

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

RNI NO.APENG/2010/33328 VOL NO.16 ISSUE NO.: 332 HYDERABAD PAGES: 12 RS. 1/-

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026

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## RUPEE CRASHES TO RECORD 94.81

MONEY MATTERS 9

## RAM CHARAN AS PEDDI PEHELWAN



BOX -OFFICE 12



## CM Witnesses Celestial Wedding of Lord Rama

HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

The celestial wedding ceremony of Lord Sri Sita Rama was conducted at the Mithila Stadium in Bhadrachalam on Friday, exhibiting remarkable grandeur and serving as a visual delight. An impressive number of devotees gathered to witness the sacred nuptials of Lord Rama, which took place in the midst of reverent Vedic chants.

Pilgrims from various regions of the Telugu states assembled in significant numbers, creating an atmosphere filled with the incessant

recitation of the holy name of Sri Rama, resonating throughout the temple town.

The Mithila Stadium was transformed to reflect the ethereal ambience of Vaikuntha, captivating devotees who experienced profound spiritual exaltation as they beheld the wedding of Lord Rama, performed within an exquisitely decorated Kalyana Mandapam embellished with remarkable sculptures.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, accompanied by his wife, paid a visit to the Bhadrachali

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

### SHORT TAKES



### CENTRE CUTS EXCISE ON FUEL BY RS. 10/LITRE

The Union government on Thursday reduced the Special Additional Excise Duty on petrol and diesel by Rs. 10 per litre each, aiming to ease the financial burden on OMCs amid rising global crude prices. However, the move will not result in any reduction in retail fuel prices for consumers.

SPECIAL 02



### MARKET BLOOD-BATH: 9L CR LOST

India's stock market wrapped up the week on a grim note Friday, with benchmark indices closing about 2 percent lower amid widespread selling pressure across multiple sectors. The Sensex plunged 1,690.23 points, or 2.25 percent, to settle at 73,583.22.

MONEY MATTERS 09



### FROM DOLLAR DREAMS TO AI DISRUPTION

A candid exchange highlights how the software boom raised incomes in Coastal Andhra but sidelined agriculture, research, and broader intellectual pursuits, over the decades. It also reflects a gradual shift in social values and career aspirations.

OPINION 06

# PM Modi Calls for United Response to Crisis

PM Reviews Fuel Supply, Inflation Preparedness with CMs Amid West Asia Crisis



NEW DELHI, MAR 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday chaired a virtual meeting with Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors of States and Union Territories to review preparedness in view of the evolving situation in West Asia and its potential impact on India's fuel supply and inflation. During the meeting, the Prime Minister emphasized that the government's top priorities are

maintaining economic and trade stability, ensuring energy security, safeguarding citizens' interests, and strengthening industry and supply chains. He noted that the situation remains dynamic and requires continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies.

Mr Modi informed that an Inter-Ministerial Group has been operational since

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## CM Assures PM on Steady Fuel, LPG Supply

Hyderabad: Honourable Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the measures taken by the State Government to supply petrol, diesel and LPG gas in a smooth manner in the crisis time. The Chief minister said that the government constituted a committee headed by Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao to review the supply of petrol, diesel and gas and monitor the situation continuously.

The CM attended the virtual video conference held on Friday evening by the Prime Minister with the Chief Ministers of all states to review the prevailing situation in the supply of fuels and LPG amidst the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

- Committees Formed at State and District Levels to monitor fuel and LPG supply
- Special measures to supply commercial LPG gas to hospitals, hotels etc
- Telangana Government is promoting EV vehicles in the state
- CM Revanth Reddy attends PM's Video Conference

## FORMER MINISTER JEEVAN REDDY SET TO JOIN BRS?

KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 27

Political circles are abuzz as former minister Jeevan Reddy is reportedly gearing up to join the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) party in the near future. After parting ways with the Indian National Congress, sources indicate that he may formally switch sides on the 10th of next month.



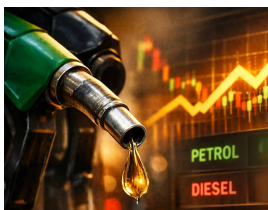
It is learnt that Jeevan Reddy is making preparations for a massive public meeting in Lakshampur village, within the Jagtial rural mandal, spanning nearly 15 acres, aimed at showcasing his political strength. Senior BRS leaders K.T. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao are expected to visit and inspect the venue on Sunday.

Party insiders suggest that discussions between the BRS leadership and Jeevan Reddy have already taken place, with an auspicious date reportedly finalized. A Congress veteran of over 40 years, his move could mark a significant shift in Telangana's political landscape.

## FUEL PRICE CUT SPARKS BJP PRAISE, STATE GOVT DRAWS FIRE IN TELANGANA

HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Telangana BJP chief N. Ramchander Rao on Friday welcomed the Centre's decision to cut retail fuel prices, hailing it as a pro-people move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Expressing gratitude, Rao said the reduction in excise duty - Rs.10 per litre on petrol and zero on diesel - demonstrates the Centre's commitment to easing the burden on the common man, especially amid rising global crude oil prices. However, he sharply criticized the Telangana government led by A Revanth Reddy, alleging that high value added tax (VAT) rates - around 35% - continue to strain the state consumers. He urged the state to follow the Centre's lead and reduce taxes to bring petrol prices below Rs.100 per litre. Rao accused the state government of prioritizing revenue over public welfare and called for immediate action to provide tangible relief to citizens.



## WAR OUTSIDE, WATCHDOG WITHIN INDIA SLAMS THE DIGITAL GATES

A Nation Under Information Siege Chooses Speed, Power And Control

BY C SUBRAHMANYAM

India has intensified control over social media amid the Iran linked conflict driven surge in misinformation and digital propaganda. A strict three hour takedown mandate reflects a shift towards rapid intervention to maintain stability and prevent narrative manipulation. However, the expanded sweep has also affected legitimate journalistic content, raising concerns over transparency, accountability and the balance between national security and freedom of expression. The development marks a decisive but contentious shift in India's digital governance during global crisis conditions.

3 HOURS TO WIPE IT OUT! ZERO DEBATE - TOTAL CONTROL!

SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK!

- FAKE NEWS? BANNED!
- JOURNALISTS HIT? BLOCKED!

- WHO DECIDES WHAT'S AXED?
- IS TRUTH ALSO ON THE FIRING LINE?

TO PROTECT OR TO PULL THE PLUG?

"In the age of information warfare, India has chosen to move first and question later. The challenge now is ensuring that in silencing distortion, it does not also silence dissent."

The war theatre may be burning across West Asia, but make no mistake, the real tremors are being felt inside India's digital bloodstream. This is not about distant missiles. This is about

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## GET YOUR CKYC NUMBER, IT HELPS IN OPENING ACCOUNT AND RE-KYC

How it works:

- Banks capture and upload customers' KYC information onto the Central KYC Records Registry (CKYCR)
- A 14-digit number is assigned to the customer
- This 14-digit number can be used by other financial institutions to retrieve the customer's existing KYC records for opening an account and Re-KYC

To get your CKYC number:  
Contact your Bank OR Give a missed call on 7799022129 OR Visit <https://ckycindia.in>

### THE DAILY MANTRA

HOLD ON

LIFE IS LIKE A CAMERA  
ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT AND YOU'LL CAPTURE IT PERFECTLY

- Focus on what truly matters.
- Let go of distractions and noise.
- Prioritize what moves you forward.
- Say no to what doesn't serve you.
- Stay consistent, and results will follow.

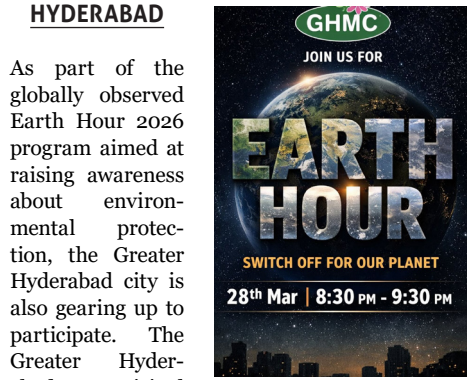
Collected by Venna Srinivasa Reddy

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## GHMC Calls for Earth Hour!

**In Greater Hyderabad, Lights off on March 28 from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM**



As part of the globally observed Earth Hour 2026 program aimed at raising awareness about environmental protection, the Greater Hyderabad city is also gearing up to participate. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has urged city residents to actively take part in the Earth Hour 2026 event being organized under its leadership. Citizens are requested to voluntarily switch off unnecessary lights from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM on the 28th of this month and contribute to environmental conservation. With the slogan #GiveAnHourForEarth, GHMC stated that small actions can lead to big changes. GHMC also mentioned that it is continuing efforts toward increasing greenery, implementing eco-friendly initiatives, and promoting sustainable urban development.

It emphasized that steps are being taken to develop Hyderabad into a city that responds effectively to climate change. On this occasion, Commissioner R. V. Karnan said: "Every small action has value. By dedicating one hour for the Earth, we can initiate a significant change." The Commissioner also called upon the people of Greater Hyderabad, organizations, and educational institutions to voluntarily participate in this global movement.

# Jupally honoured with Global Grand Prize for Contribution to World Peace

HYDERABAD

In a moment of global recognition for Telangana's growing stature as a hub of spiritual heritage, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Archaeology, Jupally Krishna Rao, was conferred with the prestigious 'Grand Prize for Contribution to World Peace' on Friday.

The award, presented by the International Interchange Development Association and its President Mun Yong Jo, acknowledges the Minister's sustained efforts in promoting international cultural exchange and fostering life-affirming values through the preservation and promotion of Buddhist heritage. The honour was conferred during the inaugural session of the International Buddhist Conference on World Peace - 2026, held at Haritha Plaza, which witnessed the participation of nearly 150 distinguished delegates and eminent monks from 22 countries.

Accepting the award, Jupally Krishna Rao stated that the recognition reflects the visionary leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and the Telangana government's steadfast commitment to the timeless teachings of Lord Buddha—compassion, peace, and non-violence.

He observed that the conference theme, "World Peace: Buddhist Approaches to Conflict Resolution, Reconciliation, and Healing," resonates strongly with Telangana's vision of emerging as a global beacon of harmony in an increasingly fragmented world.

The Minister emphasised that the principles of the middle path and mindful living offer enduring solutions to contemporary global challenges and must be strengthened through dialogue and col-



lective engagement.

Highlighting Telangana's rich Buddhist legacy, Jupally Krishna Rao noted that the region around Nagarjuna Sagar holds deep historical significance, being closely associated with Acharya Nagarjuna, the eminent philosopher and founder of the Madhyamaka School of Mahayana Buddhism. He reiterated the government's commitment to preserving and promoting key archaeological sites such as Phanigiri, Nelakondapalli, Dhulikatta, and Kotilingala.

To further enhance the state's spiritual tourism potential, the government is actively developing an integrated Buddhist Tourism Circuit, aimed at offering a world-class pilgrimage experience while

preserving the sanctity and heritage of these ancient sites. The Minister also announced that Buddhavanam, the flagship project spread across 274 acres, is being accelerated for development as a global "World Peace Centre." As part of future initiatives, plans are underway to establish a digital experience centre to engage younger generations through immersive technologies, along with a Global Buddhist Centre to be developed, he said.

The conference was graced by distinguished dignitaries, including Prof. H. Niduma Sunil Senevi, Minister of Buddhassasana, Sri Lanka; Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu of Vietnam; Buddhavanam; and Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Special Officer, Buddhavanam Project.(NSS)

## Centre Cuts Excise on Fuel by ₹10/Litre; No Relief for Consumers

NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday reduced the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on petrol and diesel by ₹10 per litre each, aiming to ease the financial burden on oil marketing companies (OMCs) amid rising global crude prices. However, the move will not result in any reduction in retail fuel prices for consumers. With the revision, excise duty on diesel has effectively been brought down to zero, while that on petrol now stands at ₹3 per litre. The decision was notified by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas clarified that the excise cut is intended to offset under-recoveries incurred by public sector OMCs — Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) — which continue to sell fuel below cost despite surging international prices.

### Revenue impact

The excise duty reduction is expected to cost the exchequer around ₹7,000 crore over the next 15 days, according to Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Vivek Chaturvedi. To partly compensate for this loss, the government has increased export duties on diesel to ₹21.5 per litre and on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to ₹29.5 per litre. These hikes are likely to generate about ₹1,500 crore, bringing the net revenue impact to roughly ₹5,500 crore over the same period. Officials said the duty structure will be reviewed every fortnight, depending on import trends and revenue considerations, amid continued uncertainty in global energy markets.



### Global pressures

The move comes as crude oil prices remain volatile due to the ongoing West Asia crisis, with Brent crude crossing \$111 per barrel. Officials described the situation as dynamic, noting that revenue implications would depend on actual supply flows and global developments.

### No lockdown planned

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri dismissed rumours of a possible lockdown due to fuel shortages as "completely false." He stated that no such proposal is under consideration. Mr. Puri highlighted the financial strain on OMCs, estimating losses at around ₹24 per litre for petrol and ₹30 per litre for diesel at current crude prices. However, official estimates suggest under-recoveries of about ₹26 per litre for petrol and ₹81.90 per litre for diesel, amounting to nearly ₹2,400 crore per day.

### Private firms raise prices

While public sector OMCs have kept fuel prices unchanged, some private players have started passing on the higher costs. Nayara Energy recently increased petrol prices by ₹3 per litre and diesel by ₹5 per litre, citing unprecedented challenges in the sector.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

# WAR OUTSIDE, WATCHDOG WITHIN INDIA SLAMS THE DIGITAL GATES

FROM PAGE 1

messages, images, narratives and the battle to dominate them. As tensions spiral around Iran, India has moved with calculated sharpness. Not a hesitant step. Not a bureaucratic shuffle. A decisive tightening of the screws on social media platforms that now find themselves operating under a clock that ticks louder than ever before.

Three hours. That is the window. Not for debate. Not for deliberation. For compliance.

### THE NEW ORDER: ERASE FIRST, VERIFY LATER

This is governance in combat mode. The instruction to digital platforms is blunt. Content identified as unlawful must disappear almost instantly. The earlier breathing space has been wiped out. What remains is urgency bordering on compulsion. Why this urgency? Because the battlefield has changed.

The war is no longer confined to geography. It is being fought in pixels and code. Old videos dressed up as fresh attacks. Synthetic visuals engineered to provoke outrage. Narratives crafted not to inform but to influence.

The state has read the situation. And it has chosen to act before the storm gathers force. But here is the uncomfortable truth. When speed becomes the supreme

principle, accuracy begins to take strain.

### THE NET THAT DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE

This is where the story takes a harder turn. The sweep against misinformation has not remained neatly confined to fabricated content. It has widened. And in widening, it has begun to touch spaces that raise serious questions. Reports point to restrictions on journalistic output, independent reportage and commentary linked to geopolitics and conflict. This is not a minor detail. This is the fault line. Because once the same mechanism is used to remove both falsehood and legitimate scrutiny, the distinction between control and overreach begins to blur. The system is no longer just filtering noise. It is shaping the signal.

### THE INVISIBLE WAR MACHINE

Let us not pretend the threat is imagined. The present conflict has unleashed a relentless stream of digital manipulation. Information is being weaponised with precision. State and non state actors are flooding platforms with material designed to distort perception and provoke reaction. Actors linked to regions around Iran are deeply embedded in this contest of narratives. India is not a spectator. It is a target, a market, and a battleground rolled into one. In such a climate, inaction is not an option. That much is clear.

### THE STATE STRIKES BACK

The government's logic rests on a single pillar. Stability cannot be negotiated. In a country of India's scale, even a rumour can acquire velocity. Social fault lines can be stressed. External narratives can seep into domestic discourse with dangerous ease. Therefore the response is preemptive. Act early. Act fast. Act decisively. From a governance standpoint, this is a strategy designed to prevent escalation before it begins.

### BUT WHO HOLDS THE LENS TO POWER

Yet, the sharpest questions do not come from what is removed. They arise from how it is removed. Opacity defines the process. There is little clarity on: \* who initiates the takedown \* what precise standards are applied \* what safeguards exist against excess For the citizen, for the journalist, for the platform, the system appears as a command without a visible audit trail. And that is where democratic discomfort finds its footing. Because power, when exercised without visible checks, invites scrutiny by its very nature.

### INDIA AT A CROSSROADS

This moment is larger than a policy shift. It signals a structural recalibration of how India intends to manage information during periods of

global tension. Across the world, governments are tightening their grip on digital ecosystems. India is part of that pattern. But its stakes are higher. Its diversity deeper. Its discourse far more combustible. Every takedown here does more than remove content. It redraws the contours of public understanding.

### CONTROL IS ASCENDANT, BUT THE TEST LIES AHEAD

India has made its position unambiguous. In the face of an information war, it will not wait. It will act. The intent is to secure the digital domain. To prevent manipulation. To maintain order. But the real test is not in the display of power. It lies in restraint. Because the strength of a democracy is not measured only by how firmly it can control the narrative, but by how carefully it allows the truth to breathe within that control.

### THE DIGITAL DOCTRINE IN MOTION

The present framework is defined by urgency and centralised direction. Platforms are compelled to respond within hours. The volume of takedown instructions has increased. Content linked to geopolitics, conflict and sensitive narratives faces heightened scrutiny. The system is designed for speed and containment, not prolonged evaluation. This marks a transition from reactive moderation to proactive control of the information environment.

# PM Modi Calls for United Response to Crisis

FROM PAGE 1

March 3, conducting daily reviews and taking timely decisions. He highlighted India's prior experience in handling global disruptions, recalling the coordinated Centre-State response during the COVID-19 pandemic, which helped mitigate challenges related to supply chains, trade, and daily life.

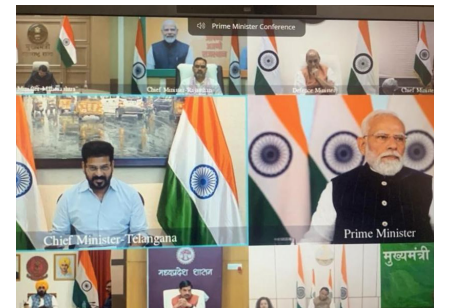
Stressing cooperative federalism, the Prime Minister said that addressing the current challenge is a shared responsibility and expressed confidence that "Team India" will successfully navigate the situation through coordinated efforts. He appreciated the suggestions put forward by Chief Ministers and said these inputs would be valuable in managing the evolving crisis effectively.

Highlighting the role of States, Mr Modi called for constant communication and coordination with the Centre, timely sharing of information, and swift, well-aligned decision-making. He urged States to ensure smooth functioning of supply chains and take strict action against hoarding and profiteering.

The Prime Minister also directed States to activate control rooms at State and district levels and maintain administrative alertness to prevent disruptions. He stressed advance planning in the agriculture sector, particularly monitoring fertilizer storage and distribution, to avoid difficulties for farmers during the upcoming Kharif season.

Cautioning against misinformation, Mr Modi underlined the importance of timely dissemination of accurate information to prevent panic. He also warned against online fraud and fake agents. Special attention was advised for border and coastal States to manage challenges related to shipping, essential supplies, and maritime operations.

He further suggested that States with citizens in West Asia should activate helplines, appoint nodal officers, and establish district-level support systems to assist affected families and ensure proper information flow. The Prime Minister noted that recent ef-



orts to strengthen India's economic and supply systems are proving beneficial in the current context. He called for continued engagement with industry and MSMEs to maintain production stability and employment.

Emphasizing both immediate response and long-term preparedness, Mr Modi urged States to accelerate the adoption of alternative energy sources such as biofuels, solar energy, the GOBARdhan initiative, and electric mobility, along with expanding piped natural gas connections. He also stressed the need to boost domestic exploration of oil and natural gas with active State cooperation.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who also addressed the meeting, said the government is taking proactive steps under the Prime Minister's leadership, including ensuring timely availability of LPG and reducing excise duties on petrol and diesel. He called for collective action by States, Union Territories, and the Centre to address the situation.

Chief Ministers across the country appreciated the Centre's measures and the Prime Minister's diplomatic outreach to ensure the safety of Indian citizens abroad. They expressed confidence that the situation remains stable, with adequate availability of petrol, diesel, and LPG, supported by continuous monitoring mechanisms.

States welcomed the reduction in excise duty on fuel, stating it would provide relief to citizens amid global uncertainties. They also supported the decision to increase commercial LPG allocation to 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels, up from 50 per cent.



