injured condition in the yard area of New Jalpaiguri was rescued and admitted to District Hospital, Siliguri. On the

same day, another passenger suffering from breathing problems on board Train No. 15961 UP, was provided immediate assistance and shifted to Railway Hospital, New Jalpaiguri. Further, on 17th March, 2026 an unknown female passenger found in a semi-conscious condition at New Jalpaiguri railway station was attended to and shifted to Railway Hospital for necessary treatment.

Northeast Frontier Railway reiterates its commitment towards ensuring passenger safety, security, and well-being. The RPF continues to remain vigilant and proactive in safeguarding railway property while also extending timely humanitarian assistance whenever required.

Aarohi Brijesh is now set to participate in the fourth stage of VVM

at the esteemed Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Gandhinagar

BY SANJAY DWIVEDI

Aarohi Brijesh, a bright Class 10 student of The Aditya Birla Public School, Renuagar, has once again proven her academic excellence by achieving a remarkable milestone at the national level. She has been selected for the prestigious Young Scientist Programme (YUVIKA) and has also successfully cleared all three stages of the Vidarthi Vignyan Manthan (VVM).

Aarohi is now set to participate in the fourth stage at the esteemed Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Gandhinagar, marking a significant step in her academic journey. Earlier, Arohi underwent a 15-day intensive training program in Bengaluru, where she gained in-depth knowledge of space science, satellite technology, rocket science, and modern scientific experiments. She also had the opportunity to interact with scientists from ISRO, which greatly enriched her scientific outlook and inspired her further. Upon successful completion of the program, Arohi was awarded a "Certificate of Participation" by ISRO, recognizing her talent, dedication, and keen interest in science. Her achievement has brought immense pride and joy to the entire region. Officials including Unit Head R. P. Singh and HR Head Ashish Pandey of

Hindalco Renuagar, along with her teachers and parents, have congratulated her and wished her a bright future. Aarohi attributes her success to her hard work, positive mindset, and consistent efforts. She has also credited her parents, Vandana B. Kumar and Brijesh Kumar, as well as her teacher Rachna Srivastava, for their constant support and guidance. Previously, Aarohi had excelled in the prestigious VVM 2025-26 by securing second position at the State Level Camp (Level-III), held at Kailash Institute of Pharmacy and Management (KIPM) Technical Campus, Gorakhpur. VVM is regarded as India's largest digital-based science talent search examination, organized by Vijnana Bharati with support from leading institutions like the National Council of Science Museums and NCERT. Looking ahead, Aarohi aspires to contribute to the rapidly evolving technological world by working on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Quantum Computing, aiming to bring transformative advancements in science and industry. Apart from academics, she is also keen to establish her identity in music and sports. Her inspiring journey stands as a motivation for students everywhere, proving that determination, passion, and perseverance can turn dreams into reality.

Uttarakhand: Ambedkar statue defaced in Pauri, case registered

PAURI (UTTARAKHAND): (MAR 22)

A case has been registered after a statue of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was defaced in Uttarakhand's Pauri district, police said on Sunday. The police stated that they received information around

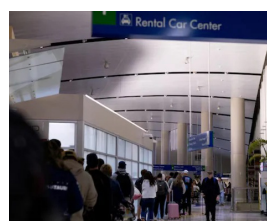
4 pm on Saturday regarding damage to the statue, which is installed in a park near Alkeshwar Ghat along the banks of Alaknanda river. According to the police, passersby noticed red and black paint smeared on the face of Babasaheb's statue and immediately alerted the authorities.



Sri Lanka hikes fuel prices 25% amid Gulf war tensions

The Sri Lankan government on Sunday raised fuel prices by around 25 per cent, the second such increase in a week amid the West Asia conflict.

The step comes in the backdrop of the joint US-Israel strikes against Iran and the retaliation by the Islamic nation that has spread to the entire Gulf region. It has led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a strategically important choke point for the world's energy supplies. The island nation's government hiked fuel prices effective midnight as the conflict, which has roiled global oil markets, entered its fourth week. The price of auto diesel rose 26.1 per cent from Sri Lankan rupees (LKR) 303 to LKR 382, super diesel 25.5 per cent from LKR 353 to LKR 443, petrol 92 octane 25.6 per cent from 317 to 398, petrol 95 octane 24.7 per cent from 365 to 455, and kerosene 30.8 per cent from 195 to 255. The price hike, caused by the conflict, is the second in a week and the third since March 1. With the cost escalations, the fuel retail prices are set to return to the levels of the 2022 economic crisis, when Sri Lanka declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948.



Trump deploys ICE agents at US airports amid funding standoff

Amid a deepening funding deadlock in Washington after the partial government shutdown, US President Donald Trump said Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents will be sent to airports from Monday, marking a sharp escalation in his response to the crisis affecting homeland security agencies. In a post on Truth Social, Donald Trump said ICE personnel would assist Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers who have continued to work despite uncertainty over funding. He also lashed out at Democrats, accusing them of holding back funds that had already been agreed upon.

"On Monday, ICE will be going to airports to help our wonderful TSA Agents who have stayed on the job despite the fact that the Radical Left Democrats, who are only focused on protecting hard line criminals who have entered our Country illegally, are endangering the USA by holding back the money that was long ago agreed to with signed and sealed contracts, and all," he wrote. "The decision follows days of boiling tension between the White House and congressional Democrats over funding for homeland security agencies. The impasse has affected the TSA, which is responsible for passenger screening at US airports."

The US President had earlier repeatedly warned that he would take action if lawmakers failed to reach an agreement.

All except enemy ships can pass Hormuz: Iran after Trump's 48-hour ultimatum

TEHRAN: MAR 22, 2026

The statement comes hours after US President Donald Trump threatened to target Iranian power plants if the waterway does not "fully open" within 48 hours.

Iran has softened its stance on letting ships pass through the Strait of Hormuz, with a senior UN representative saying that the waterway remains open to all shipping except vessels linked to "enemies" - presumably the US and Israel. The statement comes hours after US President Donald Trump threatened to target Iranian power plants if the waterway does not "fully open" within 48 hours. Ali



Mousavi, the Iranian representative to the International Maritime Organisation, said on Sunday that ships not linked to "Iran's enemies" could pass the strait by coordinating security and safety arrangements with Tehran. He added that Tehran is ready to cooperate with the

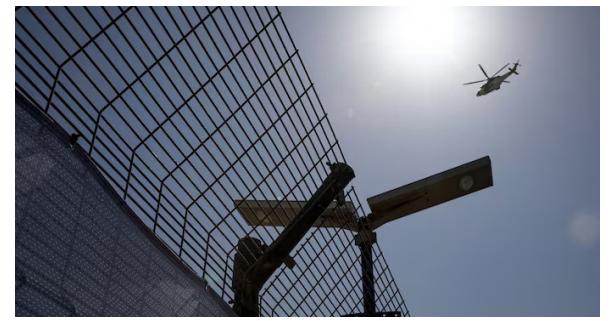
UN body to improve maritime safety and protect seafarers in the Gulf, arguing that Israeli and US attacks against Iran are at the "root of the current situation" in the Strait of Hormuz. "Diplomacy remains Iran's priority. However, a complete cessation of aggression as well as

mutual trust and confidence are more important," Mousavi said. Iran shut the vital energy supply route on February 28, through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied gas passes, saying it "won't even allow a litre of oil" to reach the US, Israel and their partners. The threat of Iranian attacks during the US-Israeli war on Iran has kept most ships from getting through the narrow strait, the conduit for around a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, threatening a global energy shock. 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.

6 killed in Qatar military chopper crash

DOHA: MAR 22, 2026

The accident came amid heightened tensions in the region, with Iran attacking US bases and other key installations across the kingdom several times since the Israeli-US airstrikes on February 28.