## CM Witnesses Celestial Wedding of Lord Rama

FROM PAGE 1

temple, where they presented silk garments and pearl Talambalu (sacred rice adorned with pearls) to the presiding deity on behalf of the State government. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Ministers Tummala Nageswara Rao, Ponguleti Srinivas, Konda Surekha, Vaki-ti Srihari, and Seethakka, joined the Chief Minister for this occasion. Following this, the temple priests elucidated the significance

of the celestial wedding ceremony to the attendees gathered in the pavilion. Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister and the Ministers solemnly laid the foundation stone for development projects amounting to ₹351 crore in Bhadrachalam.

This budget includes ₹75 crore earmarked for the enhancement of Godavari Ghat, ₹180 crore allocated for temple expansion and infrastructure improvements, and ₹96 crore designated for the development of the temple's surroundings.

## CM Assures PM on Steady Fuel, LPG Supply

FROM PAGE 1

West Asia crisis. During the meeting, CM Revanth Reddy brought several key issues to the Prime Minister's attention including the official Committee was continuously reviewing the situation from the Command Control Center located in Hyderabad and the committees constituted with Nodal Officers in all 33 districts to oversee gas supply, petrol and diesel sales and to curb black marketing.

The Chief Minister briefed Modi about the measures taken to supply commercial gas cylinders to hospitals, schools, orphanages, and old-age homes on a priority basis. Referring to the availability of fuels, the CM said that the officials are continuously monitoring stock levels available at every filling station as well as the daily consumption rates. The average daily consumption of petrol and diesel in Telangana stands at 36,189 kiloliters under normal circumstances and the state currently holds reserves of 188,210 kiloliters.

Further, CM Revanth Reddy has informed that legal action is being

initiated against individuals posting content on social media spreading misinformation and creating panic regarding shortages of petrol, diesel, or gas.

Emphasizing that the promotion of EV vehicles would help tide over the fuel crisis in the coming days, the Chief Minister said that Telangana was actively working to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas and encouraging people to shift to EV vehicles. As part of this initiative, the CM said that the state granted a 100 percent exemption on road tax and registration fees for EVs in Telangana.

CM Revanth Reddy also brought to the attention of the Prime Minister the state's extensive efforts to promote EV manufacturing and foster a robust battery ecosystem. The process of converting over 1.20 lakh petrol and diesel-run auto-rickshaws in Hyderabad city into Electric Vehicles (EVs) through retrofitting, purchase of EV buses for TGSRTC was also discussed in the meeting. State Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao and CM's Principal Secretary, V. Seshadri were also present.

# "Sarvodaya Telangana"

FROM PAGE 1

Women continue to suffer due to the lack of representation and targeted solutions to their problems. All of these sections are being treated as mere vote banks. We've seen enough number of parties with men at the helm of affairs. As a "Telangana Adabidda", or "Daughter of Telangana", I firmly believe that there is a need for new and inclusive political force led by a woman to achieve "Sarvodaya Telangana". With the blessings of the people of the state, I will be launching my party on the 25th of April, 2026 at Advaya Conventions in Medchal at 10:00 am and this will mark the beginning of a new era in Telangana politics.

Elaborating on the service rendered by Telangana Jagruthi over the course of the last two decades, she said, "Telangana Jagruthi is one organisation that has fought for every section of the society. Even for those sections which were never roped in by any other entity. Including numerically inferior communities like Sikhs and Christians, we had and will

continue to have dedicated wings that will be aimed at addressing the respective problems of these communities. Jagruthi went to the extent of giving 2500 as pension to families of nearly 300 farmers who died by suicide between 2014 and 2018. During Covid, we helped scores of thousands of families. Irrespective of how small or big the issue, Jagruthi has always fought for the people, even during the BRS regime."

Representation of youth in politics has been a long-standing problem in India. Addressing that, she said, "Politics is our job. It isn't rocket science. Even if it is, it is imperative and important that we decode and understand the system. It impacts every aspect of our lives. I appeal to the youngsters of Telangana. Please do not steer away from politics. Get involved and change politics instead. You have to be in a political party or inside the system to do that. I invite all the youngsters to join our party. Together we will change the future of Telangana. We cannot depend on others to do this. We will have to do it ourselves"

# Police bust multi-crore 'Mule Accounts' scam; 13 arrested

KARIMNAGAR

The police have busted the "Mule Accounts" scam that created a sensation across the erstwhile Karimnagar district. The Karimnagar police apprehended a gang that was opening bank accounts in the names of innocent individuals and conducting illicit transactions worth hundreds of crores through them.

So far, 13 individuals have been arrested in connection with this case, while the police have identified a total of 24 people as accomplices in this scam. It is noteworthy that RBL Bank employees, Kalyan and Ayesha, played a pivotal role in this massive scam. Acting in collusion, the duo violated banking regulations to create "mule accounts" for the purpose of facilitating cryptocurrency transactions and illicit deposits.

Karimnagar CP Ghouse Alam clarified that the investigation revealed



they collected personal details from unsuspecting individuals—luring them with the promise of a mere 2 percent commission—and subsequently opened bank accounts in their names. The investigations have revealed that the accused executed massive transactions totaling a staggering ₹137 crore using just eight "mule accounts." It is suspected that these funds

were primarily diverted into cryptocurrency trading and foreign bank accounts. Among those arrested in connection with this case, bank employees Kalyan and Ayesha—along with Sairam, Ranjith, Mallesh, Satyam, and Bandi Pranay—have been identified as key accused.

Currently, the police have taken the prime accused—Kalyan and Ayesha—

into custody and are subjecting them to intensive interrogation. The investigation is proceeding with a focus on aspects such as which other bank accounts are involved in this scam, the source of the funds, and where the money was diverted. Search operations have been initiated to apprehend the remaining 11 individuals who are currently absconding.

# Ramgiri shrine to become major spiritual hub by next Rama Navami: Komatireddy

NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Friday announced that the historic Ramgiri Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple will be developed into a prominent spiritual centre with improved facilities by next year's Sri Rama Navami. The Minister participated in the Sri Sita Rama

Kalyanotsavam at the temple as part of the festive celebrations, offered silk clothes and mutyala talambalu to the deity. Addressing devotees, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said a comprehensive plan is in place to enhance infrastructure, keeping in view the growing influx of pilgrims to the temple every year. He said key initiatives include creation of Vaikuntha Dwaram

and Uttara Dwara Darshanam, along with expansion of existing darshan routes to ease crowd movement. The Land acquisition for these works is under process, with registration expected to be completed within a month, after which development works will begin, the Minister said. Emphasising the temple's historical importance, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said efforts would

be made to ensure better amenities for devotees without disturbing temple lands. He noted that the National Highway alignment in the area has already been diverted through a bypass to safeguard temple property. Extending Sri Rama Navami greetings, the Minister expressed hope that people of Nalgonda would be blessed with peace, prosperity and well-being.

# Geetha Murthy Participated in Shri Rama Navami Celebrations



HYDERABAD

the festival of Sri Rama Navami was celebrated in a highly spiritual manner at many places across the city. At Hari Hara Kshetram in Balaji Nagar, Neredmet, the event was conducted under the leadership of Sudhakar and Sangeeta. Similarly, in Machha Bol-

laram, the Sita-Rama Kalyanam (divine wedding ceremony) was carried out with great grandeur under the guidance of Karuna Sri. BJP National Council member and former State President of Mahila Morcha, Geetha Murthy, along with Youth Morcha Central District Vice President Uday Kumar, and Global Hindu Tra-

ditions President Dr. Anupama, among others, participated in these programs. Later, they also took part in the divine wedding ceremony at East Anand Bagh, organized under the leadership of Annapurna, Sridevi, and Lalitha Sharma. A large number of devout devotees attended the events at all locations.

## Governor participates in Sri Sita Rama Kalyana Mahotsavam

HYDERABAD: Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, along with his spouse Janaki Shukla, participated in the Sri Sita Rama Kalyana Mahotsavam organised by Lok Bhavan employees at Lok Bhavan Community Hall (Sanskriti) on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami on Friday. He offered prayers with devotion and reverence. The Governor conveyed his greetings and good wishes to the officials and staff present on the occasion. Later, the Governor attended the Sri Rama Navami celebrations organised by the Bhagyanagar Sri Rama Navami Utsava Samithi and flagged off the Rath Yatra.

## Snapanam performed to Utsava Murthies

TIRUMALA: As a part of Sri Ramanavami festivities, the sacred bath, Snapana Tirumanjanam was offered to the Utsava deities of Sri Sita Lakshmana Anjaneya sametha Sri Ramachandra Swamy at Tirumala on Friday. The deities were seated on the special platform at Ranganayakula Mandapam in Sri-vari temple. Tirumala Pedda Jeeyar Swamy, TTD EO Ravichandra, Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary and others were present.

# A lecture on Digital Intimacy at GITAM



HYDERABAD

The Department of English and Other Languages at GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences (GSHS), Hyderabad, organized a special lecture titled "Digital Intimacy: Young Women in Inter-Asia" on 27 March 2026. The lecture was delivered by Prof. Tejaswini Niranjana, Director, Centre for Asian Studies, GITAM.

Drawing on her recent multi-sited research across Asian cities (Hong Kong, Singapore, Guangzhou, and Bangalore), Prof. Niranjana explored how digital mediation, shaped by neoliberal economies and evolving consumer cultures, is transforming the ways young women negotiate identity, relationships, and intimacy. She highlighted the re-configuration of boundaries between public and private life, the emergence of digitally mediated sociality, and the growing role of smartphones as central to everyday experience.

The lecture also examined language practices, online-offline dynamics, and new forms of digitally intimate behaviour, emphasizing how communication patterns, platform usage, and selective language choices reshape emotional expression and social connections in contemporary contexts. Faculty members and students attended the session. Prof. Sharmuel Tharu, Director In-Charge, GSHS, was present, and Dr. Sayantan Mondal, Head of the Department, delivered the vote of thanks.

### About the Speaker

Prof. Tejaswini Niranjana is Director, Centre for Asian Studies, GITAM, and Adjunct Professor at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. A distinguished scholar, she has authored and edited several influential works on culture, music, and postcolonial studies, and is an award-winning translator recognized with the National Translation Prize for Fiction by the American Literary Translators' Association.

# EESL Plans 5 Lakh Induction Cookstoves Amid LPG Concerns

HYDERABAD

State-owned Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) under Ministry of Power is set to float fresh tenders to procure over five lakh (half million) induction cookstoves in two phases, responding to a sharp surge in demand for electric cooking solutions across the country.

The move comes against the backdrop of ongoing disruptions in global energy supply chains, particularly the West Asia crisis, which has impacted LPG availability and natural gas supplies in India. EESL has already awarded a tender for one lakh induction cookstoves and initiated procurement of induction-compatible utensils, following strong feedback from state governments and consumers. "Given the overwhelming market response, EESL has geared up to float fresh tenders for over half a million units once the current vendor capacity is exhausted," top level official sources said.

The push for electric cooking aligns with the Union government's National Efficient Cooking Programme (NECP), launched under the broader Go Electric Campaign, aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels and promoting sustainable alternatives.

Recent weeks have witnessed a sharp spike in induction stove prices, driven by rising demand amid LPG shortages linked to supply disruptions in the Strait



of Hormuz. EESL's intervention is expected to stabilise prices and ensure availability across key urban and rural towns via EESLmart.in its e-commerce platform. EESL's electric cooking initiative builds on its proven track record of large-scale energy efficiency programmes such as UJALA (Unnat Jyothi affordable LEDs for All) Scheme and Gram UJALA, which successfully transformed lighting consumption patterns in India and attracted Global attention as one of the largest Pro-Public Energy Efficiency LED program.

Under NECP, EESL is promoting energy-efficient 1200-W induction cooktops equipped with advanced features such as energy consumption display and child safety locks.

The company has also submitted a detailed proposal to the Union government to elevate NECP into a flagship na-

tional programme, positioning electric cooking as a strategic, consumer-centric and cost-effective solution for India's clean energy transition. According to sources induction-based cooking can deliver 20-30 per cent savings compared to LPG, with some estimates placing savings as high as 35 per cent, while also significantly reducing carbon emissions.

To ensure supply continuity and price stability, EESL has entered into one-year rate contracts with multiple domestic manufacturers, enabling assured supply, consistent quality and timely delivery. The EESL is currently in the process of deploying nearly one lakh induction cookstoves to various state governments, public sector undertakings and institutions, signalling readiness for large-scale nationwide adoption of electric cooking solutions.

## Uttar Pradesh Taking Off to New Heights

A Future-ready Greenfield Airport, developed at a cost of ₹11,200 Crore, accelerating connectivity and growth

### Grand Inauguration of Noida International Airport (Phase I)

by **Narendra Modi** Prime Minister

Uttar Pradesh Powering India's Aviation Future

- Among India's largest greenfield airport projects
- Multi-Modal Transport Hub with seamless integration across road, rail, metro and regional transit systems
- Multi-Modal Cargo Hub with an annual capacity of 2.5 lakh+ metric tonnes, expandable to around 18 lakh metric tonnes
- Envisioned as a major international gateway for the NCR region
- Passenger handling capacity of 1.20 crore annually
- Expansion of passenger handling capacity up to 7 crore annually by Phase 4
- Architecturally inspired by the rich cultural heritage of Uttar Pradesh, featuring haveli-style design elements and a multi-level terminal blending the divinity of the ghats of Varanasi and Haridwar
- Interiors enhanced with handicrafts and textiles from states across India

In the august presence of

<b>Anandiben Patel</b> Governor, Uttar Pradesh	<b>Yogi Adityanath</b> Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh	<b>Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu</b> Minister, Civil Aviation, Government of India
<b>Pankaj Chaudhary</b> Minister of State, Finance, Government of India	<b>Keshav Prasad Maurya</b> Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh	<b>Brajesh Pathak</b> Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh
<b>Brajesh Singh</b> Minister of State, Public Works Department, Uttar Pradesh	<b>Dr. Mahesh Sharma</b> MP, Gautam Buddha Nagar	<b>Surendra Singh Nagar</b> Member, Rajya Sabha
<b>Amit Chaudhary</b> Chairman, District Panchayat, Gautam Buddha Nagar	<b>Pankaj Singh</b> MLA, Noida	<b>Tejpal Singh Nagar</b> MLA, Dadri
<b>Lakshmi Raj Singh</b> MLA, Sikandrabad	<b>Shrikant Sharma</b> MLA, Mathura	<b>Minakshi Singh</b> MLA, Khurja
<b>Rajesh Chaudhary</b> MLA, Mant	<b>Jaiveer Singh</b> MLA, Barauti	<b>Narendra Singh Bhati</b> MLC
<b>Surender Diler</b> MLA, Khair	<b>Shrichand Sharma</b> MLC	

and other dignitaries

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2026 | Time: 11:30 AM | Venue: Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh

Vikas ki Gati Apaar-Double Engine Sarkar

Information and Public Relations Department, U.P. | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)

## SHORT TAKES

### Minister Ponnamm attends grand Sri Rama Navami celebrations at Vemulawada

**HYDERABAD:** On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, Telangana Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar on Friday participated in the celestial wedding of Lord Rama and Sita at Vemulawada Rajanna Temple. Along with MLA Adi Srinivas, he presented silk robes and Talabralu to the deity. The leaders received a traditional Purna Kumbham welcome at Sri Bhimeswara Swamy Temple and performed special rituals. District officials, including Collector Garima Agarwal and SP Mahesh B. Gite, later met the Minister to review festival arrangements.

### MP Mallu Ravi pushes for industrial growth in Nagarkurnool



**HYDERABAD:** Congress MP Mallu Ravi raised strong demands in Parliament, urging the Centre to transform Nagarkurnool into a model constituency in the country. Raising the issue in Parliament, the Congress MP appealed to the Finance and Industries Ministries to establish major industries and consider expanding units from Hyderabad. Highlighting the upcoming Regional Ring Road, Ravi said it would unlock investment and employment opportunities. "Give our backward region a chance to grow, lead Nagarkurnool on the path of development", he urged.

### Unity in devotion: Leaders across parties join Sri Rama Navami celebrations

**NIZAMABAD:** Sri Rama Navami was celebrated with grandeur across Telangana, with the celestial wedding of Sita-Rama held at the historic Sri Raghunatha temple (also known as Quilla Rama Temple) in Nizamabad. In a rare show of unity, leaders from different political backgrounds participated in the rituals. Telangana Jagruthi president K. Kavitha represented the bride's side, while TPCC chief Mahesh Kumar Goud took part from the groom's side, and they presented silk garments and glistening pearl Talabralu (sacred rice mixed with pearls) to the deities. Devotees were offered prasadam, including traditional Panakam and Vadappu, marking the festive spirit.

## CASR demands immediate release of Lingraj Azad, condemns action

STATE REPRESSION AND CORPORATE LOOT IN ADIVASI REGION

HYDERABAD

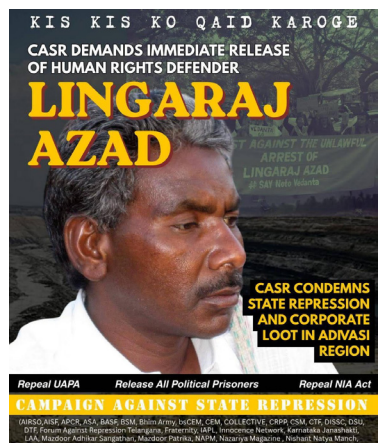
The Campaign Against State Repression (CASR) strongly condemns the arrest of prominent Human rights defenders Lingraj Azad, who was arrested by the Odisha Police on 25 March 2026 from Bhawanipatna, along with fellow activist Suresh Sangram.

Azad, a leading figure of the Samajwadi Jan Parishad and associated with people's movements like the Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti and Maa Mati Mali Suraksha Manch, has consistently raised his voice against illegal land acquisition and mining projects in Scheduled Areas.

His arrest is not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern of repression against those resisting corporate plunder of Adivasi lands. Azad has been at the forefront of defending the constitutional protections guaranteed under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and laws such as the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006. These laws clearly mandate that no land acquisition or mining activity can proceed without the free, prior, and informed consent of the Gram Sabha.

### Corporate Loot and Forced Displacement

CASR emphasises that the arrest of Lingraj Azad must be understood in the wider context of increasing corporate loot in natural resource-rich regions of Odisha and across India. Areas rich in minerals—inhabited largely by Adivasi and forest-dwelling communities—have become sites of aggressive extraction



by corporations, often facilitated by the state.

Large-scale mining projects, particularly those linked to companies such as Vedanta Resources, have led to massive displacement, destruction of forests, loss of traditional livelihoods, and irreversible ecological damage. Despite legal safeguards under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006, Gram Sabhas are routinely bypassed or manipulated, reducing democratic processes to mere formalities.

Those who resist—activists, community leaders, and organisations—are increasingly being targeted through false cases, arrests, surveillance, and intimidation. The arrest of Azad is a clear attempt to silence one of the strongest voices against this ongoing corporate-driven displacement.

### OUR DEMANDS

- \* Immediate and unconditional release of Lingraj Azad and Suresh Sangram
- \* Withdrawal of all false and fabricated charges against them

\* An immediate halt to forced land acquisition and mining projects without Gram Sabha consent

\* An end to corporate loot of natural resources and displacement of Adivasi communities

\* Strict implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and Forest Rights Act, 2006

\* Accountability of officials responsible for illegal arrests and violations of constitutional rights

CASR calls upon all democratic forces, civil society organisations, student groups, workers' unions, and concerned citizens across the country to raise their voices against this systematic plunder and repression.

The ongoing model of "development" that prioritises corporate profit over people's rights is resulting in dispossession, marginalisation, and deepening inequality. Criminalising dissent will not silence the resistance of the people.

Release All Political Prisoners!  
Stop Corporate Loot!  
Stop State Repression!

\*Campaign Against State Repression (CASR)\*

### Organising Team

(AIRSO,AISF, APCR, ASA, BASF, BSM, Bhim Army, bsCEM, CEM, COLLECTIVE, CRPP, CSM, CTF, DISSC, DSU, DTF, Forum Against Repression Telangana, Fraternity, IAPL, Innocence Network, Karnataka Janashakti, LAA, Mazdoor Adhikar Sangathan, Mazdoor Patrika, NAPM, Nazariya Magazine, Nishant Natya Manch, Nowruz, NTUI, People's Watch, Rihai Manch, Samajwadi Janparishad, Samajwadi lok manch, Bahujan Samajwadi Mnach, United Peace Alliance, WSS, Y4S)

## DGP Couple at Sitarama Kalyanam



BHADRACHALAM

The sacred Sitarama Kalyanam Mahotsavam was celebrated on Friday with great grandeur and devotion at the holy shrine of Bhadrachalam. The celestial wedding of Lord Rama and Sita was conducted in a magnificent and visually delightful manner in the presence of Vedic chants.

As part of this annual festival, a large number of devotees gathered this year as well. Amid Vedic recitations and traditional musical instruments, the ceremony was attended by Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy along with his spouse, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti

Vikramarka and his spouse, and Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy with his wife Hemalatha. Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Vakiti Srihari, Konda Surekha, Anasuya Seethakka, and Rajya Sabha Member Vem Narender Reddy, along with others, also attended the ceremony and were blessed by witnessing the divine event.

On the occasion of the Sitarama Kalyanam Mahotsavam, the DGP arrived in Bhadrachalam on Thursday evening itself to oversee the security arrangements. He held discussions with local police officials regarding the arrangements. Considering the presence of

the Chief Minister, several ministers, and a large gathering of devotees, he instructed officials to ensure strict security measures to prevent any untoward incidents. Around 2,000 police personnel were deployed for tight security. Under the supervision of District SP Rohit Raj, local police managed the security arrangements effectively. Measures were taken to ensure that devotees faced no inconvenience and could witness the ceremony in an orderly manner.

The Sitarama Kalyanam Mahotsavam concluded as a visually splendid and spiritually uplifting event in the devotional atmosphere of Bhadrachalam.

## Service above all: Bhuvaneshwari reaffirms NTR Trust's commitment

CHITTOOR

Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of AP chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, reiterated that public service remains the core mission of the NTR Memorial Trust, as she concluded her four-day tour of Kuppam.

Paying tributes to N.T. Rama Rao's ideals, she highlighted the Trust's wide-ranging welfare activities, including

healthcare services to over 23 lakh people and Rs.23 crore spending on medical aid.

With support from Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, she said the Trust is expanding Thalassemia care, blood banks, and women empowerment initiatives. She distributed sewing machines, pushcarts, and hearing aids to beneficiaries. To foster the economic self-reliance of women,

the trust had established the Stree Shakti Skill Development Center in Kuppam.

"The women who have undergone training here are now standing on their own feet financially", she noted and said that, under the aegis of NTR Trust, the Stree Shakti Handicrafts Store was established in Hyderabad to market the products created by these trained women.

## "Too little, too late": MP Vamsi slams fuel excise cut



NEW DELHI

Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna on Friday termed the Centre's Rs.10 per litre excise duty cut on petrol and diesel as "too little, too late", accusing the BJP-led NDA government of burdening citizens with heavy fuel taxes over the past decade. "It is a belated move after years of burdening the common man with high fuel prices despite low global oil costs", he remarked.

The Congress MP alleged that despite lower global crude prices, the BJP government kept retail fuel prices high, collecting nearly Rs.25 to Rs.30 lakh crore from the public. Contrasting it with the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) era, he claimed petrol prices were significantly lower even when crude

oil was costlier. The BJP was now trying to project itself as pro-people while ignoring the massive taxes collected over the last decade. "Actually, in the last 10 years, when the oil barrel was 50-60 dollars per barrel, the government had increased the petrol cost to a minimum Rs 100 per litre", he pointed out.

Vamsi also raised concerns over reports of LPG shortages and panic buying in Telangana, warning that the government statements are creating unnecessary public anxiety. "Even in Hyderabad, the public are rushing to the petrol bunks, trying to fill fuel, because Modi ji in the parliament has said that the Corona time crisis is still the same. It is a very dangerous situation. And it is not good to put the public in a panic mode", he warned.



### BIG CROWDS AT SHOBHA YATRA

A massive turnout of devotees participates in the Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra, filling the streets with vibrant processions, devotional chants, and traditional performances. The atmosphere buzzes with spiritual fervour as families, youth, and elderly devotees come together to celebrate the divine occasion

## Ponnamm assures review of Huzurabad dumping yard plan

HYDERABAD

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar on Friday assured that the proposed dumping yard near Sirsapalli Rangapur in Huzurabad will not proceed against public sentiment.

Responding to a memorandum from the Huzurabad All-Party Committee, the

Minister said he would take the issue to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and ensure a fair decision.

He noted that the dumping yard project was sanctioned in the year 2022 but emphasized that the government would prioritize people's concerns before moving forward.

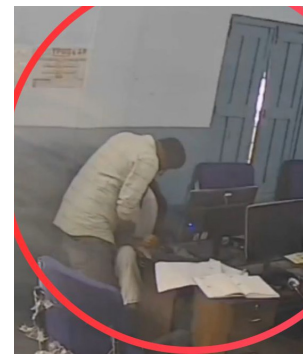
The all-party committee included

Municipal Chairperson Rontala Suhasini, Councilor Vardineni Ravinder Rao, All-Party Committee President Palakala Eshwar Reddy, former SC Corporation Chairman Banda Srinivas and committee members Rajapalli Sarpanch Katkuru Mallareddy, Chandupatla Janardhan, Kolipaka Sammaiah, Velpula Ratnam and Hariprasad.

## Teacher's assistant caught misbehaving with Class 10 student, suspended

HYDERABAD

A teacher's assistant at a Zilla Parishad High School in Mominapur village of Maddur mandal in Telangana's Narayanpet district has been suspended after closed circuit television (CCTV) camera footage of him allegedly misbehaving with a student surfaced on the internet. The act reportedly occurred on March 7, but surfaced much later. The accused, identified as Swami, had called a Class 10 girl to the computer lab and then proceeded to behave inappropriately with her. The video of the incident shows the accused and the victim sitting across each other, when Swami suddenly gets up and approaches the victim. He then bends down to her face, supposedly to kiss her. In response to the video, District Education Officer Govindaraju issued a statement saying that Swami has been suspended and an inquiry has been launched into the incident.



## ASPIRE-BioNEST, Indian Immunologicals sign MoU to boost biotech startups

HYDERABAD

ASPIRE-BioNEST at University of Hyderabad (UoH) has entered into a strategic partnership with Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) to accelerate biotech innovation under the "One Health" framework.

The collaboration aims to support startups across therapies, diagnostics, and medical devices by enabling co-development, validation, technology transfer, and market access. The initiative is expected to bridge the gap between early-stage research and real-world deployment, boosting the commercialization of biotech solutions.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Anand Kumar, Director, Indian Immunologicals Ltd., and Prof. S. Rajagopal, Director, ASPIRE-BioNEST in the presence of senior officials from both the organizations.



As part of the engagement, IIL will provide technical mentorship, domain expertise, and access to advanced R&D and manufacturing facilities, including vaccine development capabilities. Startups may also benefit from IIL's CDMO support for scaling up production.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Anand Kumar said IIL will support startups across the product lifecycle - from research and validation to regulatory pathways and commercialization - helping translate innovations into market-ready solutions.

Dr. Anil Kondreddy, CEO of ASPIRE-BioNEST, emphasized that such industry partnerships are crucial for helping startups move from proof-of-concept to scalable products.

The collaboration will also promote entrepreneurship through hackathons, semi-

nars, and pre-incubation programs, while exploring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support to strengthen the incubation ecosystem.

This partnership is expected to deepen industry-startup collaboration and enhance India's position in the global biotechnology landscape.

## "Farmers want land, not money": Anger grows over M. Kodandaram's stand on Pharmacy

HYDERABAD

Tension is mounting among farmers opposing the Pharmacy project after TJS leader Prof M. Kodandaram sought compensation for affected landowners during a meeting with the Rangareddy District Collector. "Why is Professor Kodandaram now asking the Collector to provide compensation? Did the farmers ask for compensation? The farmers are clearly demanding that their land rights be restored to them. Professor Kodandaram is well aware of this", the farmers pointed out. Farmers have rejected the compensation approach, reiterating their demand for cancellation



of land acquisition and restoration of their land rights. They expressed disappointment, noting that Kodandaram had earlier backed their cause and opposed handing over fertile lands. Accusing him of shifting stance, farmers said they expected him to fight alongside

them against the state government, not support what they see as a compromise solution. "Professor Kodandaram now appears to be supporting the government's stance. This is not the kind of action expected from a People's Movement Leader", they remarked.

## Changes in the pattern of Train Services

**CHENNAI, MARCH 27:** Line Block/Power Block have approved for commissioning of Doubling work between Eraniel - Nagercoil Town, consequently the following are the changes in the pattern of train services:

**Partial Cancellation/Change in Origination of Train Services:**  
**Train No. 12659 Nagercoil Jn - Shalimar Gu-rudev Superfast Express** scheduled to leave Nagercoil Jn at 14.45 hrs on 29th March, 2026 will be partially cancelled between Nagercoil Jn and Thiruvananthapuram Central. The train will originate from Thiruvananthapuram Central at its scheduled departure time of 16.12 hrs  
**Train No. 16382 Kanniyakumari - Pune Express** scheduled to leave Kanniyakumari at 08.40 hrs on 29th, 30th, 31st March, 2026 will be partially cancelled between Kanniyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram Central. The train will originate from Thiruvananthapuram Central at its scheduled departure time of 10.40 hrs  
**Partial Cancellation/**

**Short Termination of Train Service:**  
**Train No. 16381 Pune - Kanniyakumari Express** scheduled to leave Pune at 23.45 hrs on 26th, 27th & 28th March, 2026 will be partially cancelled between Thiruvananthapuram Central and Kanniyakumari. The train will be short terminated at Thiruvananthapuram Central  
**Diversion of Train Service:**  
**Train No. 22620 Tirunelveli - Bilaspur Superfast Express** scheduled to leave Tirunelveli at 01.25 hrs on 29th March, 2026 will be diverted to run via Tenkasi, Sengottai and Punalur skipping stoppages at Nagercoil Town and Thiruvananthapuram Central. Additional stoppages will be provided at Tenkasi, Sengottai and Punalur for the convenience of passengers.  
**Regulation of Train Service:**  
**Train No. 12634 Kanniyakumari - Chennai Egmore Express** scheduled to leave Kanniyakumari at 18.00 hrs on 30th March, 2026 will be regulated for 1 hour enroute



## 8 Killed, 3 Children Among Victims, in UP Crash

**NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026**

The people who died in the incident were returning from a head-shaving (mundan) ceremony in Prayagraj.

At least eight people, including three children, were killed, and several others were injured when a speeding pickup vehicle rammed into a stationary container truck in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi district on Friday. Five women were also among those who lost their lives, officials said. All the people who died were travelling in the pickup vehicle and were returning after attending a head-shaving (mundan) ceremony in Prayagraj, they added.

At least 27 people have been injured in the incident, officials added. The incident took place near Dorma village on the national highway in Kaushambi. The container was parked on the roadside when the collision took place. The impact was so severe that five women and three children died on the spot. As soon as information about the accident was received, police and administrative teams arrived at the scene. Rescue operations were initiated, and the injured were admitted to various nearby hospitals, where the condition of several of them is said to be critical.

According to preliminary information, the accident is believed to have been caused by the pickup driver dozing off behind the wheel. The police are currently investigating the matter.

## Kejriwal Pushes Punjab Model in Gujarat, Promises Free Care for Poor

**NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026**

Arvind Kejriwal highlighted Punjab's welfare model, claiming farmers get free treatment up to Rs 10 lakh in private hospitals. He said the same can be implemented in Gujarat if Aam Aadmi Party comes to power, urging voters to back AAP. AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday highlighted welfare measures in Punjab in a visit to Gujarat, claiming that farmers and labourers are now receiving free medical treatment of up to Rs 10 lakh in top private hospitals. In a post on X, Kejriwal said that hospitals where even billionaires seek treatment are now providing free care to farmers and workers in Punjab. He added that similar benefits could be implemented in Gujarat if his party comes to power, urging voters to "remove BJP and bring the broom." Kejriwal further said that Punjab has a "farmers' government," listing several measures introduced in the state. According to him, farmers receive free electricity for agriculture, payments for crops are made within 24 hours, and canal water



coverage has expanded significantly—from 20% to 78% of fields in four years. He asserted that these initiatives could also be replicated in Gujarat if voters support his party. The AAP leader also mentioned that he addressed a public rally in the tribal region of Dahod, where a large number of people gathered.

On Thursday, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener Arvind Kejriwal accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of "looting Gujarat" and alleged that the Congress and BJP have been working together to weaken the state. Addressing a public rally in Jamnagar, the former Delhi Chief Minister claimed that several government departments in Gujarat have become deeply corrupt. He claimed that the ruling BJP has "ruined" the state while accusing the Congress of enabling this decline.

## Centre will hike fuel prices after polls, claims K'taka Dy CM Shivakumar

**BENGALURU, MARCH 27**

Terming the Centre's move on fuel prices as an election gimmick, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Friday alleged that petrol and diesel prices would be increased again immediately after the elections. Addressing the media at the KPCC office and later speaking to reporters at his residence, Shivakumar said: "As soon as the elections are over, the Central government will again raise petrol and diesel prices. They have done this before too. All of this is election gimmickry."

"The Central government is collecting an additional Rs 1,000 crore in taxes every day. Who is this reaching? When fuel prices were raised earlier, we had launched the '100 Not Out' campaign. Now they are doing a trial run to benefit companies of their choice," he said. Referring to the global situation, he said crude oil prices have risen at the international level, but alleged that the Centre has failed to ensure adequate supply of gas cylinders to consumers in the state.

"Two ships crossed the Strait of Hormuz and came



to the country. Could they not have sent one of them to the south - to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu? Why did they go to Gujarat? Elections are currently underway in Ker-

ala and Tamil Nadu. Because they have no influence in the southern states, they are treating South India with contempt," he alleged. He further criticised the Centre over fuel pricing and public messaging. "Earlier, there used to be hoardings at all petrol bunks showing a Muslim woman thanking the government for providing gas. Why have all those been removed now? The Central government is picking the pockets of consumers every single day," he said.

"From May 26, 2014 onwards, petrol and diesel prices kept rising. Petrol was be-

## Fuel Supply Stable in Haryana: CM Saini to PM

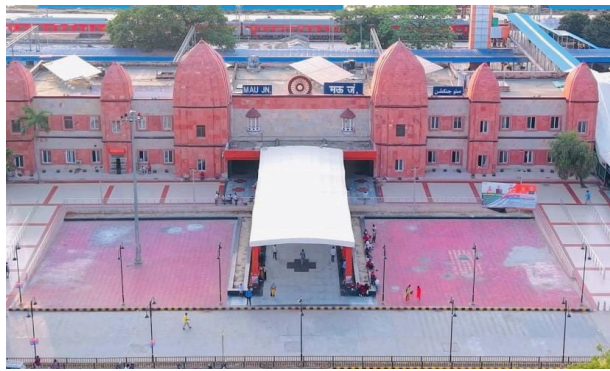
**CHANDIGARH: (MAR 27)**

The supply of petroleum products in Haryana remains smooth and uninterrupted, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said on Friday. Taking part in a virtual meeting of chief ministers with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Saini said he had held meetings with petroleum companies to review the situation arising out of the West Asia conflict in the state. The availability of petrol, diesel and gas in the state remains the same as it was four months ago, Saini said.

## Redeveloped Mau Junction Station to Fulfill Public Aspirations

**GORAKHPUR, MARCH 27, 2026:**

Mau Junction station, located on the Aunrihar-Bhatni rail section under the Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway, is being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme at a cost of ₹52.65 crore. Mau Junction is an important station in eastern Uttar Pradesh. It is directly connected by train services to major cities such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Pune, Lucknow, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Jaipur, Ranchi, and Amritsar. A total of 44 mail/express and passenger trains operate daily from this station. Keeping in view the increasing passenger movement and transportation needs for the next 50 years, redevelopment work is being carried out rapidly. The objective of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is to make railway stations passenger-friendly by equipping them with modern facilities and preparing them to meet future challenges. Under the redevelopment, the station is being upgraded with beautification of the station building, improved entry and exit gates, waiting halls for passengers, modern toilets, enhanced lighting, raised and extended platforms for easy boarding and deboarding, adequate seating arrangements, and construction of a foot over bridge (FOB) for movement between platforms. Work on the station building and porch, along with a facade covering 3,000 square meters, has been completed. Attractive facade lighting has been installed. The approach road to the station has been improved, and in the circulating area, works including 600 meters of drainage, 1,250 meters of boundary wall, 15,000 square meters of roads, 2,000 square meters of parking, and 3,000 square meters of pathways have been completed. Additionally, for passenger convenience, platform expansion work is underway, including laying granite over 5,500 square meters of platform surface. To protect passengers from sun and rain, provisions for 32-bay PP shelters are being made. Construction of new waiting halls of various categories is also in progress. Keeping cleanliness in mind, modern toilets for men, women, and differently-abled persons are being provided.



## Speed Up PM Surya Ghar, RDSS Works: Ravi Kumar

**AMRAVATI:**

Andhra Pradesh Minister for Energy, Sri Gottipati Ravi Kumar, has directed officials to expedite the implementation of various power sector projects across the state. Holding a teleconference from his Camp Office on Friday, the Minister reviewed the progress of PM Surya Ghar, RDSS schemes with CMDs of DISCOMs and senior officials. He emphasized the need for a war-footing approach to meet the state's energy goals and improve infrastructure. The Minister laid special emphasis on providing free solar power to SC and ST categories under the PM Surya Ghar scheme. He set a specific target to complete at least 2,000 solar connections per constituency between the birth anniversaries of Babu Jagjivan Ram and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He instructed officials to take stringent measures and ensure that these targets are achieved within the stipulated timeframe without any delays.

Regarding the agricultural sector, Minister Ravi Kumar ordered the immediate clearance of all pending electricity connections before the commencement of the upcoming farming season. He reiterated the government's commitment to supporting farmers and stressed that the electrical infrastructure must be strengthened to provide uninterrupted power supply. This move is aimed at ensuring that the agricultural community faces no hurdles during the crucial cropping period. Reflecting the vision of Chief Minister Sri Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the Minister stated that the alliance government would bear the burden of electricity charges to ensure no additional financial weight falls on the citizens. He called upon field-level engineers and staff to work with renewed vigor and coordination. By ensuring efficient service delivery, the Minister noted that the department could bring a positive reputation to the government while providing significant relief to the public.



## Gujarat Fake Currency Racket: Fresh Arrest, ₹20 Lakh Circulated

**AHMEDABAD/SURAT, MARCH 27**

A key associate in a fake currency racket involving forged Rs 500 notes has been arrested by the Ahmedabad Crime Branch, as investigators expanded their probe into a network allegedly linked to a self-styled godman known among associates as "Yoga Guru". The accused, Bhavesh Gajera (46), a resident of Kamrej in Surat, was taken into custody for his role in manufacturing and circulating forged Indian currency. He has been remanded in police custody for six days. The arrest follows a major operation on March 18 in which the city's Crime Branch intercepted a vehicle in the Amraiwadi area and detained seven individuals, including a woman. Officers recovered counterfeit Rs 500 notes with a face value of Rs 2,48,26,500 from the vehicle. The accused were allegedly on their way to deliver and circulate the notes when they were apprehended, and were later remanded for 10 days for questioning. An official said, "Another accused who assisted in making fake Indian currency notes of Rs 500 denomination has been arrested," adding that Gajera "was present during the conspiracy to print fake notes and played an active role in the crime". Investigators said that further inquiry revealed that in early February 2026, Gajera, along with co-accused Mukesh Thummar and Ramesh Balar, had already circulated counterfeit notes worth about Rs 20 lakh. Police stated that he was part of a pre-planned conspiracy led by the main accused, Pradip Jotangia, described in the investigation as a self-styled spiritual figure or "Guru/Baba", and his associates. According to the Crime Branch, Gajera provided financial assistance for procuring equipment and materials used to print the fake notes and was involved in arranging their circulation. Three mobile phones worth Rs 15,000 were seized from his possession. The case forms part of a wider counterfeit currency racket that investigators say operated from an ashram-based setup in Surat linked to the group. Authorities earlier uncovered a printing unit equipped with printers, cutting machines and specialised paper resembling currency sheets. Police said the network was organised and methodical, with members sourcing high-quality paper with imitation security features from suppliers in China and setting up printing operations at residential premises. The group initially tested the fake notes in small transactions before expanding distribution through informal channels such as local markets and intermediaries.