Six people were killed in a helicopter crash in Qatar's territorial waters while operations continue to find the last missing person, the country's interior ministry said on Sunday. The defence ministry earlier said the helicopter had crashed after suffering a technical malfunction during "routine duty". The Qatari government did not provide further details about the cause

of the crash or the identities of those who were on board. Preliminary information suggested that a technical malfunction could have led to the accident. There was no indication that the crash was the result of hostile action amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The accident came amid heightened tensions in the region, with Iran attacking US bases and other key in-

stallations across the kingdom several times since the Israeli-US airstrikes on February 28. In fact, within a day of the Israeli-US airstrikes, Iran retaliated by launching 44 missiles and eight drones towards Qatar, according to news agency Reuters. An early-warning radar located in the north of Qatar was damaged in the Iranian attack on March 1, reported Reuters.

Bhutan's tourism business experiences slowdown due to Middle East conflict

THIMPHU, MARCH 22

With rising cancellations and an ebb in future bookings, the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan's tourism sector has experienced an unusual slowdown in the backdrop of the ongoing Middle East conflict, local media said.

The drop in tourism business has come at a time of the year when the industry generally sees a surge of visitors. Bhutan's national newspaper Kuensel said tour operators have reported the cancellation of over 1,000 tourist bookings between February and May this year.

Some establishments have also received cancellations for the peak months of October and November, raising concerns about the long term im-

act on the industry in a country where tourism is one of the mainstays of the economy.

Amid rising global fuel prices linked to developments in the Middle East, Bhutan's national air carrier Drukair has implemented a fuel surcharge on international bookings effective March 10. The airline stated that the surcharge is adjusted based on route and fluctuations in fuel prices, in line with standard practice.

According to Drukair officials, the surcharge on the Dubai route increased by six per cent from March 11, while flights to Gelephu saw an eight per cent increase. From March 12, surcharges rose by six per cent for Bangkok routes, 88 per cent for Singapore, and 19 per cent for Dhaka.

Officials said that, overall,

most routes have experienced fuel surcharge increases ranging between five and nine per cent. The Singapore sector recorded the highest spike, rising by over 98 per cent, followed by Dhaka at nearly 20 per cent. "While a surcharge increase may slightly soften demand, it is unlikely to significantly disrupt peak-season arrivals," an official said. "Fuel surcharges are adjusted in line with changes in aviation turbine fuel prices."

Despite this, tour operators warn that the already high cost of airfare to Bhutan could further rise, making the destination less competitive. "Airlines to Bhutan are already relatively expensive. The additional surcharge will further increase travel costs, especially during the peak

season," a tour operator said. "This may discourage new bookings, affect last-minute travel plans, and reduce Bhutan's competitiveness compared to other destinations."

Tour operators also highlighted that the Middle East conflict has had a broader impact on the tourism sector, including longer flight durations due to rerouting, higher operational costs, and schedule uncertainties. In some cases, there have also been flight cancellations. "These disruptions affect travel confidence and have negatively impacted tourist arrivals," a tour operator said.

New bookings have slowed, and future demand remains uncertain due to reduced connectivity and ongoing travel disruptions.



UK sends nuclear sub to Arabian Sea amid Iran conflict

NEW DELHI: MAR 22, 2026

The UK has deployed a nuclear-powered submarine in the Arabian Sea, the Daily Mail reported, citing military sources, on Sunday (IST) amid the raging conflict in the Middle East. According to the report, the HMS Anson, equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles, is supposedly taking up position in the northern Arabian Sea.

If true, the deployment will give Britain the capability to launch strikes on Iran in case the regional conflict escalates drastically. Earlier, on Friday, the British government had authorised the US military to use bases in Britain to carry out strikes on Iranian missile sites that are attacking ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer had initially rejected a request by the US for the use of British bases to strike Iran, saying he needed to be satisfied that any military action was legal. But the leader modified his stance after Iran conducted strikes on British allies across the Middle East, saying that the US could use RAF Fairford and Diego Garcia, a joint US-UK base in the Indian Ocean.

Cuba's power grid collapses again amid deepening energy crisis

HAVANA: MAR 22, 2026

Power outages, whether nationwide or regional, have become relatively common in the last two years due to breakdowns in the ageing infrastructure. The breakdowns are compounded by daily blackouts of up to 12 hours caused by fuel shortages, which also destabilise the system.



Cuba's power grid collapsed Saturday leaving the country without electricity for a third time in March as the communist government battles with a decaying infrastructure and a US-imposed oil blockade. The state-owned Cuban Electric Union reported a total blackout across the island without giving a cause for the outage. Authorities said they were working to restore power.

Power outages, whether nationwide or regional, have become relatively common in the last two years due to breakdowns in the ageing infrastructure. The breakdowns are compounded by daily blackouts of up to 12 hours caused by fuel shortages, which also destabilise the system. The last nationwide blackout occurred on Monday. Saturday's outage was the second in the past week and the third in March. The blackouts have

a significant impact on the population, whose lives are disrupted by reduced work hours, lack of electricity for cooking, and food spoilage when refrigerators stop working, among many other consequences. President Miguel Diaz-Canel has said the island has not received oil from foreign suppliers for three months. Cuba produces barely 40% of the fuel it needs to power its economy.

Cuba's ageing grid has drastically eroded in recent years. But the government also has blamed the outages on a US energy blockade after US President Donald Trump in January warned of tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba. The Trump administration is demanding that Cuba release political prisoners and move toward political and economic liberalisation in return for a lifting of sanctions. Trump has also raised the possibility of a "friendly takeover of Cuba."

Russia accuses Kyiv of destabilising region after 6 Ukrainians arrested in India

NEW DELHI: MAR 22, 2026

Kremlin said that Kyiv wants to keep the "questionable activities" of its citizens under wraps, after Ukraine issued a statement on the arrests of six Ukrainian citizens in India.

Russia took a sharp jibe at Ukraine over the arrest of six Ukrainian citizens in India. These citizens allegedly infiltrated from Myanmar into the northeastern part of India and were apprehended by the National Investigative Agency (NIA) at three airports.

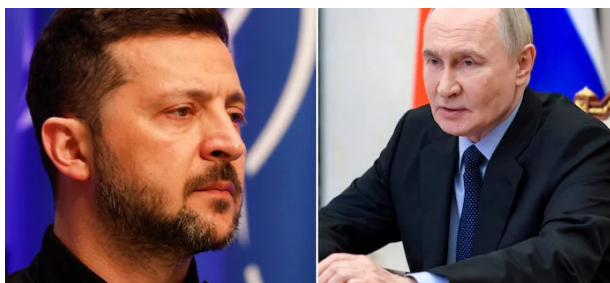
Taking a sharp dig at the Volodymyr Zelenskyy administration, Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that the "neo-Nazi" government

of Ukraine wants to keep its "questionable activities of its citizens under wraps." "The reaction of the Ukrainian embassy in New Delhi was quite revealing as it reportedly sought to conceal the incident and to keep its citizens' questionable activities, which were clearly designed to destabilise the situation in the region, under wraps. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry chose to remain silent on its citizens' violation of

India's counter-terrorism legislation and wasted no time baselessly accusing "certain Indian and Russian news agencies" of deliberately falsifying the facts," the statement read. The Russian response came a day after the Embassy of Ukraine in India flagged reports of a Russian tip-off, expressing "serious concern" regarding the possibility of an "orchestrated and politically motivated nature" of the matter. "Taking

into account publicly available information in the case concerning the detention of six citizens of Ukraine, including media reports indicating that the initiation of this proceeding was prompted by information provided by the Russian side, the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of India expresses serious concern regarding the presence of circumstances that point to a possible orchestrated and politically motivated nature of this case, as evidenced, in particular, by the facts known at this stage," the statement by the embassy of Ukraine, read.

On March 13, the National Investigative Agency (NIA) arrested a total of seven people, six Ukrainians and an American national, Matthew Aaron VanDyke, from three airports - Kolkata, Lucknow and Delhi.



Finding Mojtaba Khamenei Iran Supreme Leader's whereabouts puzzle US, Israel

TEHRAN: MAR 22, 2026

The continued absence of Mojtaba, according to an Axios report, has been a matter of discussion during President Donald Trump's intelligence briefings. The report also quoted an official as saying that the US national security team is still assessing who is in charge in Tehran.

Mojtaba Khamenei ascended to the position of Iran's Supreme Leader on March 9, following the death of his father in a US-Israeli airstrike on February 28. However, the new Supreme Leader is yet to make a public appearance. His first public statement on March 12 as well as his Nowruz message on March 20 were read out by the state media, further deepening the mystery about his whereabouts. As per the latest Israeli and US media reports, the new Supreme Lead-

er is alive but not in real control of his country. Sources told Jerusalem Post that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps could be holding effective power in Iran while Mojtaba is unable to fully exert his authority over the political apparatus. The Israeli publication quoted US-Israeli intelligence sources as saying that Mojtaba remains physically capable of carrying out at least some functions, despite being injured in the February 28 airstrike that killed his father, Ali Khamenei. "We don't think the Iranians would have gone through all this trouble to choose a dead guy as the supreme leader. At the same time, we have no proof that he is taking the helm," a US official told Axios. The continued absence of Mojtaba, according to an Axios report, has been a matter of discussion during President Donald Trump's intelligence briefings. The report also quoted an official as saying that the US national security team is still assessing who is in



charge in Tehran. Iran experts like Raz Zimmt of the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv told Axios that the new Supreme Leader is unlikely to make any public appearance due to the ongoing security situation. "His injury does not even allow him to release a recorded video in order not to expose to the public the severity of his condition," Zimmt told the US publication. In his first-ever public statement as the Supreme Leader on March 12, which was read by a TV news presenter, Mojtaba outlined a hardline stance on the United

States and the Strait of Hormuz amid ongoing conflict in the Gulf region. He also warned that Iran would avenge the blood of its martyrs and keep the Strait of Hormuz closed. On March 20, the Persian New Year, the newly-appointed Supreme Leader praised the steadfastness of the Iranian people in yet another written statement released to the state media. On the same day, the Iranian state media released an undated video of Mojtaba teaching religious science at a seminary. Mojtaba's absence from public view coincides with the continued elimination of top Iranian officials by Israel. Ali Larjani, the man tasked with steering Iran's security strategy and who has been Tehran's face amid the conflict, was killed in Israeli strikes on March 17. Another top commander, Gholamreza Soleimani, was killed in Israeli airstrikes on March 16.

However, foreign minister Abbas Araghchi told Al Jazeera that Iran would continue to fight de-

spite losing many of its top leaders. "The presence or absence of a single individual does not affect Iran's political and economic structure," Araghchi told Qatari news channel.

Drawing a parallel with the death of the former Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, on February 28, Araghchi added, "Even the (Supreme) Leader was martyred, yet the system continued its work."

Since the war began on February 28, Iranian state media has put the death toll at 1,270 people. Following the Israeli-US strikes on Iran, Tehran expanded the theatre by hitting US bases in the Middle East. Later, Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz for shipping, threatening to attack ships that pass through the chokepoint. The threat of Iranian attacks has kept most ships from getting through the strait, which serves as the conduit for around a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, threatening a global energy shock.

G7 calls for 'safety of navigation' in Strait of Hormuz amid energy crisis

NEW DELHI: MAR 22, 2026

The Group of Seven (G7), which is made up of the US, the UK, France, Japan, Italy, Germany, and Canada, and the European Union (EU), announced on Saturday it was willing to take necessary measures to ensure the security of global energy supplies and reaffirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime routes, including the Strait of Hormuz. In a statement jointly issued by the foreign ministers of the seven countries and the top diplomat of the EU, the influential multilateral forum said, "We reaffirm the importance of safeguarding maritime routes, and safety of navigation, including in the Strait of Hormuz and all associated critical waterways, as well as the safety and security of supply chains and the stability of energy markets." The Strait of Hormuz is a critical choke point for global fuel transit and has remained 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. About 20 per cent of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas is transported through the critical shipping lane. The disruption to the passage of merchant vessels through the strategic strait has sent fuel prices soaring in most parts of the world. Iran, however, appears to be enforcing the blockade in a selective manner, according to various recent news reports. Earlier this week, the country's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, said the strait was only closed to tankers and ships of "enemies and those supporting their aggression." He told Japanese news agency Kyodo that Tehran was ready to let Japan-related vessels pass through the strait. Moreover, last week, two Indian-flagged vessels carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) were granted transit through the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian authorities.

Clean Cooking Mission Gains Pace; AP Leads National Push

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 22

India's National Mission for Efficient and Clean Cooking is gathering momentum, with several states adopting energy-efficient induction cooking solutions to promote sustainability, cost savings, and women's welfare. Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a frontrunner, setting a benchmark for nationwide implementation.

The initiative, part of the National Efficient Cooking Programme (NECP) led by the Ministry of Power, aims to accelerate the transition from conventional LPG-based cooking to modern, energy-efficient alternatives. States including Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Rajasthan, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, and Ladakh have shown keen interest in the programme.

Implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited, a joint venture under the Ministry of Power, the programme focuses on delivering economic and environmental benefits. Induction cooking systems under the scheme are nearly 30% more efficient than traditional LPG methods, offering significant cost savings and

reduced carbon emissions.

The Centre has praised Andhra Pradesh's proactive approach, particularly its plan to achieve 100% coverage of Anganwadis (AWCs) with energy-efficient induction stoves. Following discussions with Union Power Minister Manohar Lal, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed swift implementation across the state.

In Phase I, over 11,400 AWCs have already been equipped with induction stoves and utensils in collaboration with the Women and Child Welfare Department, receiving positive feedback from beneficiaries. Phase II is underway, targeting the remaining 44,346 centres to achieve full coverage of 55,746 AWCs.

Union officials have lauded the state's efforts. Anil Malik, Secretary, Ministry of Women



and Child Development, described Andhra Pradesh's initiative as a bold step towards eliminating fossil fuel use in Anganwadis, urging other states to follow suit. Similarly, Additional Secretary Lav Agarwal termed the move a "benchmark initiative" with far-reaching economic, environmental, and social benefits. Senior state officials, in coordination with EESL, are working to fast-track implementation. The Chief Minister's Office has emphasized timely completion, aiming to transform Anganwadis into model centres for clean cooking practices.

Experts highlight multiple advantages of the transition. Induction cooking not only

enhances energy efficiency but is also expected to generate annual savings of around ₹24 crore by reducing LPG consumption. Additionally, the shift could help avoid approximately 28,327 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year. Improved safety, elimination of open flames, and better working conditions for Anganwadi workers further strengthen the case for adoption.

As countries worldwide grapple with energy challenges, Andhra Pradesh's early and decisive action has positioned it as a leader in India's clean energy transition, reinforcing the nation's commitment to sustainable development and climate goals.

Heatwaves, El Niño Raise Alarm for Farm Sector

NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

Globally, disruptions in the Gulf could trigger shortages across multiple sectors. Supplies of helium, sulphur, methanol, and aluminium are at risk, potentially impacting industries ranging from semiconductor manufacturing to fertilizers and construction. Food security concerns may also rise as fertilizer supply chains face disruptions, leading to higher agricultural input costs, said a report by DAM Capital Advisors.

The report highlights that while crude oil availability may remain manageable in the near term, the supply of key petroleum products such as LPG, naphtha, aviation turbine fuel (ATF), and gasoil is expected to face significant pressure due to limited refining capacity. Natural gas markets are also likely to tighten, as the Gulf region accounts for over 20pc of global LNG supply, leaving little room for alternative



sourcing. For India, the macroeconomic impact could be significant if crude oil prices remain elevated. The report estimates that every USD 1 per barrel increase in crude prices could widen the fiscal deficit by Rs 100 billion. A sustained price above USD 80 per barrel may push inflation beyond 4.5pc and weaken the rupee.

India's heavy dependence on imports, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz, adds to the vulnerability. Nearly 90pc of LPG imports and over 50pc of crude imports pass through the route, making supply chains

susceptible to disruptions. While crude oil availability is considered manageable due to alternative sourcing and reserves, LPG availability remains critical due to limited inventories. Upstream oil and gas companies may benefit from higher prices, while downstream firms, especially oil marketing companies, are likely to face margin pressures due to limited ability to pass on costs. Airlines could see profitability hit as fuel accounts for up to 40pc of operating costs, while FMCG companies may face margin pressure from rising packaging costs.