## BJP Slams Karnataka Govt Over Fuel Tax Hikes

**BENGALURU, MARCH 27**

Senior BJP leader and the Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka on Friday hit back at Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President D.K. Shivakumar over his criticism of fuel pricing, accusing the Congress-led state government of burdening people through repeated tax hikes on petrol and diesel. In a media statement, Ashoka said it was "ironic and laughable" that Shivakumar was speaking about rising fuel prices while the state government itself had increased taxes, making fuel costlier for citizens. He alleged that since coming to power in May 2023, the Congress government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has treated fuel as a major source of revenue to compensate for fiscal mismanagement. Ashoka claimed that the government had raised petrol prices by around Rs 3 per litre and diesel by about Rs 3.5 per litre in June 2024 through a sales tax hike. He further alleged that diesel prices were increased again by Rs 2 per litre in April 2025. According to him, these decisions have resulted in diesel in Karnataka becoming over Rs 5.5 per litre costlier solely due to state-imposed taxes. Questioning Shivakumar's remarks against the Centre, Ashoka asked why the state government continued to "punish farmers, transporters and commuters" through higher fuel prices.

He also responded to the Deputy Chief Minister's query on fuel revenues by referring to the Congress-led UPA government's issuance of oil bonds between 2005 and 2010, which he said deferred subsidy costs to future governments. Ashoka stated that the current NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is still servicing liabilities arising from those bonds, which he claimed have crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore, including interest.

He accused Congress of taking credit for lower fuel prices in the past while shifting the financial burden to future taxpayers.

Drawing a comparison between the Centre and the state, Ashoka said that when the Union government adjusted excise duty in April 2025, it ensured there was no impact on retail consumers. In contrast, he alleged that any increase in fuel taxes by the Karnataka government directly affected consumers.

He further criticised the state government's fiscal approach, alleging that it viewed petrol and diesel as a "cash cow" to manage budgetary pressures.



## Defence Ministry Seals ₹858 Cr Missile, Navy Deals

**NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026**

The Defence Ministry on Friday signed contracts worth Rs 858 crore for the Army and Navy. The deals cover air defence missile systems and maintenance support for maritime aircraft.

The Ministry of Defence on Friday signed contracts worth Rs 858 crore to strengthen India's air defence and maritime surveillance capabilities, with separate agreements for the Army and the Navy. The deals include a Rs 445 crore contract with Russia's Rosoboronexport for the procurement of Tunguska Air Defence Missile Systems for the Indian Army, and a Rs 413 crore agreement with Boeing India Defence Private Limited for depot-level inspection of P-8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft used by the Indian Navy. The Tunguska missile systems are expected to significantly enhance India's multi-layered air defence network by improving its ability to counter aerial threats such as aircraft, drones and cruise missiles. The agreement also reinforces the long-standing strategic defence partnership between India and Russia. In a parallel move, the MoD signed a contract under the "Buy Indian" category with 100% indigenous content for the maintenance of the Navy's P-8I fleet. The Rs 413 crore deal with Boeing India Defence will facilitate depot-level inspection and servicing of the aircraft within the country. Officials said the arrangement will ensure in-country Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) support for the P-8I aircraft, reducing dependence on foreign facilities and improving operational readiness. The ministry noted that the project aligns with the government's push for Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India, aimed at boosting domestic capabilities in defence manufacturing and services.

The contracts were signed at Kartavya Bhawan-2 in New Delhi in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and senior officials of the ministry.



## EC Sets Duties for Police in Poll-Bound Bengal

**KOLKATA: (MAR 27)**

The Election Commission on Friday evening issued two separate directives clearly outlining responsibilities of police officers, from station officers to SDPOs, as part of intensified poll preparedness in West Bengal, an official said. The move comes shortly after the suspension of Basanti police station inspector in charge Avijit Paul for allegedly failing to tackle BJP-TMC clashes on March 26.

EDITORIAL

A FRAGILE FOUNDATION:  
WHY INDIA'S CORE SECTOR IS  
STALLING

The economy has recently been yielding some discomfiting data, even before the war in West Asia began. The most recent of these was the February 2026 data on the Index of Eight Core Industries. This release showed that growth in the overall Index had dropped to a three-month low in February, half the rate of what it saw in January. This was not a case of a high base effect, either, with growth in February 2025 having been just 3.4%. The sector-wise data reveal further issues. The domestic crude oil industry has been contracting for six consecutive months. In fact, the sector has contracted in 20 out of the last 24 months. The natural gas sector, too, has contracted for the last 20 consecutive months. As context, from about the middle of last year, it had been increasingly clear that there would be some sort of escalation between the U.S. and Iran, even if the exact nature of the war now could not have been predicted then. It is no secret that India is highly dependent on energy imports, especially from the region that would have faced the brunt of any such escalation. As a matter of fact, a large part of the contraction in domestic production was likely because imports were coming cheap. Yet, as tensions increased, it might have been more prudent to have increased domestic oil and gas production over the last eight months so as to at least build reserves, if not to also temporarily reduce import dependence. Permanently reducing such dependence will take time, but a temporary domestic production push — as is belatedly underway — might have considerably alleviated the current supply crunch. Hindsight is 20-20, but that does not excuse a lack of foresight or an inability to learn. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana of 2016 should have triggered a concerted policy to secure LPG supplies and reserves.

This poor core sector performance comes on top of the new series of GDP data showing that the Indian economy is actually smaller than previously thought. Further, between 2022-23 and 2025-26, the contributions to GDP of key engines such as private consumption, capital formation, exports and imports have all fallen. The share of 'change in stocks' has nearly doubled, however, meaning that there is production but not enough sales. Soon, that production too will reduce to fall in line with the subdued demand. All of this leads into the impact of the current crisis. With commercial fuel sources curtailed, oil prices at more than \$100 a barrel, and global economic uncertainty at a high, economists and rating agencies are already downgrading India's growth outlook to about 6.5%. Perhaps, India's much-vaunted macroeconomic fundamentals and resilience need a more realistic assessment.

FROM DOLLAR  
DREAMS TO  
AI DISRUPTION

BY CHATURVEDULA  
SUBRAHMANYAM

A grounded, no-nonsense exchange between Dr. Yelamanchili Shivaji, and Veerapaneni Rajesh dissects the economic and cultural shift in Coastal Andhra over three decades. The software boom, powered by American dollars, delivered financial rise but quietly narrowed intellectual choices, sidelined agriculture, and reduced respect for skilled and research-driven

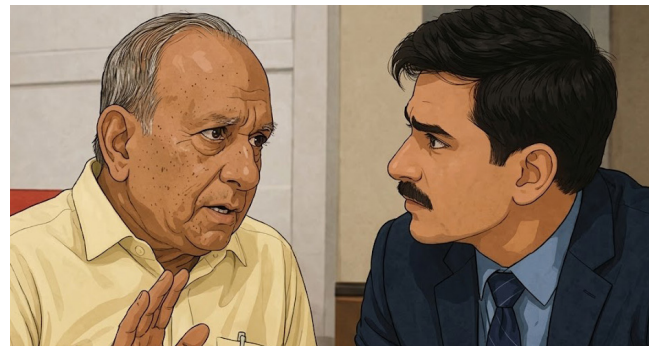
professions. Using the framework of "Dutch Disease," the discussion exposes how dependence on a single economic pathway created structural vulnerability. The conversation then pivots sharply to the AI disruption, mapping how automation will target the middle-layer software workforce while rewarding deep knowledge, physical skill, and genuine enterprise. The central warning is clear: speed without depth is a dead end in the coming AI economy.

Dr. YELAMANCHILI SHIVAJI WARNS  
COASTAL ANDHRA'S SOFTWARE  
MODEL IS RUNNING OUT OF ROAD

Dr. Yelamanchili Shivaji walks into any conversation with the weight of decades in public life; seasoned, sharp, and unafraid to take a position. A former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament from Andhra Pradesh, shaped by stints in the Telugu Desam Party, Bharatiya Lok Dal, and Janata Party, he has built a reputation as a relentless voice on governance, agriculture, and the structural imbalances of Indian federal politics. Across the table sits Veerapaneni Rajesh, a Dallas-based Non-Resident Indian who represents a very different, yet equally influential, constituency—the global Telugu diaspora. Deeply embedded in community networks through platforms like TANA, Rajesh operates at the intersection of culture, technology, and diaspora engagement. When these two minds meet, one grounded in the soil of Andhra's political realities, the other shaped by global exposure and migrant ambition; the conversation is not casual; it is a collision of generations, geographies, and hard questions about the future.

A Face-to-Face Conversation: Dr. Yelamanchili Shivaji and Veerapaneni Rajesh, Dallas

**DR. SHIVAJI:** Rajesh, what you are seeing in Coastal Andhra today, it is not random. It follows a pattern. Have you heard of "Dutch Disease"?  
**RAJESH (leaning in):** I've come across the term, but never thought it applied to us. How does it connect?  
**DR. SHIVAJI (measured tone):** In the 1960s, the Netherlands discovered massive natural gas reserves. Money started flowing in. Easy money. And that was the beginning of the problem.  
**RAJESH:** Problem? With that kind of wealth?  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** Yes. Because when money becomes easy, effort becomes optional. Their manufacturing sector weakened. Why build when you can buy? And when the gas ran out, they had lost the ability to produce. (He pauses. Looks directly at Rajesh.) Now tell me, does this sound familiar?  
**RAJESH (after a brief silence):** You're saying... software became our natural gas?  
**DR. SHIVAJI (nods):** Exactly. From the 1990s onwards, dollars from America flooded Coastal Andhra. Vijayawada, Guntur, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam and the real estate exploded.  
**RAJESH:**



And one path became standard... Both together, almost instinctively: Engineering → Software job → HIB visa → America. But it did lift families. Financially, it changed lives.  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** I am not denying that. It gave stability. It gave exposure. But tell me, what did it take away?  
**RAJESH (thinking):** Diversity... maybe?  
**DR. SHIVAJI (firmly):** Intellectual diversity. Agriculture was neglected. The Krishna-Godavari delta, one of the richest soils in the world became a place people wanted to escape from.  
**RAJESH:** And skilled professions... they lost respect.  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** Correct. When a software salary comes easily, who wants to spend ten years doing a PhD? The question changed. Not "What do I want to understand?" But "Does it give salary and visa?"

**DR. SHIVAJI:** Now comes the real disruption: AI.  
**RAJESH (serious):** Everyone is talking about it.  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** Talking, yes. Understanding? Very few. It reminds me of the Harshad Mehta era. Noise everywhere. Depth nowhere.  
**RAJESH:** So where does AI hit the hardest?  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** Let's break it down. (He raises three fingers.)  
**First:** Physical Skills. Electricians. Plumbers. Surgeons. Agricultural technicians. AI cannot fix a pipeline or wire a house. These jobs will hold strong.  
**Second:** True Entrepreneurs. If your business is just middle work, like booking tickets or forwarding resumes, you're exposed. But if it runs on trust, relationships, judgement, AI becomes a tool, not a replacement.  
**Third:** Deep Intelligence. Scientists. Researchers. Mathematicians. Not users of knowledge,

but creators of it.  
**RAJESH (quietly):** And our software generation...?  
**DR. SHIVAJI (direct):** Stuck in the middle layer. Coordinators. Junior consultants. Process managers. That is exactly where AI will strike first.  
**RAJESH:** So what should families do now?  
**DR. SHIVAJI (leans back, voice steady but sharp):** They need to ask better questions. Are we teaching children speed or depth? Are we preparing them for five years or fifty? A child who knows how to use something is replaceable. A child who understands why it works, that child survives.  
**RAJESH (nodding slowly):** We chased opportunity. Now we

need to rethink direction.  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** Precisely. We don't need to run abroad for everything. India has institutions, viz. IISc, IITs, all world class. What matters is not location. It is depth. (Dr. Shivaji's voice softens, but the conviction remains unshaken.)  
**DR. SHIVAJI:** No revolution can shake a mind that understands deeply. But surface knowledge... that will struggle.  
**RAJESH (with quiet resolve):** This conversation, we need to have it more widely.  
**DR. SHIVAJI (firm):** Not casually. Honestly. Because what is at stake is not just careers. It is the direction of an entire generation.

**A GENERATION AT RISK AS EASY SUCCESS MEETS A HARD FUTURE**  
What unfolds here is not just a polite exchange of ideas but a warning bell ringing inside a complacent society. Coastal Andhra has mistaken cash flow for capability, and comfort for competence. The software boom delivered wealth, but quietly hollowed out intellectual courage and curiosity. A generation trained to execute is now staring at a future that demands original thinking. That middle layer which once thrived on coordination and process now stands directly in the line of disruption. AI is not arriving as a distant threat; it is already redrawing the value map. The uncomfortable truth is this: speed without depth has an expiry date. Families that continue to chase predictable paths are preparing their children for an outdated world. The real shift will come only when ambition moves from salary brackets to knowledge creation. This is not a collapse moment yet, but it is certainly a decisive turning point. Those who read the signal early will adapt; the rest will be forced to react under pressure.



FRIENDSHIP —  
THE UNWRITTEN LAW OF LIGHT

Before the first word  
betrayed silence,  
before time fractured the seamless whole,  
there lingered—  
not a presence,  
but an awareness  
that needed no witness.  
It did not begin.  
It revealed itself—  
the way dawn does not arrive,  
but uncovers what was always waiting  
behind the eyes of darkness.  
Friendship is not between two beings.  
It is the unseen symmetry  
in which separateness forgets itself;  
the still axis  
where two solitudes  
lose their edges  
and become horizon.  
Not spoken—  
yet it outlives every language.  
Not written—  
yet it inscribes the soul  
with a script no erasure can reach.  
In laughter,  
it is the silence that holds the sound;  
in grief,  
the unbroken thread  
that refuses the tyranny of absence.  
Time leans toward it—  
and falters;  
for it cannot be kept  
by what is destined to pass.  
Distance extends its question—  
but finds no reply;  
for what appears apart  
is only a surface illusion  
of an indivisible depth.  
It is a center

that does not occupy space,  
a circle  
that remembers no boundary;  
a hidden constellation  
visible only  
to those who have unlearned sight.  
When the self shatters  
into unnamed fragments,  
it does not mend—  
it remembers;  
and in that remembering,  
wholeness returns  
without effort.  
It asks nothing—  
not even to be known.  
Yet it abides,  
like an unwritten law  
governing the quiet gravity  
of being.  
Do not call it love—  
love still reaches.  
This does not reach.  
It simply remains—  
like silence  
after truth has dissolved  
the need to speak.  
A friend—  
is not a figure in time,  
but a threshold  
through which the infinite  
recognizes  
its own reflection.  
And what we name eternity  
is only the faint afterglow  
of this recognition—  
falling, without sound,  
across the fragile miracle  
of existence.

Dr. Peruka Raju ...  
7810032847

From Dream to Reality: Noida Airport Ready for Takeoff

A Game-Changer for  
India's Aviation Sector

BY VIVEK SHUKLA

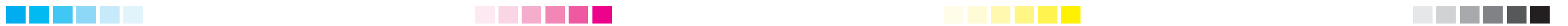
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the Noida International Airport at Jewar on March 28, marking a historic milestone for Uttar Pradesh, Delhi-NCR and the nation. Just days away from this grand launch, the airport—popularly known as Jewar Airport—will commence operations as India's newest and one of its most ambitious aviation hubs. Located in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, approximately 75 km from Delhi, this greenfield facility is poised to become the second major airport serving the National Capital Region (NCR). With its inauguration, India takes a significant leap toward addressing the growing demands of its booming aviation industry. The Noida International Airport (IATA: DXN) has been developed in phases, with Phase 1 ready to handle 12 million passengers annually. It features a 3,900-metre runway capable of supporting up to 30 aircraft movements per hour, a state-of-the-art terminal spanning 100,000 square metres equipped with 48 check-in counters, 10 aerobridges, nine immigration lanes, and advanced security systems. Cargo terminals are fully operational, and the airport will initially focus on both domestic and international flights. Low-cost carriers like IndiGo (the launch airline), Akasa Air, and Air India Express are gearing up to operate from here, connecting key cities such as Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and more. In the long term, the airport aims to scale up to 70 million passengers per annum across multiple phases, eventually featuring multiple runways



and positioning itself as one of Asia's largest aviation gateways. It goes without saying that central to this transformative project has been the visionary leadership of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Under his dynamic governance, the airport has moved from planning to reality at an unprecedented pace. He has personally inspected the site multiple times, reviewing progress on the domestic terminal, security arrangements, traffic management, and inauguration preparations. He has chaired high-level meetings, directing officials to ensure quality, timeliness, and zero laxity in execution. It was he who formally invited Prime Minister Modi to inaugurate the airport on March 28, underscoring the state's commitment to this landmark. Yogi Adityanath ji's role extends far beyond oversight. The airport embodies his "Triple S" model—Safety, Stability, and Speed—that has redefined Uttar Pradesh's development narrative. By prioritizing infrastructure like the Jewar project, his government has attracted global partners and investors. Plans for a "Singapore City" near the airport, complete with world-class logistics and investor-friendly ecosystems along the Yamuna Expressway, highlight his forward-thinking ap-

proach to turning aviation hubs into economic engines. Land acquisition for the project, executed with sensitivity toward affected families (offering employment options alongside compensation), reflects his people-centric policies. Yogi Ji has positioned Jewar not just as an airport but as a symbol of Uttar Pradesh's resurgence—a "turning point in its aviation history" that will propel the state from laggard to leader in India's growth story. His hands-on involvement, including recent inspections just days before the launch, has ensured that regulatory clearances, safety protocols, and operational readiness were fast-tracked without compromising standards. This development is not merely an addition to infrastructure; it is a strategic response to the crippling congestion at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, which has long exceeded its designed capacity. "I feel by providing a modern alternative, Noida International Airport will decongest NCR's skies, reduce delays, and enhance passenger experience. India's aviation sector has been on a rapid growth trajectory, with domestic passenger traffic surging post-pandemic and international connectivity expanding," says Ajit Dubey, an Aviation sec-

tor expert. Amrit Mann, Managing Director, Mann Fleet Partners Limited, said, "Noida International Airport represents the future of Indian aviation, and I foresee it will be one of the leading airports in the world. It may be recalled that Noida International Airport strengthens its passenger mobility ecosystem with the appointment of Mann Fleet Partners Limited as its official ground transportation services partner. The collaboration is aimed at delivering seamless, efficient and integrated last-mile connectivity solutions for travellers, enhancing overall passenger convenience across the airport campus. Under the agreement, Mann Fleet Partners Limited will manage a comprehensive portfolio of ground mobility services designed to support smooth passenger movement. The Noida International Airport's launch comes at a pivotal time for India's aviation ambitions. With air traffic projected to grow exponentially over the next three decades, this facility will play a crucial role in realizing the nation's vision of becoming a global aviation leader. It will generate employment on a massive scale, stimulate regional economies, and enhance connectivity for millions. As flights take off from Jewar soon, the airport will not only ease the burden on Delhi but also ignite a new era of prosperity. It stands as a testament to collaborative governance—between the Centre and the state—and Yogi Ji's unwavering focus on transformative infrastructure. India's skies are set to expand, and Noida International Airport will be at the forefront, soaring high as a beacon of progress.



## 1,719 km of National Highways Constructed in Haryana Over Last 11 Years at a Cost of ₹28,582 Crore: CM Nayab Singh Saini

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 27:

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday said the state government is taking comprehensive steps to strengthen road infrastructure while ensuring road safety through policy measures, technology, and public participation. He emphasized that reducing road accidents is a priority and requires both administrative action and responsible behavior from citizens. The Chief Minister was addressing a gathering after inaugurating a two-day national seminar on "Road Safety Solutions," organized by the Indian Roads Congress in collaboration with the Public Works Department (PWD), Haryana, in Chandigarh. Public Works and Public Health Engineering Minister Ranbir Gangwa was also present. The programme began with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp, and Saini extended greetings on the occasions of Ram Navami and Navratri. Over 350 experts, engineers, researchers, policymakers, and academicians are participating in the seminar. The event aims to discuss key challenges and solutions related to road safety. Saini

### Chief Minister Inaugurates Two-Day National IRC Seminar on 'Road Safety Solutions' Several Concrete Steps Taken for Road Safety Along with Strengthening Road Network: CM 4,80,000 E-Challans Issued for Over-Speeding Vehicles

said the seminar provides an important platform to prepare a roadmap for the future, bringing together ideas, technology, and experience to make roads safer and more efficient. He highlighted that roads are the backbone of development, connecting rural and urban areas, farmers to markets, and youth to opportunities. However, he noted that road accidents remain a major concern, leading to loss of lives and causing social and economic distress. He stressed that road safety is not just a technical matter but also a social and moral responsibility. Saini underlined that rules alone are not enough unless they are followed. He said simple actions like wearing helmets, using seat belts, and maintaining speed limits can significantly reduce fatalities. He called for greater awareness among students, youth, and the general public, adding that road safety must become a shared responsibility. Referring to the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047," the Chief Minister said modern and



safe infrastructure is essential for national progress. He noted that across the country, projects such as expressways, metro systems, freight corridors, and bridges are advancing rapidly, with equal emphasis on safety and sustainability. Providing details of Haryana's progress, Saini said that over the past 11 years, 43,703 kilometers of roads have been improved at a cost of ₹28,582 crore. Additionally, 2,417 kilometers of new roads have been constructed with an investment of ₹2,534 crore using modern technology. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, 2,432 kilometers of roads have been built at a cost of ₹1,077 crore, improving rural connectivity. To enhance safety at railway

Safety Month is observed annually to promote awareness.

Highlighting the use of technology, Saini said that 128 advanced cameras have been installed along National Highway-44 from Kundli to Shambhu, monitored from a central control room in Karnal. This has led to the issuance of around 4.8 lakh e-challans for over-speeding vehicles in the past year. The "Sanjaya" application, developed by IIT Madras, is being used to collect and analyze accident data for better planning. He also mentioned the Haryana 112 emergency response system, launched in July 2021 and integrated with helplines 1033 and 1073, which has improved response times during emergencies. He stressed that adopting modern technology is essential to prevent accidents and improve safety outcomes. Saini expressed confidence that the seminar would lead to meaningful discussions and practical solutions. He urged engineers and researchers to focus on

implementing ideas that are affordable, durable, and environmentally sustainable.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ranbir Gangwa reiterated the government's vision of "Safe Roads, Strong Haryana." He said the state is focused on both infrastructure development and safety. He highlighted that the road sector budget has been increased by 22 percent, from ₹4,830.73 crore in 2025-26 to ₹5,893.66 crore in 2026-27.

Gangwa said that technical codes of the Indian Roads Congress have been shared with engineers to ensure quality work. Guidelines have been issued for road safety audits on all state highways. To improve safety near schools, ₹25 crore has been allocated for signage and road markings. He added that the PWD maintains 30,603 kilometers of roads and undertakes regular measures such as lane markings to improve visibility during fog. The "Mhari Sadak" app has been launched to allow citizens to report road issues, ensuring timely repairs through GPS-based monitoring. Senior officials, including Additional Chief Secretary A.K. Singh, and other dignitaries were also present at the seminar.



## NFR Speeds Up Running of 35 Trains During FY 2025-26

MALIGAON, 27 MARCH, 2026:

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has undertaken a significant initiative to enhance operational efficiency and passenger convenience by increasing the speeds of 35 trains across its network during the FY 2025-26. This concerted effort has resulted in a cumulative saving of 675 minutes in travel time, with an average reduction of approximately 19.29 minutes per train. The speed augmentation covers a mix of daily, weekly and bi-weekly train services connecting important destinations, thereby ensuring widespread benefits across different categories of passengers. Among the major improvements, prominent trains such as New Jalpaiguri-Bongaigaon Express, Howrah-Guwahati Saraihat Express, Dibrugarh-Deoghar Express along with several others have witnessed substantial time savings, with reductions of time up to 60 minutes, 30 minutes and 90 minutes respectively. Several other routes facing congestions during running of intercity, mail/express and passenger oriented trains have also been optimized through better sectional speeds, improved scheduling and infrastructure upgrades. These enhancements reflect NFR's continuous com-

mitment towards modernizing train operations and maximizing network efficiency. The increase speeds in train operations brings multiple advantages for the Railways and its passengers. For passengers, reduced travel time leads to greater convenience, improved journey experience and better connectivity. Faster services also enhance reliability and punctuality, making rail transport a more attractive option compared to other modes. Meanwhile for the Railways, optimized speeds lead to better utilization of rolling stock and track capacity, improved turnaround time of trains and overall operational efficiency. Additionally, time savings contribute to energy efficiency and cost optimization, while also enabling the possibility of introducing additional services within the same infrastructure.

This initiative is part of NFR's broader vision to provide faster, safer and more efficient rail services to the people of the region. Continuous efforts are being made to upgrade infrastructure, streamline operations and adopt technological advancements to further enhance train performance. NFR always remains committed towards delivering improved services and ensuring a superior travel experience for its passengers.

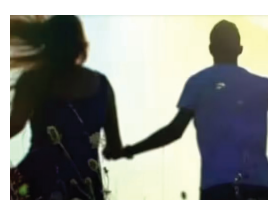


## 6 dead, 5 injured in Sonamarg highway avalanche

JAMMU: MAR 27, 2026

At least six people were killed and five others were injured after an avalanche buried close to a dozen vehicles on the Zojila-Sonamarg highway on Friday. Reacting to the incident, Ladakh's Lieutenant Governor, VK Saxena, said he was personally monitoring the situation.

"Heard the unfortunate news of an avalanche at Zoji La. I have directed the DC & SSP of Kargil to visit the spot immediately and mobilise relief and rescue operations. All government agencies including disaster relief forces and BRO have been put on high alert. I am personally monitoring the situation," he said in a post on X.



## UP man elopes twice, threatens husband

The woman allegedly took money and jewelry kept in the house while eloping with the man for the second time.

In a startling incident, a man in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district eloped with a married woman for the second time in a span of seven days. When the woman's husband tried to stop them, the man allegedly threatened to kill him.

The incident came to light on Thursday after the husband filed a complaint against the man named Jiledar Khan and his wife. According to his statement, Khan arrived at his house on March 24 and lured his wife away under the pretext of marriage. When the man tried to intervene and stop, Khan resorted to verbal abuse and gave him death threats. This is not the first time Khan eloped with the man's 24-year-old wife. A week before, the woman went missing under similar circumstances.

## 15th Convocation Marks Historic Return at Manipur University

IMPHAL, 27-MARCH-2026:

Manipur University on Friday held its 15th Convocation Ceremony, resuming the academic tradition after a gap of over a decade. The previous convocation was held on April 29, 2014. The ceremony took place at the university auditorium, with students from affiliated colleges in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Moreh joining through virtual mode. Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, also the Chief Rector of the university, attended as the Chief Guest, while Chief Minister N. Biren Singh graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. The programme was presided over by Chancellor Professor T. Tiru-



pati Rao. Addressing the gathering, the governor termed the convocation a significant milestone in the lives of graduating students, marking the culmination of their academic journey and the beginning of new responsibilities. He emphasized the role of higher education in shaping young minds and nation-building, stressing the need for integrity, ethical values, and a sense of duty. He urged graduates to contribute towards a developed India through innovation, lifelong learning, and self-reliance while also promoting peace, inclusivity, and harmony in the Northeast. The Chief Minister reaffirmed the State Government's com-

mitment to strengthening higher education and skill development, noting that Manipur University continues to be a hub of academic excellence and intellectual growth.

The Chief Minister further informed that 572 students of the university secured placements in both government and private sectors over the past two years. He encouraged graduates to focus on entrepreneurship and contribute to nation-building, drawing inspiration from the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for youth to become job creators. Presenting the annual report, Vice-Chancellor Professor N. Lokendra highlighted the university's steady academic progress. He stated

that the institution secured NAAC B+ accreditation and was ranked in the 101-150 band under the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). He added that timely conduct of examinations, implementation of the National Education Policy, introduction of new academic programmes, and over 1,500 research publications by faculty members reflect consistent growth.

The university has also achieved notable success in sports, winning 127 medals, including 45 gold medals, in recent years.

Dr. Pankaj Mittal described the convocation as significant in the context of rapid changes in education and technology.

## 'Jag Vasant' arrives at Gujarat coast with 42,000 tonnes of gas

GANDHINAGAR, MARCH 27:

Amid ongoing tensions in West Asia, another LPG tanker has safely reached India. A vessel named "Jag Vasant", carrying 42,000 tonnes of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), arrived on Friday at Kandla Port in Gujarat. Notably, the ship took special precautions during its journey due to fears of a possible closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The "Jag Vasant", which began its journey on Monday along with another tanker named "Pine Gas", crossed the Strait of Hormuz through the Qeshm-Larak channel instead of the conventional route. While traveling through this route, the ships broadcast messag-

es such as "IND SHIP AND CREW" and "JGVASNTIND-SHIPINDCRW" to clearly identify themselves as Indian vessels. Experts believe that these ships likely traveled with prior permission from Iranian authorities. This is the third LPG tanker to safely reach India in recent times. Earlier, two other vessels named "Shivalik" and "Nanda Devi" arrived at the ports of Mundra and Vadinar in Gujarat. Together, those two ships brought over 92,000 tonnes of LPG. The Ministry of Shipping's Special Secretary Rajesh Kumar Sinha had earlier confirmed that the "Jag Vasant" safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz. The process of transferring LPG from the vessel, which has now reached Kandla Port, is expected to begin soon.

## Married man's live-in relation not illegal, morality can't override law: Court

A married man entering into a live-in relationship with a woman is not an offence under the law, the Allahabad High Court has observed, emphasising that social morality cannot override the court's duty to protect individual rights.

Hearing a plea seeking protection for a live-in couple facing threats from the woman's family, the court said no offence is committed when a married man cohabits with an adult by mutual consent. "There is no offence of the kind where a married man, staying with an adult in a live-in relationship, by consent of the other person, can be prosecuted for any offence, whatsoever. Morality and law have to be kept apart. If there is no offence under the law made out, social opinions and morality will not guide the action of the court for protecting the rights of citizens," the bench said. The High Court noted that the woman had informed the Superintendent of Police that she was living with the man of her own



free will, but alleged inaction by the police despite threats of honour killing from her family. The court stressed it is the duty of the police "to protect two adults living together". "Apparently, no action has been taken on this complaint by the Superintendent of Police. To protect two adults living together is the duty of the Police," the division bench of Justice JJ Munir and Justice Tarun Saxena said, underscoring that particular obligations in this regard are cast upon the Superintendent of Police, as held by the Supreme Court in a previous verdict. The court issued a notice to the Uttar Pradesh government, listing the matter for April 8, and directed that immediate protection be provided to the couple.

## Will petrol, diesel prices fall after government cuts excise duty by Rs 10?

The government has sharply reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel. Does this mean retail fuel prices will fall? Here's all you need to know.

The government's decision to cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 has raised expectations of relief for consumers, but a fall in retail fuel prices is far from certain. The excise duty on petrol has been reduced to Rs 3 per litre from Rs 13 earlier, while diesel duty has been cut to zero from Rs 10 per litre. On paper, such a move should lead to a reduction in pump prices. However, in practice, retail fuel prices in India are not directly controlled by the government.

Prices are determined by oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, which take into account global crude prices, exchange rates and their own margins before revising retail rates. According to experts, it is unlikely that these companies will immediately pass on the benefit of the duty cut to consumers. The key reason is that oil companies have been absorbing the impact of elevated crude oil prices in recent weeks amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia. The timing of the duty cut is also significant. It comes just a day after Nayara Energy raised petrol and diesel prices, highlighting the pressure on fuel retailers. In such a situ-



ation, companies may choose to use the duty relief to offset earlier losses or stabilise margins rather than cut prices right away. This means that while the government has reduced its tax component, the benefit may not fully translate to consumers immediately. GOVERNMENT ON EXCISE DUTY CUT According to Oil Minister Har-

deep Singh Puri, international crude prices have surged sharply in the past month, rising from around \$70 per barrel to nearly \$122 per barrel. As a result, fuel prices have increased significantly across the world, with rises of 30% to 50% reported in several regions. The minister said the government faced a choice between passing on the full impact to consumers or absorbing part of the shock. The decision to cut excise duty, he indicated, was aimed at protecting Indian consumers by taking a hit on government revenues. He also noted that oil marketing companies have been incurring significant losses, estimated at around Rs 24 per litre on petrol and Rs 30 per litre on diesel at current global prices,

and that the duty cut would help ease some of this pressure. The biggest factor influencing fuel prices continues to be global crude oil. Brent crude is still trading above \$100 per barrel, reflecting persistent geopolitical risks and uncertainty in supply. As long as crude prices remain elevated, there is limited room for oil companies to reduce retail prices meaningfully. Any sharp escalation in tensions could push oil prices higher again, putting further pressure on fuel costs. In this context, the excise duty cut acts more as a cushion than a direct price reduction. It provides oil companies with some flexibility to manage costs without immediately raising prices, rather than forcing a drop in retail rates.



## Pak rupees, USD, Nepali currency: Inside Jharkhand temple's donation box

The opening of donation boxes at Jharkhand's Baba Baidyanath Temple revealed offerings not just in lakhs of Indian rupees but also in multiple foreign currencies.

Over Rs 32 lakh in Indian currency, along with over 9,000 Nepalese rupees, 11 US dollars, 100 Pakistani rupees and 20 euros, was discovered by authorities when they opened the donation boxes in Jharkhand's Baba Baidyanath Temple. This is the first time that Pakistani currency has been found in the donation boxes of the renowned Dwadash Jyotirlinga Baba Baidyanath Temple in Deoghar. District Magistrate Naman Priyesh Lakra said. The opening of all 18 donation boxes was carried out under strict security and close supervision of the temple administration. The collected offerings, includ-

ing Rs 32,14,245 in Indian currency, were transported to the temple's administrative building for counting and verification. Thousands of devotees from across India and abroad visit the Baba Baidyanath Temple, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, to offer prayers. Many also make anonymous contributions through donation boxes placed across the temple premises. Baba Baidyanath Dham in Deoghar holds a unique place in Hindu spiritual tradition. It is not only one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the most sacred abodes of Lord Shiva, but also one of the 51 Shakti Peethas, making it a rare confluence of both Shiva and Shakti worship. According to Hindu belief, Deoghar is the place where Ravana, while carrying Lord Shiva to Lanka, paused during his journey, violating the condition that he must not stop. As a result, the deity remained here, and the site became a significant place of worship.

## Maharashtra 'godman' claims he's God, rapes, blackmails woman

UP: MAR 27, 2026

A case has been registered against a self-proclaimed 'godman' from Maharashtra's Vasai for allegedly raping and blackmailing a 35-year-old woman. During the crime, the accused presented himself as an incarnation of Lord Shiva and referred to the survivor as Goddess Parvati. The incident came to light after the woman gathered the courage to lodge a first information report (FIR) at the Manikpur Police

Station after seeing the news of spiritual leader and former Navy merchant Ashok Kharat getting arrested for sexually assaulting multiple women. As her complaint reads, the accused, Rishikesh Vaidya, connected with the woman on Facebook in 2023. In the guise of preaching spirituality, Vaidya, also the head of the Aamchi Vasai foundation, first met the survivor at a lodge in Pune in December 2023. He then drugged her and raped her.

## Singapore unveils plan to become global gold trading hub

BY GURDIP SINGH

**SINGAPORE: (Mar 27)** Singapore on Friday announced plans to boost its position as a gold trading centre as investor interest in storing and trading the precious metal grows across the Asia-Pacific region.

"Our goal is to anchor high-value activities here, create good jobs for Singaporeans, enhance the resilience and diversity of Singapore's financial sector, and benefit market participants in Singapore and the region," said a joint statement issued by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the Singapore Bullion Market Association (SBMA).

Already an established financial hub, the island state seeks to position itself as a trusted hub for gold trading in the Asia-Pacific.

## Trump extends Iran pause but US military build-up tells another story

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

Donald Trump has extended the pause in attacking Iran's energy facilities by 10 days. Such a large-hearted gesture by Trump has not only taken Iran by surprise, but has, at the same time, made it sceptical whether it was a ruse to buy time to amass thousands of additional troops near Tehran. However, several experts have predicted Saturday to be D-day, with a high likelihood that the US will put boots on the ground. "They asked for seven, and I said, 'I am going to give you 10,'" US President Donald Trump said on Thursday as he extended the deadline for strikes on Iran's energy facilities to April 6. Such a large-hearted gesture by a mercurial Trump has not only taken Iran by surprise, but has, at the same time, made it sceptical whether it was a ruse to buy time to amass thousands of additional troops near Tehran. With another Saturday approaching (Trump's preferred day to launch



strikes on Iran), several experts have predicted it to be the D-day, with a high possibility of the US putting boots on the ground. Trump's sudden change of heart towards diplomacy signals a shifting strategy. The US seems to be using military pressure as leverage to push Iran to accept a 15-point list of demands to kickstart negotiations. At the heart of the US's demands is reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed by Iran for nearly a month now, sending oil prices skyrocketing. However, Iran continues to block the key shipping route, even though Trump said that Tehran allowed to oil tankers to transit Hormuz as a goodwill gesture amid negotiations. While Iran has continued to deny any talks with the US in public, it has engaged in backchannel diplomacy and has even mocked Trump as "weak". However, time seems to be running out for Iran. It was conveyed in no uncertain terms by Trump himself on Thursday. "They'd better get serious soon, before it is too late, because once

that happens, there is no turning back, and it won't be pretty," the mercurial US President posted. For Trump, too, time is not on his side. He quickly needs to show some substantial gains in the conflict rather than pay lip service and claim "victory" even as Iran continues to bombard Gulf states. The massive US military build-up near the Middle East, combined with an unpredictable Trump in the White House, have led several experts to predict that Saturday (March 28) would be the D-day. "You don't negotiate with terror. You end it. The UAE stands firm... This Saturday will not pass quietly. It will be marked. It will be remembered," Amjad Taha, a geostrategist from the UAE, tweeted.

### WILL TRUMP PUT US BOOTS ON GROUND?

The signals from US security circles and the military manoeuvres have provided ample hints that a ground invasion is on the anvil. According to a report in Axios, based on conversations

with US officials, the scale and composition of the forces (this has been explained later) suggest four broad scenarios: Invading and seizing Kharg Island, Iran's economic lifeline. Invading Larak, an island that helps Tehran maintain its vice-like grip control of the Strait of Hormuz.

Seizing the strategic island of Abu Musa and two nearby islands, which are located near Hormuz's western entrance. Ground invasion deep inside Iran to secure nuclear material buried within facilities struck by the US and Israel. However, all eyes are on Iran's 'Crown Jewel' - Kharg Island. The US already bombed military sites on Kharg, located around 25 km from Iran, on March 14. However, energy infrastructure was spared. Why is Kharg so important? The reason is simple. It is Iran's economic lifeline, accounting for more than 90% of its oil exports. As per the latest data, Iran earned around \$78 billion (Rs 7.2 lakh crore) from crude oil sales in 2024.



## Trump signature to appear on all new US currency in historic shift

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

**The move also breaks with a 165-year tradition by removing the Treasurer of the United States' signature from federal currency for the first time since the system began in 1861.**

US paper currency will soon carry President Donald Trump's signature as part of plans to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence, the Treasury Department announced on Thursday. The department is preparing to introduce the president's signature on all new US paper currency, a first for a sitting US leader. The move also breaks with a 165-year tradition by removing the Treasurer of the United States' signature from federal currency for the first time since the system began in 1861. According to the Treasury, the first \$100 bills featuring Trump's signature alongside Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent will be printed in June, with other denominations to follow in the months ahead. Bessent said the initiative reflects what he described as strong economic progress, adding that placing Trump's name on US currency is a fitting way to commemorate both the nation's achievements and its 250th anniversary.

"There is no more powerful way to recognize the historic achievements of our great country and President Donald J Trump than US dollar bills bearing his name, and it is only appropriate that this historic currency be issued at the Semiquincentennial," Bessent said in a statement released by the US Department of the Treasury. US Treasurer Brandon Beach also backed the decision, saying the move is "appropriate" and "well deserved." Currently, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing continues to produce notes carrying the signatures of former Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who served under President Joe Biden, and US Treasurer Lynn Malerba. Malerba's signature marks the end of an uninterrupted lineage dating back to 1861, when US federal currency was first issued. For over a century and a half, the Treasurer's signature has been a consistent feature of American banknotes. The currency update comes alongside a broader push to honor Trump during the anniversary celebrations. Earlier this month, a federal arts commission approved the design of a 24-karat gold commemorative coin featuring his image, set to be released as part of the July 4 Semiquincentennial observances.