Infrastructure and capital expenditure could also be affected, as higher oil prices strain government finances. Meanwhile, industries such as textiles, chemicals, and fertilizers may face input cost inflation and supply chain disruptions, although some may benefit from short-term inventory gains, the report said. The report cautions that while short-term disruptions may be manageable, a prolonged conflict lasting beyond two months could lead to severe supply constraints, rising costs, and broader economic slowdown both globally and in India.

West Asia Conflict Threatens Global Supply Chains

NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

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India's heavy dependence on imports, particularly through the Strait



A potential escalation of the West Asia conflict could disrupt global supply chains and trigger shortages across key sectors—from semiconductors to fertilizers—while posing significant macroeconomic risks for India, including higher inflation, a widening fiscal deficit, and pressure on the rupee, according to a report by DAM Capital Advisors.

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India's options boom, a 25-year-old caution

Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman raised the taxes on futures and options trading, and the markets responded with a 2% crash. She said that the move was intended to arrest excessive speculation in the market. An option is a contract that lets a trader lock in today the price at which he/she can buy or sell a stock or index in the future. The product helps protect investors and traders from market swings that can incur them losses, an activity called hedging. It is, however, widely used by retail traders to speculate on the value of the stock for immediate gains, and such behaviour on a large scale can distort the market.

SEBI had acknowledged the challenge in a study, which found that 9 of every 10 persons trading in options lost money and came out with measures to curb volumes in the market, which is among the largest in the world in terms of the number of contracts. The capital-market regulator, however, said that the losses remained even after announcement of the measures, according to its report.

Possibilities of speculation

The product entered its 25th year of existence in 2026 in the Indian market. A committee headed by L.C. Gupta in 1998 had recommended the phased introduction of futures and options and laid down the basic ideas and structures to establish fairness.

A subsequent committee in 2002, headed by J.R. Varma,

economist and now Distinguished Professor at Dhirubhai Ambani University, also a former MPC member, recommended that the market was ready for the introduction and solidified the rules.

"Everything that we take for granted today in the cash market, they all started in the derivatives because there we were drawing on a clean slate," Prof. Varma said in a conversation with The Hindu.

The report also addressed speculators in the market while setting up the structure. For an investor to hedge the volatility of their stocks, there has to be someone to take the opposite bet, and that person is usually a speculator. "Decisions about many aspects of derivatives trading would have to strike a balance between the needs of the hedgers and the necessity to attract an adequate number of well-capitalised speculators who are prepared to take upon themselves the price risk which hedgers want to give up," the committee noted in its report.

The recommendations contained in the report aimed at setting up a structure for the derivatives market to function and were largely implemented, which included putting in place strict entry barriers for intermediaries and brokers, among others.

New media, old warnings

The markets, however, evolved, and the growth of brokerage apps made it easy to speculate on complex instruments. The risk of mis-selling to uninformed clients became more likely with the pro-

liferation of financial influencers promising unrealistic returns.

"With an explosion in index options trading on the expiry day over time, concerns arose around investor protection and systemic stability," SEBI officials wrote in a white paper that compared cash with derivative markets, signalling that the balance the LCGC report mentioned may have skewed in favour of speculators at least in option contracts with short contract terms.

There was a dissenting voice in the 1998-committee from the then BSE President M.G. Damani, who felt that "it would be dangerous to open the derivatives market to small investors in the beginning," adding that the economy was not mature enough for it in the late 1990s. In the list of questions he posed to the committee before dissociating himself from the recommendations, he suggested that members be filtered by qualifying examinations and a net worth criterion.

While brokers do undergo tight scrutiny, which was later strengthened, conversations have now shifted towards filtering retail traders, too, through suitability norms like a test. Recently, while speaking at an event in Mumbai, the Chief Executive Officer of National Stock Exchange (NSE) said that developing countries like India cannot let the lower strata of its people speculate and suggested a minimum qualifying criterion to even participate in the derivatives market, echoing Mr. Damani's sentiments in 1998.

India's foodgrain production projected to reach approximately 368 MT by 2030-31: Report



BY SOURAV SHEKHAR

New Delhi, Mar 22: India's foodgrain production is projected to reach approximately 368 million tonnes (MT) by 2030-31, according to a report released by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighting the growing need for robust storage infrastructure to support the country's agricultural expansion.

The report observed that while production levels are steadily rising, the existing storage capacity remains inadequate to handle the anticipated surge.

It stressed that without timely upgrades in warehousing systems, a significant portion of produce could be exposed to post-harvest losses, affecting both farmers and overall food security.

Emphasising the urgency of the situation, the industry body called for a quick-response policy framework that would encourage private and institutional investment in modern storage solutions.

It noted that silo-based warehousing systems, equipped with advanced technology, can play a crucial role in reducing wastage, improving grain quality, and ensuring efficient supply chain management.

The report titled 'Foodgrain Warehouse Market in India 2025-2030' serves as a comprehensive financial pre-feasibility study, offering a ready-to-use model for investors and stakeholders interested in the agriculture warehousing segment.

It translates extensive

market research into actionable insights, enabling better planning and execution of storage infrastructure projects.

Rajeev Juneja, President of PHDCCI said, "A technology-driven storage infrastructure is essential to support India's transition toward a more efficient agricultural value chain to reduce wastage and creation of value added products both of domestic as well as export markets."

According to the findings, India's transition towards scientific storage methods is essential not only to meet domestic demand but also to strengthen its position in global agricultural trade.

The report further underlined that investments in modern warehouses would generate employment opportunities, enhance rural infrastructure, and support farmers by providing better price realisation through reduced spoilage.

The chamber also pointed out that aligning warehousing development with government initiatives in agriculture and logistics could accelerate sectoral growth.

It suggested that policy support, ease of financing, and public-private partnerships would be key drivers in bridging the current storage gap.

With foodgrain output expected to rise significantly over the next decade, the report concluded that building a resilient and efficient storage ecosystem will be critical for sustaining India's agricultural growth trajectory and ensuring long-term food security.

India-Africa Partnership Meet Focuses on Power Sector Collaboration at BES 2026

NEW DELHI

The India-Africa Strategic Partnership Meet was held on the third day of the Bharat Energy Summit (BES) 2026, bringing together ministers, diplomats, senior officials, and global energy leaders to strengthen cooperation in the power sector.

The session commenced with a welcome address by Shri Jitendra Srivastava, Chairman and Managing Director of REC Limited, followed by strategic remarks from the leadership of NTPC and Africa 50. The event set the tone for deeper engagement between India and Af-

rican nations in energy development.

Key addresses were delivered by the Union Minister of Power, Housing and Urban Affairs, the Chief Minister of Haryana, and the Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy. Their remarks underscored India's commitment to expanding global energy partnerships and supporting sustainable infrastructure growth.

The meet witnessed participation from African ministers representing Mauritius and Malawi, along with ambassadors, high commissioners, and senior government officials. Representatives from

leading international organizations, including the World Bank Group, Kenya Electricity Transmission Company Limited (KETRACO), and the Africa Infrastructure Development Association (AfIDA), also contributed to the discussions.

A comprehensive overview of the Indian power sector was presented by the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), followed by interactive sessions focusing on collaboration opportunities. Delegates explored areas such as capacity building, institutional strengthening, and investment partnerships, with African representatives out-

lining their national priorities and energy requirements.

Supported by Ernst & Young (EY) as knowledge partner and moderator, the session facilitated meaningful dialogue between Indian stakeholders and African leaders. Discussions emphasized joint ventures, technology sharing, and long-term partnerships aimed at ensuring reliable and sustainable energy access.

The meeting marked a significant step in advancing India-Africa cooperation in the power sector, reinforcing India's role in promoting international partnerships for energy security and infrastructure development.



UGC'S EQUITY REGULATIONS 2026: A LEGAL, HISTORICAL AND NORMATIVE INQUIRY

On January 29, the Supreme Court of India, through a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, granted an interim stay on the **University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026**. These regulations were introduced by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to replace the 2012 framework and address discrimination in higher education institutions (HEIs).