## Gulf hotels housing US troops forced into hiding to be targets, Iran warns

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

Iran has warned that hotels in the Gulf would be targeted if they sheltered US soldiers who have been forced into hiding after several American military bases were struck in the Middle East, AFP reported. Specifically, the ultimatum has gone out to hotel owners in Bahrain and the UAE. Iran's threat comes on the back of at least 13 US military bases being rendered largely unusable due to strikes. It has forced American troops to abandon the bases for hotels across the region. "When all the Americans (forces) go into a hotel, then from our perspective that hotel becomes American," Iran's military spokes-



man Abolfazl Shekarchi told state television, AFP reported. "Should we just stand by and let the Americans strike us? When we respond, naturally, we have to strike wherever they are," he further said. The warning from the Iranian military comes a day after Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi urged hotels in Gulf countries against accepting US military

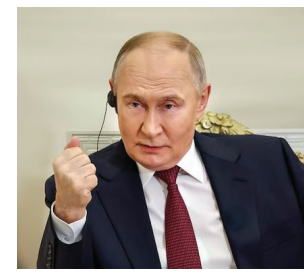
personnel. He claimed that US soldiers were using civilians in Gulf countries as "human shields". "From the outset of this war, US soldiers fled military bases in the GCC to hide in hotels and offices," Araghchi tweeted. The war, which started a month ago after US-Israeli strikes pounded Iran and killed its Supreme Leader, has now ensnared the whole Mid-

dle East. Iran has retaliated by targeting US military sites and Gulf energy infrastructure in the region. A report in the New York Times said at least 13 US military bases across Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia were hit and severely degraded. The lethal Iranian strike on Port Shuaiba in Kuwait destroyed a tactical operations centre, killing six US members. It has prompted thousands of US troops to take shelter in hotels in the Middle East. Some have been moved as far as Europe. Against this backdrop, Iran has sent "firm warnings" to hotels in the region, AFP reported. The military has also reportedly identified locations sheltering US troops in Syria, Lebanon and Djibouti.

## Putin warns Gulf war fallout could rival COVID chaos

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

Putin warns Gulf conflict could trigger global disruption comparable to COVID, hitting supply chains and industries. He says even those involved cannot foresee the consequences as crisis deepens. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday warned that the global consequences of the Gulf conflict may be impossible to predict, even for those driving it, drawing a stark comparison with the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



consequences of the conflict in the Middle East with any confidence," Putin said. "It seems to me that even those involved in the conflict are themselves unable to foresee them."

Speaking at a congress of Russia's leading industrialists, Putin said the escalation triggered by joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran has already begun to destabilise global systems, according to a report by Press Trust of India. "It's still hard to predict the

war is already rippling through key sectors worldwide. "The armed conflict in the Middle East is increasingly impacting the current situation and causing significant disruption to international logistics, manufacturing, and supply chains," he said.

## Australia's fuel supply to get more difficult in coming months: PM

CANBERRA, MARCH 27

Australia's fuel supply looks good in the short term, but it will get more difficult in the coming months, said Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Friday. Social media trends Addressing a press conference in Parliament House in Canberra over the escalating fuel crisis facing the country, Albanese said the government is "working around the clock" to "have the strongest possible plan," and get ready and over-prepared for what may come. Albanese noted his "positive" engagements with Malaysia, a critical supplier of oil to Australia, and with the wider ASEAN region. Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen said the country's supply of petrol, diesel, and oil remains the



same. "The government has always acknowledged there are real and unacceptable shortages in regional Australia as the demand has spiked so much, and it's taken time for that strong domestic supply," said Bowen. Albanese will also convene a national cabinet meeting on Monday over the fuel crisis. Earlier in the day, Opposition Leader Angus Taylor called on the government to temporarily halve the fuel excise for three months.

## Iran mobilises over 1 million ground troops to counter US invasion threat

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

**The possibility of a potential US invasion on the southern front of Iran has triggered enthusiasm among Iran's ground fighters who want to offer the US a "historic hell" on Iranian soil.**



Amid the deepening conflict in the Middle East, Iran is mobilising more than one million ground troops to fight against the United States, Iran's local news outlet Tansim News reported, citing a source from the military.

The development came amid a possibility of the US launching a ground invasion on the southern front of Iran. The report mentioned that the possibility of a potential US attack has triggered enthusiasm among the ground fighters of

the country, who now want to offer the US "historical hell" on the soil of Iran.

The military source further told Tansim News that, in addition to the mobilisation of over one million ground troops, there has been a significant surge in recruitment interest among Iranian youth. In recent days, a massive influx of requests has been directed toward the Basij, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC), and the Army, as young volunteers formally petition for deployment to the front lines. The US wants to open the Strait of Hormuz with suicide and self-destructive tactics; that's fine. We are ready for both their suicide strategy to be executed and for the Strait to remain closed," the source added.

### TRUMP ISSUED THREATS TO IRAN

Amid the ongoing standoff, US President Donald Trump

issued a blunt warning to Iran, urging Tehran to "get serious" about the 15-point truce proposal that the US sent. He threatened Iran amid reports that Washington has put forward a detailed plan to end the conflict, even as Tehran rejected direct negotiations.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump blasted Iran's approach. "The Iranian negotiators are very different and 'strange.' They are 'begging' us to make a deal, which they should be doing since they have been militarily obliterated, with zero chance of a comeback, and yet they publicly state that they are only 'looking at our proposal.' Wrong!" he wrote.

"They better get serious soon, before it is too late, because once that happens, there is NO TURNING BACK, and it won't be pretty!" President DJT," he further added.

## Experts urge NATO-US action to stop Iran war

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

One of Europe's longest-serving leaders, Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, has urged that Nato alliance should join the US to end the war with Iran as soon as possible. He believes the war could trigger a new crisis and a fresh wave of refugees into Europe. As the war in Iran is deepening, one of Europe's longest-serving leaders has weighed in with a blunt assessment of what might lie ahead. Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said that Nato should back the US in ending the conflict swiftly, warning that any delay could spiral into a wider crisis with far-reaching consequences for Europe and the world. Orban, who has been the PM of Hungary since 2010, made the remarks in an interview with journalist Mario Nawfal. His statement comes even as the Nato alliance is divided over

the war in Iran, as well as Trump's sabre-rattling over the Greenland. veteran leader, who started out as an anti-Soviet activist and briefly held power from 1998 to 2002, framed the conflict as a high-stakes gamble with profound consequences for Europe, particularly smaller nations like Hungary. "To go in, it's easy. To get out is almost impossible," Orban said, drawing on his experience witnessing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Earlier, when the war began, Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte had been the most vocal in praising US and Israeli military action against Iran. He called it "really important" for degrading Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities and suggested individual allies could "enable" US efforts. Nawfal, a geopolitical observer himself, has previously that Nato should support reopening the Strait of Hormuz out of recipro-



ty. However, other leaders, such as German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, have emphasised that this is not Europe's war, and rejected direct military involvement or Nato's role in the Strait of Hormuz. Orban's opinion, however, has been different. He described the war as a product of what he described as the emerging "new world order", where liberal global

governance has receded, and major powers now openly pursue their national interests. "The Iran war is a consequence of the New World Order. Previously, the national interest was not common at all. But now big powers play an important role, and they act in their national interest. And that's what the US is doing," he explained. He argued that the Islamic Republic of Iran was "the centre of a violent, anti-Semitic, anti-freedom network", suggesting that destroying its paramilitary capacity could advance peace. However, he cautioned that failure to achieve this quickly could lead to "an even bigger, complicated, longer war". Orban identified two primary threats to Europe and his country: rising energy prices, and a wave of migration as a result of a prolonged war with Iran. With Iran's 90 million inhabitants and existing Afghan refugees straining Europe, Orban warned that dest-

abilisation could send migrants through Turkey and the Balkans toward Hungary's borders. Europe's earlier migration challenges, like the 2015 EU refugee crisis, which saw 1.3 million refugees, mostly from the Middle East, has already left many nations "in deep, deep trouble" regarding identity and social cohesion, he noted. Energy vulnerability compounds the risk. As a landlocked nation poor in raw materials, Hungary suffered a 10 billion Euro economic hit when energy import costs surged during the Russia-Ukraine war. A renewed oil price spike from disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz would deliver another blow. "These are the main challenges, not how to reorganise the Middle East," Orban said bluntly. "That's very nice, but that belongs to the big guys."

### CALLS FOR NATO SOLIDARITY, NARROW WINDOW FOR SUCCESS IN IRAN

Despite his reservations about getting Budapest involved in foreign wars, Orban advocated support for the US effort. He suggested that Nato should back Trump's approach to help end the war quickly, not out of ideological alignment but reciprocity, after what he described as decades of American security provision to Europe. Orban's remarks come at a time when Nato is once again divided over matters related to the US, the second such schism in recent months. The alliance itself was on the verge of tearing itself apart, with Denmark's public broadcaster DR reporting that a month before the US went into a full-fledged war with Iran, Danish forces were preparing for a possible American invasion of Greenland. They were ready to blow up key airport runways to prevent US aircraft from landing and had even carried blood supplies to treat wounded soldiers.



## Talks going well: Trump halts strikes on Iran's energy sites until April 6

NEW DELHI: MAR 27, 2026

**Trump pauses attacks on Iran's energy plants for 10 days at Tehran's request, citing progress in talks, raising hopes for de-escalation as conflict continues across the region.**

US President Donald Trump said he is pausing strikes on Iran's energy infrastructure for 10 days at Tehran's request, signalling a possible opening for diplomacy even as the conflict continues. "As per Iranian Government request I am pausing the period of Energy Plant destruction by 10 Days to Monday, April 6, 2026, at 8 P.M., Eastern Time," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social. Trump indicated that negotiations are underway and showing signs of progress. "Talks are ongoing and they are going very well," he said, pushing back against what he called "erroneous statements" in media coverage of the conflict.

### PAUSE COULD PROVIDE FOR BACKCHANNEL DIPLOMACY

The pause could provide space for backchannel diplomacy. The announcement comes after weeks of intense US-Israeli strikes on Iranian infrastructure, including key oil and energy facilities, aimed at weakening Tehran's military and economic capacity. Iran had retaliated

with missile and drone attacks across the region, targeting US bases and allied infrastructure, pushing the conflict toward a broader regional war.

It remains unclear whether the 10-day pause will lead to a broader ceasefire or simply serve as a temporary de-escalation. Trump's statement did not outline specific conditions for extending the halt, but the reference to an Iranian request suggests at least some level of direct or indirect communication between the two sides.

### TRUMP ISSUES ULTIMATUM, THEN DELAYS STRIKES AFTER TALKS

On March 22, Donald Trump warned Iran that the United States would strike its power infrastructure if the Strait of Hormuz was not reopened within 48 hours. In a social media post, he threatened to "hit and obliterate" key power plants, starting with the largest, unless the waterway was fully accessible and free of threats.

However, a day later, Trump announced a five-day delay in the planned strikes following what he described as "productive" discussions. He said both sides had engaged in constructive talks toward resolving tensions, while Iran claimed the postponement signaled Washington backing down after its firm stance.

## Hyderabad Emerges as High-Growth Housing Market After Slow Phase: CREDAI

HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Hyderabad's residential real estate market has emerged as one of the fastest-growing in the country after a period of stagnation, driven by strong demand in premium and upper mid-income segments, according to a CREDAI-Liases Foras report.

The city recorded a total housing sales value of ₹1.08 lakh crore, ranking second in the luxury housing segment nationwide. It also posted a steady 5.7% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in housing prices, underlining sustained market momentum. The report noted that demand was largely concentrated in higher-value categories. Homes priced between ₹1 crore and ₹1.5 crore accounted for the largest share of sales, followed by segments priced ₹2 crore-₹5 crore and ₹1.5 crore-₹2 crore. This trend reflects a clear shift towards premium housing in the city.

On the supply side, developers are increasingly focusing on larger homes. Three-bedroom (3BHK) units dominated new project launches,

especially in the ₹1 crore-₹2 crore price bracket, while 4BHK units emerged as the second-largest category. This indicates rising demand for spacious living in premium segments.

Hyderabad's residential market currently includes 1,217 projects developed by 797 builders, with an estimated inventory of about 21 months. This suggests a balanced demand-supply scenario, supporting stable growth in the sector.

Price appreciation remained moderate but steady during 2025, with the House Price Index (HPI) rising to 3.3%. The increase signals a recovery from the earlier slowdown phase, backed by renewed demand and improving market sentiment. The report attributes the city's strong performance to its expanding IT and business ecosystem, ongoing infrastructure development, and robust economic fundamentals. These factors continue to attract both homebuyers and investors, reinforcing Hyderabad's position as a key real estate growth hub in India.

## Market Bloodbath: Rs 9L Cr Lost

NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

India's stock market wrapped up the week on a grim note Friday, with benchmark indices closing about 2 percent lower amid widespread selling pressure across multiple sectors.

The Sensex plunged 1,690.23 points, or 2.25 percent, to settle at 73,583.22. Meanwhile, the Nifty shed 486.85 points, or 2.09 percent, ending at 22,819.60. The Nifty Midcap index fell 2.2 percent, while the Smallcap index dropped 1.7 percent.

BSE-listed companies saw their total market capitalization shrink to Rs 422 lakh crore from Rs 431 lakh crore in the prior session, wiping out nearly Rs 9 lakh crore in investor wealth.

The downturn stemmed from broad-based selling across sectors, the rupee's ongoing depreciation, and persistent uncertainty surrounding the de-escalation of the US-Iran conflict.

The Indian rupee prolonged its slide for a second



consecutive session, crossing the 94-per-dollar threshold for the first time.

Virtually every sectoral index finished in negative territory. PSU banks and realty sectors posted the steepest declines, each tumbling over 3 percent. Auto, consumer durables, capital goods, and private banks each lost around 2 percent.

On the Nifty, standout gainers included ONGC, TCS, Wipro, Bharti Airtel, and

Coal India. The biggest losers were Shirram Finance, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, InterGlobe Aviation, Reliance Industries, and Bajaj Finance. More than 900 stocks on the BSE hit their 52-week lows, among them Sterling Wilson, Network 18, Aegis Vopak, Sapphire Foods, TMPV, IDBI Bank, Lodha Developer, Concord Biotech, GSFC, Amara Raja, Bajaj Housing, Sonata, Zensar Tech, Gillette India, Hin-

dustan Aeron, Gujarat Gas, and IGL.

BSE-listed firms' market capitalization stood at Rs 422 lakh crore as of March 27, a decline from Rs 463 lakh crore on February 27—when the Iran war started.

ICICI Direct noted that IT stocks are now trading at a significant discount to their long-term averages, providing valuation appeal with minimal further downside potential.

## Japan Pledges ₹276 Billion ODA Loan for India's Key Projects



NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

Japan has extended an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan worth JPY 275.85 billion to India for four projects in urban transport, health, and agriculture, targeting Punjab, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, according to a Ministry of Finance statement issued Friday.

The initiatives include: Bengaluru Metro Rail Project (Phase 3) (I), Mumbai Metro Line 11 Project (I), Project for Strengthening Tertiary Healthcare Delivery, Medical Education System, and Nursing Education System in Maharashtra, and Project for Promoting Sustainable Horticulture in Punjab.

The Bengaluru Metro Rail Project (Phase 3) (I) and Mumbai Metro Line 11 Project (I) address rising traffic demands by expanding mass rapid transit systems. These efforts will ease congestion, boost regional economic growth, and enhance urban environments.

The Project for Strengthening Tertiary Healthcare Delivery, Medical Education System, and Nursing Education System in Maha-

rashtra (I) seeks to elevate medical access and quality through new tertiary care facilities, colleges, hospitals, medical colleges, and nursing schools. It supports India's push for Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Meanwhile, the Project for Promoting Sustainable Horticulture in Punjab focuses on shifting to high-value crops, building value chain infrastructure, and enhancing farmer capacities to boost incomes and sustainability.

Notes for the agreements were exchanged between Alok Tiwari, Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Japan's Ambassador to India, Keichi Ono. Loan agreements were signed between the Government of India and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

ODA loans are low-interest, long-term concessional funds from donor governments to aid developing nations' economic growth and infrastructure.

India-Japan bilateral development ties date back to 1958, with economic cooperation forming a cornerstone of their relationship.

## AutoTech Asia 2026 Unites Global Automotive Ecosystem



BY SOURAV SHEKHAR

As the automotive sector transforms at breakneck speed, AutoTech Asia 2026 will unite the full mobility ecosystem under one roof. Set for April 17-19 at Bharat Mandapam here, this B2B exhibition spotlights automotive tech, electric mobility, batteries, and advanced manufacturing.

At Friday's pre-event press conference, Project Director Mukesh Yadav stressed the urgency of a unified platform in this fast-changing industry.

"The industry today is evolving rapidly, but interactions across segments remain fragmented. AutoTech Asia is built to bring the entire automotive value chain onto one platform, enabling manufacturers to engage directly with the technologies, partners, and solutions they need to scale," he said.

Founder and Director Ashish Jain explained the event's design to encompass the whole ecosystem amid tech-driven shifts.

On the name "AutoTech Asia," Jain said, "Auto was chosen because we want to cover the entire ecosystem. Technology and automobiles are now inseparable."

With EV newcomers flooding the market, Jain noted the complexity in finding partners; the show creates a hub for collaboration, networking, and deals.

Unlike typical trade fairs, Jain differentiated it: "The exhibition is not about crowds, it is about decision-makers. Our main focus is to generate real business opportunities for exhibitors." Expect senior procurement, production, R&D, and leadership attendees.

Targeting Asia's rise as the top auto market, the event draws beyond India, with participants from China, Italy, and diverse Indian firms across two/three-wheelers, EVs, batteries, charging, and tech.

Key features include integrated financial solutions for scaling investments, plus an "Experience Zone" for live tech demos.

Parallel to the expo, the three-day AutoTech Conclave gathers leaders, policymakers, and experts for knowledge exchange.

International Federation of Electric Vehicle Association (IFEVA) Founder Dr Shailendra Saroj underscored conferences' role: "There are vehicles in the market, but people still lack clarity on when and how to charge. Awareness around charging infrastructure is critical."

Sessions cover OEM strategies, charging ecosystems, batteries, and mobility's future, emphasizing sustainability beyond electrification to cleaner energy.

Organizers warned that while India has dodged global tensions so far, prolonged conflicts could disrupt supply chains.

With pavilions, global participation, and emphasis on innovation, deals, and outcomes, AutoTech Asia 2026 positions itself as a pivotal event for electrification, localization, and sustainable mobility.

## RUPEE CRASHES TO RECORD 94.81 HIGHEST FISCAL DROP IN 14 YEARS

NEW DELHI

The Indian rupee plummeted to a historic low on Friday, collapsing past the psychological barrier of ₹94 per dollar. The currency's freefall is the latest casualty of a deepening energy crisis sparked by the West Asia war, leaving the rupee on track for its most disastrous fiscal-year performance in more than a decade.

The rupee tumbled 0.9% to close at 94.8125, having touched an intra-day nadir of ₹94.84. Since the outbreak of hostilities with Iran in late February, the currency has depreciated by 4%. Total losses for this fiscal year now stand at a staggering 11%.

**A Decade of Stability Undone**

The current volatility draws haunting parallels to the 2011-12 fiscal year. During that period, a global "risk-off" sentiment fueled by Eurozone debt, coupled with a weak domestic current account, dragged the rupee down by 14%. Analysts warn that the current trajectory could mirror that era of economic instability.

The primary catalyst remains the West Asia conflict, which has triggered the most severe disruption to global energy supplies in recent memory. Oil prices continue to hover near \$110 per barrel as supply chains for



everything from cooking gas to industrial plastics remain choked.

**Global Tensions and Market Fallout**

Investor anxiety reached a fever pitch after U.S. President Donald Trump extended a deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz—a vital global energy artery. The move failed to soothe volatile oil markets, leading to a massive sell-off in global equities and a spike in bond yields.

**Domestically, the fallout was immediate:**

**Equities:** The Nifty 50 shed 2% in Friday's session.

**Bonds:** The 10-year benchmark bond yield rose seven basis points to 6.94%.

**Growth:** Leading analysts have begun "shaving" India's growth forecasts, with many now predicting imminent rate hikes by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

**Lack of 'Financial Cushion'**

Sanjay Mathur, Chief Economist for Southeast Asia and India at ANZ, issued a

stark warning in a note to investors. "The problem is that neither the government nor households currently have much financial cushion," Mathur stated. He suggested that the government may be forced to choose between a ballooning fiscal deficit or deep cuts to capital spending to stay afloat.

**Government and RBI Response**

In an effort to blunt the impact of "imported inflation," the Centre has moved aggressively to shield consumers. Excise duties on petrol and diesel have been slashed, and new windfall taxes have been slapped on aviation fuel and diesel exports to retain domestic supply.

However, the central bank's strategy appears to be shifting. Societe Generale, which has recommended shorting the rupee with a target of ₹96, noted that the RBI's interventions have become "less aggressive."