The 2026 Regulations aim to eliminate discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, disability, and other identity markers. They particularly focus on historically disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs), and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Their broader goal is to foster inclusion and ensure equitable access and participation in higher education.

Historically, exclusion has been deeply embedded in Indian education. As noted by Gautam Bhatia in "Transformative Constitution", even in the 19th century, individuals from oppressed castes were denied university access on the grounds of "polluting" elite academic spaces. This legacy of exclusion continues to shape modern institutions, where subtle forms of discrimination and gatekeeping persist.

The interim stay and its implications

The Supreme Court justified the interim stay by observing that the regulations were "capable of dividing society" and warranted judicial scrutiny due to potential misuse. Notices were issued to both the UGC and the Union government, and the 2012 regulations remain in force for now.

This move appears paradoxical because the 2026 Regulations were themselves a result of the Court's earlier directive in *Abeda Salim Tadvi & Anr. v. Union of India (2025)*. The case originated from a Public Interest Litigation filed by the mothers of Rohit Vemula and Payal Tadvi, both of whom allegedly died by suicide due to caste-based discrimination in academic institutions. Their plea sought institutional mechanisms to address such injustices.

Advocates defending the regulations argued that they are not punitive laws targeting specific communities but protective frameworks aligned with constitutional values. Their aim is to provide safeguards for marginalized groups rather than create divisions.

Identity, discrimination, and social reality

Discrimination undermines the ideals of equality and human dignity. Amartya Sen, in "Identity and Violence", highlights that identity is multifaceted, yet societies often reduce individuals to singular categories. In India, caste remains a dominant axis of identity and inequality.

B. R. Ambedkar's "Annihilation of Caste" exposes the deeply hierarchical structure of Indian society, where social solidarity is weak. Sociologist Gail Omvedt similarly describes equality and inequality as coexisting forces within Indian society.

Despite constitutional commitments to equality, caste continues to shape everyday life—from matrimonial advertisements to social networks. Public discourse may emphasize modernity, but private practices often reinforce traditional hierarchies.

Within HEIs, discrimination has evolved into more subtle forms. Drawing from Michel Foucault's ideas on discipline and punishment,



modern institutions may not exhibit overt violence but employ systemic mechanisms that marginalize individuals. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often face academic alienation, invisibility, and psychological distress.

Law, constitution, and social justice

The role of law is to promote social solidarity and correct historical injustices. A notable example is the Brown v. Board of Education decision, which dismantled racial segregation in American schools without violence.

Similarly, the Constitution of India enshrines equality through Articles 14 to 17, ensuring both procedural and substantive justice. Affirmative action policies, including reservations for SCs, STs, and later OBCs and EWSs, reflect this commitment.

Key judicial decisions such as Indra Sawhney v. Union of India and Ashoka Kumar Thakur v. Union of India expanded access to education and employment. More recently, Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India upheld reservations for economically weaker sections.

However, representation alone has not addressed deeper issues of discrimination within institutions. Marginalized students often remain vulnerable to exclusion, with limited mechanisms for redressal.

The idea of an inclusive university

Universities are expected to serve as spaces of intellectual growth and social integration. Jawaharlal Nehru described universities as the "brain of a nation," emphasizing their role in shaping progressive societies.

Yet, access to these spaces has historically been unequal. For many first-generation learners from marginalized communities, entering a university represents a significant achievement. However, their experiences are often marked by alienation and systemic bias.

Data indicates that over 13,500 SC, ST, and OBC students dropped out of premier institutions such as central universities, IITs, and

IIMs in the past five years. These figures highlight the gap between access and inclusion.

As B. R. Ambedkar famously urged, "educate, agitate, organize," emphasizing education as a tool for empowerment. Sociologist Satish Deshpande argues that education remains one of the few avenues for marginalized communities to challenge entrenched power structures.

Evaluating the 2026 Regulations

The 2026 Regulations seek to address these challenges through institutional mechanisms and accountability measures. However, they raise several important questions.

1. Protected groups

The regulations classify SCs, STs, OBCs, EWSs, women, and PwDs as protected groups. While this aligns with the principle of equality, it also raises concerns about treating diverse groups—particularly OBCs—as homogeneous. Differences within these categories may require more nuanced approaches.

2. Definition of discrimination

The regulations define discrimination broadly as unfair or biased treatment. While this allows flexibility, it may also create ambiguity in interpretation. A more precise definition could improve implementation.

3. Institutional accountability

The framework places responsibility on institutional heads to prevent discrimination. Non-compliance could lead to penalties, including loss of UGC recognition or funding. This introduces a deterrent effect that was largely absent in the earlier system.

4. Mechanisms for redressal

The regulations mandate the creation of Equity Committees, Equal Opportunity Centres, Ombudspersons, and helplines. These bodies are intended to provide accessible grievance redressal mechanisms and promote awareness

through workshops and outreach.

Challenges in implementation

Despite their progressive intent, the regulations face practical challenges. Establishing the required institutional infrastructure across all HEIs may be difficult due to resource constraints. The roles and powers of certain bodies, such as Equity Squads, remain unclear, raising concerns about effectiveness.

Additionally, the success of these regulations depends on institutional willingness to enforce them. Without proper monitoring and accountability, they risk becoming symbolic measures rather than transformative tools.

Key takeaways and conclusion

The 2026 Equity Regulations represent a significant step toward addressing discrimination in higher education. They aim to move beyond mere representation and create a more inclusive academic environment through accountability and institutional reform.

Positive aspects include:

- Structured grievance redressal mechanisms
 - Representation of marginalized groups in decision-making bodies
 - Use of digital platforms for transparency and evidence
 - Emphasis on awareness and sensitization
- However, concerns remain regarding:**
- Broad and ambiguous definitions
 - Homogenization of diverse social groups
 - Limited institutional capacity for implementation

Ultimately, the regulations align with the constitutional vision of justice, equality, and dignity. Their success will depend on careful drafting, effective implementation, and sustained institutional commitment.

The challenge lies not in their intent but in ensuring that they are applied in a manner that genuinely transforms university spaces into inclusive and equitable environments.

Oxford Student Highlights India's Inclusive Education Model At UNHRC

India's vision for inclusive education under the National Education Policy 2020 was highlighted during the 61st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council



Geneva: India's commitment to inclusive education under the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was spotlighted at the 61st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The remarks were delivered by Jan Hubel, a Luxembourg national and master's student in International Development at the University of Oxford.

During his intervention, Hubel underlined that inclusive education is central to ensuring the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. He noted that NEP 2020 presents a progressive framework that promotes universal access to education, flexible learning pathways, and the use of assistive technologies to support diverse learners. According to him, traditional exam-centric systems often exclude students with varied learning needs, whereas competency-based approaches, as encouraged by NEP 2020, help create a more equitable learning environment.

Hubel highlighted that India is home to an estimated 2.1 million students with special needs, many of whom face barriers in accessing mainstream education. He emphasised that the policy aims to integrate such learners into regular public schooling by creating supportive and adaptable academic structures. This includes personalised learning strategies and the use of technology to enhance accessibility.

He also drew attention to the work of the Akshar Foundation, which collaborates with government schools across India. The foundation focuses on building holistic education models that go beyond academics by incorporating health support, psychosocial care, and strong community engagement. According to Hubel, these initiatives create safe and inclusive environments where children with disabilities are not only able to learn but also thrive socially and emotionally.

Further, Hubel stressed the importance of integrating skill development and vocational training into the education system. Early exposure to livelihood-oriented skills, he said, helps build confidence, independence, and smoother transitions from education to employment and active participation in society.

Calling for global support, he urged the Council to recognise holistic, inclusive, and skills-based public education systems as essential for advancing the rights and opportunities of children with disabilities. Hubel's insights were informed by his experience with the Oxford Internship Programme at the Akshar Foundation in 2023, where he worked in Indian government schools implementing NEP-aligned models. He later expanded his engagement with education by teaching in Hong Kong and delivering lectures at Banasthali Vidyapith.

His address reinforced India's growing role in promoting inclusive and equitable education on the global stage.