"The RBI's focus looks to have shifted towards capping the 10-year yield below 7% while letting the exchange rate gradually depreciate," the firm noted, suggesting a strategic conservation of foreign exchange reserves. While state-run banks were seen offering dollars on Friday, traders described their presence as "mild," indicating a reluctance to fight the prevailing market tide

## AI Geopolitics: US Policy, Tech Giants Unite Against China Threat

NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

Alarm over China's swift AI progress is forging an unusual alliance between US lawmakers and Silicon Valley, framing the tech race as a high-stakes fight for security and economic supremacy, per a new report.

At the Hill and Valley Forum—designed to link Washington with Big Tech—government and industry leaders showed striking unity, deeming AI rivalry with China vital to national security and global leadership, according to Fortune.

Despite regulatory frictions, both sides pinpointed China as the core threat, cautioning that AI's winner will redefine economic and geopolitical might.

Senator Rick Scott called it an "existential" contest, urging the US to surpass China in AI prowess.

Tensions surfaced over curbing advanced tech flows to adversaries. Nvidia drew heat for exporting high-end

AI chips to China and reports of smuggling via underground channels.

House Speaker Mike Johnson pressed tech firms to keep essentials like chips, data centers, and AI systems domestic, shielding them from rivals.

Lawmakers seek stricter rules: The proposed GAIN AI Act mandates prioritizing US access to advanced chips and licenses for exports to "countries of concern."

Tech execs mirrored the alarm, warning AI supremacy will dictate economic power; some investors pledged to shun projects aiding rivals. Experts advocate tighter government-industry teamwork. Defense tech voices argued against over-regulation or unchecked freedom, pushing collaboration for US edge.

Though the US leads in AI innovation, China's emphasis on real-world rollout and economic applications poses a mounting challenge.

## BCSSL Bags Hyd Police Order for AI Infrastructure Deployment

HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Blue Cloud Softech Solutions Limited (BCSSL) has secured a work order from the Office of the Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad City, for the supply and deployment of AI-enabled high-performance computing infrastructure.

The order, dated March 25, 2026, involves installation of the company's Access Genie BluEdgeAI infrastructure, including rack servers and GPU-powered high-performance workstations. These systems will be deployed for the Central Analysis Team (CAT) of the Telangana Police.

According to the company,

the project covers supply, installation, and commissioning of enterprise-grade servers and advanced computing systems aimed at strengthening data processing, analytics, and mission-critical operations. The execution timeline for the project is 60 days from the date of the work order.

BCSSL said the engagement marks a significant milestone, showcasing its capability to deliver AI-driven infrastructure solutions in high-security government environments. The deployment also serves as validation of its proprietary AccessGenie BluEdge platform in a public safety application. The company expects

the project to open up further opportunities in the public sector, particularly in areas such as AI analytics, cybersecurity, and managed digital infrastructure services.

Commenting on the development, Tejesh Kodali, Group Chairman of BCSSL, said the order reflects the company's growing alignment with government-led digital infrastructure initiatives. He added that it reinforces BCSSL's ability to deliver reliable and high-performance AI-enabled systems in mission-critical environments, while positioning the company for expansion in public sector digital transformation projects.

## Hetero Begins Global Export of Generic Semaglutide Injections

HYDERABAD, MARCH 27:

Pharmaceutical major Hetero has announced the export launch of its generic semaglutide injection portfolio, aiming to expand access to advanced therapies for type 2 diabetes and obesity.

The company said the rollout marks the start of a strategic, multi-year global expansion plan covering more than 75 countries. Initial launches are underway across regions in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, with further expansion planned in phases, subject to regulatory approvals.

Hetero's injectable semaglutide

products will be marketed under the brand names Truglyx, Rolmodil, and Moto G in various international markets.

The company is also awaiting approval from India's drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), after completing clinical trials for both diabetes and obesity indications. The India launch is expected following regulatory clearance.

According to Hetero, the portfolio has been developed as a global-quality product platform, reflecting its capabilities in complex generics and advanced man-

ufacturing. The products are designed to improve access to GLP-1 therapies, which are widely used in managing blood sugar levels and supporting weight management.

The injections will be offered in multi-dose disposable pen devices, aligned with innovator formats, and will be available in multiple strengths ranging from 0.25 mg to 2.4 mg. This range is intended to support flexible, patient-centric dosing for both diabetes care and weight management.

Commenting on the development, Managing Director Dr. Vamsi Krishna Bandi said the company aims to provide high-quality

and affordable treatment options across emerging markets. He noted that Hetero will leverage its established commercial presence in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America to ensure consistent global supply and wider patient access.

Headquartered in Hyderabad, Hetero is a global pharmaceutical company engaged in the development, manufacturing, and commercialization of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and generic formulations. The company operates in over 145 countries and employs more than 30,000 professionals worldwide.

Building wealth takes time, effort, and discipline. The good news is that anyone can follow proven strategies to grow and preserve wealth over the long term. The earlier you begin, the better your chances of success. We outline key principles for building wealth, including setting goals, managing debt, saving, investing, understanding taxes, and building strong credit. Let's take a closer look at how these principles can help you achieve your financial goals



# 7 Steps to Start Building Personal Wealth

## 1. Maximizing Your Income

The first step in building wealth is earning money. While this might seem obvious, it's crucial—you can't save or invest without income. You've probably seen charts showing that a small amount of money regularly saved and allowed to compound over time can eventually grow into a substantial sum. But those charts never answer this fundamental question: How do you get money to save in the first place? There are two main ways to earn money: earned income or passive income.

- Earned income comes from your job or business.
- Passive income comes from investments or businesses that generate revenue without constant effort.

### To maximize your earning potential:

**Do what you enjoy:** You'll perform better and likely build a long-lasting career if you're passionate about your work. In fact, one study found that more than nine out of 10 workers said they would trade a percentage of their lifetime earnings for greater meaning at work.<sup>1</sup>

**Leverage your strengths:** Identify what you're good at and find ways to monetize those talents.

**Research your options:** Consider career paths that align with your interests and skills. Tools like the Occupational Outlook Handbook from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics can help you assess potential salaries and career growth.

**Tip:** Investing in your education and skills is an excellent way to maximize your earning potential. Advanced degrees, industry-specific certifications, and training programs are all helpful in building your human capital. Just be sure to consider student loan debt in your calculations to be sure that your investment will pay off.

## 2. Strategic Goal Setting and Planning

Clear financial goals are essential for wealth-building. Whether you aim to retire early, buy a home, or pay for your children's college, setting specific, measurable, and time-bound goals will help guide your financial plan.

**Define your goals:** Understand what you want to achieve and the costs involved. Examples include saving for retirement or buying a property.

**Create a plan:** Build a strategy to meet your goals, including budgeting, increasing income, and investing in assets that will appreciate in value over time.

**Review regularly:** Your plan should be flexible. Track your progress, and adjust as necessary to stay on course.

## 3. Effective Saving Strategies

Simply making money won't help you build wealth if you end up spending it all. Moreover, if you don't have enough money for your bills or an

emergency, you should prioritize saving enough above all else. Many experts recommend having three to six months' worth of income saved up for such situations.<sup>2</sup>

### To set more money aside for building wealth, consider these moves:

**Track your spending for at least a month:** You can use a budgeting app or spreadsheet to help you do this, but a small, pocket-size notebook could also work. Record what you spend, even small amounts; many people are surprised to see where all their money goes.

**Cut unnecessary expenses:** Categorize spending into "needs" (e.g., housing, insurance) and "wants" (e.g., dining out, entertainment). Focus on trimming the latter.

**Set savings goals:** Identify how much you can afford to save each month and automate your savings through direct transfers to your account. If you're meeting your savings goals, feel free to reward yourself once in a while. You'll feel better and be motivated to stay on course.

**Contribute to retirement:** Save for retirement by having money automatically withdrawn from your pay and put into your employer's 401(k). Financial planners usually advise contributing at least enough to get your employer's full matching contribution.

**Use high-yield savings:** Maximize the payoff of your savings by shopping for savings accounts with the highest interest rates and lowest fees. High-yield savings accounts (HYSAs) offer 10 to 12 times the interest rate of a standard savings account.<sup>3</sup> Certificates of deposit (CDs) can be a good savings option if you can afford to lock up that money for several months or years.

Keep this in mind, too: You can only cut so much in costs. If your costs are already down to the bone, you should look into ways to increase your income.

**Important |** Setting a spending budget is one of the best ways to ensure you are saving enough. Cut back on excess and unnecessary spending and put the money in the bank instead.

**4. Smart Investment Approaches**

Once you've managed to set aside some money, the next step is investing it so that it will grow. Remember that interest rates on typical savings accounts tend to be very low, and your cash risks losing purchasing power over time to inflation.

The most important investing principle is diversification—spread your money across various investments to minimize risk. Simply put, your goal should be to spread your money among different types of investments. That's because investments perform differently at different times. For example, bonds may provide good returns if the stock market is on a losing streak. Or if Stock A is in a

slump, Stock B may be on a tear.

Mutual funds provide some built-in diversification because they invest in many different securities. And you'll achieve greater diversification if you invest in both a stock fund and a bond fund (or several stock funds and several bond funds), for example, rather than just one or the other.

As another general rule, the younger you are, the more risk you can afford to take because you'll have more years to make up for any losses.

**Tip:** Index funds, such as those in your employer's 401(k) or IRA, are a type of mutual fund or ETF. These funds typically have lower fees than actively managed funds, making them a good entry point for new investors.

### Types of Investments

Investments vary in terms of risk and potential return. Generally, the safer they are, the lower their potential return, and vice versa.

If you aren't already familiar with the various types of investments, it's worth spending a little time reading up on them. While there are all kinds of exotic investments, most people will want to start with the basics: stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

**Stocks** are shares of ownership in a corporation. When you buy stock, you own a tiny slice of that company and will benefit from any rise in its share price and any dividends it pays out. Stocks are generally considered riskier than bonds, but stocks can also vary widely in risk from one corporation to another.

**Bonds** are like IOUs from a company or government. When you buy a bond, the issuer promises to pay your money back, with interest, after a certain period. Bonds are considered less risky than stocks but with less potential upside. At the same time, some bonds are riskier than others; bond-rating agencies assign them letter grades to reflect that.

**Mutual funds** are pools of securities—often stocks, bonds, or a combination of the two. You get a slice of the entire pool when you buy mutual fund shares. Mutual funds also vary in risk, depending on what they invest in.

**Exchange-traded funds (ETFs)** are like mutual funds in that each share holds an entire portfolio of securities, but ETFs are listed on exchanges and trade like stocks. Some ETFs track major stock indexes like the S&P 500, particular industry sectors, or asset classes like bonds and real estate.

**Tip**

Before you start investing, make sure you have sufficient savings and money set aside to handle any unexpected financial emergencies.

### 5. Asset Protection Techniques

You've worked hard to earn your money and grow your wealth. Insurance is crucial to wealth-building, as it safeguards your assets against unexpected events. Essential types of insurance include:

- Homeowners or renters insurance to protect property.
- Auto insurance to cover accidents and damage.
- Life insurance to provide financial support to your beneficiaries in case of untimely death.
- Disability insurance to replace lost income if you become ill or injured.

Even if you're young and healthy, buying life and disability insurance early can save money in the long run, as premiums increase with age. That means even if you are 25 years old and single, buying life insurance could be much more cost-effective than when you are 10 years older with a partner, children, and mortgage.

### 6. Tax Optimization Strategies

Taxes are an often-overlooked drag on your wealth-building efforts. Of course, we are all sub-

ject to income tax and sales tax as we earn and spend money, but our investments and assets can also be taxed. That's why it is essential to understand your tax exposures and develop strategies to minimize their impact.

### There are several strategies to reduce your taxable income:

**Tax-advantaged accounts:** Contribute to 529 college savings plans, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and 401(k) plans to benefit from tax deductions or tax-free growth. Contributions to a traditional IRA or 401(k) are tax-deductible and grow tax-deferred. Investment gains in a Roth IRA or 401(k) are tax-exempt, meaning you can grow and withdraw money in a Roth account without paying taxes on any of the income or gains.<sup>4</sup>

**Tax-efficient investments:** Consider holding growth assets like stocks in taxable accounts and income-generating assets (e.g., bonds) in tax-advantaged accounts.

**Long-term capital gains:** By holding investments for more than a year, you can take advantage of the lower long-term capital gains tax rate, which is generally lower than the short-term capital gains tax and income tax rates.<sup>5,6</sup>

Given a choice, an income-producing asset like a dividend-paying stock or corporate bond should be placed in a tax-advantaged account like a Roth IRA, where these payments will not trigger taxable events. A growth stock that will only produce capital gains (rather than income) might be better located in a taxable account.

**Tip:** Consider talking with a qualified tax professional, such as an accountant or a certified public accountant (CPA), who can help you develop a tax strategy for your specific financial situation. By minimizing the impact of taxes, you can build wealth more effectively and preserve more of your hard-earned money over the long term.

**7. Debt Management and Credit Building**

As you build wealth, you'll start to find it worthwhile to take on debt to fund various purchases or investments. You may pay for things with a credit card to earn points or rewards. You might apply for a mortgage for a home or second home, a home equity loan for home improvements, or an auto loan to purchase a car. Maybe you'll want to take out a personal loan to help start a business or invest in someone else's.

Managing your debt carefully is essential—taking on too much debt could impede your progress toward your wealth-building goals. To manage debt, be mindful of your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio and make sure that your debt payments are manageable within your budget. You should also aim to pay off high-interest debt, such as credit card debt, as quickly as possible to avoid paying excessive interest charges. Be wary of variable or adjustable interest rate products like adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) or those with balloon payments, as changes to the economy or your personal circumstances can quickly cause those debts to become unmanageable.

If you fall into debt, your credit score can be negatively impacted, and if you default on your debts, you could face personal bankruptcy.

### Maintaining a Good Credit Score

Building and maintaining a good credit score is important to growing and preserving your wealth over the long term. You'll enjoy a lower interest rate and better terms on your loans if you have a strong credit history and high credit score, which can save you thousands of dollars in interest charges over time.<sup>7</sup>

**Here are a few key steps that you can take**

### to maintain a good credit score:

**Pay your bills on time:** One of the most important factors that affect your credit score is your payment history. To maintain a good credit score, you should make sure to pay your bills on time, every time. Late payments, even if they're only a few days late, can significantly negatively impact your credit score.

**Keep your credit utilization low:** Your credit utilization, or the amount of credit you're using compared to the amount you have available, is another important factor that affects your credit score. To maintain a good credit score, you should aim to keep your credit utilization below 30% of your available credit.

**Monitor your credit report:** It's a good idea to check your credit report regularly to make sure that all the information is accurate and up to date. Today, several services will provide you with a credit report free of charge. Errors on your credit report can negatively impact your credit score, so it's important to dispute any inaccuracies you find.

Avoid opening too many new accounts. Every time you apply for credit, it can have a slight negative impact on your credit score. To maintain a good credit score, you should avoid opening too many new accounts in a short period of time. Note, however, that if you do not use credit cards or don't have enough credit lines open, you may fall victim to having an insufficient credit history. So, open some credit cards and take out some loans, but do not overdo it.

By following these steps and practicing good credit habits, you can maintain a good credit score and maximize your borrowing power over the long term.

### Should I Pay Off Debt or Invest?

If you have high-interest debt, such as many credit card charges, it usually makes sense to pay it off before you invest. Few investments ever pay as much as credit cards charge. Once you've paid off your debt, redirect that extra money to savings and investments. Try to pay your credit card balance in full each month, whenever possible, to avoid owing interest in the future.

### How Much Money Do I Need to Buy a Mutual Fund?

Mutual fund companies have different minimum initial investment requirements to get started, often beginning at about \$500. After that, you can usually invest less. Some mutual funds will waive their initial minimums if you commit to investing a regular sum each month. You can also buy mutual funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) through a brokerage firm, some of which charge nothing for opening an account.

### What Is an Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF)?

Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) are investment pools much like mutual funds. A key difference is that their shares are traded on stock exchanges (rather than bought and sold through a particular fund company). They sometimes charge lower fees as well. You can also buy them with stocks and bonds through a brokerage firm.

### The Bottom Line

Building wealth is a marathon, not a sprint. It's a process of consistent saving, investing, and smart financial decisions. By starting early, focusing on diversification, protecting your assets, minimizing taxes, and managing debt, you'll set yourself up for long-term financial success.

The key is patience, discipline, and a clear plan. Celebrate your successes along the way and stay focused on your goals, adjusting your strategy as needed. Over time, your efforts will compound, leading to financial independence and wealth-building success.



# FD VS MUTUAL FUND

Confused between fixed deposits and mutual funds? Compare returns, risks, liquidity, and benefits in detail to choose the right investment option for your financial goals.

Every investor faces the age-old question: FD or Mutual Fund? Both have their place in a financial plan, but the right choice depends on your risk appetite, goals, and timeline. Fixed Deposits bring peace of mind with guaranteed returns, while Mutual Funds provide diversification and the chance for higher growth—though with added volatility. If stability is your priority, Bajaj Finance Fixed Deposits give you assured returns up to 7.30% p.a. for senior citizens and 6.95% p.a. for general investors—among the highest in the industry. Open FD account.

### What is a fixed deposit?

A Fixed Deposit is one of the most secure ways to grow your money. You deposit a lump sum for a chosen tenure and earn a fixed interest rate throughout. Since FD returns are not linked to the market, your money grows steadily and risk-free.

### What are mutual funds?

Mutual Funds pool money from multiple investors to create a diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, or other assets. These

funds are managed by professionals, but returns fluctuate with market conditions. While they can deliver higher gains over the long term, they also carry higher risks compared to FDs.

### Benefits of investing in fixed deposits and mutual funds

Both options come with unique advantages. Mutual Funds provide higher potential returns, liquidity, and diversification across assets. On the other hand fixed deposits provide stability, assured returns, and complete immunity from market risks. So, Which is better? It all depends on your goals and risk tolerance. If you want safety, guaranteed growth, and no surprises, choose Fixed Deposits. If you're ready to take risks for potentially higher long-term gains, mutual funds may suit you. Many investors balance both—FDs for stability and liquidity, and mutual funds for wealth creation.

### Who can invest in fixed deposits and mutual funds?

- Risk-Averse Investors: FDs suit those seeking guaranteed, stable returns with minimal risk, while mutual funds—especially equity funds—carry market volatility.
- For Regular Income: FDs are ideal for predictable interest

payouts. Mutual fund returns fluctuate and are not suitable for fixed monthly income.

- Short-Term Goals: FDs work well for short-term targets due to capital safety. Equity-based mutual funds are riskier and need time to grow.
- Tax Efficiency: Mutual funds generally offer better tax benefits through long-term capital gains, whereas FD interest is fully taxable.
- Long-Term Wealth Creation: Equity mutual funds are better for long-term growth, while FDs often struggle to beat inflation over time.
- Need Quick Liquidity: Open-ended mutual funds provide easier access to money; FDs charge penalties for premature withdrawals.

### Conclusion

Both FDs and mutual funds have their place in your financial plan. But if you want an investment that guarantees growth, keeps your money safe, and offers complete flexibility, Bajaj Finance Fixed Deposits are a smarter choice. With high safety ratings, competitive returns, and easy online booking, you can invest confidently and watch your savings grow. Open FD.





## Five-time champion Mumbai Indians eye title with renewed focus



Rawat as depth spinners, but all have limited impact at the IPL level. Injuries are another possible weakness for MI. Historically, MI has experienced problems with injured players such as Bumrah, Chahar, and Hardik; with the added factor of having limited depth on the roster due to the limited auction budget, MI may not have reliable options for replacing these players if they do or do not play as a result of injuries.

Finally, MI's lower-middle order is extremely reliant on Hardik and Naman Dhir for finishing. If their form decreases during IPL 2026, there will be some vulnerability in this segment of the MI batting order.

**Opportunities**  
IPL 2026 will be MI's best chance to end its title drought that dates back to 2020. MI will once again have the opportunity to return to the top of the IPL pyramid. The MI roster provides an incredible amount of flexibility that will allow MI to make minor adjustments at each venue because multiple all-rounders, along with various other bowling options, give MI the ability to modify their batting and bowling combinations according to facility conditions. The return of de Kock to MI's top order will bring familiarity to the MI batting order and help provide additional opportuni-

ties for younger Indian players to develop in a championship environment.

**Threats**  
Over-reliance on senior players could be a problem. Rohit, de Kock, Boult, and Santner are all nearing the end of their careers, and if any of them struggle with their form, it could impact the team's performance. Teams that rely heavily on spin may take advantage of MI on slower pitches, especially if MI's spin bowlers do not perform well. Moreover, teams with stronger benches may manage player workloads and injuries better throughout the long season. Another disappointing season could also heighten pressure on leadership and strategy, which might hurt confidence during key moments.