TOP SCHOLARSHIPS 2026: UG, PG, STEM & FELLOWSHIPS OPEN NOW

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's career and intellectual growth. It not only equips students with specialised knowledge in their chosen fields but also opens pathways to professional success and global opportunities. However, the rising cost of quality education—especially at top-tier institutions—often becomes a significant barrier for many deserving students. Tuition fees, accommodation expenses, and other associated costs can make higher education inaccessible, particularly for those from modest financial backgrounds.

To address this challenge, scholarships have emerged as powerful tools that enable talented students to pursue their academic dreams without financial constraints. Across the world, numerous scholarship programmes are designed to provide not just monetary assistance but also mentorship, networking opportunities, and exposure to diverse academic environments. These initiatives span multiple domains, including international postgraduate studies, professional development courses in India, social leadership programmes, and STEM education.

The scholarship ecosystem in 2026 highlights how foundations, institutions, and

organisations are actively working to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity. By investing in students, these programmes contribute to building a skilled and inclusive global workforce. They also play a key role in empowering individuals who can later contribute meaningfully to society.

Among the most prestigious and high-value scholarships available to Indian students is the Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation scholarship programme for 2026. The Inlaks Shivdasani Scholarships are widely recognised for supporting outstanding students who wish to pursue postgraduate studies at leading universities in Europe, the United States, and the United Kingdom. This merit-based scholarship is designed to nurture exceptional talent and provide access to world-class education.

One of the key highlights of this scholarship is its generous financial support. Selected candidates can receive funding of up to \$120,000, which covers tuition fees, living expenses, and other academic costs. In addition to financial aid, scholars benefit from the prestige associated with the programme and gain access to a global network of professionals and alumni, which can significantly enhance their career prospects.

The eligibility criteria for the Inlaks Shivdasani Scholarships are clearly defined to

ensure that deserving candidates are selected. Applicants must be Indian citizens residing in India and should have been born on or after January 1, 1996. They are required to hold a first-class degree or its equivalent from a recognised Indian institution. Furthermore, candidates must meet the specific academic requirements set by the foundation and demonstrate proficiency in the English language, as most courses are conducted in English.

The application process for this scholarship is conducted entirely online, making it accessible to students across the country. Interested candidates must submit their applications before the deadline of March 31, 2026. Given the competitive nature of the programme, applicants are encouraged to present strong academic records, clear career goals, and a compelling statement of purpose.

Overall, the Inlaks Shivdasani Scholarships 2026 represent a remarkable opportunity for ambitious Indian students seeking international exposure and advanced education. By removing financial barriers and fostering academic excellence, such initiatives continue to play a transformative role in shaping the future of education and empowering the next generation of global leaders.





Indian Open 2026: Abhay Singh and Anahat Singh emerge champions

MUMBAI

It turned out to be a night of celebrations for Indian squash fans with local favourites Abhay Singh and Anahat Singh winning the men's and women's titles respectively on the final day of the Indian Open 2026 at the CCI here on Sunday.

The men's title clash was an all-Indian battle with the second seeded Abhay overpowering his four seeded compatriot Veer Chotrani 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-4). Young sensation Anahat Singh blew away Hana Moataz of Egypt 3-1 (11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 11-6) in the women's final.

Abhay was in superb form in the men's final. Although Chotrani produced a spirited fight in the first two games, the second seed zoomed up a gear as the match progressed.

The opening game was a hard-fought battle with every point contested fiercely. Abhay Singh finally prevailed in the see-saw battle to take the opening game 11-9 and take the lead.

The second game followed a similar script with every point witnessing long rallies keeping the spectators hooked. However, Abhay managed to quell an intense challenge by his compatriot to win 11-8 and extend his lead. Abhay cranked up the intensity in the third game with Chotrani finding it difficult to read his deceptive angles and powerful smashes. The second seed took the game 11-4 to win the match and the title.

On winning the Indian Open 2026, Abhay Singh (Indian #2) said, "I'm really happy to have won the tournament. Indian squash is very healthy right now with four men in the top 50, Anahat leading the charts in the Women's World Champs. Obviously, the goal



individually is the LA Olympics, but we all have a big year ahead and need to defend gold. As much as we're competing against each other on tour, this year is also about coming together, pushing each other, and backing each other to win gold in Japan."

Earlier, top seeded Anahat Singh of India came up with a sublime performance to outclass Hana Moataz of Egypt and clinch the women's title.

Although the second seeded Egyptian was a much experienced contender, the younger Anahat was in a league all her own. The top seeded Indian came up with a lethal combination of deception and speedy cross-

court movement to leave her second seeded opponent struggling to match her pace. During the initial exchanges, both opponents were equally matched, matching each other blow. The first game saw the lead change hands after almost every other rally before the Indian rattled off six consecutive points to take it 11-5 and surge into the lead.

Anahat continued her dominance in the second game as well, building up a comfortable 5-1 lead in double quick time. Although Hana did her best to put up a strong fight, she failed to match up to the in-form India, who went on to win the second game 11-6 and dou-

ble the lead. Despite being outgunned during the first two games, Hana staged a spirited comeback in the third game, taking a tight 11-9 verdict to stay alive in the contest. The Egyptian tried to slow down the rallies in an effort to counter her much faster Indian opponent while the difficult angles of her shots stood her in good stead.

The third game loss seemed to break Anahat's rhythm with Hanna forcing the pace. The Egyptian raced into a 4-1 lead in the fourth game. To her credit, Anahat managed to pick herself up and fought back to claim the lead at 5-4 before winning five back-to-back points to win the game 11-6 and claim the title.



'I do not feel fully secure': GM Koneru Humpy withdraws from FIDE Women's Candidates due to Iran-Israel war

NEW DELHI

Indian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy has withdrawn from the upcoming FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament due to security concerns amid rising tensions in West Asia.

Humpy shared her decision in a social media statement on Sunday, emphasizing that personal safety is more important than competitive commitments. "After deep reflection, I have made the difficult decision to withdraw from the FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament. No event, no matter how important, can come before personal safety and well-being. Despite the assurances provided, I do not feel fully secure under the current circumstances. This is a painful but necessary decision, and I stand by it," she wrote on X. The tournament will take

place in Cyprus, which has recently faced increased security issues. Earlier this month, a British air base on the island was hit in a drone attack. This incident raised concerns about the impact of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, which has been fueled by US and Israeli strikes on Iran, spreading into the region.

According to FIDE regulations, if there is a vacancy in the Women's Candidates field, the next eligible player from the FIDE Women's Events 2024-25 cycle will fill it. Based on this rule, Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk will replace Humpy in the tournament.

The Women's Candidates, starting March 28 in Paphos, will determine the challenger for the world championship title currently held by China's Ju Wenjun. Meanwhile, the

men's title is held by India's D Gukesh.

Earlier, American Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura has expressed serious concerns about the playing conditions in Cyprus before the 2026 Candidates Tournament, which starts in just a week.

Currently ranked World No. 2, Nakamura has reportedly been in Cyprus for nearly two months as part of his pre-tournament preparations. However, he has highlighted ongoing and lengthy power outages on the island as a troubling issue leading up to one of chess's most prestigious events.

"It's not a good sign when power goes out completely in parts of Cyprus and doesn't come back for an extended period of time," Nakamura posted on his social media account on X.

IPL 2026 SHORT NEWS

KKR rope in Saurabh Dubey as replacement for injured Akash Deep



KOLKATA: Three-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have signed Vidarbha's tall, left-arm fast bowler Saurabh Dubey as a replacement for injured India pacer Akash Deep, who was ruled out of the competition due to a stress reaction in his lower back. Dubey was signed by 2016 champions Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) for IPL 2022 but his stint was cut short due to a back injury. "Yes, Saurabh Dubey has been signed by KKR as a replacement for Akash Deep for the upcoming season. Dubey was a net bowler for KKR and was practising with them at Eden Gardens and in their camp in Mumbai, but he will now be in the main squad," said a franchise official to IANS on Sunday. Dubey, 28, is yet to make his IPL debut and had gone unsold at the mini-auction in Abu Dhabi last year. But since he had registered for the auction, Dubey became a part of the Registered Available Player Pool (RAPP).