**Mumbai Indians squad:**  
Hardik Pandya (Captain), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Ryan Rickelton, Robin Minz, Mitchell Santner, Corbin Bosch, Naman Dhir, Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Boult, Allah Ghafanzar, Ashwani Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Will Jacks, Raghu Sharma, Raj Angad Bawa, Sherfane Rutherford, Mayank Markande, Shardul Thakur, Quinton de Kock, Mohammad Ishaque, Danish Malewar, Atharva Ankekar, Mayank Rawat.



## We're looking forward to the challenge, says coach Flower

BENGALURU

Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) are all set to play the season opener of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, taking on Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. Ahead of the fixture, head coach Andy Flower said the team is approaching the new campaign with a fresh outlook despite entering the tournament as the defending champions.

"Of course, we are the holders from last year, but this is a brand new year, and we're all looking forward to the challenge. One of the truths in life is that change is always there. We are a different group now; the players are a year older, and our opponents have evolved in certain ways. Conditions might also be different, so the challenge of this IPL will be completely different to the last one, and we're excited about that," Flower said.

Reflecting on the team's experiences at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, Flower noted that the side has taken valuable lessons from previous outings at the venue.

"We lost our first three matches at Chinnaswamy last year, and we learned from those experiences. Con-

ditions might be slightly different this time as well, so we'll have to assess that. But at your home venue, you should have a better understanding of the nuances of the conditions than your opposition. We've been practising here and talking a lot about those aspects, so I'd like to think we'll be slightly ahead of the opposition on our own turf," he said.

Flower also spoke about the leadership group within the squad, praising captain Rajat Patidar and his deputy Jitesh Sharma. "It's pretty amazing that in Rajat's first year of captaincy, he led RCB to the trophy. He's a very likeable man, and he's well respected in the dressing room. He stays nice and calm, which the bowlers really appreciate. Jitesh is a very good deputy as well. He's energetic, tactically aware and sees a lot of the game from behind the stumps, so having those two working together around the square is valuable for the team," he added.

Reflecting on the form of Virat Kohli, Flower expressed confidence in the senior batter's mindset and preparation heading into the season. "Virat is in a really good space mentally. He's very comfortable with himself but still incredibly hungry, and watching him strike the ball in training, he looks at the peak of his powers," Flower said.

### Athletics

#### Country's top sprinters all set to earn qualification for World Relays



**CHANDIGARH:** The first edition of the International Invitation Relay Competition in Chandigarh on Saturday will witness the country's top sprinters as they gear up to earn a ticket to World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 in Botswana. The domestic competition on March 28 at Sector 7 Sports Complex in Chandigarh will be the last event for the national relay teams to qualify for the global relays to be held on May 2 and 3 on the African soil. "We expect members of the national relay teams to give their best and stay on course to earn passage to the World Athletics Relays in Gaborone," chief athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair said. Bhutan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Nepal are the other nations participating in an invitational relay competition.

### Strengths

The MI's main advantage is that they have well-defined roles on a well-established core. They have an impressive and deep batting line-up, with Rohit being supported by either Ryan Rickelton or Quinton de Kock, who is also returning. The MI's middle-order comprising Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, and Hardik Pandya are all premium players who will give the MI a mixture of consistency and explosive ability. In bowling, they have one of the best bowling units in the competition, led by Jasprit Bumrah with Trent Boult and Deepak Chahar as significant contributors. In addition, they have seamers like Shardul Thakur adding to the overall depth in that area. Also, MI have many all-rounders -- such as Mitchell Santner, Will Jacks, and Naman Dhir -- giving them the ability to play tactically in different conditions.

### Weaknesses

MI have structural issues in a few key areas despite their strength. The team has no proven 'keeper option from India and therefore will have to rely upon foreign talent (i.e., Rickelton and de Kock). This may result in limiting how flexible the MI will be when finalising the various combinations needed throughout the tournament. MI's spin bowling is also a relative weakness. Santner is the only proven spin option, but is also the only proven spinner on the MI roster. Outside of Santner, MI can look to Mayank Markande, Atharva Ankekar, and Mayank

## AKFI roll out elite strength & conditioning camp in preparation of Asian Games in Bellary

BELLARY

The Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) will commence a high-performance strength & conditioning camp at the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), Bellary, bringing together the country's leading men's and women's probable kabaddi athletes for the Asian Games 2026.

The camp, scheduled from March 27 to April 2, marks a significant step in strengthening India's kabaddi ecosystem, with a focused approach towards athlete development, fitness optimisation, and long-term performance excellence.

Several prominent Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) stars -- Naveen Kumar, Arjun Deshwal, Pawan Sehrawat, Aslam Inamdar, Sunil Kumar, Ashu Malik, and Bharat Hooda -- are part of the camp, reflecting



the league's strong talent pool. From the women's contingent, leading athletes include members of the Indian squad that won the Women's Kabaddi World Cup, such as skipper Ritu Negi, as well as Sonali Vishnu Shingate, Pushpa Rana, Champa Thakur, Pinki Roy, Priya and Karthika R, reflecting a strong mix of experienced

internationals and emerging talent from across the domestic circuit.

This initiative reinforces Mashal Sports and AKFI's shared commitment to the holistic development and well-being of kabaddi athletes, while continuing to build a strong pipeline of talent for India ahead of major international competitions, including the Asian Games.

Vibhor Vineet Jain, President, Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI), said, "This initiative is an important step in our preparations as we continue to raise the standard of kabaddi in India. By collaborating with Mashal Sports, we are ensuring that our players benefit from modern training methodologies, scientific support systems, and a professional high-performance environment that is essential for success at the international level."

## International matches return to Uppal... Result of HCA Secretary Jeevan Reddy's efforts

HYDERABAD

After being away from international cricket matches for some time, the Uppal Stadium is set to come alive again with international sporting excitement. With the efforts of the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) and approval from the BCCI, two international matches between Team India and Zimbabwe will be held at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Uppal.

The HCA Secretary announced that a T20 match will be held on October 14, 2026, and an ODI match on January 6, 2027. The newly appointed



HCA Secretary, Manne Jeevan Reddy, played a key role in bringing these matches to Hyderabad.

Due to the absence of international matches at the Uppal stadium in recent times, there was disappointment among cricket fans. The lack of matches at a stadium of international standards had also affected the reputation of the HCA. Determined to change this situation, Jeevan Reddy held multiple discussions with BCCI officials and successfully secured

match allocations to Hyderabad as part of Zimbabwe's tour.

Speaking on the occasion, Jeevan Reddy said, "Bringing international cricket back to Hyderabad is our primary goal. This is just the first step. In the coming days, we will strive to bring more international matches to Uppal and further enhance the reputation of the HCA."

He also stated that with the election of the new HCA executive body, they would implement development programs never seen before and further improve the stadium's infrastructure. Overall, it is being felt that Jeevan Reddy's initiative in bringing international matches back to Uppal has given a new boost to the HCA.

## ISSF Shotgun World Cup: Maheshwari Chauhan three off the pace in Morocco

NEW DELHI

Olympian Maheshwari Chauhan fired a 69 on the first day of the qualification round at the Tangier Shooting Club in Morocco, keeping her within range of a berth in the final of the women's skeet competition in the year's first International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Tangier.

Starting early on Friday morning, Maheshwari shot 21 in the first round but came back strong, closing out with a couple of 24s to give her seventh spot on the leaderboard. The top eight go through to the final on Saturday, after two more rounds of qualification are played out. Teammates Darshna Rathore and Yashasvi Rathore shot scores of 64 each to lie in 25th and 26th spots, respectively, one ahead of reigning Olympic champion Francisca Crovetto of Chile, who shot the same score. Emmanouela Katsouraki of Greece is leading the 41-strong field presently with 72 hits.

In the men's skeet, Parampal Singh Guron was the best Indian on show with a tally of 70 (25,22,23). Young Jyotiraditya Singh Sisodia shot 67 (23,22,22) while Man Singh ended the day with 64 (21,21,22). All three men have their work cut out for them on Saturday to make the top eight.

A highly competitive field consisting of Olympic and World Champions has entered the competition. India has entered the



maximum quota of six athletes in both men and women, along with two shooters each in both men and women, who will be competing for ranking points.

The women's field is packed with stars like the reigning Olympic champion Francisca Crovetto of Chile, who is returning to international competition after maternity leave, headlining the women's competition along with reigning world champion Samantha Simonton of the United States. Diana Bacosi of Italy, a double Olympic and double world champion, also starts, while former world champion Dania Jo Vizzi of the USA, Kazakhstan's world championship medallist Assem Orynbay, among others,

make it a highly competitive field. In the men's event, an 82-strong field has entered the competition with World Championship 2025 bronze medallist Emil Kjeldgaard Petersen of Denmark headlining the list.

Last season's World Cup finals winner Christian Elliot of the USA, Italy's double Olympic champion Gabriele Rossetti, Tokyo silver medallist Jesper Hansen, also of Denmark, and former world champion and Asian Games champion Masoud Saleh Al-Athba of Qatar are among the top names in the competition. Also representing Canada for the first time will be Angad Vir Singh Bajwa, who was in India colours till last year.

## Hockey India Awards: Navneet, Hardik named Players of the Year; Zafar Iqbal gets Lifetime Achievement Award

NEW DELHI

International stars Navneet Kaur and Hardik Singh were named Players of the Year, while former India captain Zafar Iqbal, a member of the 1980 Olympic gold medal-winning team, was honoured with the Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award in the Hockey India 8th Annual Awards in New Delhi on Friday.

The ceremony was graced by several distinguished dignitaries, including Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Labour and Employment, and Raksha Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, both from the Government of India. Also present at the event were Olympians Harbinder Singh, Aslam Sher Khan, Zafar Iqbal, Vineet Kumar, M P Singh, Jagbir Singh, Mir Ranjan Negi, Priyam Rani Siwach, Sita Mehta, Mamta Kharb, and Rani.

The award presenters for the evening included Jugraj Singh, Asunta Lakra, Baljit Singh, Pargat Singh, Ajit Pal Singh, and Saroj Sharma, who joined players, officials, and Member Unit representatives to celebrate Indian hockey's finest.

Navneet Kaur and Hardik Singh were honoured with the coveted Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2025 (INR 20 lakh each) in the men's and women's categories, respectively. Zafar Iqbal, who played an integral part in India's gold medal win at the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games and also won two silver medals at the Asian Games in 1978 and 1982, along with a bronze at the Champions Trophy



in 1982, received the Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award (INR 25 lakh). Earlier in the day, Raghu Prasad RV was honoured for being named the FIH Umpire of the Year for 2025, while Ishika was recognised for scoring a goal on her debut against Uruguay during the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers at Hyderabad. Deepika was recognised for winning the Poligras Magic Skill Award, while Abhishek was honoured for being named Player of the Tournament at the Asia Cup Rajgir, Bihar 2025.

Udita was recognised for being named Player of the Tournament at the Women's Asia Cup Hangzhou, China 2025, while Navneet Kaur was honoured for being named Player of the Tournament at the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers in Hyderabad. All awardees in the Individual Achievement category received an award of INR 1 lakh each. Seven Member Units were also awarded

hockey team receiving INR 69 lakh.

The Hockey India Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year 2025 was awarded to Bichu Devi Kharibam, while Sanjay received the Hockey India Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year 2025. Sumit won the Hockey India Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year 2025, while the Hockey India Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year 2025 was awarded to Sukhjeet Singh. Each took home a cash award of INR 5 lakh. Among the emerging talents, Prince Deep Singh won the Hockey India Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year 2025 (Men - Under 21), while Sakshi Rana secured the Hockey India Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year 2025 (Women - Under 21). Both players received INR 10 lakh.

In the officials' category, the Hockey India President Award for Umpire/Umpire Manager of the Year 2025 (INR 2.5 lakh) was awarded to Sourabh Singh Rajput, while Biswaranjan Sarangi received the Hockey India President Award for Technical Official of the Year 2025 (INR 2.5 lakh). Hockey Jharkhand was awarded Best Member Unit of the Year 2025 (INR 2.5 lakh) for its efforts towards the development of hockey in the region. The Hockey India President Award for Outstanding Achievement 2025 (INR 5 lakh) was presented to Sardar Sarpal Singh from Roundglass Punjab Hockey Academy, while the Hockey India Jaman Lal Sharma Award for Invaluable Contribution 2025 (INR 5 lakh) was awarded to Manoj Konbegi.



## RAM CHARAN'S EMOTIONAL POST ON HIS BIRTHDAY

**M**egastar Ram Charan has shared an emotional post on social media. He said, "The place where I grew up is Jubilee Hills. I will always remember the people there. Everyone in Jubilee Hills has been like family to me. Their love, affection, and blessings... have always been with me. Because of all this, I have reached this position today. I sincerely thank all those who have stood by me during my journey and supported me at every step."

"Congratulations to Ram Charan on his birthday. This year 'Game Changer' has come before the fans" - Allu Arjun

"Happy birthday brother! I wish all your dreams come true. Stay strong and always move forward with courage. I always stand by you. No matter what difficulties come, keep going ahead. Your passion, strength, and dedication inspire me. I am always with you. I love you" - Varun Tej

"Happy birthday Ram Charan. May God bless you with good health and success" - Nara Rohit

## RAM CHARAN AS PEDDI PEHELWAN IN SPECIAL GLIMPSE DRAWS ATTENTION

**A**ctor Ram Charan celebrates his birthday today, and the makers of his highly anticipated Pan-India spectacle Peddi have marked the occasion, and the auspicious Sri Rama Navami, with a power-packed gift for fans. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana and produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under Vriddhi Cinemas, with Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings presenting, the team released the electrifying Peddi Pehelwan glimpse. The video opens with a philosophical, hard-hitting voiceover that instantly sets the stakes-wrestling isn't a sport of bats and balls, it's a battlefield of survival. The visuals plunge us into a raw, traditional wrestling pit where dust, sweat, and sheer willpower dominate every frame. We witness the rise of Peddi Pehelwan as he endures brutal training, scaling brick walls, lifting massive sandbags, and mastering the traditional Gada with unwavering determination.

Ram Charan's transformation is nothing short of staggering. With chiselled six-pack abs, ripped muscles, and an intensity that burns through the screen, he embodies a true Pehelwan. One stand-out moment—where he wields the mace and strikes a Hanuman-like pose, feels tailor-made for the spiritual fervour of Sri Rama Navami. And his

final dialogue, "Choodume... Aate Naa Pogaru...", lands like thunder, sending mass vibes roaring.

Director Buchi Babu Sana delivers a goose-bumps-loaded feast, showcasing Ram Charan in a never-before-seen avatar. Every frame packs whistle-worthy energy, building massive hype around the film. The technical backbone further elevates the experience. R Rathnavelu crafts a gritty, immersive visual palette, capturing the sweat-soaked intensity of the wrestling world. The background score by Academy Award winner AR Rahman throbs with tribal rhythms that heighten the tension. Navin Nooli's sharp editing accentuates every hard-hitting moment, while Avinash Kolla's production design brings rustic India alive with authenticity. With these top-tier craftsmen at work, the production values shine through every frame.

Janhvi Kapoor plays the leading lady, while Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyendu, and Boman Irani will be seen in prominent roles. The glimpse not only celebrates Ram Charan's birthday but also signals the emergence of a ferocious force- Peddi Pehelwan is here, and his roar is just getting started. The makers yet again clarified that, the film Peddi is gearing up for a grand worldwide release on April 30th.

## Ramayana Glimpse Rama to Release on Hanuman Jayanti



**T**he much-awaited film Ramayana is creating huge excitement among movie lovers across the world. This grand project is being directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra. It is planned as a two-part epic and is expected to be one of the biggest films ever made in Indian cinema.

Recently, Namit Malhotra shared an important update on social media during the special occasion of Ram Navami. He posted a heartfelt message about the journey of making this film and the responsibility of bringing such a legendary story to life. He said that Ramayana is not just a story, but something that belongs to everyone and must be told with honesty and devotion.

The biggest highlight of his announcement is that a new glimpse titled 'Rama' will be released on April 2, which also marks the auspicious festival of Hanuman Jayanti. This reveal is planned as a grand global event, where fans from different parts of the world will be part

of the celebration. The makers want to make this moment special and memorable for audiences everywhere.

Ramayana is believed to be set around 5,000 years ago and is one of the most respected and loved stories in Indian culture. The film aims to present this timeless tale in a modern way using advanced technology and strong storytelling. Earlier, the first look of the film already created a huge buzz, including a special display in Times Square, showing its global scale.

The casting of the film has also added to the excitement. Ranbir Kapoor will be seen as Lord Ram, while Sai Pallavi plays Sita. Yash takes on the powerful role of Ravana, and Sunny Deol will appear as Hanuman. Ravi Dubey is playing Lakshman. The film is being made with the support of global studios like DNEG, known for winning multiple Oscars, ensuring high-quality visual effects. The first part of Ramayana is scheduled to release during Diwali 2026, followed by the second part in Diwali 2027.

## PC hints at new journey with "Another Adventure" post



**A**ctor Priyanka Chopra has set social media abuzz with her latest post, "Chalo, another adventure," after arriving in India and heading towards Amritsar. The actress was recently spotted at the Delhi airport, keeping it stylishly casual in a satin silver shirt paired with blue jeans, a denim cap, and oversized round glasses. She greeted paparazzi with folded hands and happily posed for pictures with fans before leaving. Soon after, Priyanka shared an Instagram story featuring a flight route from Delhi to Amritsar, captioning it, "Chalo, another adventure," sparking curiosity about her plans. However, she kept details under wraps. On the work front, Priyanka is said to be playing the female lead opposite Mahesh Babu in Varanasi, directed by S. S. Rajamouli. The film is expected to be a travel adventure, with

Priyanka reportedly essaying a lively lover-girl role. She is also likely to feature in a dance number with Mahesh Babu and perform high-octane action sequences, showcasing a fierce new side. Priyanka was recently seen in The Bluff, directed by Frank E. Flowers, which featured actors like Karl Urban, Ismael Cruz Cordova, Safia Oakley-Green, and Temuera Morrison in key roles.

While her latest post keeps fans guessing, it has certainly added to the excitement around her India visit and upcoming projects.



## 'I DREAM OF A DAY WHEN WOMEN IS NOT JUST SOMEONE'S WIFE'

**A**ctor Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently shared her thoughts about women and their journey in the film industry. She spoke at an event for Hollywood Reporter's Women in Industry and expressed her hopes for a better future where women are treated equally and fairly. Samantha spoke openly about the struggles women face in their careers. She said that women often adjust a lot in their personal and professional lives. They change their plans, opinions, and even dreams to make others comfortable. She explained that many women do this so naturally that they don't even realize they are sacrificing something important.

She also pointed out an interesting fact. According to her, women say sorry much more often than men, even in similar situations. This shows how women are conditioned to be more apologetic and less confident in some cases. Samantha said, "We adjust our schedules, our opinions, our ambitions so everyone around us is comfortable. And we do it so cheerfully and willingly that we don't even register it as a sacrifice. Did you know women apologise nearly ten times more than men in the same situation? Imagine, Ten times more."

She encouraged women to stop doing this and start valuing themselves more. She said that women deserve to take up space and should not feel guilty about their success. She added, "Stop. I'm saying this with utmost humility and because I care. Stop. Because you deserve to take up the space you have earned. Credit is not a bad word. Ambition is not a character flaw. And taking a compliment with a simple thank you is not arrogance. It's just the truth." Samantha also shared her dreams for the future of women in cinema. She said she hopes

there will be a time when stories led by women are not treated as something different or risky. Instead, they should simply be called stories, just like any other film.

She said, "I dream of the day when we stop calling stories female-led as though that is a category, a risk, worse, an apology... and we just call them stories." She also wants female characters to be shown in a more real and natural way. According to her, women on screen should be strong, complex, and independent, just like women in real life. They should not only exist as someone's partner or as a reason for a hero's success. Samantha further said, "I dream of the day when the women on screen are as contradictory and complicated and human as the women watching them. Not just someone's wife. Or the reason the hero finds his courage. Just themselves. Fully."

She also spoke about equality behind the scenes. She hopes that one day, a woman negotiating her contract will not become big news. It should be normal and expected. She added, "I dream of the day when a woman negotiating her contract is the most boring headline of the week." Finally, she spoke about safety in the film industry. She believes that safety should not be discussed only once in a while, but should become a basic rule followed by everyone. On the work front, Samantha is busy with her upcoming films like Maa Inti Bangaram and Rakt Brahmand: The Bloody Kingdom.