IPL 2026

After strong fan demand, Kolkata Knight Riders launch practice jersey



KOLKATA: Three-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have unveiled their practice jersey for the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) season, marking the first time the franchise has introduced a training kit for fans to purchase. The move follows an overwhelming response to the initial reveal of the team's training jersey, with thousands of supporters urging the franchise to make it available for purchase. Designed with a contemporary look, the jersey features a tiger-print motif inspired by the Bengal Tiger, symbolising power and agility while reflecting the team's identity. The jersey is now available for purchase on the team's official store. "The response from our fans to the practice jersey was incredible and truly reaffirmed the deep connection they share with the brand. We saw clear demand for the practice jersey and felt it was only right to make it available.

Chennai Super Kings inducts Raina, Hayden into first-ever Hall of Fame



CHENNAI

Five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have inducted former players Suresh Raina and Matthew Hayden into the franchise's first-ever Hall of Fame during their Roar '26 fan event at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday.

The franchise unveiled the Hall of Fame to honour two of their most celebrated cricketers. Raina, the former left-handed batter known to fans as 'Chinna Thala,' represented CSK from 2008 to 2021 and was part of four IPL title-winning squads in 2010, 2011, 2018 and 2021.

He also featured in two Champions League T20 triumphs in 2010 and 2014, while winning the Player of the Tournament award in the latter edition of the now-defunct competition. Raina remains CSK's all-time leading run-scorer with 5,529 runs, including two centuries and 38 half-centuries.

Hayden, the former left-handed opener who played for CSK from 2008

to 2010, was part of the 2010 IPL title-winning side and became the first player from the side to win the Orange Cap by scoring 572 runs in the 2009 season. The former Australia opener amassed 1,117 runs for the franchise, including eight half-centuries.

The induction ceremony into the Hall of Fame was a part of CSK's pre-season celebrations ahead of the 19th edition of the IPL, which begins on March 28. CSK, led by India batter Ruturaj Gaikwad, will open their campaign when they take on inaugural champions Rajasthan Royals (RR) at the ACA Stadium in Guwahati on March 30.

It is followed by fixtures against Punjab Kings (PBKS) at Chepauk on April 3, before traveling to Bengaluru to take on defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on April 5 and hosting Delhi Capitals (DC) in a home game on April 11. All four of CSK in the first phase of the competition will be evening games.

CSK reunites past stars with current players in 'Roar 2026' event at Chepauk



CHENNAI

Five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) brought together former stars and current squad members at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday for 'Roar 2026' event ahead of the 19th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) starting on March 28.

Ex-CSK batter S Badrinath shared a photo on X showing himself, Ambati Rayudu, Matthew Hayden, Muttiah Muralitharan, Parthiv Patel, Suresh Raina, Dwayne Bravo, Harbhajan Singh, Joginder Sharma, Murali Vijay and Lakshmi Prasad Balaji posing with the franchise's five IPL trophies and in their previous CSK days jerseys. "O(ldie)G

squad," wrote Badrinath in the post.

The event saw legends like Hussey, Hayden, Bravo and Raina reunite with current players such as captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, MS Dhoni (who got loudest cheers from the fans), Shivam Dube, and new signing Sanju Samson, who will play his maiden season for CSK after being Player of the Tournament in the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup win for India.

There were considerable chants of 'Sanju, Sanju' from fans, with his name and number jerseys selling like hot cakes outside the stadium. Clips from the event showed Dhoni sharing laughs with former teammates, especially Raina, Rayudu and Bravo, while Gaikwad was seen bowling to Hussey, who rolled back

the years with some fluent strokes. The current squad also held an open practice session, with players engaging in light drills and football kickabouts, before musical events, including by AR Rahman, took centre stage.

Samson, Dube and U19 World Cup-winning captain Ayush Mhatre were honoured by Dhoni with commemorative plaques, as fans donning yellow jersey got beautiful memories to cherish for a lifetime.

CSK begin their 2026 campaign against Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati on March 30, followed by fixtures against Punjab Kings on April 3, Royal Challengers Bengaluru on April 5 and Delhi Capitals on April 11.

'Ronaldo not obsessed with 1,000-goal milestone'

LISBON

Portugal head coach Roberto Martinez has dismissed suggestions that star footballer Cristiano Ronaldo is fixated on reaching the 1,000-goal milestone, stating that the veteran forward remains focused on team performance rather than personal records.

Ronaldo, who has scored over 950 career goals and continues to lead the line for both Portugal and Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr, recently picked up a muscle injury that has sidelined him for a few weeks. The 41-year-old was consequently left out of Portugal's squad for the ongoing international friendlies as a precaution.

Despite the setback, Ronaldo has enjoyed a strong run of form this season, scoring consistently for his club and maintaining an impressive goals-per-game ratio. His per-



formances have reinforced confidence in his availability for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, where he is expected to play a key role for the national side.

Rejecting claims of an obsession with individual milestones, Martinez pointed to Ronaldo's team-oriented approach during recent tournaments.

"I don't agree with that. If Cristiano had played the European Championship focused on scoring a goal to break another record, the assist against Turkey for Bruno Fernandes wouldn't have happened," he said as quoted by Goal.com.

Martinez emphasised that the Portugal squad, especially its senior players, prioritises

collective success over personal achievements.

"It's not true that our players have records or personal goals in mind. The only thing I saw at the European Championship was a different kind of responsibility in the more experienced players, a maximum responsibility to have a top performance in the tournament," he added.

When asked if Ronaldo had set any personal target, Martinez reiterated that such discussions were irrelevant to the player's mindset.

"No, because I don't see Cristiano playing with the anxiety or intention of reaching 1,000 goals. Whether he has 950 or 1,050 goals, he has the same legacy. It won't change anything. That's outside talk," he said. The Portugal coach further highlighted Ronaldo's decision-making and ability to create opportunities for teammates as key aspects of his game.

"We're talking about a striker who has 25 goals in 30 games. But I value behaviour inside the box much more. And Cristiano doesn't have the obsession that people talk about from the outside regarding his 1,000th goal. Because his behavior isn't like that. I can't say for the club, but here with the national team it's not like that," he concluded.

4th T20I: Esterhuizen shines as SA beat NZ by 19 runs to level the series 2-2

WELLINGTON

Wicketkeeper batter Connor Esterhuizen's half-century, followed by a combined bowling effort from Gerald Coetzee, Otneil Baartman, Prenelan Subrayen, and Keshav Maharaj, helped South Africa register 19-run win against New Zealand in the fourth T20I of the five-match series played at the Sky Stadium on Sunday.

Batting first, South Africa posted 164/5 on the scoreboard from 20 overs, with Esterhuizen leading the charge with the bat. In reply, New Zealand got bowled out for just 145 in 18.5 overs. With this win, South Africa have levelled the series 2-2, and the decider will be played on March 25 at Hagley Oval. After winning the toss and choosing to bat, South Africa had a poor start as Mulder got out on just the second ball. However, Esterhuizen and Tony De Zorzi built a strong partnership of 81 runs, putting the team in a good position. Esterhuizen reached his fifty in 33 balls during the 10th over. New Zealand, led by Jimmy Neesham, fought back by taking quick wickets. Esterhuizen was dismissed for 57, while De Zorzi got out after scoring 23 off 21 balls.



Dhurandhar 2 nears ₹500 crore mark in just 3 days

The action thriller Dhurandhar 2 has created a massive storm at the box office, delivering record-breaking collections within just three days of its release. Starring Ranveer Singh and directed by Aditya Dhar, the film has witnessed phenomenal response from audiences across India and overseas.

The movie opened with strong momentum through paid premieres, collecting around ₹43 crore net even before its official release. On Day 1, it registered an impressive ₹100+ crore, setting the tone for a blockbuster run. The momentum continued on Day 2, with collections remaining exceptionally high, pushing the film well past the ₹300 crore mark globally within just two days. By the end of Day 3, Dhurandhar 2 had crossed approximately ₹300 crore net and moved close to ₹500 crore gross worldwide, making it one of the fastest Indian films to achieve such milestones. Trade analysts note that the film's

strong word-of-mouth, festival release timing, and massive scale have contributed significantly to its outstanding performance.

Despite its long runtime and a few technical issues reported in some regions, the film has continued to draw huge crowds, with theatres running housefull shows and even adding late-night screenings to meet demand.

The film's success is not limited to India alone. Overseas markets have also contributed significantly, with collections running into tens of crores within the first two days itself. The high-octane action, patriotic theme, and grand visuals have resonated with audiences across languages.

With such a powerful start, Dhurandhar 2 is expected to break several more box office records in the coming days. Industry experts predict that it could soon enter the ₹700 crore club if the current trend continues, cementing its place among the biggest Indian blockbusters.

Trivikram Srinivas and Thaman to Reunite After a Break

Renowned director Trivikram Srinivas and popular music composer S. Thaman have delivered several musical blockbusters together, including Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo, Aravinda Sametha Veera Raghava, and Guntur Kaaram. Their collaborations have consistently been a major highlight, especially Thaman's impactful background scores. Currently, Trivikram is directing Venkatesh Daggubati in a family entertainer titled Adarsha Kutumbam. However, in a surprising move, Trivikram has chosen to collaborate with young composer Harshavardhan Rameshwar instead of Thaman for this project. This decision sparked speculation in industry circles about possible creative differences between the successful duo.



Putting an end to the rumors, Thaman clarified that the decision was mutual. He revealed that both he and Trivikram felt the need to take a short break and explore fresh creative directions. Thaman added that Trivikram wanted to work with a new team for Adarsha Kutumbam. Importantly, Thaman confirmed that their collaboration is far from over. He stated that he will be working with Trivikram again on the much-anticipated film God of War, which is expected to be one of the director's biggest projects. Trivikram has reportedly been developing this film for quite some time, and the shoot is likely to commence before the end of this year, with more details to be announced soon.

Meanwhile, Thaman continues to enjoy strong recognition in the industry. His background score for Veera Simha Reddy received immense appreciation, especially from Nandamuri Balakrishna, who even praised him as "Nandamuri Thaman." Thaman also contributed background score work to Ustaad Bhagat Singh, even though the film's official composer is Devi Sri Prasad. With both artists set to reunite for a major project, fans can look forward to another powerful combination soon.



Anushka Sharma To Make Telugu Debut With Allu Arjun And Atlee's AA22xA6: Report

Anushka Sharma is reportedly in discussions to star opposite Allu Arjun in his upcoming film, tentatively titled AA22xA6. While an official confirmation is still awaited, the development has already generated significant buzz, as it could mark Anushka's much-anticipated debut in Telugu cinema.

As reported by Deccan Chronicle, Anushka Sharma is likely to make her debut in Telugu cinema. The actress is in talks to star in Allu Arjun's upcoming film, tentatively titled AA22xA6. However, nothing has been confirmed. About AA22xA6

According to a report by Variety India, the makers are likely to unveil the official title of AA22xA6 on Allu Arjun's birthday, April 8, 2026. The announcement is expected to come through a specially designed video that will introduce audiences to the film's grand cinematic world. The report states that the title announcement will not be a simple reveal but a large-scale visual spectacle. The video is said to feature cutting-edge VFX and offer the first glimpse into the film's ambitious narrative, which is reportedly set in a parallel universe. A source quoted in the report shared that the announcement video has been designed to leave viewers stunned. The visuals will reportedly showcase Allu Arjun in multiple never-seen-before avatars, highlighting the scale and creativity behind the project. "Atlee has gone beyond expectations in crafting a one-of-a-kind spectacle for Indian cinema," the source said, hinting at the filmmaker's ambitious vision for the film.

While the video will reportedly focus primarily on Allu Arjun's character and trans-

formation, fans of Deepika Padukone might have to wait a bit longer for a proper glimpse of her role in the film.

Anushka Sharma's Chakda Xpress
In an exclusive interview with News18 Showsha, actor Dibyendu Bhattacharya, who has an extensive role alongside Anushka in the film, revealed just how special the biopic truly is. He further mentioned that he is as confused as the audience, who are eagerly waiting for the film's release. "You don't know how badly I'm waiting for the film to release because it is a fantastic film," Dibyendu Bhattacharya told us. The actor didn't hold back in praising Anushka Sharma's performance either. "It is the best performance of Anushka Sharma to date. I don't know why they are not releasing it. It's a really, really fantastic film." When asked whether the film had been shelved or merely postponed, the actor admitted to being in the dark. "I have no idea," he said with the utmost honesty. "If I had any information about the film, I would tell you first. I really don't know because Clean Slate is on one side and Netflix is on the other. What's going on between the two, I have no clue," he further stated.

Why is Chakda Xpress facing delays?
Netflix's Chakda Xpress was announced by Anushka Sharma in 2022 as her comeback film after Zero with Shah Rukh Khan and Katrina Kaif in 2018. It is backed by Clean Slate Filmz, a production house by Anushka's brother Karnesh Ssharma. Last year, it was reported that the production house's partnership with Netflix has ended, resulting in a delay in its slate of releases.

Reports said that Clean Slate Filmz might repurchase the film from Netflix and might look out for other platforms for release. Clean Slate Filmz and Netflix have yet to address these claims.

SHAKIRA'S INDIA SHOWS CALLED OFF AMID IRAN WAR, FANS FRUSTRATED

Just weeks after sparking excitement among fans, Shakira's much-awaited India concerts have been postponed, leaving many disappointed.

District by Zomato shared the update on social media. In a statement, the organisers said the decision was taken due to the "prevailing geopolitical situation and regional tensions", referring to the ongoing US-Iran conflict.

"The well-being of our fans, the artist and the production team remains our foremost priority (sic)," the statement read.

Organisers confirmed that all ticket holders will receive a full refund, which will be automatically processed to their original mode of payment within five to seven business days. They also said they are working with the artist's team to reschedule the concerts, with new dates to be announced soon.

The announcement has triggered strong reactions online, with several fans expressing disappointment. While some shared that they had been eagerly waiting for the concerts, others questioned whether additional expenses such as travel and accommodation would also be compensated.

About Shakira's India shows

The concerts were part of the Feeding India Concert initiative, organised in collaboration with District by Zomato. They were scheduled to be held on April 10 and 11 in Mumbai, followed by a show in Delhi on April 15. The performances would have marked Shakira's return to India after nearly two decades, her last major concert in the country being in 2007.

Earlier, a concert by Kanye West in New Delhi was also postponed amid the same tensions. Originally set for March 29, it has now been rescheduled to May 23.

At the time of announcing her India tour, Shakira had expressed her excitement about returning to the country, calling it a special place to perform and connect with fans.



Did Venkatesh Reject V. V. Vinayak's Comedy Script?

There has been strong buzz in industry circles that Venkatesh Daggubati might collaborate with V. V. Vinayak for a big-ticket entertainer. However, the project now appears to be on hold, sparking speculation about what went wrong.

According to sources, Venkatesh was not keen on doing a different kind of entertainer at this stage of his career. Writer Akula Siva had reportedly pitched a comedy-centric script, but the actor is said to be looking for something fresh and different. "He didn't want to go ahead with a routine laugh riot. With directors like Anil Ravipudi already exploring that space, Venkatesh is keen on choosing a subject that connects with new-age audiences," a source revealed.

The actor-director duo previously delivered the successful film Lakshmi, which blended action and family drama effectively. Their reunion had created considerable excitement, with expectations of a bigger and more engaging entertainer this time.

V. V. Vinayak, known for blockbusters like Aadi and Tagore, was expected to present Venkatesh in a powerful and dynamic role. The project was said to be a commercial entertainer with a mix of action and romance.

Meanwhile, Venkatesh is riding high on the success of Sankranthiki Vasthunam and his special appearance in Mana Sankara Varaprasad Garu. The actor is reportedly being cautious with his choices, aiming to maintain his strong connection with audiences by exploring varied genres and fresh narratives. For now, the Vinayak project remains on hold, and it remains to be seen whether the duo will reunite with a different script in the future.

